

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

DATE OF POLICY:

APPROVED BY: CHIEF INSPECTOR – CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE TO BE REVIEWED:

Introduction

ISI is committed to high quality inspection, promoting improvement in all settings. Constructive challenge is welcomed. Concerns about poor practice within ISI, including poor inspection practice, or suggestions for areas where practice might usefully be strengthened and developed, may be raised without fear of detriment with the Deputy Chief Inspector or Chief Inspector, or via the ISI whistleblowing policy. It is the duty of all members of the ISI community to raise such concerns so that they can be fully aired and in order that through appropriate challenge and analysis, improvements can be made.

This policy sets out the procedures that inspectors or employees should follow if you are concerned about inspection quality or procedures, integrity of internal processes at ISI or any similar matter, whether or not directly related to inspection. You should be assured that raising concerns will not result in reprisals in any form.

Victimisation of those raising concerns will not be tolerated and we will take appropriate action to protect any person who raises a concern in the appropriate manner using this policy. This will still be the case, even where a concern that is sincerely felt and expressed is subsequently unsubstantiated or proved to be unfounded.

Attempts will be made, wherever possible, to protect the identity of any individual who raises a concern and does not want his or her name to be disclosed. However, any investigation process may in itself reveal the source of the information and a statement may be necessary as part of the evidence.

ISI's inspectors and employees are aware of the existing policies and procedures for inspection and the independent safeguards which are already in place. These include:

- internal monitoring and quality assurance
- Ofsted quality assurance monitoring
- a complaints procedure covering both inspection and non-inspection complaints
- the ISI safeguarding policy.

Concerns should be raised outside these channels if you are satisfied that the following criteria are met:

- you are acting in good faith
- you have reasonable grounds to believe the information disclosed indicates that any of the following have happened, are in progress or are likely to happen:
 - Poor inspection practice
 - Failure to comply with necessary requirements for the inspectorate to maintain approval by the Secretary of State for Education
 - Criminal offence(s)
 - Failure to comply with legal obligation(s)
 - Miscarriage of justice
 - Endangerment of health and safety
 - Damage to the environment
 - Concealment of information about any of the above
- normal procedures are inappropriate or have already been tried and have failed to resolve

the serious issues concerned

- you are not disclosing the information for personal gain, you seriously believe the concern to be valid and that disclosure is in the public interest.

Avenues for reporting concerns within ISI

Concerns should normally be raised with the appropriate level of management. However, the most appropriate person to contact depends on the seriousness of the issue in question, as well as who is suspected of malpractice. Individuals may contact any of the following at a level depending on circumstances:

- The head of the relevant function
- Other member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Chief Inspector
- Chief Executive
- Chair of the ISI Board

If you are dissatisfied with the response provided you may raise the matter with the next level within ISI as listed above.

Individuals will not be expected to prove the truth of the allegation that has been made, but it will be necessary to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

ISI will respond promptly to any serious concern raised. Any person who is the subject of a concern will not be involved in the handling of the matter.

How ISI will respond to whistle-blowing concerns about ISI

Management may investigate the matters raised by one or more of the following means, as appropriate:

- Internal investigation by the relevant line manager or another manager
- Investigation by or on behalf of Chief Inspector/ Chief Executive, with benefit of external advice where appropriate
- Investigation by or on behalf of the Chair of the ISI Board, with benefit of external advice where appropriate
- Referral for external investigation by the relevant government agency or regulator.

Certain matters may be subject to investigation by the Police, if there is evidence to suggest that a criminal offence may have occurred, or may be about to occur. In the event of a serious child protection matter the relevant Local Authority will be informed by ISI (see the **ISI safeguarding policy** on the ISI website for more).

Avenues for reporting concerns outside ISI

If you are not satisfied with how your concern has been dealt with, in some instances the Public Interest Disclosure Act provides for ‘protected’ disclosures to be made to an appropriate regulator, also known as a ‘prescribed person or body’. In relation to matters of inspection practice, this would be the Department for Education. Other regulators may be relevant to other types of concern. The full list and more advice is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

Contact details

Chief Inspector	Vanessa Ward c/o P.A. Alison.buckley@isi.net
Chair	Christine Swabey c/o P.A. Alison.buckley@isi.net

Schedule of Amendments

Date	Amendment
June 2018	Updated to extend to concerns about poor inspection practice, to reflect introduction of ISI safeguarding policy, and expansion of ISI Complaints policy to include non-inspection complaints.