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**THE LOXFORD SCHOOL TRUST**  
**WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

## **Introduction**

The staff and Board of Directors of The Loxford School Trust seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, The Loxford School Trust has established the following whistleblowing policy, or code of practice, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term *whistleblower* denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the *Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies* published in May 1996.

The Loxford School Trust is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. The Loxford School Trust recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

The Loxford School Trust is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance which would be dealt with under the Loxford School Trust grievance procedures.

### When might the whistleblowing policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which The Loxford School Trust considers should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- manipulation of accounting records and finances
- inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- decision-making for personal gain
- any criminal activity
- abuse of position
- fraud and deceit
- serious breaches of school procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register a personal interest)
- [other]

### What action should the *whistleblower* take?

The Loxford School Trust encourages the *whistleblower* to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity.

The Loxford School Trust has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

#### **Name & Position**

#### **Contact details**

##### Loxford School

Headteacher  
Chair of Governors

In school or 020 8514 4666  
01245 477757  
21 Newport Cl, Gt Baddow,  
Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 7BA  
[peter.ballard@loxfordschooltrust.net](mailto:peter.ballard@loxfordschooltrust.net)

##### Abbs Cross Academy & Arts College

Headteacher  
Chair of Governors

In school or 01708 440 304  
020 8478 3560  
7 Park Road, Ilford  
Essex, IG1 1SB  
[david.low@loxfordschooltrust.net](mailto:david.low@loxfordschooltrust.net)

##### Aldborough

Headteacher  
Chair of Governors

In school or 020 8166 8348  
020 8478 3560  
7 Park Road, Ilford  
Essex, IG1 1SB  
[david.low@loxfordschooltrust.net](mailto:david.low@loxfordschooltrust.net)

Gaynes School

Headteacher  
Chair of Governors

In school or 01708 502 900  
020 8478 3560  
7 Park Road, Ilford  
Essex, IG1 1SB  
[david.low@loxfordschooltrust.net](mailto:david.low@loxfordschooltrust.net)

Tabor

Headteacher  
Chair of Governors

In school or 01376 323701  
01245 477757  
21 Newport Cl, Gt Baddow,  
Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 7BA  
[peter.ballard@loxfordschooltrust.net](mailto:peter.ballard@loxfordschooltrust.net)

The Warren

Headteacher  
Chair of Governors

In school or 020 8270 4500  
0208 270 8975  
12 Sylvan Avenue  
Romford, Essex, RM6 6BE  
[testingpaul@hotmail.com](mailto:testingpaul@hotmail.com)

The *whistleblower* may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Alternatively if the *whistleblower* considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to:

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The Loxford School Trust would prefer that a serious concern is raised responsibly rather than not at all. Despite the assurances, the whistleblower may feel that it is more appropriate to raise the concern with an external organisation, such as a regulator. It is, of course, open for them to do so provided they have sufficient evidence to support the concern. The Loxford School Trust strongly advises that before reporting the concern externally, the whistleblower seeks advice from one of the following:

- Public Concern at Work, a registered charity which advises on serious malpractice within the work place, can be contacted on 020 7601 6803/6873.
- The Audit Commission, “prescribed persons” under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, have set up an Anti-fraud and Corruption Unit which can be contacted on: 020 7601 6803/6873.

**How will the matter be progressed?**

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer(s)) will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police and the LA.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the Board of Directors and the Governing Board, will consider how best to report the findings

and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police.

The *whistleblower* will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the Board of Directors, the Governing ~~Body~~ Board and the LA.

The LA has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the *whistleblower*. If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation, The Loxford School Trust would prefer that the whistleblower raised this with them or the LA, explaining why this is the case. The concern will be looked at again if there is good reason to do so.

If the *whistleblower* is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officer(s), the Board of Directors, the Governing Board and/or directed to the LA.

### **Respecting confidentiality**

Wherever possible The Loxford School Trust seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the *whistleblower* and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. The Loxford School Trust will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the *whistleblower* or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances. The Public Interest Disclosure Act became law in 1999 and gives a “worker” the right not to be victimised or dismissed because he or she has made a protected disclosure.

### **Raising unfounded malicious concerns**

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

### **Conclusion**

Existing good practice within The Loxford School Trust in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.