Saint Stephen's College
CRICOS Provider Number 01938G

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Reference Number	MAN-11	**Policy Status**	Approved
Delegated Policy Owner	Principal	**Approved By**	College Board
Version Number	1.3	**Approved Date**	29 July 2026
Review Frequency	Biennially	**Scheduled Next Review**	29 July 2028

1. Introduction

This Whistleblower Policy (Policy) has been developed to align with Saint Stephen's College Limited's (College) values and ensure the College's stakeholders can raise concerns regarding Disclosable Conduct safely, securely, and with confidence that they will be protected and supported.

This Policy is available via the College website. Hard copies can be made on request to the Principal's Office.

2. Purpose

This Policy aims to:

(a) Encourage Disclosers (see section 3) to report an issue if they have reasonable grounds to suspect it concerns Disclosable Conduct (see section 4);
(b) Provide details about how and to whom, a Discloser can make a report (see section 7);
(c) Provide details about how the College will deal with reports of Disclosable Conduct (see sections 8 and 9);
(d) Provide details about the protections available to Disclosers, and how the College will ensure fair treatment of those affected by a report (see section 10); and
(e) Fulfil obligations under whistleblower laws, in the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and the *Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019* (Cth) (collectively, the Whistleblower Laws).

3. Scope

This document applies to the College and its related bodies corporate.

This Policy applies to qualifying Disclosers, being persons who are, or have been, officers, employees, suppliers or associates of the College, or a relative, dependant or spouse of any of such persons.

A person who makes a report about alleged Disclosable Conduct but does not qualify as a Discloser under this Policy, will not qualify for protection as a whistleblower

4. What conduct does this document apply to?

Disclosable Conduct

A Discloser may make a report under this policy if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that information indicates there has been Disclosable Conduct.

Disclosable Conduct includes:

(a) Misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances in relation to the College (or a related body corporate).
(b) Conduct that breaches the *Corporations Act*, or other legislation prescribed by the Whistleblowers Laws.
(c) Conduct that constitutes an offence against any other law of the Commonwealth that is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more.
(d) Conduct that represents a danger to the public or the financial system.
(e) Conduct that is otherwise prescribed by Whistleblower Laws.
(f) Conduct that may indicate a 'systemic issue'.

However, this Policy does not apply to a disclosure to the extent that the information disclosed concerns a Personal Work-Related Grievance, and does not concern alleged or threatened detrimental treatment (see section What is a Personal Work-Related Grievance?).

Any reports that do not relate to Disclosable Conduct are not covered by this Policy, and will not qualify for protection under Whistleblower Laws.

Practical examples of Disclosable Conduct include:

(a) Illegal conduct, such as theft, dealing in or use of illicit drugs, violence or threatened violence, and criminal damage against property;
(b) Fraud, money laundering or misappropriation of funds;
(c) Offering or accepting a bribe;
(d) Financial irregularities;
(e) Failure to comply with, or breach of, legal or regulatory requirements; and
(f) Engaging in or threatening to engage in victimisation.

However, Disclosable Conduct can include conduct that may not involve a contravention of a particular law.

What is a Personal Work-Related Grievance?

Personal Work-Related Grievances are grievances that relate to one's own employment (or former employment), and which:

(a) May have implications for the Discloser personally;
(b) Do not have any other significant implications for the College; and
(c) Do not relate to any conduct, or alleged conduct, about a Disclosable Matter.

Practical examples of Personal Work-Related Grievances include:

(a) An interpersonal conflict between the Discloser and another employee(s);
(b) A lawful management decision or workplace action relating to the Discloser that does not involve misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or a breach of workplace or other laws;
(c) A decision relating to the engagement, transfer or promotion of the Discloser;
(d) A decision relating to the terms and conditions of engagement of the Discloser; and

(e) A decision to suspend or terminate the engagement of the Discloser, or otherwise to discipline the Discloser.

Personal Work-Related Grievances should be dealt with under the College's workplace policies (and raised with the Human Resources department).

