CODE OF CONDUCT

For schools and educational settings in the London Borough of Hackney

Version 6.0, September 2026

Hackney Education
Hackney Service Centre
1 Hillman Street
London E8 1GQ
T: 020 8820 7000
E: education.hr@hackney.gov.uk

education.hackney.gov.uk
hackneyservicesforschools.co.uk

Working for every child

Hackney

About this policy

Purpose

This document covers the Code of Conduct for schools and other educational settings.

Refer to the table of contents, below, for a full list of topics covered.

Contents

This document covers the following topics:

1. About the Code of Conduct 3
2. Scope of the policy 3
3. Legislation and guidance 3
4. General standards of behaviour 4
4.1 Personal standards 4
4.2 Dress code 4
4.3 Contact with parents and the general public 5
4.4 Respect for others 5
4.5 Honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity 5
4.6 Accountability 6
4.7 Stewardship 6
4.8 Personal interests 6
4.8.1 Registration of interests 6
4.9 Openness 6
4.10 Appointment of staff 7
4.11 Duty of trust 7
4.12 Trade Union membership 7
5. Staff-pupil relationships 7
6. Acceptable use of technology (including the use of mobile devices) 8
7. Communication and social media 8
8. Working with and safeguarding children 9
8.1 Definition 9
8.2 An individual's responsibilities 10
8.3 Procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children 10
8.4 Safe environment 10
8.5 Conduct: general guidance 11
9. Dealing with allegations or concerns about staff 11
9.1 Allegations that may meet the harms threshold 11
9.1.1 What should staff do if they're worried that a child is being abused 12
9.1.2 Female Genital Mutilation – mandatory reporting 13
9.1.3 Preventing radicalisation 13

9.2 Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (low level concerns) 14
9.2.1 Sharing low level concerns 14
9.3 Positive handling 14
10. Whistleblowing **15**
10.1 About the Whistleblowing Policy 15
10.2 Raising concerns 15
10.3 Fraudulent, criminal or child protection offences 16
10.4 External source 16
10.5 Untrue allegations 16
10.6 Independent advice 16
11. Further information **17**

Version control

The table below shows the history of the document and the changes that were made at each version:

Version	Date	Summary of changes from v. 5.0 September 2026
5.0	September 2026	**Section 4.3 Respect for others:** additional wording stating staff should take a zero tolerance approach to certain types of behaviour **Section 6 Acceptable use of technology (including the use of mobile devises:** updated guidance on the use of mobile devices **Section 8.3 Procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children:** updated guidance to confirm that all staff must read part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Next major release

This policy will be updated annually after the last release or as legislation or procedures change.

Distribution

This policy is available on the Hackney Education Services for Schools website.

1. About the Code of Conduct

This document aims to ensure that there is consistency in what is expected of the employee and employer. It sets out guidance for employees and other adults working with children, with the intention of minimising the risk of being accused of improper conduct, particularly towards the young people with whom they come into contact during the course of their work.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, contractors, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

If a member of staff does not adhere to this guidance, the school/setting may take disciplinary action against them. This may have serious consequences for staff, including the possibility of dismissal in the most serious cases.

This code of conduct should be covered in schools' induction arrangements for all new staff and for most, will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. Should they have any doubts about the advice contained in this document they should consult with their headteacher or Human Resources provider.

There may be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions in the best interests and welfare of the school and the children in their charge, which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. In such instances, the employee should ensure that senior management, preferably the headteacher, is made aware of the action taken as soon as possible and that a record is kept, so that they are seen to be acting appropriately.

2. Scope of the policy

This guidance is recommended to Hackney schools, children's centres, nurseries and other educational settings as a model code of conduct. It makes clear the conduct considered acceptable, and clearly indicates what action will be taken if school rules and/or policies are broken.

This code of conduct seeks to establish a set of core principles which underpin the concept of public service and which are applicable to anybody who works with children, regardless of grade/position, hours of work or type of contract.

It also includes governors, contractors, volunteers and any other adults working in the school/setting.

3. Legislation and guidance

Schools are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, this staff code of conduct covers:

- staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media (Section 5)
- acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices) (Section 7)
- allegations against staff (Section 9)
- low-level concerns (Section 9.2)
- whistleblowing (Section 10)

4. General standards of behaviour

This section outlines the expected standards of behaviour that must be demonstrated by all staff. This does not constitute a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour for adults in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists.

Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of children in their charge. Such judgements should always be recorded and shared with senior management, preferably the headteacher, so they are seen to be acting appropriately.

