



7Hills International School

ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Reviewed:	August 2025
Next Review Due:	July 2026
Applies To:	Whole School (inc. Board)
Owner:	Head of School
Approved By:	Board of Directors

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To inspire our children to reach their full potential by fostering curiosity and an interest in learning, awakening their minds and illuminating their world.

Vision

To create an affordable international secondary school with a high standard of education where children learn through practical and project-based work. To develop our students' moral and intellectual capacity, and to encourage creativity and adaptability.

Aim

An education that is broad, balanced and challenging, with an emphasis on developing strong connections to our host country, Uganda.

Values

Desire for lifelong learning; an ability to adapt; be innovative and reflective thinkers; open minded, and empathetic while achieving high academic success according to individual potential.

7Hills International School

ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

Contents

1. Purpose & Principles
2. What Counts as Whistleblowing?
3. Commitment to Protection & Non-Retaliation
4. Confidentiality & Anonymous Reporting
5. Safeguarding & Child Protection Concerns
6. How to Raise a Whistleblowing Concern
 - 6.1 Stage 1 - Internal reporting
 - 6.3 Stage 3 - Investigation
 - 6.4 Stage 4 - Outcome
7. Escalation if the Reporter Believes Action Was Not Taken
8. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations
9. Monitoring & Record Keeping
10. Links with Other Policies
11. Policy Review and Approval
12. Distribution and Access

7Hills International School

ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

1. Purpose & Principles

7Hills International School (7Hills) is committed to:

- high standards of integrity, accountability and ethical conduct
- a culture of transparency and professional responsibility
- encouraging staff to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisal
- ensuring concerns are investigated fairly, promptly and sensitively

This policy:

- provides clear routes for raising concerns
- explains how disclosures will be handled and investigated
- sets out protection for staff who raise concerns in good faith
- distinguishes whistleblowing from employee grievances

This policy does not replace staff grievance or complaints procedures.

2. What Counts as Whistleblowing?

A whistleblowing concern is one raised in the public interest, relating to suspected:

- criminal activity, fraud or corruption
- breach of legal, financial or regulatory obligations
- safeguarding failures or unsafe practice
- serious breach of professional standards or school procedures
- risk to health, safety or the environment
- misuse of school funds or resources
- abuse of power, malpractice, or unethical behaviour
- attempts to conceal wrongdoing

A personal employment concern is normally a grievance, not a whistleblowing matter. If uncertain, staff may seek confidential advice or speak with a senior leader before deciding which route to use.

3. Commitment to Protection & Non-Retaliation

No employee will be dismissed, disciplined, harassed and victimised for raising a concern in good faith, even if it is later found to be mistaken. Malicious or knowingly false allegations may result in disciplinary action and an instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself misconduct.

4. Confidentiality & Anonymous Reporting

7Hills will:

- protect the identity of a whistleblower wherever reasonably possible
- restrict disclosure to those directly involved in investigation

Anonymity may limit investigation and cannot always be guaranteed where legal or safeguarding duties apply. Anonymous disclosures will be considered where:

- allegations are serious
- evidence appears credible
- the concern may be verifiable through other sources

5. Safeguarding & Child Protection Concerns

Any concern relating to:

- abuse
- neglect
- grooming
- unsafe contact
- child protection risk

must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and where necessary, external statutory referrals will be made.

6. How to Raise a Whistleblowing Concern

6.1 Stage 1 - Internal reporting

Concerns should normally be raised with:

- Line Manager or Head of Department

If inappropriate due to involvement or sensitivity, staff may instead report to:

- Head of School
- Deputy Head / Senior Leadership
- Chair of the Board (if related to Head or Deputy Head of School)

Reports should be made in writing where possible, including:

- nature of the concern
- dates, times, locations
- names of those involved
- relevant evidence
- any personal interest declared

6.2 Stage 2 - Acknowledgement & Initial Review

The recipient will:

- acknowledge the concern within 5–10 working days
- assess whether whistleblowing criteria are met
- decide whether investigation is required
- confirm next procedural steps and timeframes

6.3 Stage 3 - Investigation

An investigation may be conducted by:

- a senior leader
- Board representative
- an independent / external investigator
- police or regulatory body (if warranted)

The whistleblower will be:

- treated with dignity and fairness
- kept informed where appropriate
- advised if confidentiality limits apply

Where misconduct is proven, disciplinary or regulatory action may follow.

