

Thomas Telford School



Whistleblowing Policy

Prepared by: Ian Rawlings
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Introduction

At Thomas Telford School, we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage staff and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of Senior Management Team and/or relevant agencies. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school, rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside. It applies to all staff, and those contractors working on the premises. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract.

It is recognised that whistleblowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the behaviour that is causing concern, continuing.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

Other Complaints Procedures

This procedure is separate from the School Complaints Procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. Safeguarding and Child Protection issues should always be reported to the Safeguarding Lead or the Headmaster according to the specific guidelines laid out in our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

Behaviour that should cause concern:-

- conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely occur the result of which the school fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud and corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- past, current or likely damage to the environment

Reasons for whistleblowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistleblowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals

- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern (see also Appendices 1 & 2)

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can with your line manager. 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
- If your concern is about your immediate line manager approach the Headmaster or Senior Deputies. If your concern is about the Headmaster, talk the Chair of the Governing Board, or Mrs Michelle Davies, the Clerk to the Governors, who is also an employee of the School. The Chair can be contacted via Mrs Davies
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest
- Ideally you should always put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern

What happens next

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness. Concerns raised in good faith and which proved to be unwarranted will have no consequences for any party.

Anonymous Allegations

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual.

However, anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the school's discretion. In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence.

Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with the Headmaster so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

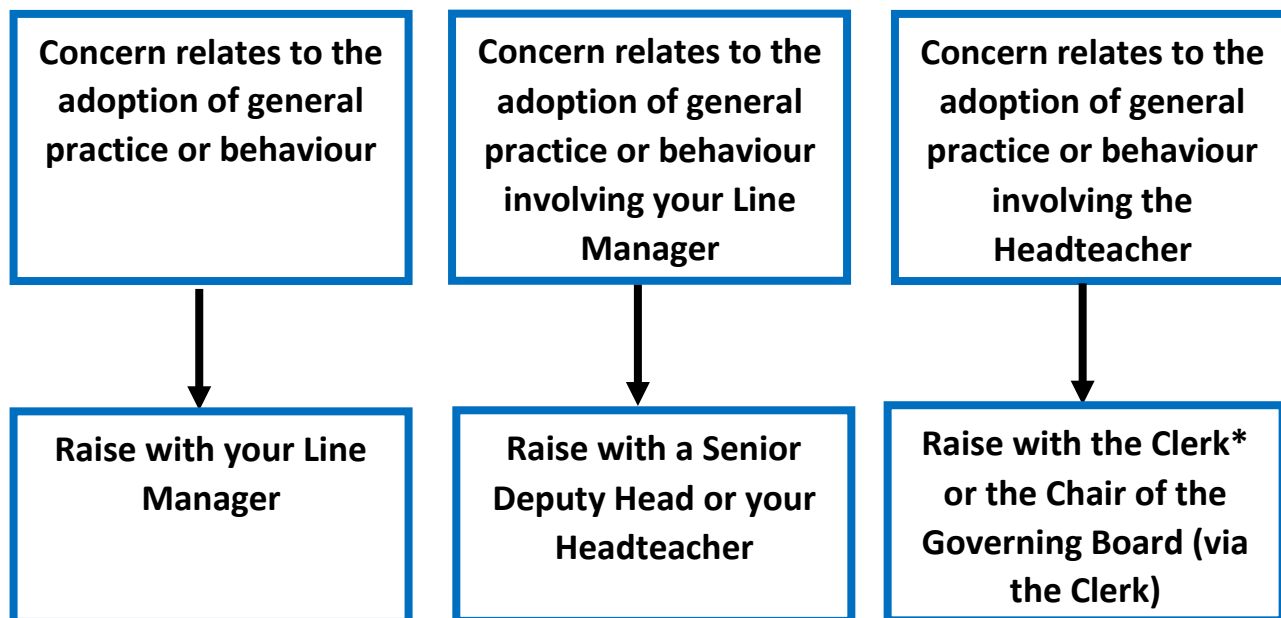
Further advice, support and contact details

It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your Headmaster or Senior Management Team.

Appendix 1

How to raise a concern

The chart below shows how staff may voice concerns, suspicions or uneasiness, as set out on page 3 of this document.



***Contact details**

Mrs M Davies
Clerk to the Governing Board
C/O Thomas Telford School
Old Park
Telford
TF3 4NW
Telephone: 01952 200000
Email mmdavies@ttsonline.net

Appendix 2

This form is provided to assist staff to document any concern

Your name:

Your department:

Details of your concern, including background and history, names, dates and places, where possible:

Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

Are you attaching any evidence to support your concern? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date: