

Whistleblower Policy

[December 2019]

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Little Yarra Steiner School (the School) is committed to maintaining the highest standard of conduct and ethical behaviour in all areas of practice. The School strives to promote an open and honest culture and encourages Board members, staff, parents, students and other individuals who have a relationship with the School to report any unethical behaviour or suspected or actual misconduct.

The School will ensure that any individual who makes a report shall do so without disadvantage or the fear of intimidation.

Definitions:

Whistleblower- An individual who exposes any kind of information or activity that is deemed illegal, unethical, or inappropriate within an organisation.

Part 1- Reportable Conduct

1. An individual should make a report under this Policy if they believe that an individual involved with the School has engaged in conduct which:
 - 1.1 is dishonest, fraudulent or corrupt;
 - 1.2 is illegal;
 - 1.3 is unethical or in breach of the School's policies;
 - 1.4 is potentially damaging to the School, a School employee or third party, such as unsafe work practices, environmental damage, health risks or abuse of the School's property;
 - 1.5 amounts to abuse of authority;
 - 1.6 may cause financial loss to the School or damage to reputation or be otherwise detrimental to the School's interests;
 - 1.7 involves harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying; or
 - 1.8 involves any other kind of serious impropriety.

Part 2- Procedure

1. A whistleblower should promptly, in person, writing or via email, report the suspected or actual matter to the Education Administrator.
2. If the whistleblower is reluctant to report directly to the Education Administrator, then they have the right to report the matter to the Board Chair.
3. It is the whistleblower's absolute discretion whether they choose to disclose their identity or to report the matter anonymously.

4. The School will investigate all matters reported under this Policy as soon as practical after the matter has been reported.
5. All investigations will be conducted in an objective and reasonable manner, having regard to the nature of the Reportable Conduct and the circumstances.
6. If the Education Administrator and/or the Board decides the allegations are of a very serious nature, external investigators will be engaged.
7. Where appropriate, at the absolute discretion of the Education Administrator and/or the Board, the School will provide feedback to the whistleblower regarding the investigations.

Part 3- General

1. The School encourages employees who become aware of known, suspected or potential cases of Reportable Conduct to make a report under this Policy.
2. The School recognises the importance of ensuring confidentiality in respect of all matters raised in relation to this policy and will do everything in its power to ensure the whistleblower receives no retaliation or retribution for a report that was provided in good faith and is not vexatious.
3. The identity of the whistleblower, if known, shall remain confidential to those persons directly involved in applying this Policy, unless the issue requires investigation by external investigators or the Police.
4. If the whistleblower's identity is known, the whistleblower has the option to receive support provided by the School.
5. Anyone who retaliates against the whistleblower who reported an event in good faith will be subject to investigation underpinned by procedural fairness. This may result in discipline, including possible termination, as well as to possible criminal and civil penalties under the *Federal Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018*.
6. If an individual makes a vexatious report, they will be subject to the School's normal disciplinary procedures.
7. Crimes against a person or property should immediately be reported to the Police.
8. Procedural fairness will be applied in dealing with any individuals who are the subject of whistleblowers' reports. Allegations will be documented, and individuals given an opportunity to respond fully to allegations.
9. The School will monitor and review this Policy regularly to assess its effectiveness and efficiency in encouraging the reporting of Reportable Conduct, protecting the individual making the report and the investigation of reports.
10. The School will ensure the School community is educated in relation to this Policy.

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