



## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

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### Introduction

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. It applies when the complainant has no vested interest but rather is an observer. It is not the same as making a complaint.

### Statement of Intent

Thomas's Academy is committed to open and honest communication between all members of the community. To that end we nurture a culture in which employees, parents and volunteers feel safe to raise, without fear of reprisal, a concern they may have about misconduct or malpractice. The well-being and safety of the children is our prime concern; it must take priority over any loyalty towards work colleagues.

All concerns raised in accordance with this Policy will be promptly investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

### Aims

- To assist staff to acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies, particularly where the welfare of children may be at risk
- To enable and encourage individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns.
- To support staff to take an active role in the elimination of poor or insufficient practices, malpractice or wrongdoing.
- To ensure any concerns raised are investigated appropriately and confidentially.
- To ensure protection to those making the complaint against any form of retaliation or victimisation.

This policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of our Complaints Policy, Grievance Procedure and Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.

## Procedures

Where staff are concerned about the behaviour of another staff member, they should raise this with the Head Teacher who will make the decision on further action. If the Head Teacher is not available, then the concern should be reported to the Deputy Head Teacher. If a concern is about the Head Teacher, this should be reported to the Governors. If staff are worried about how to raise a concern, they should seek independent advice through e.g. a union, early years advisor, professional body or call the Public Concern at Work advice line on 020 7404 6609.

Low level concerns and actions are stored in a secure file accessible to SLT only. Low level concerns relate to any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- Doesn't meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough for the school to refer to the local authority
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Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door

If a staff member wants to inform the leadership of an issue that may be misconstrued, they should complete a Neutral Notification form.

Staff should not:

- investigate the matter themselves
- tell anyone other than the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher or Governor, including the person they suspect to be involved
- accuse or approach individuals

If staff are not satisfied with the outcome they should take the concern to Ofsted. They can be contacted:

- through a dedicated whistleblowing hotline – 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 6.00pm)
- by email to the whistleblowing team – [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)
- by post – WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

NB If your concern is about an immediate or current risk to a child, you must follow the procedure laid out in our Safeguarding Policy.

## Confidentiality

If a concern is raised anonymously it is very difficult to investigate.

The Head Teacher and Governors will respect and protect a person's identity when a concern is raised. However in certain circumstances identities will have to be revealed to the person complained against and the complainant may be asked to provide written evidence in support of the complaint.

If a person's identity is to be disclosed, he or she will be informed before the disclosure and given reasons why this was necessary.

*Ref: The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998*

**See also:** Complaints Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct

<b>This Conduct Guide will be reviewed biannually</b>		
Reviewed in: June 2021	By	Miles Chester, Executive Head Thomas's Academy
Reviewed in: August 2023	By	Suzanne Kelly, Head Teacher Thomas's Academy