5. Interactions between this document and other Policies

In some cases, a Discloser may make a disclosure to which multiple policies, procedures or legal obligations may apply.

For example, a disclosure may concern Disclosable Conduct and also raise a reportable allegation under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, a child safety concern, or obligations under the Child Safe Standards. The College will therefore have obligations under both this Policy and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

In such circumstances, the College will manage the matter in a way that complies with all applicable statutory and regulatory obligations, while maintaining the protections available to eligible Disclosers under this Policy.

6. How to make a report?

Form of Report

A report about alleged Disclosable Conduct under this document can be made at any time, either verbally or in writing. The report should include details of:

- The nature of the allegation(s);
- The individual(s) involved;
- The key facts on which the Discloser is making the report and has formed the view that Disclosable Conduct exists and involves the individual(s) named in the report; and
- The nature and whereabouts of any additional evidence that substantiates the allegation(s).

Reasonable grounds and false claims

A report made under this Policy may have serious consequences, including potential damage to the personal reputation and career prospects of the person(s) who are the subject of alleged Disclosable Conduct. A Discloser must therefore have reasonable grounds to suspect that the concerns being raised fall within the definition of Disclosable Conduct.

Persons who are found to have knowingly made a false report may be in breach of this Policy, and be subject to appropriate disciplinary action (including termination of employment or engagement).

Anonymity

Disclosers can elect to make an anonymous report. Anonymous reports remain protected by Whistleblower Laws.

However, the College may not be able to undertake an investigation if it is not able to contact the Discloser (e.g. if a disclosure is made anonymously and the discloser has refused to provide, or has not provided, a means of contacting them). A Discloser who wishes to remain anonymous should therefore maintain ongoing two-way communication with the College, so the College (or its representatives) can ask follow-up questions or provide feedback.

7. Who to make a report to?

Reports of alleged Disclosable Conduct may be made to any of the following persons in order to qualify for protection. The College encourages all Disclosers to consider making an internal report in the first instance, following the Formal Resolution Procedure documented in the College's *Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedure*, as this will enable the College to identify and address any wrongdoing as early as possible.

Internal Reporting

Eligible recipients include an officer, senior manager, or auditor of the College.

An eligible recipient must promptly forward a report to the Principal and if the report is regarding the Principal, the report is to be forwarded to the Board. If the report is in relation to the Board, the report is to be forwarded to the Company Secretary. The Principal, Board and Company Secretary act in the capacity of the Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO). Refer to the College's *Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedure* for contact details.

The College has authorised the WPO to:

(a) Receive reports of alleged Disclosable Conduct and coordinate any necessary action by the College;
(b) Keep the Discloser updated on developments;
(c) Safeguard the interests of Disclosers making reports under this document; and
(d) Ensure the integrity of the reporting system.

External Reporting

Although the College's preference is that a Discloser first contact an internal eligible recipient, or the WPO, the Discloser may choose to make a report of alleged Disclosable Conduct directly to Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or any other prescribed Commonwealth authority. To be eligible to make a report under this law, the following criteria must be met:

(a) You must be a current or former employee, officer, contractor or contractor's employee, volunteer, associate, or spouse, relative or dependant of a current or former employee, officer, contractor or contractor's employee or volunteer.
(b) The organisation must be a company, an incorporated association or other body corporate.
(c) You must make your disclosure to ASIC or APRA, the ATO or any other prescribed Commonwealth authority.
(d) You must have reasonable grounds to suspect that the information you are disclosing about the company or organisation concerns misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances.

To access external reporting forms, please see the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's factsheet available here.

Public interest and emergency disclosures

In some limited circumstances, the Discloser may be permitted to make a public interest or emergency disclosure to a Member of Parliament or a journalist. However, this is only in certain limited circumstances.