4.1 Personal standards

Personal standards of behaviour must be high in dealing with other staff, volunteers, contractors, governors, parents and children. Public confidence in the school would be undermined if staff:

- Take drugs or drink alcohol while at work/on duty, or drink at social events within or outside working hours to the extent that their work could be affected. Please refer to the Drug and Alcohol Policy for further guidance.
- Threaten, fight or assault anyone on the school premises, or persist in verbal or non-verbal behaviour, which would intimidate anyone. It should be noted that this also means any such action outside the school premises which could potentially bring the school into disrepute.
- Steal, take without authority, or deliberately damage property that belongs to the school.
- Use their position within the school inappropriately to advance the interests of any other person or organisation with which they are associated, or show favour to any friends, family or personal contacts.

4.2 Dress code

It is the school's policy to maintain an image of a professional public service organisation providing high quality services. A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice. However, staff should ensure that they dress decently, safely and appropriately for the roles they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner that could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation, and may result in disciplinary action.

4.3 Contact with parents and the general public

There is a general expectation of the school that staff will:

- Be polite to members of the public at all times.
- Give/provide their name to parents/carers and other members of the public or school community when speaking or writing on behalf of the school.
- Ensure that any information provided in relation to the school is accurate.
- Ensure that any information provided to third parties is in line with the Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- Respect confidential information provided to them in the course of their work.
- Avoid doing anything which could make the public doubt the motives or integrity of a member of staff of the school or bring the school into disrepute.
- Ensure that any significant concerns or complaints expressed to them by parents, carers or the general public are passed on to the senior management of the school.

4.4 Respect for others

All staff must:

- Treat others with respect.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and derogatory behaviour.
- Not discriminate unlawfully against any person and treat others equally regardless of ability, gender, age, race, position in school or any other protected characteristic.
- Treat other members of staff and colleagues of the school professionally.

Bullying and harassment - Staff must not single out another for treatment where they feel threatened, humiliated or patronised. This type of behaviour could be seen as harassment or, in serious cases, bullying. Please refer to the Harassment and Bullying Policy for guidance on how to deal with such allegations.

Domestic abuse - on or off duty, inside or outside of work - is unacceptable. It is the responsibility of those causing the harm to stop abusing others. Our school will take action against those who harm others and, where appropriate, work with them to stop their abusive behaviour. Further information is available in the school's Domestic Abuse Policy.

4.5 Honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity

Staff are subject to national and local terms and conditions of employment, which are tailored to their particular job. All staff will be expected to comply with written or oral instructions about the way in which they tackle their duties and conduct themselves.

Staff, volunteers and governors should be made aware of the school's policy for accepting gifts including arrangements for the declaration of gifts received and given.

It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example, at Christmas or as a thank you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Money should never be accepted as a gift. Any reward given to a child or young person must be in accordance with agreed practice within the school.

Staff, volunteers and governors should avoid putting themselves in debt to a colleague where this would be likely to or could be seen to influence their work.

4.6 Accountability

All staff are accountable to the school for their actions. They must also respect and adhere to the management structure of the school, ensuring that management roles and decisions are not ignored or undermined.

Managers have a responsibility to hold staff accountable for agreed actions and to themselves be accountable to the staff they manage.

4.7 Stewardship

All staff, volunteers and governors must:

- Use any public funds entrusted to or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.
- Not make personal use of property or facilities of the school unless authorised to do so.

4.8 Personal interests

An employee must not in their official or personal capacity allow their personal interests to conflict with the school's requirements, bring the reputation of the school into disrepute, or use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

4.8.1 Registration of interests

All staff must comply with any requirements of Hackney Council to register or declare interests and to declare hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of their employment.

4.9 Openness

Staff must maintain appropriate confidentiality and not disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which they believe is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it.

Exceptions will be if they are required by law to do so and/or the disclosure of the information to the appropriate person is required to adequately safeguard a child or children.

Staff must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

4.10 Appointment of staff

Staff must not be involved in the appointment or any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, who is a relative, friend or partner.

In this paragraph: 'Relative' means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons. 'Partner' means a member of a couple who live together or who have a close personal relationship.

4.11 Duty of trust

All staff must, at all times, act in accordance with the trust that the school is entitled to place in them. Similarly, the school is expected to act in accordance with the trust that the employee is entitled to place on the school.

4.12 Trade Union membership

The school/setting supports the system of collective bargaining and believes in the principle of solving industrial relations problems by discussion and agreement. It may be advantageous for staff to belong to a trade union that represents them on the appropriate negotiating body. All staff are encouraged to be a member of an appropriate trade union.

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

Where staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours, if possible. Arranging to meet with pupils from the school or setting away from the work premises should not be permitted unless the necessity for this is clear and approval is obtained from a senior member of staff, the pupil and their parents/carers.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

To safeguard both pupils and adults, a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work should always be undertaken. Each assessment should take into account the individual needs of each pupil and should be reviewed regularly.

