



# Whistleblower Policy

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## 1. Introduction and Purpose

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) is committed to promoting and supporting a culture of honest and ethical behaviour, corporate compliance and good corporate governance.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage reporting of corrupt conduct, maladministration and serious and substantial waste (“wrongdoing”) that is of legitimate concern, by providing a safe and confidential environment where such concerns can be raised by Whistleblowers without fear of reprisal or detrimental treatment.

This Policy sets out:

- the principles for dealing with disclosures made by Whistleblowers
- how to make a disclosure
- the responsibilities of the various parties
- how CSPD investigates disclosures
- who is protected as a Whistleblower and the protections available

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## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all staff members (paid employees, volunteers, Religious, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants and students on work placements) and any other person with knowledge of any suspected illegal or improper conduct related to CSPD’s business or staff (e.g. students and their families, service providers).

This Policy is not intended to deal with complaints from staff about personal work-related grievances such as complaints about pay and conditions, promotion decisions, or complaints of discrimination, bullying or harassment. This Policy is also not intended to replace the standard complaint mechanisms for clients or volunteers; nor the exercising of rights under the terms of their contract by contractors and suppliers.

Other policies such as the *Managing Complaints Policy* or *Preventing Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying Policy*, or other complaints mechanisms should be followed in the situations outlined above.

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### 3. Definitions

**Whistleblowing** is the disclosure by (or for) a witness of actual or suspected wrongdoing (i.e. corrupt conduct, maladministration, or serious and substantial waste, as defined below).

**Whistleblower** is a person who reports wrongdoing in accordance with this Policy.

**Wrongdoing** includes:

- **Corrupt conduct** occurs when deliberate or intentional actions by a staff member involve the misuse of CSPD information or resources, or the improper and dishonest exercise of a staff member's position and functions. Corrupt conduct includes theft of CSPD resources or money, fraud, bribery and a staff member inappropriately deriving a benefit for themselves or others by misuse of their position; or
  - **Maladministration** an administrative act or omission which is contrary to law or CSPD policy or procedures, is manifestly unjust or oppressive or based on improper motives; or
  - **Serious and substantial waste** means unauthorised use of CSPD resources which is grossly uneconomical, inefficient or ineffective and results in a serious and significant loss of resources.
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### 4. Principles for dealing with disclosures

CSPD adheres to the following principles in dealing with disclosures under this Policy:

**Confidentiality** – as far as reasonably possible, the identity of the Whistleblower and the person subject of the disclosure will be protected, except where the law requires his/her identification to be disclosed.

**Ethical culture** – this Policy supports the commitment by CSPD to sound governance and ethical behaviour in the workplace.

**Procedural fairness** – the person who is the subject of a disclosure will be provided with sufficient information in order for them to provide a full response to the disclosure that has been made against them. In certain circumstances, certain details may not be

provided if there is a concern that this may compromise the investigation process, the safety or wellbeing of a person or confidence in the Whistleblower Policy.

**Protection of Whistleblowers** – any person who makes a disclosure in good faith and in accordance with this Policy, shall be protected as far as reasonably practicable against victimisation and retaliation as a result of making the disclosure.

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## 5. Making a disclosure

### 5.1 Internal Whistleblowers (employees, volunteers, Religious, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants and students on work placements)

Staff members must advise their supervisor or, if this is not appropriate, a nominated Whistleblower Protection Officer (see 6. below) if they observe corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious and substantial waste.

Staff members must:

- provide an accurate description of the facts or circumstances which form the basis for the disclosure using, as much as possible, first-hand knowledge
- ask for guidance from a nominated Whistleblower Protection Officer if they need assistance.

Supervisors who receive reports must:

- obtain an accurate description asking for facts and observations of what occurred, not opinion
- make a note of what is reported verbatim
- refer the matter to a nominated Whistleblower Protection Officer (refer to Section 6).

All parties must maintain confidentiality if they are involved in any capacity in a report. Staff members who discuss or release information about a report without authorisation may be subject to disciplinary action for misconduct.

In some circumstances the report may not be kept confidential by CSPD, as it may be obliged to interview persons about the issue and/or notify external

bodies e.g. the NSW Police, if it raises a matter that involves alleged illegal activity.

## 5.2 External Whistleblowers (other people with a relationship with CSPD e.g. students and their families, or suppliers)

External persons are encouraged to report suspected or actual knowledge of wrongdoing by a CSPD staff member. Ideally, they should provide an accurate description of the facts or circumstances which form the basis for the disclosure using, as much as possible, first-hand knowledge.

## 5.3 Alternative whistleblowing reporting mechanisms


Where a Whistleblower (internal or external) is reluctant to report their concerns to the CSPD person they ordinarily deal with for fear of retribution, they can report their concerns to a CSPD Whistleblower Protection Officer (refer to Section 6). Where this is not appropriate, then the alternative reporting mechanism described below is available.

An alternative reporting mechanism to normal whistleblowing channels are available where:

- the normal reporting channel is considered inappropriate to the circumstances
- CSPD's management was notified but failed to deal with the concern
- the person or organisation disclosing wrongdoing is concerned about possible retaliation.

