



## LONGACRE SCHOOL

### WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

**This policy includes the Early Years Foundation Stage**

***Policy Reviewed: September 2024***

***Policy to be reviewed: September 2025***

The School has adopted this policy and procedure on whistleblowing to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about safeguarding and welfare issues, fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, and failure to comply with legal obligations or unethical conduct. The policy also provides if necessary, for such concerns to be raised outside the organisation.

This guidance is written for staff (which includes any adult, paid or voluntary worker) who work with children and young people within Longacre and is written in conjunction with the school safeguarding policy.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern (the attitude or action of colleagues) to the attention of the Head, DSL, and/or relevant agencies.

#### **Reasons for Whistleblowing:**

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable or unsafe practice or behaviour, including potential failures in the School's safeguarding procedures, provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary;
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening;
- To protect or reduce risk to others;
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

#### **Elements of the Policy**

In accordance with Lord Nolan's Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the School's policy on whistleblowing demonstrates that the School:

- Will not tolerate malpractice;
- Respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;

- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;
- Will invoke the School's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations;
- Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff.
- Will demonstrate fair play, even handedness and a fair hearing by peers.

## Procedure

Where possible you should share your concerns in writing. Please write to the Head and please provide as much detail as possible to help the School address your issue quickly and effectively. Low level concerns can also be raised via the CPOMS School safeguarding system

In the Head's absence, concerns should be raised with the DSL. If you don't feel comfortable or able to raise a concern with the Head or DSL, you can contact the HR & Compliance Manager as an alternative internal point of contact. If you cannot raise a concern internally you can use an external, independent and completely confidential service provided by EthicsPoint to make a disclosure. You can contact EthicsPoint in the following ways:

Online: [EthicsPoint - Surrey County Council](#)

Telephone: 0800 069 8180

Further information on the reporting procedure, security and confidentiality of EthicsPoint can be found on their website.

This procedure is separate from the School's adopted procedures regarding grievances. Employees should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation and should follow the grievance procedure outlined in the Staff Handbook.

This procedure is to enable members of staff to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School.

Malpractice includes, but is not limited to, allegations of fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of ethics, criminal activities, or failing to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to suspected malpractice within the School. If you have any genuine concerns related to a suspected malpractice affecting any of the School's activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this procedure.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school safeguarding arrangements.

Further information relating to whistleblowing and child protection is located within the School Safeguarding Policy.

A failure to make a disclosure under this policy may be considered a disciplinary matter and all members of staff should therefore proactively implement this policy for the protection of the School and all its stakeholders.

If any person to whom this policy is relevant to is unsure whether a particular circumstance impacts on their suitability to work with children they must seek guidance under this policy from the Head.

### **How to Raise a Concern**

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken;
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why;
- You should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background, history, giving names, dates and places where you can;
- You will not be expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern;
- If your concern relates to a safeguarding issue, inform the DSL or Head immediately, who will then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as appropriate;
- If your concern is about the DSL, contact the Head;
- If your concern is a safeguarding concern about the Head, contact the Chair of Governors, or, if you feel you need to take it to someone outside the School, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer;
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response in line with the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Policy. The NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### **What Happens Next**

- You should be given information (as the school considers appropriate) on the nature and progress of any enquiries;
- Longacre has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation;
- No action will be taken against you if the concerns prove unfounded but were raised in good faith;
- Malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence of the person making the allegation;
- We recognise that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, HR & Compliance Manager, Head and/or your trade union.

### **Confidentiality**

Employees who wish to raise a written concern under this procedure will have the matter treated confidentially. Their name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without their prior written approval. Where concerns are raised verbally rather than in writing, confidentiality will be maintained where possible, although all parties using this policy are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible. If there is evidence of criminal activity then the Police will in all cases be informed.

### **The Investigation**

A member of staff will be at liberty to express their concern to the Head about a whistleblowing concern raised under this policy.

Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. The member of staff making the allegation will be kept informed of progress and, whenever possible and subject to third party rights, will be informed of the Resolution.

A member of staff who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Chair of Governors. Contact details for the chair of Governors can be obtained via the Head's PA or HR & Compliance Manager.

### **External Procedures**

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted and where a resolution has not been achieved, a member of staff shall have a right in certain circumstances to access to an external body/person. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure) HMRC, the Audit Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and/or the LADO (where the disclosure relates to a child protection issue). A member of staff may also have the right under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, to raise a concern directly with an external body where the employee reasonably believes:

- That exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- That the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- Where they believe they would be victimised by the School;
- Where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

Before a member of staff considers referring a matter under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, they must have discussed the matter fully in confidence with either the Head or the Chair of Governors.

### **Malicious Accusations**

Malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation**

No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and follow these Whistleblowing procedures.

**Amendments and updates to this policy**

Any suggestions for future amendments to this policy should be fed back to the Head for consideration.

## Appendix 1 – Contact Reference List

### Internal

Head Sophie Baber  Email: <a href="mailto:head@longacreschool.co.uk">head@longacreschool.co.uk</a> Telephone: 01483 893225
Assistant Head & DSL  Tara Pandey Email: <a href="mailto:tpandey@longacreschoolc.o.uk">tpandey@longacreschoolc.o.uk</a> Telephone: 01483 893225 ext. 218
HR & Compliance Manager Andy Whyte Email: <a href="mailto:awhyte@longacreschool.co.uk">awhyte@longacreschool.co.uk</a> Telephone: 01483 893225 ext. 206
Chair of Governors Andrew Blurton Email: On Request from the Clerk to Governing Body or HR & Compliance Manager Telephone: On Request from the Clerk to Governing Body or HR & Compliance Manager

### External

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Email: <a href="mailto:LADO@surreycc.gov.uk">LADO@surreycc.gov.uk</a> Telephone: 0300 123 1650
EthicsPoint (Surrey CC) Website: <a href="https://secure.ethicspoint.eu/domain/media/en/gui/107090/index.html">https://secure.ethicspoint.eu/domain/media/en/gui/107090/index.html</a> Telephone: 0800 069 8180
Health & Safety Executive Website: <a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/">https://www.hse.gov.uk/</a> Telephone: 0300 790 6787
NSPCC Website: <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/</a> Email: <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a> Telephone: 0808 800 5000

## Appendix 2 – Whistleblowing Flowchart