6.4 Stage 4 - Outcome

A formal outcome will state:

- whether wrongdoing was identified
- corrective actions taken
- whether referral to external agencies was necessary

Full details may be limited where confidentiality applies.

7. Escalation if the Reporter Believes Action Was Not Taken

If the staff member reasonably believes:

- the concern was not properly investigated, or
- there remains risk of harm or malpractice

they may escalate to:

- Chair of Board
- Board Committee for Governance

If still concerned, they may report to:

- statutory regulators
- safeguarding bodies
- external auditors
- recognised prescribed bodies

This should be done responsibly and without disclosing confidential or sensitive information unnecessarily.

7Hills International School

ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

8. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

No disciplinary action will occur where concerns were raised in good faith and proved unfounded.

Where allegations are knowingly:

- false
- fabricated
- made for personal gain

9. Monitoring & Record Keeping

A secure whistleblowing register will record:

- date concern received
- category of concern
- investigation route
- outcome summary
- referral actions (if any)

Access is restricted to governance oversight.

10. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Financial Controls Policy
- Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures

11. Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect changes in legislation, CIS standards or school practice.

12. Distribution and Access

This policy is available to all staff, students, and parents via the school website and on the school Google drive. Printed copies can be requested from the school reception.

7Hills International School

ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

Appendix 1 - Whistleblowing Concern Reporting Form

Name of person raising concern (leave blank if anonymous)	
Role / Department	
Date concern submitted	
Category of concern	financial / safeguarding / conduct / legal / health & safety / other
Details of concern (facts only — include names, dates, locations, evidence where applicable)	
How did you become aware of this concern?	
Have you raised this concern with anyone previously?	Yes/No
Do you believe there is an immediate risk of harm?	Yes/No
Preferred contact method (optional)	
Signature(if applicable)	
Received by (name & role)	
Date received	

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ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

Appendix 2 - Initial Review & Triage Record

Reference number	
Date of review	
Reviewer (name & role)	
Summary of allegation	
Meets whistleblowing criteria?	Yes/No
Safeguarding threshold reached?	Yes/No
Immediate protective actions taken	
Decision	no further action / internal investigation / external referral / disciplinary route
Assigned investigator / lead	
Target timeframe for response	
Communication sent to whistleblower (date / summary)	
Notes	

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Appendix 3 - Investigation Plan & Evidence Log

Case reference	
Investigator(s)	
Scope of investigation	
Questions to be determined	
People to be interviewed	
Documents / data to be reviewed	
Evidence log	item / source / date / relevance
Risk considerations	confidentiality / retaliation / legal
Support provided to involved parties	
Interim findings (if applicable)	
Target completion date	

7Hills International School

ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

Appendix 4 - Investigation Outcome & Decision Record

Case reference	
Date investigation completed	
Investigating officer(s)	
Finding	substantiated / partially substantiated / not substantiated
Summary of evidence considered	
Actions taken	disciplinary / safeguarding / financial / policy / training
External referrals made (agency / date)	
Outcome communicated to whistleblower (date / format)	
Outcome communicated to subject of allegation (date / format)	
Recommendations for organisational learning	
Board / Governance review (date)	
Case closed (date / signed by)	

7Hills International School

ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

Appendix 5 - Whistleblowing Register

Ref No.	Date Received	Category	Received By	Investigation Route	Outcome	External Referral?	Date Closed

Appendix 6 - External Referral & Escalation Record

Case reference	
Reason for external referral	
Agency / regulator contacted	
Contact person (if applicable)	
Date & method of referral	
Information shared (summary)	
Safeguarding considerations documented	
Follow-up actions agreed	
Date of agency response	
Further actions required	
Recorded by / role	
Date logged	