While the school is aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, personal gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a colleague and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6. Acceptable use of technology (including the use of mobile devices)

All staff must consistently enforce the school's policy on mobile phones being prohibited for pupils throughout the school day.

In line with the DfE Guidance: Mobile phones in schools, staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.

There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone or similar device, for instance to issue homework, issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication.

It is a criminal offence to take and share nude or semi-nude images, including those generated by artificial intelligence, of anyone under the age of 18.

7. Communication and social media

Staff should not give their personal contact details to children for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web-based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, they should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If staff have a personal profile on social media sites, they should ensure their profiles are set to private so that pupils are prevented from viewing their personal content.

Staff may choose not to use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. Staff will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their parents and the school's consent.

Staff should not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites, either inside or outside of working hours, which may bring themselves, the school or employer into disrepute. Staff should not have contact with any pupil through social media (unless the pupils are family members) and should exercise caution when posting photographs, images created using artificial intelligence and/or comments so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

Staff should be aware of the school's Use of Email and Internet Policy.

8. Working with and safeguarding children

Hackney Council and Hackney Education are governed by a number of government directives, policies and acts (Children Act, Education Act, Protection of Children Act, etc.) as well as local guidance issued by City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP), that place schools and staff under a statutory duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

8.1 Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child Protection is also part of safeguarding and promoting welfare and refers to activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

These aspects of safeguarding and promoting welfare all contribute to the five outcomes for improving the wellbeing of children set out in the Children Act 2004, namely:

- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Protection from harm and neglect
- Education, training and recreation
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Social and economic well-being

8.2 An individual's responsibilities

Everyone in the education service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe. All staff play an important part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect by early identification of children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm, and by educating children about managing risks and improving their resilience through the curriculum. All staff have three main areas of responsibility:

- Understanding procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children.
- Providing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.

The overriding principle of these policies is that the welfare of the child is paramount.

8.3 Procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children

All staff must be familiar with and follow school procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children.

These documents are available on the school's website or from the school office. Staff should also know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is and how to contact them to express concerns about a child's welfare. Contact details are available from the school office.

Staff should also be aware of the latest legislation and government guidance including:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Copies of policies and a copy of Keeping Children Safe in Education should be provided to **all** staff at induction including volunteers, contractors and third party (agency staff).

All staff will read at least part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) in full and make sure they understand their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance.

8.4 Safe environment

All staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; and safeguard children and young people. Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, they have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from neglect and sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.

8.5 Conduct: general guidance

Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead someone to question their motivation and/or intentions. Everyone expects high standards of behaviour from school staff.

They must:

- Adhere to the standards of behaviour outlined at the start of this Code of Conduct document.
- Always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably.
- Take reasonable care of children and young people under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- Continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the latest guidance.
- Comply with relevant statutory provisions which support the well-being and development of children and young people, including where these require cooperation and collaboration with a range of agencies, as well as teacher colleagues and other adults.

They must not:

- Demean or undermine children and young people, their parents, carers or colleagues, or act towards them in a manner which is discriminatory.
- Misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience.
- Bring the reputation and standing of the teaching profession into serious disrepute.

9. Dealing with allegations or concerns about staff

All staff have a duty to report matters concerning offences of a criminal or child protection nature. They have a responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies at an early stage. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance covers two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harm threshold.

2. Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low level concerns'.

9.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This is an allegation when a teacher or member of staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) in a school or college that provides education for children under 18 years of age has:

- **behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;**

- **possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;**
- **behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or**
- **behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.**

If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Headteacher or the next most senior member of staff. If the allegation is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors must be notified. In all cases, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and their HR provider must be notified.

For guidance on how to manage an allegation made against staff and volunteers, please refer to the following information:

- CHSCP - reporting allegations against staff and volunteers
- London Safeguarding Children Partnership - London procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

For guidance on how staff and volunteers should handle allegations made against them, please refer to the following information:

- Hackney Council - guide for staff and volunteers

9.1.1 What should staff do if they're worried that a child is being abused

If a school employee has concerns about a child's welfare, or if a child discloses that they are suffering abuse or reveals information that gives grounds for concern, they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead with a view to passing on the information to Children's Social Care.

Individuals must always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration. Please refer to the guidance on Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.

Individuals will need to use their own judgement, but it is preferable that all concerns are reported in accordance with this guidance. For example:

- Actions which endanger the health or safety of any individual, including risks to children or the public as well as other workers.
- Sexual or physical abuse of children.
- Neglect or emotional abuse of children.

Further guidance can be found in:

- Hackney Education: Safeguarding and Child Protection Handbook
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.

