



CHISLEHURST SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Policy Document

Policy Name: **Raising Concerns Policy 2026-27**

Date of Last Review: **October 2026**

Date of Next Review: **October 2027**

Most Recent Updates: September 2025

SLT Responsible: MFh

Other Staff Contribution:

Raising Concerns Policy 2026-2027

This policy is formulated in the light of the Public Interest Disclosure Act which came into effect on 2nd July 1999.

The Act is there to protect staff who feel the need to raise concerns on certain prescribed matters, provided they do so through the appropriate channels.

A 'qualifying disclosure' must relate to one or more of the following:

- a criminal offence;
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- a danger to the health and safety of persons;
- damage to the environment;
- deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above.

At CHSFG the 'appropriate channels' will be via your Head of Faculty, a Deputy Head or the Head teacher.

If none of these appears appropriate, the Chair of Governors may be approached.

It is, of course, hoped that all such concerns, should they every arise, may be dealt with swiftly and fairly within School.

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection/safeguarding procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, which are informed by the NEOST/Joint Union Guidance. Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leaders and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong, but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feeling, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable children or young persons who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think 'What if I'm wrong' - think 'What if I'm right'

Reasons for Whistle-Blowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour;
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening;
- To protect or reduce risks to others;
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What Stops People from ‘Whistle-Blowing’

- Starting a chain of events which spirals;
- Disrupting the work or project;
- Fear of getting it wrong;
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers;
- Fear of not being believed.

How to Raise a Concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier, and sooner, action can be taken;
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you, and why;
- Approach your immediate manager, Headteacher, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- If your concern is about your immediate manager/Headteacher, if you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Lead Officer for Education safeguarding on 020 8461 7669;
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest;
- You should then put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places, where you can;
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What Happens Next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries;
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation;
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded, and was raised in good faith;
- Allegations made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, will be seen in a different light, and disciplinary action may be taken.

Self-Reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, or perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most situations, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare, or safety, of children.

Further Advice and Support

It is recognised that whistle-blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager and/or your professional trade union.