



# Whistle Blowing Policy

Revised: May 2020

Review: May 2021

This policy should be read in conjunction with the OxSFC COVID-19 policy that overrides the guidelines/procedures in this policy, where appropriate. The guiding principle will always be to maintain the health and safety of all stakeholders.

### **Our Commitment**

Oxford Sixth Form College is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect staff, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the College's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

The policy applies to all employees, (including those designated as casual hours, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers or work experience).

### **The Aims of the Policy**

- To encourage staff to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- To provide avenues for staff to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- To ensure that a staff member receives a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- To reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made a disclosure in good faith.

### **What Types of Concern are covered?**

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law.
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation.
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the students as well as other employees.
- Damage to the environment.
- Possible fraud and corruption.
- Sexual, physical or other abuse of students or staff.
- Other unethical conduct.
- Actions which are unprofessional, inappropriate or conflict with a general understanding of what is right and wrong.

N.B. Other procedures are available to employees e.g. the Grievance procedure which relates to complaints about employment.

### **Safeguards and Victimisation**

The College recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what is being said is true, staff should have nothing to fear. The College will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect a staff member when a concern is raised.

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the staff member if they so wish. At the appropriate time, however, the staff member may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages staff however to put their name to a concern whenever possible. Please note that:

Staff must disclose the information in good faith.

Staff must believe it to be substantially true.

Staff must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations.

Staff must **not** seek any personal gain.

### **How to Raise a Concern**

As a first step, a staff member should normally raise concerns with their immediate line manager or the Principal. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that the Principal is involved you should approach another member of the Senior Management Team or the HR Director (Robin Fry) of the Oxford International Education Group (OIEG).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Staff Handbook
- Dealing with allegations against a member of staff policy
- Child Protection Policy