

Montessori Home School Hub Ltd

Whistle-Blowing Policy

Approved by:

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, knowing their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality respected.
- Staff know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the setting.
- Set clear procedures for how the setting will respond to such concerns.
- Inform staff of the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern.
- Ensure staff receive a response to their concerns and know how to pursue them if unsatisfied.
- Assure staff they will not be victimised for raising legitimate concerns through the steps outlined in the policy, even if mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be treated as a disciplinary issue).

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. It applies to all employees or other workers providing services to the setting, including self-employed consultants or contractors.

2. Legislation

This policy aligns with [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). It also takes into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) and the DfE's *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*.

3. Definition of Whistle-Blowing

Whistle-blowing involves reporting wrongdoing that is "in the public interest." Examples include:

- A criminal offence (e.g., fraud or corruption) is committed, likely to be committed, or is being committed.
- Health and safety of any individual is endangered.
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement.
- Breaches of financial management procedures.
- Attempts to cover up any of the above.
- Environmental damage.

A whistle-blower is someone who raises a genuine concern. Whistle-blowers are not mischief-makers or troublemakers. Personal staff grievances, such as bullying or harassment, are typically not considered whistle-blowing concerns.

Public interest means acting beyond personal interest, serving a broader group. Considerations include:

- The number of people affected by the disclosure.
- The extent and nature of the wrongdoing.
- The identity of the alleged wrongdoer.

Further guidance is available from [Protect](#) and their [advice line](#).

4. Our Assurances to Whistle-Blowers

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), employees who “blow the whistle” are protected if the disclosure is substantially true, made in good faith, and serves the public interest. The setting:

- Will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of whistle-blowers and will take appropriate action to protect staff who raise concerns in good faith.
- Will handle all disclosures confidentially.
- Encourages individuals to raise concerns confidentially and will discuss with them if their identity needs to be disclosed.

5. Procedure for Staff to Raise a Whistle-Blowing Concern

5.1 When to Raise a Concern

Consider examples in Section 3 to determine if your concern is whistle-blowing. Evaluate whether the incident(s) were illegal, endangered people, or breached statutory procedures.

5.2 Who to Report To

- If the concern raised is about Ben – report to Philippa and vice versa.

5.3 How to Raise the Concern

Concerns should be submitted in writing, detailing names, dates, locations, evidence, and any relevant context. Oral concerns will be handled at Ben and Philippa’s discretion.

For external advice, contact:

- [Protect](#) at 020 3117 2520.
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): LADOenquiries@brighton-hove.go.uk.

6. Setting Procedure for Responding to a Whistle-Blowing Concern

6.1 Investigating the Concern

When a concern is received, the recipient will:

- Meet with the whistle-blower within a reasonable time to gather details.
- Reiterate their protection under PIDA (The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998).

- Investigate the concern and determine next steps, such as involving an external body, or the police.
- Inform the whistle-blower of the outcome where appropriate.

6.2 Outcome of the Investigation

A report will be prepared detailing findings, recommendations, and any referrals to external

7. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

- Allegations made in good faith will not result in disciplinary action, even if mistaken.
- Malicious or deliberately invented allegations may result in disciplinary action.

8. Escalating Concerns Beyond the Setting

Staff may escalate concerns to external bodies if they feel internal reporting is inappropriate. A list of prescribed bodies is available [here](#).

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links with:

- Staff grievance policy
- Complaints procedure
- Child protection and safeguarding policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by Ben and Philippa.