



Policy: Whistleblower Policy

Adopted by the Board of Directors: 9 June 2025

Effective Date: 9 June 2025

The Salish Sea School Whistleblower Policy

1. General Policy Statement

The Salish Sea School is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethics, transparency, and accountability. This policy encourages all staff, volunteers, and affiliates to report suspected wrongdoing without fear of retaliation. The Salish Sea School prohibits retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith and will protect whistleblowers to the fullest extent permitted by law, including applicable federal statutes and Washington State laws such as [RCW 49.60](#), which safeguards employees from discrimination and retaliation.

2. Who Is Protected

This policy applies to:

- a. Employees (full-time, part-time, temporary)
- b. Volunteers, Interns, and Board Members
- c. Contractors, Vendors, and Affiliates (regardless of contractual terms)
- d. Others acting on behalf of the Organization

It covers conduct occurring on Salish Sea School property, during Salish Sea School activities, or that significantly impacts the organization's operations, reputation, or legal standing.

3. What Can Be Reported

Whistleblower reports may relate to, but are not limited to:

- a. Fraud, theft, financial mismanagement, or misuse of funds
- b. Violations of laws, regulations, or grant requirements
- c. Unsafe, hazardous, or environmentally harmful practices
- d. Harassment, discrimination, or retaliation
- e. Data privacy breaches or misuse of confidential information
- f. Conflicts of interest, unethical conduct, or violations of internal policies
- g. Attempted misconduct (even if unsuccessful)

4. Reporting Process

A. How to Report

Confidential Options:

- **Primary:** Executive Director (Amy Eberling)
Email: amy@thesalishseaschool.org
- **If involving the Executive Director:** President and Secretary of the Board of Directors
Email: president@thesalishseaschool.org
Email: secretary@thesalishseaschool.org

Anonymous Option: Secure Dropbox: Attn: Treasurer, 1513 A Avenue, Anacortes, WA 98221

B. Report Requirements

To facilitate investigation, include:

- Description of the concern, including dates, locations, and individuals involved
- Supporting documents (if available)
- Whether you wish to remain anonymous

Note: Anonymous reports are accepted but may limit investigation effectiveness.

5. Investigation Process

No individual who reports a concern in good faith will be subject to retaliation, harassment, or adverse consequences. Retaliation against a whistleblower is grounds for disciplinary action, including termination or removal from duties.

- Reports will be reviewed by the Board of Directors.
- Initial findings will typically be completed within 30 days, with confidentiality maintained to the extent possible.
- Where contact information is provided, whistleblowers will receive acknowledgment and updates on the review.

Investigation Guidelines

Whistleblowers and any other individuals interviewed as part of an investigation are expected to cooperate fully and refrain from discussing the investigation with individuals not directly involved. Complainants should not attempt to investigate the matter themselves or contact the individual(s) involved. Any media inquiries should be directed to the Executive Director or Board President.

6. Confidentiality

The Salish Sea School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality, consistent with the need for an effective investigation. Identities will be disclosed only to those directly involved in the review, except where disclosure is required by law (e.g., subpoena or court order).

7. False or Malicious Allegations

Knowingly making false, malicious, or bad-faith reports is a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action. Good-faith reports are protected — even if unproven.

8. Staff Acknowledgment and Distribution

This policy will be included in The Salish Sea School Staff Handbook and provided to all employees and key volunteers.

- All staff, volunteers, and Board members must sign an acknowledgment confirming they have received, read, and understood this policy, along with the organization's Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure policies.
- Signed acknowledgments will be retained in personnel or Board records as part of onboarding and continued engagement.
- This policy will also be posted publicly on The Salish Sea School's website to demonstrate the organization's commitment to governance best practices and transparency.

9. Legal Rights

This policy does not limit an individual's right to report concerns directly to government agencies (e.g., OSHA, EEOC, or Washington State authorities) or pursue legal remedies.

Limits of Protection

This policy does not grant immunity to individuals who are complicit in the misconduct reported. A complainant's protection from retaliation does not extend to shielding them from accountability if they participated in or benefited from the misconduct being investigated.

10. Oversight and Review

The Board of Directors is responsible for the annual review and oversight of this policy.

Definitions

- **Baseless Allegations:** Claims made in bad faith or with reckless disregard for their truth or falsity.
- **Complainant:** An individual who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct under this policy.
- **Good Faith:** A reasonable belief that the reported information is truthful, even if later proven incorrect.
- **Retaliation:** Adverse actions taken in response to a protected report.

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding

I acknowledge that I have received and read **The Salish Sea School Whistleblower Policy**, and I understand its contents. I agree to comply with this policy and understand my responsibility to report any suspected misconduct, unethical behavior, or violations of law or policy as outlined.

I understand that this acknowledgment will be kept on record as part of my onboarding and continued engagement with The Salish Sea School.

Individual's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____