



Whistleblowing Policy		Associated Policies
Last reviewed	January 2021	Safeguarding and Child Protection
Next review	January 2024	Staff Code of Conduct
Gov. sub-committee	Education	Staff Grievance Procedure
Owner	Headmaster	

1. About this policy

Richmond House School is committed to conducting our work with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent situations of malpractice or unethical conduct and to address them when they do occur.

The aims of this policy are to

- i. Encourage all Staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected
- ii. To provide Staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns
- iii. To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisal, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

For the purposes of this policy, Staff includes all employees, Governors, supply staff, casual workers, contractors and volunteers. This policy may be amended at any time and is not part of an employee's contract of employment.

2. Whistleblowing

2.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include

- i. financial fraud or mismanagement
 - ii. failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
 - iii. danger to health and safety
 - iv. concerns about safeguarding practices
 - v. criminal activity
 - vi. miscarriages of justice
 - vii. damage to the environment
 - viii. negligence
 - ix. serious breach of our internal policies and procedures
 - x. conduct likely to damage the School's reputation
 - xi. unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- a. A 'whistleblower' is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If a member of staff has any genuine concerns related to a suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the School's activities, then they should report it under this policy.

- b. Staff should follow the Whistleblowing policy if they have concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the school or potential failures by the school or staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils.
- c. Any allegations concerning a member of staff regarding safeguarding malpractice should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance, in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2.3 Staff should not use the Whistleblowing policy to raise grievances about their personal employment situation. They should follow the School's grievance procedures.

2.4 If a member of staff is uncertain about whether something is within the scope of this policy, they should seek advice from the Headteacher or Katherine Collins (Katherine.collins@rkga.co.uk) who is the School's HR independent advisor or the independent whistleblowing charity listed at the end of this policy.

3. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

3.1 In many cases, the School hopes that a member of staff will feel able to raise a concern with a member of the SLT. This can be done in person or in writing. The member of the SLT may be able to agree a way of resolving the concern quickly and effectively or may refer it onto the Headteacher or Katherine Collins.

3.2 Where the matter is more serious, or if staff feel the concern has not been addressed or if staff feel they do not want to raise it with the Headteacher, then they should contact Katherine Collins directly.

3.3 A meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher as soon as possible. The member of staff may bring a colleague or a trade union representative to any meetings under this policy. However, all must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

3.4 A written summary of the member of staff's concern will be taken and a copy will be provided after the meeting. An indication of a proposed method of dealing with the matter will also be given.

4. Confidentiality

4.1 The school hopes that all staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if a member of staff wishes to raise a concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep their identity secret. If it does become necessary for anyone to know the identity of the whistleblower, this will be discussed with them beforehand.

4.2 The School does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or even impossible if we cannot obtain further information. It can also make it more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Headteacher or Katherine Collins and then appropriate measure can be taken to preserve confidentiality.

4.3 If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work – the Independent whistleblowing charity (details at the end of the policy) who will offer a confidential helpline.

5. Investigation and outcome

5.1 Once a concern has been raised, an initial assessment will be carried out to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform the whistleblower of the outcome of the

assessment and they may be asked to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

5.2 In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience or specialist subject knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrong doing.

5.3 We will aim to keep the whistleblower informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving specific details of the investigations or any disciplinary action taken as a result. Any information received must be treated confidentially.

5.4 If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. If the Whistle blower is not satisfied

6.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with the concern fairly and appropriately and using this policy should help to achieve this.

If the whistle-blower is not happy with the way in which their concern has been handled, this can be raised with another contact set out at the end of this policy.

7. External Disclosures

7.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases, alerting someone externally should not be necessary.

7.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to report concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely be, if ever, appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage all staff to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The Whistleblowing Charity, Public Concern at work, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. (Details at end of this policy)

7.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a parent, pupil, service provider or supplier. In some circumstances, the law will protect the whistle-blower if they raise the matter with the third party directly. However, we encourage staff to report such concerns internally first.

8. Protection and support for Whistleblowers

8.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

8.2 Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing advisor immediately (Katherine Collins). If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it using the normal grievance procedures.

8.3 Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Any staff involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.


9. Contacts

Headmaster (Whistleblowing Officer)	Chris Bouckley cbouckley@rhschool.org 0113 2752670
Deputy Headteacher	Camilla Mullis cmullis@rhschool.org 0113 2752670
Katherine Collins (HR advisor)	Katherine.collins@rkga.co.uk
Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline (020) 7404 Email ; whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website www.pcaw.co.uk

A review of this policy, through the Governing Body and the SLT is undertaken within 3 years of the last review date.



Signed (Headmaster):



Signed (Chair of Governors):