For matters considered to be in the public interest, there are specific criteria that must be met including:

(a) You must have previously made a report to ASIC or APRA that satisfies the criteria described under the External Reporting section.
(b) At least 90 days have passed since you made the report to ASIC or APRA and you do not have reasonable grounds to believe that action to address your concerns is being or has been taken.
(c) You have reasonable grounds to believe that reporting your concerns to a journalist or parliamentarian would be in the public interest.
(d) After 90 days from your original report to ASIC or APRA, you give ASIC or APRA a written notice that includes sufficient information to identify your earlier report and states your intention to make a public interest disclosure.
(e) You report your concerns about misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances or a breach of the law to a journalist or a parliamentarian.

For matters in an emergency, the following specific criteria must be met:

(a) You must have previously made a report to ASIC or APRA that satisfies the criteria described under the External Reporting section.
(b) You have reasonable grounds to believe that the information in your report concerns substantial and imminent danger to the health or safety of one or more people or the natural environment.
(c) You give ASIC or APRA a written notice that includes sufficient information to identify your earlier report and states your intention to make an emergency disclosure.
(d) You report your concerns about the substantial or imminent danger to a journalist or parliamentarian.

For more information on these disclosures, please see the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's fact sheet available here.

Reporting to a legal practitioner

A Discloser may make a report to a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or legal representation in relation to the operation of this document or Whistleblower Laws in general.

8. Steps following a report

Following a report of alleged Disclosable Conduct, the WPO will assess whether:

(a) It qualifies for protection; and
(b) A formal, in-depth investigation is required.

9. Investigations of Disclosable Conduct

Whistleblower Investigations Officer (WIO)

Name: Josie Burford

Position: Director of Risk and Compliance

Telephone: 07 5573 8617

Email: jburford@ssc.qld.edu.au

Where a report is made, and it is determined that an investigation of the alleged Disclosable Conduct is warranted (see section 8), the WIO will carry out (or delegate) the investigation.

Investigation Procedure

Where a formal investigation is warranted, the College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the investigation is conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

Investigations under this Policy must be conducted as soon as is reasonably practicable. In ideal circumstances, investigations will be completed in weeks rather than months. However, this depends on the complexity of the alleged Disclosable Conduct, and the availability of witnesses and evidence.

The Discloser will be periodically updated regarding the status of the investigation, if they can be contacted.

Appropriate records and documentation for each step in the investigation process must be maintained.

Persons the subject of a disclosure

The College recognises that individuals who are the subject of alleged Disclosable Conduct must also be supported during any investigation process. Accordingly, the College will provide such individuals with natural justice and procedural fairness, and details of the College's available support services.

Outcomes

Following the investigation, findings will be made about whether or not there has been Disclosable Conduct. These findings will be communicated (subject to any conflicts of interest) to the Principal, the Chair, the WIO, the WPO, the Discloser, and any person the subject of the alleged Disclosable Conduct.

The method for documenting and reporting the findings will depend on the nature of the alleged Disclosable Conduct and related report. In some cases, it may not be appropriate to provide details of any outcomes to the Discloser.

10. Protection of Whistleblowers

Anonymity of a Discloser

A Discloser can remain anonymous while making a report, over the course of any subsequent investigation, and after the investigation is finalised. A Discloser can also refuse to answer questions that may identify themselves, and may adopt a pseudonym (i.e. by not using their legal first and/or last name).

Confidentiality

All reports made under this Policy will be confidential.

A person cannot disclose the identity of a Discloser, or information that is likely to lead to the identification of the Discloser, which they have obtained directly or indirectly because the Discloser has made a report that qualifies for protection under Whistleblower Laws.

There are exceptions to this, including where the Discloser consents to their identity being disclosed. A person can also disclose information contained in a report, without the Discloser's consent, if:

(a) The information does not include the Discloser's identity;
(b) The College has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the risk that the Discloser will be identified from the information; and
(c) It is reasonably necessary for investigating the issues raised in the disclosure.

It is illegal for a person to identify a Discloser, or disclose information that is likely to lead to the identification of the Discloser, unless an exception applies.

All files and records created during an investigation will be retained in secure files and any unauthorised release of information will be regarded as a breach of this document.

If a Discloser considers there has been a breach of confidentiality, they can choose to lodge a complaint with the College or with a regulator, such as ASIC or APRA, for investigation.

