



# Arbour House School

## Whistleblowing Policy & Procedures

Policy number	34
First issue date	March 2025
Version number and previous validation date	<i>Version 1 (Adapted from the Potens' Whistleblowing Policy V.5 April 2024 to be school/education specific)</i>
Next review date	March 2026
Policy Owner	Charlie Smith
Signed off by	The Governing Body
Distributed to	All staff, including the Governing Body, the Board of Proprietors, or anyone working on behalf of the Proprietors (Potens) at Arbour House School.

## **1.0 Policy Statement**

- 1.1 Arbour House School's policy on 'whistleblowing' sets out to comply with the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 in the protection and non-victimisation of staff who report genuine and reasonable concerns about any form of malpractice that they encounter in their work.

## **2.0 Aims**

- 2.1 Arbour House seeks to create an atmosphere of open communication and commitment to high standards of work, within which criticisms can be frankly made and thoroughly investigated.
- 2.2 Arbour House encourages staff to raise their concerns through internal whistleblowing arrangements to help safeguard the interests of the children we support. The term 'whistleblowing' is used to describe the actions of employees who draw attention to bad practice where they work.

## **3.0 Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998**

- 3.1 The act provides employment protection for people who raise concerns about malpractice in their workplace. This means it protects employees who 'whistleblowing' from dismissal or detrimental treatment by their employer.
- 3.2 Arbour House School understands a 'detriment' to include such things as denial of promotion, denial of facilities or training opportunities which would otherwise have been offered, dismissal or inappropriate selection for redundancy.
- 3.3 PIDA only applies to employed staff and employed contractors. It does not apply to volunteers.
- 3.4 To qualify for the protection provided by PIDA, employees must raise **genuine** concerns i.e. act in good faith and reasonably believe their information to be true. Employment protection under PIDA is not available for staff who make malicious, fictitious reports.
- 3.5 Raising an untrue allegation maliciously is a disciplinary offence.

## **4.0 Staff Obligations**

- 4.1 Whistleblowing is included in the induction training for all new staff. Staff are expected to read and familiarise themselves with this whistle blowing policy and ensure that they understand their responsibilities within it.
- 4.2 Arbour House School requires all of its employees to observe their working environment carefully and report diligently on anything that causes them concern.

- 4.3 Arbour House School believes that teamwork and loyalty to colleagues should not deter staff from reporting suspected abuse, criminal acts, neglect of pupils or bad practice that is against the appropriate 'Staff Code of Conduct', when they observe it.
- 4.4 Any member of staff who attempts to prevent a staff member from reporting their concerns to their manager/the Headteacher, or who bullies, attempts to intimidate or discriminates against a colleague in these circumstances will be dealt with under disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.5 A whistleblower who feels themselves to be subject to hostile action from colleagues should inform their manager/the Headteacher, who should take appropriate action including, if necessary, alter the staff member's duties so as to protect them from the hostile action.

## **5.0 Disclosure**

- 5.1 If a whistle blowing disclosure raises concerns about the safety of pupils, staff must always act in accordance with the local multi-agency safeguarding policies.

- 5.2 The types of disclosure that this policy intends to cover include:

- Professional incompetence
- Endangering the health and safety of any individual
- Abuse: physical, sexual, psychological, financial, institutional, racial, discriminatory, neglect
- Failure to carry out duties required within the staff role
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A criminal offence
- Financial malpractice, including fraud, theft, corruption and deliberate damage to property
- A miscarriage of justice
- The company is breaking the law, for example does not have the right insurance
- Or the cover up of any of the above

Personal grievances (for example bullying, harassment, discrimination) are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest.

Report these under the [Grievance Policy](#).

- 5.3 Employees with genuine concerns of malpractice should normally first raise the issue with their immediate line manager. In cases where staff do not feel that they can tell their immediate line manager, for whatever reason, they should raise this matter with their Head of Lower or Upper School, verbally or in writing. Staff must state whether they prefer their concern(s) to be dealt with confidentially.

- 5.4 Staff may be worried that by reporting such issues, they will open themselves up to the risk of bullying, intimidation or discrimination. POTENS aims to create an atmosphere where all staff feel able to report bad practice; therefore **victimising people who raise genuine concerns is a disciplinary offence.**
- 5.5 Arbour House encourages staff to raise concerns openly, or in confidence if they wish. Anonymous concerns will be considered at the discretion of senior management. Staff should be aware that it is often difficult to investigate anonymous concerns thoroughly.
- 5.6 The Headteacher must always be kept aware of any whistleblowing concerns that are being addressed at a school level.

### **Related Documents**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Grievance Policy and Procedures
- Complaints Policy & Procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct

### **Whistleblowing Procedure**

This procedure must be followed where concerns under PIDA are raised by staff to managers or to the Headteacher.

Managers who demonstrate good whistleblowing practice encourage and do not suppress or ignore reports, act promptly to investigate and rectify instances of bad practice, and act to safeguard the interests of pupils.

### **Initial Assessment**

An initial assessment will be carried out to establish whether the concerns:

- Fall within the scope of PIDA
- Require urgent action being taken before any investigation is conducted e.g. concerns of abuse must be reported to the Local Authority and the relevant Regulatory Body
- Require a thorough investigation

### **Suspected Abuse**

Where abuse is suspected the Headteacher must:

- Safeguard evidence relating to the abuse and alert the appropriate authorities in accordance with wider safeguarding policies.
- Share confidential information in a proper way with appropriate authorities so that safeguarding action can be taken.

