

# Durham School for Girls Doha

## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Version 4.0 | August 2023

FIRST IMPLEMENTATION DATE : AUGUST 2019

REVIEW PERIOD : ANNUAL

DATE LAST REVIEWED : SEPT 2023

RESPONSIBLE PERSON : PRINCIPAL

RATIFIED BY : SCHOOL GOVERNORS

### Values

قيمي ترسم هويتي

**MARK VALUES AND QATARI VALUES ARE AT THE HEART  
OF A DURHAM GIRL**

## WHISTLEBLOWING / PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

### 1. Policy aims

- 1.1. This policy is designed to ensure that employees can raise concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within the School without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal.
- 1.2. It is also intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the School rather than ignoring a problem or 'blowing the whistle' externally.
- 1.3. The policy aims to:
  - 1.3.1. Encourage staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns at the earliest opportunity and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
  - 1.3.2. Provide avenues for employees to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
  - 1.3.3. Ensure employees receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
  - 1.3.4. Reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made a disclosure in good faith.
- 1.4. The School commits in this policy does not discriminate, but staff must be aware of the moral reputation of the individuals and the school in the Qatari community and the law.

### 2. Policy statements

- 2.1. This policy is intended to enable those who become aware of wrongdoing in the School affecting some other person or service, to report their concerns at the earliest opportunity so that it can be properly investigated.
- 2.2. The Whistleblowing policy is not intended to replace other policies, for example the complaints and grievance policies.
- 2.3. Concerns may be raised under this policy by employees, employees of contractors, employees of suppliers, those providing services under a contract or other agreement or voluntary workers.
- 2.4. Any worker at the School is entitled, without fear of reprisal, to disclose any action which he/she reasonably considers to be:
  - Potentially or unlawful, or
  - Involves a miscarriage of justice, or
  - Compromises an individual's health and safety, or
  - Might cause environmental damage, or
  - Contravenes any legislation or School policy, or

- Might be considered improper, or
- Falls below the normal standards of conduct within the School, or
- Any concealment of such action.
- Cause for reputational damage of an individual or school (Online and face to face) Qatar has a deformation of character law. (criminal offence)

The Governing Body guarantees this right, so long as the individual has acted in good faith.

- 2.5. The School is committed to good practice and high standards and to being supportive to employees. The School recognises that the decision to raise a concern can be a difficult one to make. If the employee honestly and reasonably believes that what they are saying is true, then the employee should have nothing to fear because they will be doing their duty as an employee.
- 2.6. The School will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect the employee when they raise a concern in good faith and will treat any harassment or victimisation as a disciplinary matter.
- 2.7. All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the individual raising the concern if that is their wish. If disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation, it may not be possible to take action as a result of the disclosure without the support of the individual making the disclosure, so that individual may be asked to come forward as a witness. Where an individual is asked to come forward as a witness support will be provided to them.
- 2.8. Individuals raising concerns under this policy are encouraged to provide their name, and not make anonymous allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously may be considered at the discretion of the School. In exercising this discretion, the School will take account of the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.
- 2.9. The member of staff must:
  - Act in good faith when making such a disclosure; and
  - Must not commit a criminal offence in doing so; or
  - Disclose such confidential information to any person outside the School (except the Chair of Governors or their representative); and
  - Not expect any personal gain from making the disclosure.

Where an employee makes an allegation that is frivolous, malicious or for personal gain appropriate action will be taken, which may include disciplinary action.

- 2.10. Members of staff should consider whether the School's complaints or grievance policy should be followed in the first instance.

### **3. Procedure**

- 3.1. A concern may be raised in writing, or verbally.
- 3.2. The employee raising the concern should determine the most appropriate person to raise the concern with, this will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue and who is suspected of wrongdoing. Concerns may be raised with the individual's Line Manager, the Principal, one of the Heads of School, HR or the Chair of the Governing Body ( only if it is a cause regarding the Principal themselves).
- 3.3. Where the concern is about any action taken by the Governing body it should be raised with the Investors, or respectfully the Ministry if advised to do so.
- 3.4. The School will respond to concerns as quickly as possible. Where appropriate the matters raised may:
  - 3.4.1. Be investigated by management or through the disciplinary or grievance procedures.
  - 3.4.2. Be referred to the police
  - 3.4.3. Be referred to external auditors
  - 3.4.4. Be referred and put through established safeguarding procedures
- 3.5. Within 15 working days of a concern being raised the person investigating the concern will write to the person who raised the concern:
  - 3.5.1. to acknowledge that the concern has been raised,
  - 3.5.2. to indicate how the School proposes to deal with the matter, and
  - 3.5.3. to supply information on staff support mechanisms,
- 3.6. The amount of contact between the person dealing with the matter and the individual who raised the concern will depend on the nature of the matter raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. It is likely that a meeting will take place to ensure that the disclosure is fully understood. Any meeting arranged can be away from the normal workplace of the individual, and if the individual wishes they may be accompanied to the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague.

### **4. Responsibilities**

Responsibilities under this policy will be determined on a case by case basis, depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter.

### **5. Links to other policies and documents**

This policy is linked to all other documents : Staff Handbook, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding , Residence agreement.

**Policy last reviewed by VJ Whay – Sept 2023**