

## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

**Regent College**

Previous Edition: January 2008 Reviewed/Updated: Provisional Next Review: 2011	Author: Peter Bignold Reviewing and Monitoring by: Peter Bignold
Location: Sharepoint: Policies	Page 1 of 3
E&D Impact Assessment Status Assessed October 2010	Previously Assessed
Status of Policy	SMT Approved 2008



**Policy Context:**

The overall aim of this policy document is to establish, implement and monitor mechanisms whereby any member of the College community can raise a concern without feeling vulnerable.

As a College we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the work of the College or of particular individuals to come forward and voice those concerns.

We believe that it is important for staff and other stakeholders in the College to be able to question what is going on without fear of criticism or victimisation. We wish to encourage a culture of openness and honesty, seeing this as a prerequisite for constructive change and progress within our organisation.

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within an organisation, or with the behaviour of particular individuals employed by that organisation. They may not, however, express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to colleagues and/or to the organisation. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than to report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

We believe it is important to avoid the raising of concerns being seen in any kind of negative sense. However, we believe that it is important to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns **within** the College rather than overlooking or ignoring a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

We recognise that some cases will have to be dealt with on a confidential basis and this document makes it clear that staff can raise matters confidentially without fear of reprisal.

**Policy statements**

- provide an avenue for you to raise any concern you might have and to receive feedback on action taken
- allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the initial response you receive, and
- reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for raising a concern in good faith.

There is in place a **grievance procedure** in order that you can raise any concerns relating to your own employment.

There is also in place a **disciplinary procedure** which assists the Corporation and Principal ensure consistent and fair treatment of all employees whilst ensuring that all employees achieve and maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and job performance.

This policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of the grievance and disciplinary procedures. Such concern may be about something that:

- is unlawful or
- is against the College's standing orders or policies or
- falls below our established standards or practice or
- is improper conduct.

## **SAFEGUARDS**

### **Harassment or Victimisation**

The College recognises that a decision to report a concern may be difficult, not least because you may fear reprisal from those about whose behaviour you are expressing concern.

The College wishes to make it clear that harassment or victimisation of a person "whistle blowing" in good faith will not be tolerated and action will be taken to protect you when you raise a concern.

This does not mean that if you are the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures that those proceedings will be halted as a result of your allegation(s).

### **Confidentiality**

The College will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern if you do not wish your name to be disclosed. However, you must appreciate that the investigation process may have to reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence gathered. Although every effort will be made to protect your identity if you wish it, no guarantee can be given.

### **Anonymous allegations**

You will be encouraged to give your name when you raise a concern. This is because a concern expressed by a named individual carries much more weight than one expressed anonymously. Anonymous concerns will be considered at the discretion of the College but they are less powerful. In exercising discretion, to consider or not anonymous concerns, the factors taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the concerns raised
- the credibility of those concerns and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### **Untrue Allegations**

If you make an allegation *in good faith* but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. However, if you make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action against you may be taken.

### **Responsibility & Accountability**

Because of its nature, it is impossible for a single named individual to have overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Policy. However, the Principal and Vice Principal will each independently maintain a record of all concerns raised and their outcomes (but in a form which will not endanger your confidentiality), and will report as necessary to the College's Board of Governors.

### **Impact Assessment**

In constructing new policies or revising existing policies the college will carry out an impact assessment to ensure that any procedures thus derived do not have a direct or indirect discriminatory effect.

Further details are set out in the Whistle Blowing Procedures