



READING BLUE COAT

Whistle Blowing Policy

Introduction

All staff, both Teaching and Support, who work in a school will naturally come into close and regular contact with pupils in their care. Where such close interaction exists, so does the opportunity for abuse to occur. Although rare, a sad reality is that teachers and staff have been found to be responsible for abuse of children. At the same time, this close contact makes staff vulnerable to false allegations of abuse that can have long term consequences for the work and health of the staff involved.

Staff guidelines exist to protect both pupils and staff alike. Where a situation arises and it is felt a pupil is at risk on safeguarding grounds, all staff have a duty of care to refer this for investigation and resolution. If we do not act on information, we may ourselves be subject to disciplinary action. This seeks to impress upon us the importance of our safeguarding roles. Any referral made in good faith can be done so without fear of repercussions. The following points seek to clarify the process to be followed, but it should also be noted that safeguarding concerns can be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL: Deputy Head, Pastoral), ISI, the police, Children's Services or the Chair of Governors.

Reporting Procedure :

1. If you believe that any breach of the School's rules or other malpractice may have taken place, or is likely to occur in the future. It is important to report your concerns to an appropriate representative of the School, so that the matter may be investigated and appropriate action taken. If you feel unable to report the matter to your Head of Department, you should speak to the Head or Bursar.
2. You can report your suspicions verbally or in writing and you should try to provide as much information as possible in support of your suspicions.
3. A meeting will be arranged with you to discuss your suspicions in detail. This is to enable the School to consider how best to proceed. A colleague of your choice may accompany you if you so wish.
4. If the matter requires further investigation, an investigation will be carried out and you will be informed of the outcome of the investigations and what, if any, action has been taken.
5. At all times during and after the investigation, your identity will be kept confidential, unless you agree otherwise in order to further any investigation. However, the School recognises that there may be matters that cannot be dealt with internally and external authorities will need to become involved. Where this is necessary the School reserves the right to make such a referral without your consent.
6. If you are unhappy about the speed or conduct of the investigation or the way in which the matter has been resolved, you should refer the matter to the Bursar or Head. When

they have investigated your complaint they will tell you the result of the investigation and what, if any, action has been taken.

Whistle blowing and safeguarding

If an episode of staff misconduct is of such nature that it is perceived as a safeguarding concern, staff are also referred to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern about a member of staff, this must be reported directly to the Head or, in his absence, the Chair of Governors. If there is a concern about the Head, this must be referred to the Chair of Governors. Full information and advice will be found in the policy.

Implementation of the policy

Staff have a duty of care to report known or suspected breaches of the School's rules or illegal practices and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken. Allegations made about a staff member that are investigated and found to have been made maliciously will constitute an act of gross misconduct and be dealt with in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedure. However, no concerns raised in good faith will result in any repercussions for the staff member.

Remember that in matters of safeguarding, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

For Pupils

Concerns may be raised by pupils too, again without fear of repercussion (unless found to be malicious upon investigation). The opportunities to share concerns are open to pupils too, but may also be raised through tutors, teachers or some other channel.

For both staff and pupils, a secure Whistleblowing e-mail is available – **whistleblowing@rbcs.org.uk** - which can be accessed by Dr Guy Williams, the Deputy Head, Pastoral.

Author:	Dr Guy J Williams
Date:	October 2020
Review Frequency:	Bi-annually
Next Review Date:	October 2022
Governor:	P Bertram
Date Agreed at Governors:	October 2020