

Whistleblower Protection Policy

1. Introduction

Child Side School is committed to providing and ensuring a respectful and safe environment that is safe, positive and supportive for all people in the school. Child Side School expects all school community members including staff, volunteers, children (students), parents, caregivers, visitors and contractors to share this commitment. Each group within the community has their own specific code of conduct and it is expected that when we are employed or enrol at the school or playgroup the 'code of conduct' will be adhered to by all. The code applies to all activities and events that are school-related and when representing or acting on behalf of the school. The code also requires that our (children's, staff's, parent's, care-givers, governing council member's, visitor's, contractor's) actions do not bring the school into disrepute at any time regardless of whether the action occurs within or outside of school activities. Breaches of the Code of Conduct and or any unacceptable behaviour (reportable conduct) is taken seriously and dealt with as a matter of priority.

2. Scope and application

A 'Whistleblower' is a person who exposes activities of an organisation/individual that are illegal or immoral. In this policy, a whistleblower is a person who sees or is suspicious of the activities of a community member (staff, children Governing Council Members, parents or caregivers, volunteers, visitors, contractors) and reports that observation or suspicion to a person who has the authority to investigate the activity. The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure to provide whistleblowers with protection, allowing children, parents, staff and others to come forward confidentially and anonymously, to the extent possible under existing laws, and ensuring that they are not victimized or subjected to any form of detrimental action.

This policy will be reviewed and amended in accordance with Child Side School Policy on Policies and Policy Guidelines and Procedures Contents Schedule.

The use of the word child/children in this policy refers to students in the context of the school environment.

3. Related legislation, policies and guidelines, documents

- SW Learning Community Association Inc Constitution
- Privacy Act
- Privacy Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Child Code of Conduct

- Governing Council Member Code of Conduct
- Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission Governance Standards
- Communication Procedure
- Grievance Policy
- Guiding Children's Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Child Side Curriculum Map
- Governing Council Charter and Resource file

4. Policy Statement

The school expects staff, parents and children to behave in a manner that is consistent with our commitment to being safe, kind and creative through our words and our actions.

The school expects that everyone within the school community will practice courtesy, respect and thoughtfulness in their behaviour towards themselves, others and their environment and, in particular, they will be encouraged and supported to be proactive in questioning behaviour that does not meet the school's expectations.

Within this context, a person who sees or is suspicious of the activities of a community member (staff, Governing Council Members, parents or caregivers, volunteers, visitors, contractors) should report that observation or suspicion to a person who has the authority to investigate the activity.

Reportable conduct

A child, parent or caregiver, staff member or other person involved with the School should report the following conduct:

- Dishonesty;
- Unethical conduct;
- Serious improper conduct;
- Unsafe work practices;
- Child abuse;
- Illegal acts including theft, drug sale or use, violence or threatened violence and criminal damage against property;
- Breaches of relevant laws, regulations, by-laws;
- Any other conduct which may cause loss to the School or be otherwise detrimental to the School.

Abuse of the reporting process

All reports made under the confidential reporting process must be made in good faith. Abuse of the confidential reporting process will not be tolerated and will be treated as a serious breach of the School's Code of Conduct.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Whistleblower Protection Policy Practice and Procedures
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Version Management

VERSION	DATE REVIEWED	DATE RATIFIED	CHANGES MADE	AUTHOR OF CHANGES	FUTURE REVIEW DATE
1	31 July 2019	31/07/2019	Policy formulated	JM	July 2020
2	28 May 2020	24/06/2020	GC changes – included 'individuals' as well as organisations in scope and application	LF	May 2021
3	22 June 2021	11/08/2021	No changes made	LF	June 2022
4	June 2022	09/11/2022	Added considerations for individuals who are responsible for carrying out the process in 'Practices and Procedures'	JM	June 2023

Whistleblower Protection Policy Practice and Procedures

Whistleblower Protections

1. The School is committed to ensuring the individual/s managing all whistleblower reports are appropriately qualified for this role and readily accessible.
2. All reports will be kept confidential and secure.
3. All persons making a report are assured that in making a report they will not be personally disadvantaged by dismissal, demotion, any form of harassment, discrimination or current or future bias.
4. The person making the report will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation as far is allowed by the law.
5. Any person who, having made a report, believes that they have been personally disadvantaged has an automatic right of appeal using the Schools established grievance process and whose decision will be complied with.
6. Best practices will be followed by the investigating officer/s that will be fair and independent of the person who made the report and the person who is the subject of the reportable conduct.
7. The identity or any information that could lead to the identity of the person who has made a report will not be disclosed to any person who is not involved in the investigation/resolution of the matter.

Reporting procedure

A student, parent or caregiver, staff member or other person of the School who wishes to make a report in connection with reportable conduct should do so in writing and contact either:

The School Principal marked 'Private and Confidential' to childsideschool@bigpond.com or in writing marked 'Private and Confidential' and sent *Attention Principal, PO. Box 112, Boyanup WA 6237*.

The Chair of the Governing Council marked 'Private and Confidential' to childsideschool@bigpond.com or in writing and sent marked 'Private and Confidential' sent to *Attention Chair of the Governing Council, PO. Box 112, Boyanup WA 6237*.

It should be noted that no report in connection with reportable conduct will be considered unless it is lodged in writing to the appropriate individuals.

Investigation procedures

Any reports received of reportable conduct will be subject to thorough investigation by the School Principal and or the Governing Council Chair. If it is deemed by either the Principal or the Governing Council Chair that there may be a conflict of interest in their representation that cannot be suitably managed, then they will appoint an appropriate replacement to manage the investigation. This replacement may be sought external to the school.

The investigation will include the following steps:

1. Full details of the allegation/s will be obtained in writing
2. The person against whom the allegation/s are made will be informed
3. Involvement of external parties considered appropriate by the Principal or Governing Council Chair may be initiated (such as AISWA* representatives, other Governing Council Members, the WA Police, TRBWA (Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia), other Government Departments)
4. The allegation/s will be fully investigated
5. The Principal and or the Governing Council Chair will decide on the action to be taken
6. The person making the report will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation
7. The Principal and or the Governing Council Chair will maintain all documentation associated with this process and will ensure that it is held in a secure place for a period of seven years
8. The Principal and or the Governing Council Chair will manage all information including the reporting of any matter associated with the outcomes of the investigations. They may seek to engage external agencies to assist with this process

Where the Principal and or the Governing Council Chair decide that the allegations are of a very serious nature, external investigators will be engaged.

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, it will be encouraged that the investigator/s seek support to debrief and or reflect for the benefit of the process as well as the well-being of the investigator.

Monitoring and Training

The School will monitor and review this policy regularly to assess its effectiveness in

- encouraging the reporting of reportable conduct
- the protection of persons making the reports
- the protection of persons investigating the reports
- the investigation of reports received.

Education and training about the procedures involved under this **Whistleblower Protection Policy** will be provided to those involved in managing or investigating disclosures. It is acknowledged that in some instances, the process of investigation can be very demanding. Investigators reserve the right and will be supported to seek support upon the conclusion of an investigation. Any costs directly associated with the provision of this support will be responsibility of the school.

The Governing Council will keep informed about current mandatory reporting legislation and also the requirements of the standards for the registration of non-government schools, as these requirements must be complied with under particular circumstances.

The School's community will continue to be educated in relation to the Code of Conduct Policy and associated Codes, and kept informed in relation to the Whistleblower Protection Policy and the protections and procedures contained therein.

***AISWA** Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia