

Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

People working within organisations are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong in the place in which they work. They may be wary of expressing concerns because they feel that to do so would be disloyal to their colleagues or to their organisation. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may feel easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

Gloverspiece is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees and others working at or with us who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy aims to give a clear message that allegations of serious wrongdoing will be taken seriously.

“Complaints that count as whistleblowing:

You’re protected by law if you report any of the following:

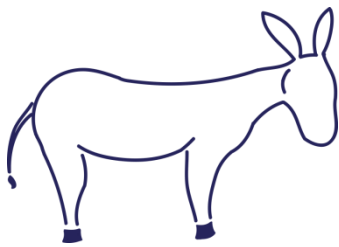
- *a criminal offence, e.g. fraud*
- *someone’s health and safety is in danger*
- *risk or actual damage to the environment*
- *a miscarriage of justice*
- *the company is breaking the law, e.g. doesn’t have the right insurance*
- *you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing*

Complaints that don’t count as whistleblowing:

Personal grievances (e.g. bullying, harassment, discrimination) aren’t covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest.”

[\(www.gov.uk/whistleblowing\)](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing)

The latter should be reported under our Grievance Policy.



Aims of the Policy

This policy is designed to encourage and enable you to raise concerns you might have about the way Gloverspiece Minifarm or School conducts their business.

It does this by providing you with an opportunity to raise concerns which you reasonably believe point to serious malpractice in a confidential way, without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. Your concerns may relate to the improper, unethical or illegal conduct of employees, trustees, volunteers or others acting on behalf of us. Some examples of serious malpractice include: conduct which is an offence or a failure to comply with a legal obligation; disclosures on miscarriages of justice; endangering the health and safety of pupils, members of the public as well as other employees; damage to the environment; the unauthorised use of public funds; possible fraud and corruption; sexual or physical abuse or harassment of students or other workers; any concern over the welfare of students or other workers; deliberate concealment of malpractice; and other unethical conduct.

This list is not exhaustive.

Victimisation or harassment of anyone using this policy or if anyone tries to discourage others from coming forward will be deemed to be a disciplinary matter.

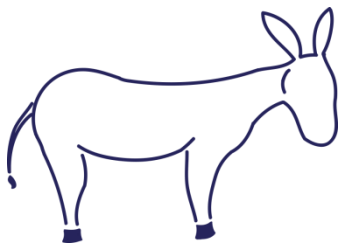
This complements complaints and statutory reporting procedures already in place for service users and non-employees and reflects the legal protection afforded by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. It is not designed to be a substitute for our disciplinary or grievance and harassment policies. If you have a personal concern unrelated to malpractice, please use the Grievance Policy. If, having read this policy, you are uncertain about whether it is the appropriate policy or how to proceed, please feel free to seek informal advice from Children's Services Human Resources.

Who is covered by the Policy?

Anyone working for or on behalf of may raise a concern about malpractice, including employees, trustees, contractors, supply staff, agency and trainee teachers, councillors or statutory office holders.

Who is responsible for the policy?

The trustees are responsible for ensuring the operation of this policy with regard to matters relating to Gloverspiece Minifarm, and the proprietor for Gloverspiece School. They will also monitor the effectiveness of this policy, along with a member of senior management.



How to Raise a Concern

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope that you will be able to raise the matter with the management team. If your concern is connected to a child protection issue, you must follow our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

However, if you feel unable to raise the concern with the manager due to the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved, or if you believe that he/she may be involved, you should speak to the Chair of Trustees (farm) or the relevant outside agency, such as Ofsted (school). Concerns may be raised verbally but should be followed up in writing. If you wish to make a written report, you are advised to include the background and history (giving relevant dates) and give the reason why you are particularly concerned about the matter.

If you are personally involved in the matter you raise, you must state this at the outset.

If the concern is related to child protection, you may wish to raise it with the Senior Adviser Safeguarding Children in Education on 01905 728902 or with Children's Services Access Centre on 01905 768054.

What will happen?

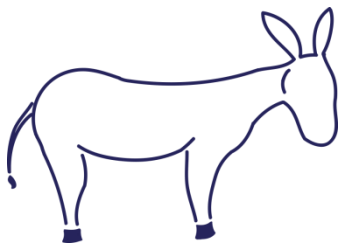
Gloverspiece will respond promptly to your concerns by assessing what action ought to be taken. This may involve an internal investigation or a more formal inquiry. You will be told who is handling the matter (the Responsible Officer), how you can contact them and whether any more assistance from you will be required. In normal circumstances within 7 working days of a concern being raised, the Responsible Officer will write to you acknowledging that your concern has been received. The letter will also inform you of any relevant staff support mechanisms and agree arrangements for keeping you informed. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation. If urgent action is required this may be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Thereafter, the Responsible Officer will keep you informed of progress and the outcome of any investigations or decisions on the matter including the content of any reports written. They can't give you much detail if they have to keep the confidence of other people.

Gloverspiece will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. You won't have a say in how your concern is dealt with. A prescribed person can't help you with your relationship with your employer.

If you're not satisfied with how Gloverspiece dealt with your concern;

- Tell someone else (e.g. a more senior member of staff) or a prescribed person or body if you believe your concern wasn't taken seriously or the wrongdoing is still going on.
- Contact the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), the whistleblowing charity Public Concern at Work or your trade union for more guidance.



Raising a Concern Externally

While we hope that this policy gives you the confidence to raise your concern with the management team or trustees, we would prefer that you raised your concern with the proper external regulator rather than not at all.

If you act genuinely and in good faith, and you reasonably believe that both the malpractice falls within the remit of a regulator and that the information disclosed is substantially true, you may also contact the following prescribed regulators: the Health and Safety Executive for health and safety dangers; the Environment Agency for environmental dangers; the Audit Commission or External Auditor for concerns associated with conduct of business, value for money, fraud and corruption; The Information Commission for compliance with the requirements of legislation relating to data protection and freedom of information; The Commission for Social Care Inspection for matters related to the provision of regulated social care services for children; The Pensions Regulator for occupational pension schemes; The Commission for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs; The Director of the Serious Fraud Office for serious or complex fraud; The General Social Care Council for matters relating to the registration of social care workers; Ofsted for education related concerns.

Confidentiality

You can tell Gloverspiece or a prescribed person anonymously but we may not be able to take the claim further if you haven't provided all the information we need. You can give your name but request confidentiality: you must say straight away if you don't want anyone else to know it was you who raised the concern. We will make every effort to protect your identity. Gloverspiece undertakes to protect your identity and we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where it is not possible to pursue your concern without revealing your identity (e.g. the need to give evidence in court or at a disciplinary hearing), we will discuss with you how and if we can proceed.

If you report your concern to the media, in most cases you'll lose your whistleblowing law rights.

Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but the evidence produced during the investigation does not substantiate it, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you are an employee or statutory office holder and you make an allegation maliciously or for personal gain, this may result in disciplinary action taken against you. If you are a contractor or you are employed by another organisation but working on behalf of Gloverspiece and you make an allegation maliciously or for personal gain this may result in you being removed from the approved list of contractors.

Approved By:	Lynne Duffy
Last Reviewed:	April 2024
Next Review Due:	April 2026