TORPOINT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

INSPIRING OPTIMISTIC LEARNERS

Whistleblowing Policy

Approved/Reviewed: April 2026	**Next review due:** April 2027
Governing Body Committee: HRFF	**CLT contact:** Ian Smart **Governor Contact:**
Policy adopted by the FGB Governing Body on: November 2026	

Policy – Amendment Record Sheet

Amendment Number	Section Amended	Amended By	Reason for Amendment	Date
01	Policy review dates amended	Ian Smart		21/10/21
02	Section- How to raise a concern amended	Ian Smart	Information removed was not needed	21/10/21
03	Section- Raising a concern about children	Ian Smart	Information removed was not needed	21/10/21
04	Section- Links with other policies	Ian Smart	Information removed was not needed	21/10/21
05	Policy review dates amended	Ian Smart		25/07/22
06	Governor Contact	A Peach		23/09/22
07	Various	Ian Smart	Whistleblowing Governor details updated	24/07/23
08	How to raise a concern	Jeremy Plumb	Whistleblowing Governor email added to policy for ease of contact	12/12/2024
09	All	Ian Smart	Updated font and layout	18/07/2025
10	Page 5 Inclusion of sexual harassment/bullying	Jo Jones	Updated Employment Rights Act 2025	24/03/2026
11	Removal - Chair of governor name	Donna Douglas	Amendment to email re contact for chair of governors	02/11/2026
12				
13				

Whistleblowing Policy – Summary

Aims and Scope of the Policy

The policy aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising genuine concerns about unlawful conduct, malpractice or wrongdoing at work, without any fear of comeback
- clearly define a public interest disclosure
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- reassure you that you will not be victimised for raising a matter under this policy
- reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis's 'Freedom to speak up' review (Appendix 1).

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect the identity of the person raising a concern. However, at the appropriate time the person raising the concern may need to come forward as a witness in order that the issue can be thoroughly investigated.

Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages you to put your name to your concern as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate/prove.

Untrue Allegations

If you raise a concern, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If you knowingly make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

How to Raise a Concern

As a first step you should normally raise the concern with your line manager; alternatively, and depending on the nature of the concern, you could approach a member of the College Leadership Team, the Headteacher or a member of the Change Management Group (all who can act as the 'Freedom to speak up' guardian).

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. You should identify the nature of the concerns and the grounds upon which these are based. Information on the background, history, names, dates and places should be provided if possible.

The Governor appointed with specific responsibility for this procedure is the Chair of Governors, please initially contact the Clerk to Governor Donna Douglas (douglas.d@torpoint.cornwall.sch.uk). The chair will then write to you within ten working days to acknowledge that the concern has been raised and inform you of what action is to be taken.

Introduction

Torpoint Community College is committed to the highest possible standard of operation, probity and accountability and recognises that its staff are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the College. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the College and they may also fear harassment or victimisation.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, the College encourages its staff with serious concerns about any aspect of the College's work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the College rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.

The College will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of staff who raise concerns where it is appropriate to do so.

"Whistleblowing" is the term used when someone who works for an organisation raises a concern about a possible fraud, crime, danger or other serious risk that could threaten customers, colleagues, the public, a vulnerable adult, child, young person or the organisation's own reputation. When someone blows the whistle it is to raise a concern about a danger or illegality that affects others. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides protection for workers who disclose information which might otherwise be regarded as confidential where the disclosure is in the public interest.

All staff have a responsibility for the safety of children and to this end should report any concerns through the means identified in this Policy.

Aims and Scope of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to improve our service delivery by providing employees, and other workers, with a procedure for reporting genuine concerns about unlawful conduct, malpractice or wrongdoing at work, without any fear of comeback. The policy is designed to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns as soon as the issue arises, rather than staying silent and waiting until something more serious happens. The College will take your concerns seriously and ensure that any matter raised will be dealt with promptly and fairly.

This policy applies to all employees and other workers including casual staff, agency workers, contractors and consultants whilst engaged on College business.

Concerns that should be raised via this Whistleblowing Policy may be in relation to the actions / behaviours that are perceived as being in the public interest and are:

- Unlawful / illegal
- in breach of the College's procedures or regulations
- falling below established standard or practice; or
- amounting to improper conduct.