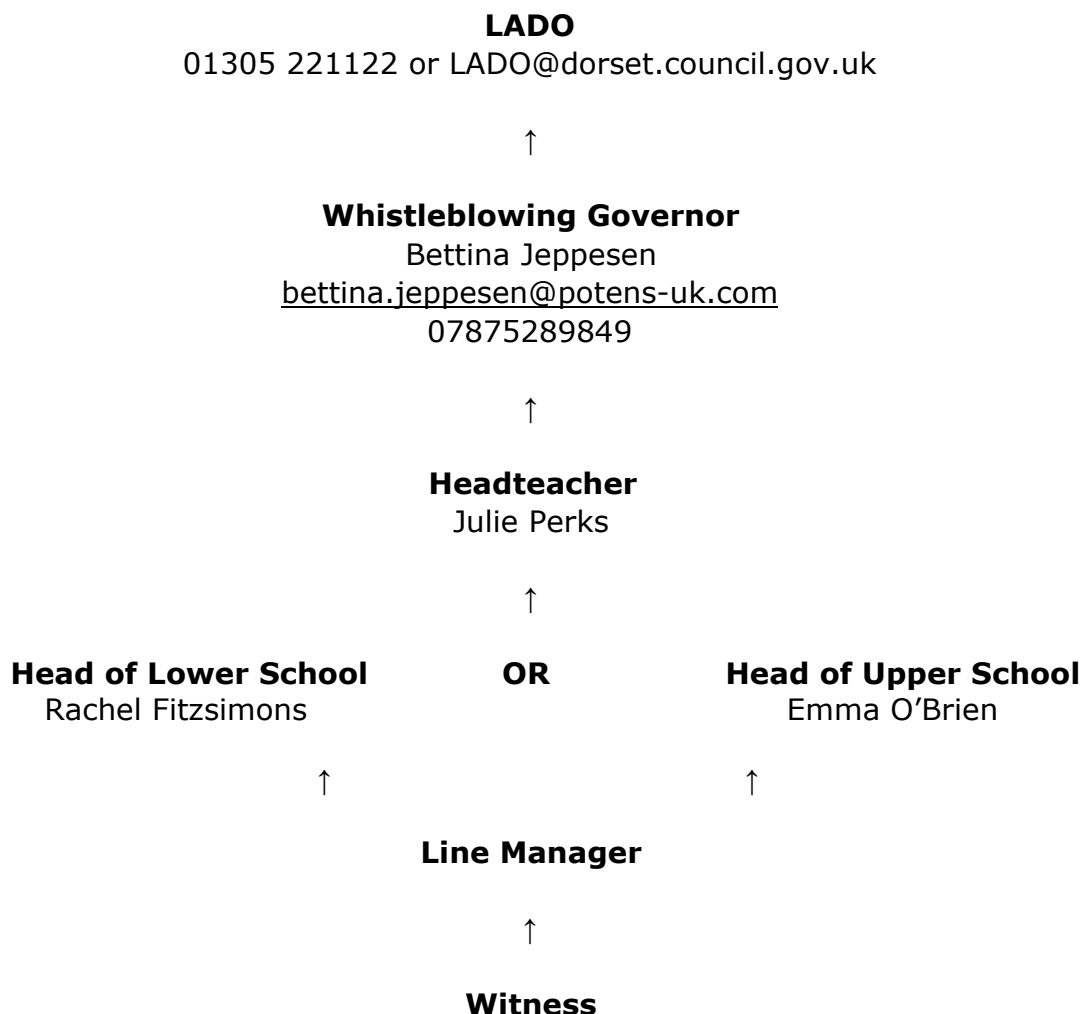
- Treat information about individuals, who it appears may have been affected by abuse, with the utmost sensitivity; and handled strictly in accordance with confidentiality policies.
- Take immediate steps to prevent any further abuse

## 6.0 Whistleblowers

All whistleblowers must be:

- Offered support and protected from bullying, intimidation or discrimination.
- Given feedback, wherever possible within ten working days to reassure them of the action being taken to address and resolve their concerns raised, with an estimated time until the final response.
- Advised regarding the need for any further investigations.
- Informed of the final outcome, unless due to legal constraints, or where it would infringe a duty of confidence or confidentiality, POTENS or the Headteacher are prevented from doing so.

### WHISTLE BLOWING REPORTING FLOWCHART



Where staff or volunteers feel it is inappropriate to report to any of the noted levels, please go to the next level up.

If staff or volunteers feel unable to raise an issue with the school or with the Chair of Governors, or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may report their concerns through other whistleblowing channels, such as:

Protect, an independent whistleblowing charity, previously known as Public Concern at Work (helpline: 020 3117 2502, email: [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk), website: [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)).

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline 0800 028 0285 or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

**LADO** - 01305 221122 or [LADO@dorset.council.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@dorset.council.gov.uk)

### Policy Review Record

POLICY NAME	Whistleblowing Policy	
COMPILED BY	Charlie Smith	
DATE	March 2027 - Adapted from the Potens' Whistleblowing Policy (v.5. April 2024) to be education/school specific, removing references to the NHS and Health & Social Care.	
REVIEW DUE DATE	REVIEWED:	
	DATE:	BY NAME & CHANGES MADE:
March 2027		

