

# **Connaught School for Girls**



## **Whistleblowing Policy**

Date of Consultation : December 2018

Date of Ratification by the Governing Body: December 2018

Date of Consultation : December 2022

Date of Ratification by the Governing Body: 14<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022

# Whistleblowing Policy

## Introduction

On occasions you may have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually, these concerns are easily resolved. If your concern involves unlawful conduct, financial malpractice or dangers to the public or the environment, you should report these concerns under this Policy. You are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 from any detrimental consequences when you have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred or is likely to occur.

Connaught School for Girls has introduced this procedure to enable you to raise your concerns about malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. Please raise a matter of concern early rather than wait for proof to avoid escalation of the issue and perhaps to avoid severe consequences.

This Whistleblowing Procedure is for concerns where the interests of others or of the organisation itself are at risk and where you reasonably believe the disclosure is in the public interests.

If in doubt – raise it.

## Our Assurance to you

### Your safety

The Headteacher, Governors and Responsible Officers are committed to this policy. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Disciplinary action may however be taken against a member of staff who is discovered to have made allegations falsely and maliciously.

### Your confidence

We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that you may nonetheless, want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for instance, because your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.

If you make an anonymous disclosure it may be more difficult for us to look into the matter and give you feedback.

## How to raise a concern internally

### Step 1

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your line manager.

### Step 2

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your line manager for whatever reasons, please raise the matter with:

**The Headteacher** - **Ms Linsey Hand**

**The Chair of Governors** - **Mr Alan Douglas** (email address on school website - letters handed to the school office will be forwarded)

The School Accountants - For Financial concerns - Mr Michael Durst – Landau Baker 020 8359 9988 or if you feel that any financial matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact:

**The Audit Commission on 020 7828 1212**

Matters should be raised in confidence and not discussed with other parties. Due regard should be taken to slander or libel.

A concern that is sincerely felt and expressed may, on investigation, prove to be unfounded. The Academy will try and ensure that any negative impact on a whistleblower is minimised but acknowledges there may be disclosure to other prescribed persons e.g. Inland Revenue or the Police and that it will not be possible to prevent all of the repercussions potentially involved.

## Independent advice

If you are unsure whether to use this procedure or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact:

- the independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk). Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.
- **The Audit Commission on 020 7828 1212**

## How we will investigate your concerns

We will assess the seriousness of your concerns to decide how to proceed. There may be an internal inquiry or formal investigation. Where you have identified yourself we will

- acknowledge your concerns within 10 days, tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact him/her and whether your further assistance is required

- provide feedback - but may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else or compromise the investigation
- advise you when a final response to your concerns is expected
- Provide reasons if we decide not to investigate.

### External contacts

This policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise matters internally but there may be circumstances where you can properly report matters to outside bodies, such as regulators or the police. If you raise your concerns outside the school you should not divulge confidential information. Public Concern at Work can advise you on such an option and on the circumstances in which you may be able to contact an outside body safely.

### If you are dissatisfied

If you are unhappy with our response you can go to the other levels and bodies detailed in this policy. We cannot guarantee that we will always respond in the way that you might wish we are required to handle the matter fairly and properly.

### Monitoring the Policy

The Academy will maintain a record of all matters raised through the Whistleblowing Policy in order that an assessment may be made of the effectiveness of the policy and any emerging patterns.

Agreed at Finance & Premises Meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Agreed at FGB Meeting –14<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Signed: .....

Alan Douglas – Chair of Governors

Signed:.....

Linsey Hand – Headteacher

Signed:.....

Chair of the Finance/Premises Committee