For example (this list is not exhaustive):

- malpractice or ill treatment of a student

- abuse or neglect of children or any other service user, for example, failure to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being or by using abusive language, shouting or deliberately with-holding food, drink or medication
- grooming a child (in an effort to promote an unacceptable relationship)
- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- pecuniary or business interests that conflict with employees' roles and responsibilities
- suspected fraud, bribery or corruption
- a failure to comply with legislation or carry out a legal obligation
- damage to the environment
- endangering of an individual's health and safety
- a breach of Financial Regulations, Contract Procedure Rules, or any other part of the College's regulations, procedures or any code of conduct
- Sexual harassment, harassment or bullying (including where this affects multiple individuals or indicates a wider cultural issue)
- concealment of any of the above.

A public interest disclosure is a disclosure by a worker concerning a wrongdoing on the part of his or her employer. Protected disclosures include information about: an alleged criminal offence; a failure to comply with a legal obligation; a miscarriage of justice; a breach of health and safety such that an individual has been, is, or is likely to be endangered; damage to the environment; or information that one of the above has been or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

From 25 June 2013, a disclosure is not protected unless the employee reasonably believes that the disclosure is made in the public interest and has made the disclosure in good faith.

Links with other policies

In certain circumstances, there may be links with other policies such as the Safeguarding Policies, Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work Policy, the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy etc.

What is the difference between a grievance and whistleblowing?

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of an employee's own contract of employment. If an employee is concerned that their own contract has been, or is likely to be, broken, they should use the College's grievance procedure.

Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker raises a concern about a possible fraud, crime, danger or other serious risk that could threaten a vulnerable adult, child, young person, service user, colleague or the organisation's own reputation. The person blowing the whistle is usually not directly or personally affected by the danger or illegality. Consequently, the whistleblower rarely has a personal interest in the outcome of any investigation into their concern - they are simply trying to alert others. For this reason, the whistleblower is not expected to prove the malpractice. He or she is the messenger raising a concern so that others can address it.

By comparison, a grievance will usually concern an employee personally. For example, the individual may have a complaint about: his or her pay or working hours, the amount of work that he or she is expected to do or their working conditions. The person raising the grievance, therefore, has a vested interest in the outcome and, for this reason, is expected to be able to evidence their case.

Confidentiality (where the employee's name is known but will not be disclosed without their consent, unless required by law)

All concerns will be treated in confidence i.e. the College would expect to protect the identity of the person raising a concern.

At the appropriate time, however, the person raising the concern may need to come forward as a witness in order that the issue can be thoroughly investigated. The employee may be represented by a recognised trade union representative or work colleague and other forms of internal or external support will be offered, where requested.

Anonymous allegations (where the employee does not identify him or herself at any stage to anyone)

This policy encourages employees who raise concerns not to remain anonymous as, by doing so, allegations are difficult to investigate. The College will exercise its discretion in deciding whether to investigate an anonymous allegation and will take into account the seriousness of the issues raised and the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources. Remember, if you don't tell us who you are it will be much more difficult for us to protect your position or to give you feedback.

How to raise a concern

If something is concerning you, please tell us straight away. We prefer that you raise the matter promptly rather than to stay silent or wait until something more serious happens. If you are aware that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse you must report it.

Failure to report abuse could ultimately leave the College/Cornwall Council open to non-compliance of its legal duty to refer appropriate matters to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Contact information is detailed below under "Raising a concern about children or vulnerable adults".

We will take your concerns seriously and will ensure that any matter raised will be dealt with promptly, confidentially, and will be thoroughly investigated by an appropriate senior person. Remember, you are potentially acting as a witness, not as a complainant.

Due care and consideration will be given, depending on all the circumstances, to appoint the most appropriate investigator for the case. If you would feel more comfortable speaking to a particular person please mention this when you make contact with us.

Steps to raise a concern:

As a first step you should normally raise concerns with your line manager or their manager. However, we recognise that on occasions this may not be appropriate, in which case there are the following other options to raising a concern:

- Contact a member of the College Leadership Team.
- Contact the Headteacher.
- Contact the College's Whistleblowing Governor – Mrs Lynne Nobes.
- Alternatively, you can raise a concern in writing by emailing one of the above; this should identify the nature of the concerns and the grounds upon which these are based.

Information on the background, history, names, dates and places should be provided if possible.

You must make it clear that your declaration is being made as a 'Whistleblow' and as such will be treated in accordance with this policy.

Raising a concern about children

If you have any safeguarding concerns about children, you should contact one of the College's Designated Safeguarding Leads without delay:

- Dr Plumb – Headteacher
- Mrs Lear – Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Alternatively you may refer the concern direct to the appropriate centre:
Children: 0300 1231 116 – Multi Agency Referral Unit.

Whilst concerns about children can be raised via this policy, cases will be responded to and dealt with using separate safeguarding procedures.

