



BREDON
SCHOOL

Whistleblowing Policy

Date: September 2021
Author: Senior Deputy Head
Review Cycle: Annually
Next Review Date: September 2022

Bredon School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education; the Proprietary Body also known as the Governing Body. Any reference to Governor's means any Director of Cavendish Education.

This Policy document is one of a series of Bredon Policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive, formal Statement of Bredon's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each and every one of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this Policy needs to be read alongside all of these Policies in order to get the full picture; in particular it should be read in conjunction with the ***Equality Policy, The Health and Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Policy.***

All of these Policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to evidence the work that the whole School is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values:

'To be a small, family school that genuinely focuses on the individual; ensuring each pupil reaches his or her personal potential and destination by way of a rich and diverse journey based on breadth of opportunity, support and continuously striving towards excellence.'

In all Bredon Policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" imports the meaning parent, guardian, carer or any person in whom is vested the legal duties and responsibilities of a child's primary caregiver.

Bredon employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure compliance is met and the best practice is implemented:

**Peninsula HR Online
Peninsula Business Safe (Health and Safety)
Atlantic Data (DBS)
Educare (online CPD)**



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1. Policy Aims

- 1.1 Bredon School (The School) is committed to operating with honesty and integrity and creating a culture of safety, and expects all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with our *Staff Code of Conduct Policy*. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time. As staff are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the school, it is important that they feel able to raise genuine concerns as soon as possible, rather than to overlook or conceal problems.
- 1.2 In summary this policy aims to:
- (a) encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
 - (b) provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns both internally or externally.
 - (c) reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 1.3 The policy applies to all Bredon School employees, permanent or temporary staff, agency staff, consultants, volunteers, contractors and governors undertaking School work. It is the responsibility of everyone to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy. The School provides training to all staff, including new staff as part of their induction, on this policy and how to raise concerns with the School's senior leadership team. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's *Safeguarding Policy* and *Staff Code of Conduct Policy*.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

- 2.1 Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to the School's activities. This includes suspected bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations (including safeguarding obligations and failures in the School's safeguarding regime).
- 2.2 A **whistleblower** is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If staff have any genuine concerns related to suspected



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wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (**a whistleblowing concern**) they should report it under this policy.

- 2.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to individuals' own personal circumstances, such as the way staff have been treated at work. In those cases staff should refer to the School Handbook, and in particular, the Grievance Procedure and Personal Harassment Policy, as appropriate.
- 2.4 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from a member of the SMT or Peninsula helpline.

3. How to Raise a Concern

- 3.1 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. You may tell them in person but it is better to put your concerns in writing as this will likely make the process easier to manage. Your line manager may be able to agree on a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively.
- 3.2 However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact the Headmaster or a Governor.
- 3.3 The School will then arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concerns. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.
- 3.4 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.
- 3.5 The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome of the investigation when the matter is completed unless this is not possible for legal reasons. Sometimes this can take a long time depending upon the nature of the allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated.
- 3.6 If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, vexatiously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.



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- 3.7 The school acknowledges that concerns may be raised against staff which do not meet a threshold for the involvement of an external agency, or necessitate notifying the Headmaster (as per section 6.7 of the *Safeguarding Policy*). Low Level Concerns (LLCs) are not insignificant, it is just that the aforementioned threshold has not been met. All LLCs are to be reported to the Deputy Head Pastoral, who will keep a secure record of them until a staff member's employment with the school has ceased. The reporting of LLCs is important to create a culture where all concerns are shared appropriately with the correct member of staff, and are recorded with a sensitive and proportionate response. Self-referral can also avoid misinterpretation, and allows staff to reflect on their practice. Staff are trained in this by the DSL.

Clarity around professional boundaries (clearly stated in the *Staff Code of Conduct*) and the obvious benefit to our pupils in minimising the risk of abuse are also at the forefront of our LLC approach.

Instances which may be defined a Low Level Concern could be, but are not limited to, the following:

- being over friendly with pupils
- having favourites
- contacting (even inadvertently) pupils on a personal device
- one-to-one contact with a pupil in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- inappropriate use of language

Accountability and good practice are at the forefront of Bredon School's approach to Low Level Concerns.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1 We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concerns confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

5. External Disclosures



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- 5.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 5.2 We recognise that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator or other external agency. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6. Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

- 6.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers that raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 6.2 Whistleblowers must not suffer detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the personnel department immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise your concerns formally using our Grievance Procedure.
- 6.3 Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 6.4 Public Concern at Work is an Independent whistleblowing charity which operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are: Helpline: (020) 7404 6609; E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk; Website: www.pcaw.co.uk.
- 6.5 The NSPCC operates a whistleblowing helpline [https://www.nspcc.org.uk/0800028 0285](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/08000280285).

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