In any of these circumstances, an internal or external Whistleblower may provide the report of wrongdoing directly to Stoline Pty Ltd via one of the following five channels:

Website	<a href="https://cspd.stolinereport.com/">https://cspd.stolinereport.com/</a>
24/7 Phone Hotline	1300 30 45 50

Email	<a href="mailto:cspd@stipline.com.au">cspd@stipline.com.au</a>
Post	Attention: Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese c/o Stipline PO Box 403 Diamond Creek VIC 3089
QR Code	 <p>Use this QR Code to make a report online.</p>

#### 5.4 Anonymous reports

Anonymous reports of wrongdoing may be made under this Policy. However, anonymous reports have significant limitations that may inhibit a proper and appropriate inquiry or investigation. These limitations include the inability to provide feedback on the outcome and/or to gather additional particulars to assist the inquiry/investigation. Specific protection mechanisms may be difficult to enforce if a Whistleblower chooses to remain anonymous.

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## 6. Whistleblower Protection Officers

6.1 The role of a Whistleblower Protection Officer is to:

- receive disclosures made under this Policy
- make a preliminary assessment if an investigation of the matter is warranted
- support and safeguard the interests of the Whistleblower
- keep the Whistleblower regularly informed.

6.2 A Whistleblower Protection Officer who receives a report must:

- acknowledge receipt of the disclosure as soon as possible

- make a file note of the disclosure and forward it the Manager Audit & Assurance
- the Manager Audit & Assurance will maintain a Register of Disclosures
- the Manager Audit & Assurance will notify the Executive Director in writing
- undertake a preliminary investigation to establish the validity of the disclosure
- where the Whistleblower Protection Officer declines to further investigate (e.g. where there is no evidence or the complaint is vexatious or frivolous) s/he must report her/his findings in writing to the Manager Audit & Assurance
- if the preliminary investigation indicates there is a case to answer, the Whistleblower Protection Officer will report this finding in writing to the Manager Audit & Assurance.

6.3 Nominated CSPD Whistleblower Protection Officers (WPOs) include the following:

- Head People & Culture
- Manager Audit & Assurance.

You can contact a CSPD Whistleblower Protection Officer via email

[wpo@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:wpo@parra.catholic.edu.au)

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## 7. How CSPD Investigates Disclosures

7.1 If it is determined by CSPD that an investigation is warranted, CSPD will aim to ensure that the investigation:

- is conducted promptly
- is sufficiently resourced
- is conducted in a fair and objective manner
- is conducted in strict confidence
- protects the identity of the person who made the disclosure; however, a whistleblower's identity may be disclosed to others as part of the investigation process, but only if necessary and CSPD will take all reasonable steps to avoid the identification of the whistleblower
- gives the opportunity to any person who is adversely mentioned in the disclosure an opportunity to respond prior to any findings being made.

- 7.2 Where the matter appears to involve corrupt conduct, the investigation will usually be undertaken by the Manager Audit & Assurance.
- 7.3 At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will provide the Manager Audit & Assurance with a report that will summarise how the investigation was conducted and the evidence collected. The report will also contain findings in relation to the allegations in the disclosure and recommend any action required.
- 7.4 Following receipt of the investigation report, the Manager Audit & Assurance will take appropriate action, which may include:
- implementing the recommendations of the investigator; these may include for example, initiating a new work process or system improvement, counselling, training or disciplinary action
  - requesting further investigation
  - recommending disciplinary action; and/or
  - notifying regulatory or law enforcement bodies.
- 7.5 The Manager Audit & Assurance will liaise closely with the Head People & Culture in regard to managing investigation outcomes and what actions will be taken.
- 7.6 The Whistleblower will be informed of the results of the investigation following the steps taken above. However, some circumstances such as privacy or other legal constraints may limit the information provided to the person.
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## 8. How CSPD Investigates Disclosures

- 8.1. If a Whistleblower makes a report under this Policy in good faith, then provided he/she has not been involved in the conduct reported, the Whistleblower will not be disadvantaged because they have reported a matter.
- 8.2. A Whistleblower who has not acted in good faith or has intentionally made a false, malicious or vexatious report of alleged wrongdoing, may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment if they are an employee. Contractors and others engaged on the basis of an agreement with CSPD may have their agreement terminated by CSPD.
- 8.3. CSPD staff must not victimise, harass, or discriminate against anyone who raises a concern under this Policy or who participates in an investigation. Such



victimisation, harassment or discrimination may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

- 8.4. A Whistleblower, or person subject of a complaint under this Policy, or any other participant in an investigation who believes he/she has been disadvantaged, including by being subjected to victimisation, harassment, discrimination, or other unfavourable treatment as a result of their report, should immediately advise a nominated Whistleblower Protection Officer.
- 8.5. Staff making a report under this Policy or who are the subject of a complaint under this Policy, or any other staff involved in the investigation process, may seek additional support through the CSPD Employee Assistance Program – Converge International. Converge International can be contacted via their 24/7 phone hotline 1300 687 728 (1300 OUR EAP).

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## 9. Related Documents

- Code of Conduct Policy

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## 10. Further Information

If you would like further information about this Policy, contact a CSPD Whistleblower Protection Officer via email [wpo@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:wpo@parra.catholic.edu.au)

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