



# The Duke of York's Royal Military School

## Whistleblowing Policy

**Date of Approval**

02 March 2024

**Approved By**

Alex Foreman

**Role**

Principal

**Signed**

<b>Last Reviewed</b>	March 2024
<b>Next Review</b>	March 2025



Ministry  
of Defence



**bsa** | BOARDING  
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## **Purpose**

The Duke of York's Royal Military School adheres to the local authority *Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures* that enable staff to raise concerns relating to:

- Crime.
- A miscarriage of justice.
- Illegality.
- Health and safety.
- Environmental or property damage.
- Unauthorized use of public funds.
- Concealing, or attempting to cover up, any of the above.

This policy provides additional information to help staff to understand the role of whistleblowing in the context of poor practice and unacceptable conduct, and attitudes towards children.

## **When to Use the Policy**

The *Whistleblowing Policy* may be used by anyone employed by the School in a paid or voluntary capacity, who believes they have reason to suspect that the conduct of an employee towards a student is inappropriate.

Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not confined to:

- Bullying or humiliation.
- Contravening health and safety guidelines.
- Serious breaches of the School's code of ethical practice.
- Professional practice that falls short of normally accepted standards.
- Compromising students' welfare in a way that does not meet the threshold for child protection intervention.

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern. If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the School will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

## **Reasons for Blowing the Whistle**

Staff will naturally be reticent to report a concern about the conduct of a colleague, however, individuals must take responsibility for ensuring that students are fairly treated. If poor practice is allowed to continue unchecked, it could escalate with serious consequences.

Your action not only protects students, but also deters any suggestion that you have colluded with poor practice that you knew was occurring but chose to ignore.

Whistleblowing can also support the member of staff who is the subject of the concern. Their conduct may result from inexperience or lack of training that can be addressed by the School, or they may be under stress and be relieved when their conduct is questioned.

Staff who deliberately fail students and show no remorse or desire to improve are unlikely to welcome being exposed, but their conduct must be confronted for the sake of the students and the reputation of the whole School.

## **Barriers to Whistle Blowing**

You might fear that you lack enough evidence to voice a concern, potentially triggering a series of uncontrollable events. Concerns may arise regarding potential career repercussions, facing harassment or victimisation, or discovering that your suspicion was unfounded.

These concerns are entirely understandable, but you can be reassured that whistleblowing procedures addresses these issues.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees from reprisals for public interest whistleblowing. Your union, a solicitor or the local authority legal services can provide you with information about your legal position.

## **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

All concerns are treated in confidence and, as far as possible, your identity will not be revealed if that is your wish. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if, as a result of an investigation, you are required to provide a witness statement or attend a court hearing.

You can raise your concern anonymously if you prefer. The School would need to decide whether the levity and credibility of the concern warrants investigation, if the source of the concern, and the key evidence, is not readily available.

The School will fully support you and do all it can to protect you from any harassment or adverse repercussions that may arise from whistleblowing. Allegations that prove to be deliberately fabricated and malicious will be dealt with through staff disciplinary procedures, however, no action will be taken against any member of staff who raises a genuine concern that proves to be unfounded.

## **Reporting Procedure**

It may help if you write down, for your own benefit, what you have observed or heard that is causing alarm. One useful way to decide whether your concern should be reported is to consider whether you would want the conduct of this member of staff to continue unchecked if your own child or another young family member was involved.

You may raise your concern verbally or in writing. You should report your concern directly to the Principal.

If the Principal is the subject of your concern, speak to the Chairman of Trustees (contact via the Clerk to Trustees).

A friend, colleague or union representative may accompany you to the meeting if you wish. Ensure that the Principal or Chairman of Trustees informs you of their proposed action and sets a date for a second meeting.

Timescales will depend on the complexity of the initial inquiry, but the case should not be allowed to stall, and you should receive initial feedback within 10 working days. The timescale for subsequent feedback should then be agreed.

Ask for clarification about confidentiality and ensure that you have your wishes recorded regarding the protection of your identity.

## **Process and Outcome**

- The Principal or Chairman of Trustees will make enquiries to establish the facts of the matter and whether poor practice or inappropriate conduct has occurred.
- Members of the School community, including Trustees, may be asked to provide information or advice.
- External advice, for example, from legal or human resources or children's services, may be sought.
- A written record of the conduct, established facts, and outcome of the inquiry will be kept.
- The whistleblower will be kept informed of the progress of the inquiry.

The outcome of the inquiry will be one of the following:

- No poor practice or wrongdoing is established, and the case is closed.
- The concern has some substance, and the subject of the concern will receive advice and support from the Principal to improve practice.
- Poor practice or wrongdoing is established, and disciplinary proceedings are initiated.
- The concern is more serious, and an investigation is initiated. This investigation may involve the local authority's legal team, children's social care, or the Police.

If, at any stage in the process, there is reason to believe that a child is at risk of significant harm, children's social care will be immediately involved.

### **Examinations and Assessments**

Whistleblowing at the Duke of York's Royal Military School is encouraged, not penalised, and staff are made aware that they have a duty to report any concerns they have about the conduct of examinations.

Full information about this can be found in the School *Examinations Policy*.

### **Further Action**

If you raise a concern and you are dissatisfied with the way it is managed, or the outcome, you may contact the governing body or local authority for advice. Alternatively, you can seek advice from your union or professional association, a solicitor, the Police, children's social care or Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work); a registered charity that offers free and confidential legal advice on workplace malpractice.

Protect  
The Green House  
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road  
London  
E2 9DA

Tel: 020 3117 2520

Contact Form:

[Contact our Advice Line - Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](https://www.protect-advice.org.uk)

Website: [www.protect-advice.org.uk](https://www.protect-advice.org.uk)

The link to the Government-approved prescribed people and bodies, to which a disclosure can be made is found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>