Any safeguarding concerns relating to suspicions of financial abuse/irregularity must also be referred directly to the Whistleblowing Governor.

How the College will respond

Action taken by the College will be dependent on the nature of the concern raised and may:

- be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation
- be investigated by management / appropriate person(s)
- be referred to the Police
- form the subject of an independent inquiry
- be referred to an external auditor.

Employees will receive an initial response to any concerns raised within 10 working days. Due to the nature of the concerns covered by this procedure it may not be possible for the College to indicate how it proposes to deal with the matters and the timescales involved. However, the College undertakes to inform employees, who wish to know, of the progress and outcome where this will not compromise the process. The aim is to reassure employees that the matter has been properly addressed.

The amount of contact between the individual raising the concern and the person(s) investigating the matter will be dependent upon the issue raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided.

Upon completion of an investigation, the Headteacher (or other appropriate authority) will seek assurance that management controls will be introduced such that similar cases do not occur.

Support from "Protect"

Protect is an independent charity which specialises in providing individuals, employers and schools, free, confidential and practical advice about raising concerns at work. They can help you identify how

to raise the concern while minimising any risk to you and maximising the opportunity for any wrongdoing to be addressed.

An adviser will talk through with you how to safely and effectively raise a concern or help you if you are unsure whether to raise a concern or not. Their key advice is to remember that you are a witness not a complainant. Their number is 020 3117 2520 whistle@protect-advice.org.uk www.protect-advice.org.uk

Trade Union support

If you are a member of a trade union, you may also wish to contact your local office for advice and support in relation to raising concerns.

How will you be protected?

The College recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. No worker will be victimised for raising a matter under this policy where it has been raised in good faith. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.

The College will treat any harassment or victimisation as a serious disciplinary offence to be dealt with under the appropriate College procedures.

Untrue Allegations

If you raise a concern, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If you knowingly make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Raising your concern outside of the College

This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue to raise concerns **within** the College. The College hopes you will be able to follow the internal Whistleblowing Policy first of all, but if this is not possible, and you feel that it is right to take the matter outside the College, the following are possible contact points:

- Care Quality Commission 0300 0616 161: www.cqc.org.uk
- Environment Agency: www.gov.uk/environment-agency
- Food Standards Agency: Tel 020 7276 8829 foodcrime@food.gov.uk
- Health and Safety Executive Tel 0300 003 1647 www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm
- Ofsted Tel 0300 123 3155 whisltleblowing@oftsted.gov.uk
- The Police.

Employees who do take a concern outside of the College should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information.

Links with other policies

This policy also links to (and should be read in conjunction with) the following policies:

- Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work Policy
- Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young people and Vulnerable Adults in Educational Settings
- Complaints Procedure
- Capability Policy
- Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

Consultation

This policy was developed by Cornwall Council in consultation with the recognised trade unions, Legal Services, Children, Schools and Families, Adult Care and Support, Internal Audit and People & Organisational Development. The policy has been adapted to be directly relevant to the College, without any material changes to the County model policy, and has been approved by the College's Full Governing Body.

Monitoring arrangements

The College's Monitoring Officer is Mrs Lynne Nobes, Whistleblowing Governor. The Monitoring Officer must be notified as soon as a concern or complaint has been received. The Monitoring Officer will report to the College as necessary. As the nominated recipient of any notifications under this policy, Mrs Nobes will maintain a record of all concerns raised and the outcomes. Anonymised data may be shared on request with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Board.

Training / CPD

All staff will be made aware of this policy and updates will be given during INSET training where appropriate.

Appendix:

1. Principles for Whistleblowing (extracted from the principles in Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review and relevant to Torpoint Community College).

Appendix 1

Principles for Whistleblowing (extracted from the principles in Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review and relevant to Torpoint Community College)

Theme 1 – the need for culture change

- Culture of safety and learning
- Raising concerns
- Culture free from bullying
- Culture of visible leadership
- Value staff who raise concerns
- Culture of reflective practice

Theme 2 – the need for improving handling of cases

- Informal and formal raising and resolution of concerns
- Prompt, swift, proportionate and blame free investigation
- Mediation and dispute resolution

Theme 3 – the need for measures to support good practice

- Support to those raising concerns
- Introduction of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
- Training for every member of staff about raising concerns and handling them
- Transparency accountable
- External review

Theme 4 – the need for particular measures for vulnerable groups

- Agency staff should have access to the same support and procedures as permanent staff
- Black and minority ethnic backgrounds who raise concerns might need action over and above what is in the report to support and protect them
- Students and trainees should also be subject to all the principles.