9.1.2 Female Genital Mutilation – mandatory reporting

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Teachers must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve Children's Social Care as appropriate.

Further information is available in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

9.1.3 Preventing radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the CTSA 2015"), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard" to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Bodies to which the duty applies must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 ("the Prevent guidance").

As explained above, if a member of staff in a school has a concern about a particular pupil they should follow the school's normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, and where deemed necessary, with the Police and Children's Social Care. Hackney has a Prevent lead who can also provide support.

Further information is available in Annex A of the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance.

9.2 Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (low level concerns)

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, but is inconsistent with this staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

9.2.1 Sharing low level concerns

The school structure and culture is based on trust, openness and transparency and staff should have the confidence and knowledge to be able to raise any concerns about the behaviour of individuals within the school.

Staff are not expected to identify which behaviour would constitute a low level concern but are encouraged to report any behaviour they feel is unprofessional or inappropriate so it can be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

If a member of staff is concerned about their own behaviour they should be encouraged to raise this with an appropriate individual.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is available from the school.

9.3 Positive handling

Positive handling refers to the management of relatively rare situations when children and young people present extremely challenging behaviour which may require some form of physical intervention from adults. This is sometimes referred to as restraint or care and control. Hackney Education has adopted the term positive handling.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 "enables school staff to use force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

(a) committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil):

(b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or

(c) prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

The Headteacher will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incidents where positive handling was used. The Headteacher (or their nominee) will initiate the recording process if not already under way and review each incident to ensure that any necessary lessons are learned. All parents will be informed after an incident where positive handling is used with a child. Parents will need to be notified sensitively and to be made aware of the full circumstances.

Further information is available in Hackney Education's Positive handling - guidance for schools and settings.

10. Whistleblowing

10.1 About the Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing inside the workplace is the reporting by staff or ex-staff of wrongdoing such as fraud, malpractice, mismanagement, breach of health and safety law or any other illegal or unethical act either on the part of management, the Governing Body or by fellow staff.

The schools' Whistleblowing Policy allows staff to express their concerns without fear of victimisation or disadvantage. It is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise concerns within the school, rather than overlooking a problem or taking it outside of the organisation.

10.2 Raising concerns

The Whistleblowing Policy should be used to raise serious concerns, including:

- Conduct which has failed, or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation.
- Disclosure related to miscarriages of justice.
- Actions which endanger the health or safety of any individual, including risks to children or the public as well as other workers.
- Damage to the environment.
- Theft or misuse of school property or assets.
- The unauthorised use of public funds.
- Possible fraud or corruption.
- Serious departure from professional standards.
- Sexual or physical abuse of children/service users/workers.
- Neglect or emotional abuse of children in the institution.
- Serious breach of school, Hackney Education or Local Authority regulations.
- Serious concerns about service provision, conduct of staff or others. For example something that:

- Makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the school subscribes to;
- Is against the orders and/or policies of the school, Hackney Education, the Local Authority or the London Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- Falls below established standards or practice;
- Amounts to improper conduct

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It is important that all staff raise issues when they are just concerns rather than wait until they become more serious.

Staff should raise any concerns with their line manager, either verbally or in writing. They have the right to have the matter treated confidentially.

If the individual feels unable to raise their concern with their line manager or the Headteacher, they may contact the Chair of Governors directly. If this occurs the individual will be asked to justify why they feel unable to raise their concern with their line manager or the Headteacher.

If the individual is not able to raise the issue with any member of school staff because of fears of victimisation, they should contact:

- Hackney Education's Safeguarding team for assistance in cases of possible abuse of children.
- Human Resources for any other issues.

10.3 Fraudulent, criminal or child protection offences

All staff have a duty to report matters concerning fraud and offences of a criminal or child protection nature. Individuals will need to use their own judgement but it is preferable that suspicions are reported in accordance with this guidance rather than ignored.

10.4 External source

Whistleblowing to an external source without first going through the internal procedure is inadvisable without compelling reasons. Please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

10.5 Untrue allegations

Where allegations are made in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the whistleblower. If, however, allegations are made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual.

10.6 Independent advice

Any member of staff who has a public concern that affects a third party and who wants independent advice, may contact the independent charity, Protect. Helpline: 020 3117 2520.

Their lawyers can give free confidential advice at any stage. They can help if anyone is worried about something that is going on at work and is unsure about what to do next or have raised concerns but are concerned that it has not been addressed and the risk is ongoing.

11. Further information

Statutory guidance:

- CHSCP - reporting allegations against staff and volunteers
- London Safeguarding Children Partnership - London procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Hackney Council schools HR service policies:

Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct.

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Email and Internet Use Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy