



St Philip's Christian Education Foundation Ltd.

***Speak to Us – We are Listening***

**Whistleblowing – Parents and Community**

**2020**

*Why Have this Procedure?*

Sometimes we see things in life that make us very uncertain, because we suspect that what is happening around us is illegal or very unethical.

Sometimes, this occurs in a relational context where we do not have confidence in the people to whom we would normally go and talk to.

So, this policy and procedure is intended to describe how a member of our community, who is not a staff member, can seek to resolve their deep concern carefully, respectfully and justly within the requirements of legislation and our Biblical beliefs.

This Whistleblowing Procedure has therefore been carefully devised to be just and fair to all parties concerned, and to protect innocent parties in this kind of situation.

A whistle blowing concern by a community member can relate to any aspect of the operations of SPCEF Ltd, based upon actual or perceived events in which the person believes there is just cause for reporting. The concern must be one that lies within the powers of the management of the School to resolve, i.e. it cannot be about matters determined by national legislation, or external factors beyond the responsibility of the School.

Confidential informing will be treated seriously and will be resolved as quickly as practicable. In certain cases, it may be necessary for information or advice to be sought from others outside the School and this may delay the timescale for resolution.

All procedures should be without prejudice to the position and character of both parties in the procedure.

### Where do I start?

You may believe that you need to confidentially inform someone of an illegal and/or unethical act, but you do not have confidence that the person you normally report to will act without some form of harassment or retribution. This section outlines the principles and normal procedures involved in this circumstance.<sup>1</sup>

### Who is Responsible for what?

It is the responsibility of all members of the SPCEF Ltd community to comply with SPCEF Ltd policies and all applicable laws and regulations, and report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this policy.

### Can there be retaliation because I informed?

No person from the SPCEF Ltd community, who in good faith reports a suspected violation, shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence based on the reporting of such a violation. Any retaliation by an employee against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### How do I Report

The SPCEF Ltd has an open-door policy and encourages members of the SPCEF Ltd community to share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, the Head of that section of the community is in the best position to address an area of concern.

However, if a community member is not comfortable speaking with the Head of that section, or if they are not satisfied with the Head's response, they may speak to the Principal. If they do not have confidence in the Principal's potential or actual response, the person is encouraged to speak with the SPCEF Ltd's Director of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Executive Services, or the Executive Principal (note – all of these can be found by ringing the Foundation Office of SPCEF Ltd.). These senior executives are eligible recipients of confidential informing ("Whistleblowing").

If the community member is not comfortable speaking with any of these people, then they are encouraged to speak with the Board Chair, or another Board of Governors member they are comfortable approaching. These school leaders are also eligible recipients of confidential informing.

### Who Investigates the Concern?

The Director of Human Resources or Board of Governor member receiving a complaint or allegation, is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported concerns and, at his/her

---

<sup>1</sup> National Council of Nonprofit Association (UK) provided information for this policy, for non-commercial use by nonprofit organizations.

discretion, shall advise the Executive Principal and/or the Board of Governors audit committee. The Director of Human Resources will report compliance activity to the audit committee at least annually.

#### What if it Involves Money?

The audit committee of the Board of Governors shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Director of Human Resources or Company Secretary shall immediately notify the audit committee of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved. The SPCEF Ltd Chief Finance Officer or Board Treasurer is not to chair the audit committee.

#### How Serious Does it Have to Be?

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds (i.e. based on credible information) for believing there is indication of a violation. Any allegation that proves not to be substantiated and which proves to have been made maliciously, flippantly, or knowingly to be false, will be viewed as a serious offense against SPCEF Ltd.

#### How Confidential is the Process?

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to an extent possible that is consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

#### What is the Process to Manage the Problem?

The Senior Executive at the Foundation Office, or the Board member who is contacted, has responsibility to investigate all reported suspected violations. The person receiving the report will notify the sender within five business days that the report of suspected violation has been received. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

The process of investigation will follow the same principled procedures of confidentiality, care and record keeping that is reflected in Reportable Conduct investigations. Principals will be informed and/or involved in a manner that is consistent with the principles outlined in that policy – i.e. protecting the informant whilst dealing with the issue with integrity in a timely manner.

Should a SPCEF Ltd community member believe that the process to report and/or investigate code violations is inadequate, individuals can contact the Association of Independent Schools.