

# **Bicester Technology Studio**

## **Whistle Blowing Policy**

### **Introduction**

There is a balance to be struck between the right of the individual Bicester Technology Studio (BTS) employee to speak freely on a range of matters and the right of the school or colleagues to protect themselves against false and malicious accusations.

A Whistle Blowing Policy is about the ways in which concerns about malpractice may properly be raised within the school and if necessary outside the school.

### **Aim**

All employees have the right to be able to raise a concern about working practices and other areas of concern and receive feedback on actions taken. The school will seek to engender an ethical and open culture in which establishes safe routes of communication without reprisal, impartial and effective investigative procedures which respect confidentiality. The key principles therefore are to:

- Provide avenues for employees to raise concerns internally as a matter of course and receive feedback on actions taken
- Ensure that matters are dealt with quickly and appropriately and ensure that concerns are taken seriously
- Re-assure employees that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle-blowing in good faith.
- Allow employees to take the matter further, if they are dissatisfied with the Board of Governor's response.

### **Operation**

Initially, an employee should normally raise concerns to their line manager or where their line manager is concerned, the Vice Principal. Any issues concerning the Vice Principal should be raised with the Principal. Any issues concerning the Principal should be raised with the Vice Principal who will then consult with the Chair of Board of Governors.

Ideally, concerns are better raised in writing. The employee should set out the background and history of the concerns, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reasons why s/he is particularly concerned about the situation. If an employee does not feel able to put the concern in writing, s/he should telephone or meet their line manager or Vice Principal. It is important, however that when the concern is raised, the employee makes it clear that s/he is raising the issue via the Whistle Blowing procedure.

Although an employee is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, s/he will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

An initial meeting will be held between their line manager, Vice Principal or Principal and the individual raising the concern to establish there is genuine and sufficient grounds for concern and that the concern is appropriately being raised by the Whistle Blowing Policy. A formal record will be kept of this meeting which the person raising the concern will be asked to sign. The line manager, Vice Principal or Principal should positively encourage the employee to do this as a concern expressed anonymously is much less powerful and more difficult to address.

After the initial meeting, the line manager or Vice Principal will consult with the Principal to determine if an investigation is appropriate and what form it should take. A record will be kept of this meeting and the agreed actions. In the case of any concerns regarding the Principal, the Vice Principal will consult the Chair of Board of Governors.

The line manager or Vice Principal will communicate with the employee during the investigative process and will write a response at the end of the process outlining the steps that have been taken and provide advice and guidance on further actions if the outcome is deemed inappropriate.

At all stages the identity of the individual raising the concern will be kept confidential as far as possible.

The line manager, Vice Principal or Principal will explain to the employee if that during the process it is uncovered that the allegations are in any way malicious or vexatious, then disciplinary action may be taken against them.

If the investigation finds the allegations to be unfounded the matter will be considered to be closed unless any new evidence is received.

These procedures are applicable for concerns raised and resolved within the school. If the employee wishes to raise the matter externally s/he should be informed of whom s/he may contact.

If you are not satisfied, and feel it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

- Public Concern at Work 0207 404 6609
- Audit Commission 020 7630 1019

- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- A solicitor
- The police.

If a matter is taken outside the school, you must take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential or privileged information is not disclosed. If in doubt, check with the contacts listed above.

Any allegations made against staff working with students should refer to appendix C of Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Board of Governors and Principal will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's Whistle Blowing Policy.

Policy Written: May 2016

Policy review date: 31 August 2016