CEDAR PARK WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Agreed- September 2026
For Review- September 2027

1. Introduction

Cedar Park School is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability.

This policy enables staff and others working with the school to raise serious concerns about wrongdoing, misconduct, or safeguarding risks in a safe and supportive environment, without fear of victimisation or disadvantage.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage staff to report concerns early
- Provide clear reporting routes
- Protect individuals who raise concerns in good faith
- Ensure concerns are investigated appropriately
- Promote a culture of transparency and accountability

3. Who the Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- All staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- Supply staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors and external partners working in school

This policy **does not apply** to:

- Complaints from parents or members of the public (school complaints procedure applies)
- Personal employment grievances (grievance procedure applies)

4. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about serious wrongdoing or dangers in the public interest.

This may include concerns about:

- Criminal activity or breaches of the law
- Safeguarding concerns or abuse of pupils
- Health and safety risks
- Fraud or financial irregularities
- Unethical or unprofessional conduct
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

A whistleblower is not expected to prove the concern but should have a reasonable belief that the information is true.

5. Safeguarding and Whistleblowing

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Any concern about the behaviour of adults working with children must be reported immediately.

- Concerns about harm or risk to a child should be raised **urgently**
- These may be managed under:
    - Safeguarding procedures
    - Managing Allegations procedures
    - Whistleblowing protections

Staff may also contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** where appropriate.

6. Raising a Concern

Concerns should be raised **as soon as possible**.

First point of contact:

- Line manager or senior leader

Alternative routes:

- Headteacher
- Chair of Governors (if concern involves the Headteacher)

External routes (if needed):

- Buckinghamshire whistleblowing hotline
- Trade union

- Relevant external bodies (e.g. Ofsted, police)

Staff should:

- Raise concerns verbally or in writing
- Make clear they are using the whistleblowing policy
- Provide as much detail as possible

Anonymous concerns will be considered, although investigation may be more difficult.

7. Protection for Whistleblowers

The school will:

- Treat all concerns seriously
- Protect individuals from victimisation or retaliation
- Maintain confidentiality wherever possible

Raising a concern in **good faith** will never result in disciplinary action, even if the concern is not upheld.

However, malicious or knowingly false allegations may lead to disciplinary action.

8. Confidentiality

All concerns will be handled sensitively.

- Information will only be shared with those who need to know
- The identity of the whistleblower will be protected wherever possible

9. How Concerns Are Managed

Once a concern is raised:

1. It will be reviewed promptly
2. A decision will be made on:
    - Immediate action required
    - Whether an investigation is needed
3. An appropriate process will be followed, which may include:

- Internal investigation
- Referral to external agencies (e.g. police, LADO)
- Use of other policies (e.g. disciplinary procedures)

The individual raising the concern will receive feedback where appropriate.

10. Escalation

If a concern is not resolved satisfactorily, staff may escalate:

- To the Chair of Governors
- To external agencies

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns internally first where possible.

11. Record Keeping

- All whistleblowing concerns will be recorded securely
- Records will be kept confidentially and separately from personnel files
- Records will be retained in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements

12. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff:

- Report concerns promptly
- Act in good faith

Headteacher

- Manage concerns appropriately
- Ensure investigations are fair and timely

Governors:

- Provide oversight
- Ensure the policy is implemented effectively

13. Linked Policies

- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy