



# Whistleblowing Policy

## What is whistleblowing?

The ability for employees and pupils to report suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act appropriately within Prism.

## Aims

The aim of the policy is to encourage employees and others to who have serious concerns about any aspect of Prism's work to come forward and register those concerns.

Prism views whistleblowing as a positive act that can make a valuable contribution to assisting the school's effective operation and commitment to the creation of high standards. To help achieve these high standards freedom of speech is encouraged.

## If you are considering raising a concern you should read this policy first. It explains:

- ✚ The type of issue that can be raised
- ✚ How the person/s raising the concern will be protected from victimisation and harassment
- ✚ How to raise a concern
- ✚ What Prism will do with it
- ✚ Who can raise a concern?

## This policy applies to

- ✚ All Prism employees and volunteers
- ✚ All Prism learners
- ✚ All learners' parents/carers
- ✚ All visitors and the wider community

## What should be reported?

- ✚ Any serious concerns that you have about the service Prism provides.
- ✚ Any serious concerns that you have about Prisms provision or the conduct of its staff and volunteers that:
  - Give you cause for concern under safeguarding.
  - Make you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards and practice
  - Are not in keeping with Prisms policies
  - Fall below established standards of practice: or
  - Are improper behaviour.

## These might relate to:

- ✚ Conduct which is an offence or breach of the law
- ✚ Disclosures that relate to miscarriage of justice
- ✚ Racial, sexual, disability or other discrimination
- ✚ Health and safety of the public and /or other employees
- ✚ Damage to the environment

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- ✚ Unauthorised use of Prism funds or other assets
- ✚ Possible fraud and corruption
- ✚ Neglect or abuse of users, or other unethical conduct

## Protecting the Whistle-Blower

### Your legal rights

This policy has been produced to take into account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act-1998 which protects workers making disclosures about matters of concern, when those disclosures are made in good faith.

The act makes it unlawful for Prism to dismiss anyone or allow them to be victimised on the basis that they have made an appropriate and lawful disclosure.

If the disclosure is made by someone who has participated in the action causing concern, Prism cannot promise not to act against this person, but the fact that they came forward may be taken into account.

## Harassment or Victimisation

Prism is committed to good practice and high standards. Prism recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If you believe that what you are saying to be true you should have nothing to fear, because you are doing your duty to Prism, your colleagues and those who use Prism.

Prism will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistle-blower and will take action to protect whistleblowers. Harassment will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in line with Prism's disciplinary policies.

## Support to you

Throughout this process:

- ✚ You will be given full support from the SLT
- ✚ Your concerns will be taken seriously; and
- ✚ Prism will do all that it can to help throughout the investigation
- ✚ Appropriate advice and support will be provided

## Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not reveal your identity if that is your wish. If disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation, it may not be possible to take action as a result of your disclosure without your help, so you may be asked to come forward as a witness. If you agree to this, advice and support will be offered.

## Anonymous allegations

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You will be encouraged to put your name to any disclosure. If you do not tell us who you are it becomes more difficult to protect your position or to give you feedback. Therefore, this method of disclosure is much less powerful, but will still be considered by Prism. By exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account.

- ✚ The seriousness of the issue raised
- ✚ The credibility of the concern; and
- ✚ The likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources

## Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith and reasonably believe it to be true, but it's not confirmed by the investigations, Prism will recognise your concern and you have nothing to fear. If, however you make an allegations that are frivolous, malicious or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action may be taken against you.

## Raising a Concern

### Who should you raise the concern with?

This will depend upon the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the wrong doing. Normally you should raise concerns with:

- ✚ Your line manager
- ✚ A more senior member of staff
- ✚ Where the complaint is about the headteacher the concern should be raised with the Chair of the Trustees Board.

### How to Raise a Concern

You can raise a concern by telephone, in person, or in writing. The earlier you express your concern the easier it is to take action. You will need to provide the following information:

- ✚ The nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true
- ✚ The background and history of the concern [with dates]
- ✚ You will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that you are acting in good faith, and that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

You may invite your trade union, or colleague to be present for support during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

## What Prism will do

Prism will respond to your concern as soon as possible. Where appropriate the matters raised may;

- ✚ Be investigated by SMT, internal audit, or disciplinary/grievance process
- ✚ Be referred to the police
- ✚ Be referred to an external auditor
- ✚ Be referred and put through established safeguarding procedures
- ✚ Form the subject of an independent inquiry

Within 10 working days during term time and 15 working days during holiday periods of a concern being raised, the person investigating your concern will write to you;

- ✚ Acknowledging that the concern has been received

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- ✚ Indicating how Prism proposes to deal with the matter
- ✚ Supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms if appropriate
- ✚ Telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not why not.

You need to be assured that your disclosure has been properly addressed. You will be informed of progress and outcomes of any investigation unless there are legal reasons why this cannot be done. However, we cannot disclose the details of investigations.

### How the matter can be taken further

Should you not be satisfied with the outcomes relating to your concern you can contact:

- a. The Chair of Prisms Management Committee,
- b. Your trade union,
- c. The NSPCC
- d. The police.

For contact details for management Committee and or senior Leadership team, please look at <http://www.prismindependentschool.org>.

Katie Corfield – 01.04.2023

*\*To be reviewed with 2-year period, or earlier if necessary*

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