



Falkner House Whistleblowing Policy

Available for parents to access on the school website and on request.

Nursery - Year 6 including EYFS

Aims

Falkner House is committed to promoting a culture of safety and of raising concerns. This code is intended to provide transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled. Staff will receive whistleblowing training as part of their induction.

‘Whistleblowing’ means the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to the school’s activities. The aim of this code is to encourage staff (which includes the Headteachers, the LLP members, teaching and support staff, including temporary staff, and all volunteers who do not fall under visitor procedures, hereafter ‘staff’) who have genuine concerns about any aspect of the school’s work, including poor, inappropriate or unsafe workplace practice, including unacceptable conduct and attitudes towards children, to raise those concerns promptly. Falkner House is committed to dealing with all genuine concerns raised appropriately, openly, responsibly and professionally.

Please also see the following Falkner House Policies:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection, Safeguarding and Welfare Policy and Procedure (the Safeguarding Policy)

When to use this policy

In general, whistleblowing concerns the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. Where the concerns relate to children’s welfare and safeguarding (see below), staff should also be aware of and follow the guidance set out in the Safeguarding Policy.

Reviewed and approved by the LLP on 19th March 2025

Date of next review - no later than 1st September 2025



This policy may be referred to by anyone employed by Falkner House in a paid or voluntary capacity who believes they have reason to suspect that one or more person(s) involved with the school might have committed:

- A crime or other unlawful act or miscarriage of justice;
- A discriminatory act or other substantive breach of the school's Equal Opportunities Policy (including Disabilities);
- A substantive breach of the Falkner House Health and Safety Policy;
- Damage to the environment or property;
- Unauthorised use of Falkner House funds or other fraud;
- Any other act constituting possible gross misconduct (see the Falkner House Staff Code of Conduct) or a breach of any other internal policies and procedures;
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- Conduct likely to damage the school's reputation, including when using social media;
- Inappropriate or harmful conduct towards a child (or children), including but not confined to:
 - Bullying, humiliation, or any other kind of abuse (See the Falkner House Behaviour (including Exclusion) and Anti-Bullying Policy);
 - Contravening health and safety guidelines in place to protect children;
 - Serious breaches of the school's Staff Code of Conduct;
 - Professional practice that falls short of normally accepted standards; or
 - Compromising pupils' welfare but in a way that does not meet the threshold for child protection intervention;
 - The deliberate or attempted concealing of any of the above.

The list above is intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive; there may be evidence of other kinds of behaviour not explicitly outlined above which justifies whistleblowing.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance procedure.

Confidentiality and anonymity

In terms of children's welfare and safeguarding, the principles of confidentiality are laid out in the Safeguarding Policy. Child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that any information released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

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In other whistleblowing cases all concerns will be treated in confidence. During the process of investigating the matter, every effort will be made to keep the identity of the employee raising the concern unknown, except to the minimum number of individuals practicable. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in all eventualities.

Although Falkner House would prefer that whistleblowers disclose their identity, staff may raise concerns anonymously or request that their identity is known only to the individual whom they have reported to. Such instances will still be investigated; however, it must be recognised that such a degree of anonymity could hinder the investigation and that in certain situations (such as court or criminal proceedings) anonymity cannot be maintained.

Safeguards

Falkner House recognises that the decision to report a concern is a difficult one to make. At all stages during any ensuing investigation, this will be considered. Falkner House aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects whistleblowers from detrimental treatment or dismissal as a result of raising a genuine concern. We will take whatever action is necessary to protect the employee who has raised a genuine concern. If a member of staff believes they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Headteacher immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally as per our grievance procedure.

There must not be any threats or recriminations against whistleblowers in any way. Any such behaviour, or any direct or indirect harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary procedures against those concerned.

However, if the school concludes that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting procedure and process for managing a claim

If the concern is in the realm of children's welfare and safeguarding, staff should follow the procedures laid out in the Safeguarding Policy.

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The Safeguarding Policy indicates that all allegations, complaints, concerns or suspicions against staff or volunteers at Falkner House, including any made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a Deputy DSL, should be reported directly to the Headteacher, or in their absence, to a member of the LLP, unless one of those people is the subject of the concern.

The Headteacher, or LLP member, as appropriate, (the 'case manager') will inform the LADO.

All allegations, complaints, concerns or suspicions about the Headteacher or LLP member should be reported to the LADO without the LLP being informed. The LADO may choose to appoint a 'case manager'.

Where the matter includes concerns about a child, the case manager will also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or, if the DSL is the subject of the allegation, the deputy DSL (in accordance with KCSIE).

If at any point there is a risk of immediate or serious harm to a child a referral should be made to Social Services immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

Timescales will depend on the complexity of the initial inquiry but feedback should be provided as soon as possible, and a meeting arranged to discuss the concern. Following on from this initial review of the concern, a decision will be made by the Headteacher as to whether the matter requires further investigation.

External disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases it should not be necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some instances it may be appropriate to report concerns to an external body such as a regulator. Staff are strongly encouraged to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external.

Protect operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are set out below.

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Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity): Helpline: 0203 117 2520

Name	Position	Contact Details
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Children's Social Care (CSC) Services	The LADO is responsible for coordinating the response on behalf of Kensington & Chelsea Local Authority to allegations of a safeguarding nature made against a member of School staff.	Phone: 020 7361 3013 Email: Aqualma.Daniel@rbkc.gov.uk
		Whistleblowing: 0800 055 7214 or E-mail: whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk Guidance is available online http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/how-to-complain/complain-about-a-charity/guidance-for-employees/ General inquiries can be made via: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission#org-contacts
NSPCC	The NSPCC whistleblowing advice line offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.	Tel: 0800 028 0285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
Secretary of State for Education	You can contact the Secretary of State for Education about	Ministerial and Public Communications Division

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	matters relating to any independent (or maintained) school in England	Department for Education Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD Tel: 0370 000 2288 Website: www.gov.uk/contact-dfe
The Health and Safety Executive	Contact them about: The industries and work activities for which the Health and Safety Executive is the enforcing authority under the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1998. The health and safety of individuals at work, or the health and safety of the public arising out of or in connection with the activities of persons at work.	Tel: 0300 790 6787 Online form: www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm
The Information Commissioner	Contact them about compliance with the requirement of legislation relating to data protection and to freedom of information.	The Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow SK9 5AF Tele: 0303 123 1113 Website: www.ico.org.uk
Further Advice	The government provides advice on whistleblowing at https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing Alternatively, advice may be available from unions or professional associations, a solicitor, the police, children's social care or Protect.	