



Confidential Reporting

1. Introduction

All employees at one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, health and safety risks to the public or to other employees, damage to the environment, possible fraud or corruption, sexual or physical abuse of students or any other unethical conduct, it can be difficult to know what to do.

Employees may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to themselves, perhaps feeling it's none of their business or that it's only a suspicion. Employees may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, managers or the school. Employees may decide to say something, but find that they have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next. They may also fear that they could be harassed or victimised.

Uxbridge High School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. It expects that its employees who have serious concerns about anything that is happening in the school to come forward and raise those concerns. The school, however, recognises that employees need to be supported and have confidence that any concerns will be treated appropriately. The purpose of this policy, which is based on the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, is to enable employees to raise their concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. The school would rather that they raised the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof.

This policy is intended to apply not only to staff, but also to trustees of the school.

This policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the organisation itself are at risk. If employees have a concern about their employment with the school this should be raised through the school's Grievance Procedure. The school also has policies to cover the situation where an employee is the victim of bullying or harassment.

If in doubt - raise it!

2. Purpose of the policy

The policy aims to encourage staff and trustees to feel confident in raising serious concerns by providing clear avenues through which those concerns can be raised and reassuring staff who raise concerns that they will not be victimised if they have a reasonable belief and the disclosure was made in good faith.

The policy will ensure that staff and trustees who raise concerns receive a response and are informed about how their concerns are being dealt with.

3. Safeguards

The school is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees. The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If an employee raises a genuine concern under this policy, they should have nothing to fear because they will be doing their duty to Uxbridge High School and those for whom the school are providing a service.



The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect employees when they raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence, or be influenced by, any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect employees.

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

Employees should, whenever possible, put their name to their allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. The school will exercise discretion in considering anonymous allegations if the issue raised is sufficiently serious - e.g. involving individual or public safety or corruption, waste or other impropriety - and credible and there is a likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.

If employees make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, employees make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

4. How to raise a concern

It is normally expected that concerns will be raised in the first instance with the employee's immediate line manager or their curriculum leader. However, if the matter is of an extremely sensitive or serious nature, or they believe management to be involved, they should approach the principal. If employees have concerns regarding the principal, they should contact the chair of the board of trustees (via the clerk to the board of trustees). If employees have concerns regarding the chair of the board of trustees, they should contact the principal who would then take appropriate advice. Advice/guidance will be given to employees on how to pursue matters of concern.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. If employees wish to make a written report it is suggested that they include the background and history of the concern with relevant dates and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

You will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

You may be accompanied at any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised by your trade union or a work colleague.

5. How the school will respond

Once you have raised your concern, it will be looked into to assess, initially, what action should be taken.

As appropriate, matters raised may:

- be investigated by the leadership team or the trustees.
- be referred to the police.
- be referred to the school's external auditor.
- form the subject of an independent investigation.



In deciding how to deal with the concern raised, the overriding principle which the school will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures e.g. child protection, will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the person with whom the employee has raised the concern will write to them, acknowledging that the concern has been received and indicating how the school proposes to deal with the matter. If there is an ongoing investigation the person responsible for that investigation will provide the employee with updates on how the matter is progressing and inform them of the outcome of the investigation, subject to any legal constraints.

The school will take steps to minimise any difficulties an employee may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if they are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the school will arrange for the employee to receive advice about the procedure and any support and counselling they may require.

6. The responsible officer

The clerk to the board of trustees has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. The clerk to the board of trustees maintains a record of concerns raised, and the outcomes, in a form which does not endanger employees' confidentiality, and will report as necessary to the school.

7. External contacts

While the school hopes this policy gives employees the reassurance they need to raise such matters internally, it recognises that there may be circumstances where they can properly report matters to outside bodies, such as the schools' external auditor or the police. Employees' union or Citizens Advice Bureau will be able to advise them on such an option and on the circumstances in which they may be able to contact an outside body safely.