

Examination Whistleblowing Policy (2023-24)

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Committee Responsible	Full Governors' Body
Key staff involved in this policy / procedure	
Exams Officer	Zhulietta Stoyanova zstoyanova@greycourt.org.uk
Director of Access and Inclusion	Rebecca Gonyora rgonyora@greycourt.org.uk
Line manager of Exams & SLT member responsible	Tom Gordon-Walker (Deputy Headteacher) twalker@greycourt.org.uk
Head of Centre	Christopher Rhodes crhodes@greycourt.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Julian Knott jknott@greycourt.org.uk
Date of next review:	October 2024 This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

1. Introduction

This policy:

- explains how such concerns will be investigated and sets expectations regarding the reporting of outcomes
- encourages individuals to raise concerns, which will be fully investigated by appropriately trained and experienced individuals
- identifies how to report concerns
- provides details of relevant bodies to whom concerns about wrongdoing can be reported, including awarding organisations and regulators
- includes a commitment to do everything reasonable to protect the reporter's identity, if requested
- sets out how those raising concerns will be supported.

This policy also details the steps that could be taken by an individual involved in the management, administration and/or conducting of examinations if Grey Court School fails to comply with its obligation to report any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration.

Whistleblower

A whistleblower is defined as a person who reports an actual or potential wrongdoing and is protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, providing they are acting in the public interest.

If the person raising the issue is a worker, this will be considered as whistleblowing. This includes agency staff and contractors.

● **Reporting**

If a member of centre staff involved in the management, administration and/or conducting of examinations (such as exams officer, exams assistant or invigilator), a student has a concern or reason to believe that malpractice has or will occur in an examination or assessment, concerns should normally be raised initially with **Mr Tom Gordon-Walker** as the member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration .

There may be times when it may be more appropriate to refer the issue directly to the trust board, most often when the allegation is against the head of centre.

In addition to the centre wide Whistleblowing Policy, this exams-specific policy, includes reference to exams-related breaches including the following:

- Failure to comply with exam regulations as set out by the JCQ and its awarding bodies
- A security breach of the examination paper
- Conduct of centre staff which undermines the integrity of the examination
- Unfair treatment of candidates by either giving an advantage to a candidate/group of candidates (an access arrangement which is not supported by appropriate evidence), or disadvantaged candidates by not providing access to the appropriate conditions .
- Possible fraud/corruption (e.g. accessing the exam paper prior to the exam to aid teaching and learning)
- Abuse of authority (e.g. the head of centre/members of the senior leadership team overriding JCQ and awarding body regulations)

- **Procedure**

- If the individual does not feel safe raising the issue/reporting malpractice within the centre, or they have done so and are concerned that no action has been taken, that individual could consider making their disclosure to a malpractice expert at the awarding body for the qualification where malpractice is suspected.

In order to investigate concerns effectively, the awarding body should be provided with as much information as possible/is relevant, which may include:

- The qualifications and subjects involved
- The centre involved
- The names of staff/candidates involved
- The regulations breached/specific nature of suspected malpractice
- When and where the suspected malpractice occurred
- Whether multiple examination series are affected
- If the issue has been reported to the centre and what the outcome was

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Anonymity

In some circumstances, the whistleblower might find it difficult to raise concerns with the nominated member of the senior leadership team. If a concern is raised anonymously, the issue may not be able to be taken further if insufficient information has been provided. In such instances, and if appropriate, the allegation may be disclosed to a union representative, who could then be required to report the concern without disclosing its source.

Alternatively, whistleblowers or others with concerns about potential malpractice can report the matter directly to Ofqual, who is identified as a 'prescribed body'.

Awarding organisations are not prescribed bodies under whistleblowing legislation; however, awarding organisation investigation teams do give those reporting concerns the opportunity for anonymity.

A whistleblower can give their name, but may also request confidentiality; the person receiving the information should make every effort to protect the identity of the whistleblower.

Students at Grey Court School are made to feel comfortable discussing/reporting malpractice issues of which they are aware. The regulations surrounding their assessments, and wider academic integrity, will be reiterated to students who are undertaking, or who are about to undertake, their courses of study.