Protections against detrimental treatment

The College is committed to protecting and respecting the rights of the Discloser, and will not tolerate any detrimental treatment (such as victimisation) against a person who has made, proposes to make, or could make a report under this document (or against the person's colleagues, associates, or family).

Any such treatment will be treated as serious misconduct by the College and may result in disciplinary action (including termination of employment).

However, detrimental treatment does not include:

(a) Administrative action that is reasonable for the purpose of protecting a Discloser from detriment (e.g. moving a Discloser who has made a report about their immediate work area to another office, to prevent them from detriment); and
(b) Reasonably managing a Discloser's unsatisfactory conduct or work performance.

Compensation

Any discloser who is subjected to detrimental treatment may be entitled to compensation and other remedies if:

(a) They suffer loss, damage or injury because of a disclosure under this Policy; and
(b) The College failed to take reasonable precautions and exercise due diligence to prevent the detrimental treatment.

For more information, please see Australian Securities and Investment Commission's fact sheet available here.

Protections against legal action

Whistleblower Laws protect a Discloser against certain civil, criminal and administrative liabilities related to making a whistleblower disclosure.

However, this protection does not grant immunity to a Discloser for any misconduct they have engaged in that is revealed by the disclosure.

For more information, please see the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's fact sheet available here.

12.5 Available Supports

The College will consider what support may be appropriate for a Discloser, having regard to the nature of the report and the circumstances. Support may include access to internal support persons, wellbeing support, or other reasonable measures to reduce the risk of detrimental treatment.

Protections under the tax whistleblower protection regime

Part IVD of the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* (Cth) establishes a tax whistleblower protection regime. The regime provides protections for eligible Discloser who report tax-related concerns. These protections may apply where the Discloser has reasonable grounds to suspect that the information may assist the Commissioner of Taxation perform their functions or duties under taxation law, or may indicate misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances relating to the College's tax affairs.

13. General

13.1 Compliance

It is a condition of any employment or engagement by the College that all officers, employees and contractors comply at all times with this Policy.

However, this Policy does not form part of any agreement between any person and the College, nor does it constitute terms and conditions of any person's employment or engagement with the College.

13.2 Policy Communication

The College will ensure that all officers and employees have access to this document through the College website and the College's internal platforms. The College may also make this document available to other persons, including contractors, service providers, volunteers and associates, where relevant to their role, engagement or relationship with the College.

13.3 Policy Implementation

The College will take reasonable steps to ensure that officers and employees are aware of this document and understand how it applies to them. This may include communicating this document through induction processes, ongoing training and awareness activities, and cross-referencing this document in related College documents.

The College will also ensure that persons with specific responsibilities under this document, including eligible recipients, the Whistleblower Protection Officer and the Whistleblower Investigation Officer, receive appropriate information or training to support them to understand and carry out their obligations.

Contacts

If you have any queries in relation to this document, please contact the Whistleblower Protection Officer.

Review of this document

This Policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it remains consistent with all relevant legislative requirements, as well as the changing nature of the organisation. This Policy may be amended, withdrawn or replaced from time to time at the College's sole discretion.

Source of Obligation

Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)
Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth)
Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019 (Cth)

Related policies and procedures

Saint Stephen's College Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedure
Saint Stephen's College Staff Code of Conduct
Saint Stephen's College Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Saint Stephen's College Student Safety and Wellbeing – Staff Code of Conduct
Saint Stephen's College Student Safety and Wellbeing – Raising and Responding to Concerns Policy and Procedure
Saint Stephen's College Student Safety and Wellbeing – Recruitment, Screening and Engagement Policy and Procedure

References

ASIC Information Sheet – 238 Whistleblower rights and protections | ASIC

Document History

Version	Date	Author	Amendments
1.3	June 2026	Josie Burford – Director of Risk and Compliance	Alignment with College approved policy format and consistency with applicable legislation and available guidance.
2024	11 December 2024	Content provided by Russell Kennedy	
2020	August 2020	Bob Nicol	