

The Southover Partnership

Whistleblowing Policy

Last Reviewed	June 2020
Date adopted	April 2016
Next Review	June 2021 or in line with regulations

**Please refer to our Complaints Policy regarding matters of more general grievance*

Whistle Blowing

The Southover Partnership is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professional practice and we seek to run all aspects of business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity

In the event that members of staff, parents, Trustees, local authorities or the community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, the Trustees of The Southover Partnership have established the following Whistle Blowing Policy as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term “whistle blower” denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies published in May 1996.

The Southover Partnership is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. We recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and have therefore developed a system that allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the organisation’s environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the organisation.

The Southover Partnership is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved. The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance that would be dealt with under the organisation’s own Complaints and Complements Policy and Grievance Procedures.

When Might this Whistle Blowing Policy Apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which The Southover Partnership considers should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- Actions that breach the organisation's and statutory Safeguarding and Prevent Duties and procedures
- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of the organisation's assets or funds
- Decision-making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of the organisation's procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation or failure to register a personal interest)

What Action Should the 'Whistle Blower' Take?

The Southover Partnership encourages the 'whistle blower' to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those staff in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity. The Southover Partnership has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the 'whistle blower' is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

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Carol Frankl, Chair of Trustees
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288 Kingsbury Road
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The 'whistle blower' may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in writing to one of the individuals named above. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Alternatively, if the 'whistle blower' considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the organisation, the matter should be directed in the first instance to the relevant officers in your Local Authority (who place pupils with us), each of which have their own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the 'whistle blower'.

Also, for safeguarding based concerns:

WHISTLEBLOWING ADVICE LINE
for **PROFESSIONALS**
(Launched 13th February 2016)

FREE advice and support

NSPCC
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

Commissioned by the **Home Office** (post Rotherham)

Talk anonymously
If you are worried about how **child protection concerns** are being handled in your workplace

0800 028 0285

Or ofsted:

Ofsted's Whistleblowing Hotline

How to make contact :

Call :
0300 123 3155
(Monday to Friday 8.00.am. - 6.00.pm.)

Email on :
whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Write to :
WBHL Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square,
Manchester M2 7LA.

In addition, information and advice can be obtained from the charity, 'Public Concern at Work'. This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work. Their literature states that matters are handled in strict confidence and without obligation. Contact details for the charity are as follows:

Public Concern at Work, Suite 306,
16 Baldwins Gardens, London,
EC1N 7RJ
Telephone 020 7404 6609

How Will the Matter be Dealt With?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation, the Investigating Officer(s), will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, The relevant Local authority or the DFE.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The Investigating Officer(s), in conjunction with the Chair of Trustees, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third-party referral such as the police. The 'whistle blower' will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. The matter will be reported to the Trustees and, or the relevant Local authority depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated.

If you feel unable to follow, or are dissatisfied with the outcome of this procedure you may raise your concerns with the relevant Prescribed Person designated by the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999 or any statute or statutory instrument which subsequently supersedes this legislation.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible The Southover Partnership seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the 'whistle blower' and will as far as possible protect him or her from reprisals. The Southover Partnership will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the 'whistle blower' or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious, unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances, and/or referral to the police.

Conclusion

Existing good practice within The Southover Partnership in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the organisation operates ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur.

This Whistle Blowing Policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the

management structure of the organisation. This document acts as a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be fully investigated.

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The Southover Partnership is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 10539109 and a registered charity at the Charity Commission for England and Wales with registration number 1175243.