

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY, 2026

Forming part of Giant Steps Tasmania's *Personnel Manual*

Policy Statement

Giant Steps Tasmania recognises the importance of transparency and accountability in its practices and supports the making of disclosures that also, while not necessarily resulting in a finding of wrong-doing, reveal inconsistencies, anomalies and weaknesses in its practices which can then be addressed and rectified.

Giant Steps Tasmania does not tolerate improper conduct or detrimental action by its staff or Board or the taking of negative action against those who come forward to disclose misconduct.

Giant Steps Tasmania takes all reasonable steps to protect people who make disclosures from any negative behaviour as a result of making the disclosure. It also affords natural justice to all parties involved in the investigation of a disclosure.

Definition

Whistleblowing is when a current/former employee, officer, contractor, supplier, or associate of the organisation reports suspected wrongdoing at the organisation, based on having reasonable grounds for this belief.

Wrong-doing includes:

- putting someone's health and safety in danger;
- damage to the environment;
- not obeying the law;
- covering up wrongdoing;
- misusing the organisation's funds; and
- actions that negatively affect the welfare of children

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff and Board members understand what might warrant a disclosure, how they should go about making a disclosure and what the result of making such a disclosure might be. To this end, this policy is available on the Giant Steps Tasmania website.

Giant Steps Tasmania's staff are encouraged to continue to raise matters of concern at any time with their line manager or the Principal, and parents and carers are encouraged to use existing complaints procedures where appropriate. This policy is designed to complement these practices.

References

Whistleblowing with respect to private companies is covered by the *Corporations Act 2001* <https://www.asic.gov.au/about-asic/asic-investigations-and-enforcement/whistleblowing/whistleblower-rights-and-protections/>

Through this policy, Giant Steps Tasmania ensures that all staff and Board members are aware of the following:

- The following people, if they are reporting breaches of law (see page 1), can be termed Whistleblowers and so receive protection under the law:
 - current/former employees
 - officers
 - contractors
 - suppliers
 - associates

Anyone reporting a personal grievance is not termed a Whistleblower and should make use of the School's Complaints Policy .

- It is an offence for a person to take detrimental action against a person in reprisal for a disclosure being made.
- It is an offence for a person to divulge information obtained as a result of the handling or investigation of a disclosure.
- It is an offence for a person to knowingly provide false information

This Giant Steps' policy is also informed by the following Australian Standards:

- AS 8000 Good Governance Principles
- AS 8004 Whistleblower protection programs for entities

Implementation

While a person is at liberty to raise a matter of concern with an external agency (e.g. Police), they may feel it would be more appropriate to give the school the opportunity to address the issue first.

Where a person has concerns that a staff member or member of the Board may be responsible for one or more categories of wrong-doing listed on Page 1, they may initially choose to discuss the matter informally with the Principal or a Board member.

If this does not resolve the issue, they may move to the formal stage by raising the matter with the Chair of the Board. If the matter is alleged to involve the Chair, the person must make the submission to another Board member.

Concerns may be submitted verbally. The person to whom the disclosure is made will put the main points in writing and request the person who made the disclosure to sign it as a reliable version of what s/he said). Alternatively, the concern may be submitted in writing and signed. The person to whom the allegation is made may request additional information from the person making the allegation. The person making the allegation will receive a response within 15 working days.

It is recommended that if a person raises a matter with the Principal or a member of the Board, but has not been contacted by them **within 15 working days of raising the matter** that they contact an external agency (e.g. Police).

When a concern is investigated under this Policy and findings are made that substantiate any or all of the allegations made, the Chair of the Board, or another Board member if the disclosure allegedly involves the Chair, may:

- arrange for the counselling of the person involved on their behaviour and the findings of the investigation;
- pass the matter on to an external organization (e.g. police)

- terminate the contract of employment of the person who is the subject of the allegation;
or
- take no further action

The Chair, or another appropriate Board member, will write a report on the concern, investigation and outcomes. The report will be held securely at Giant Steps Tasmania **for a minimum of 5 years.**

Anonymous allegations will be taken seriously and will be investigated, but it should be noted that in instances of anonymous allegations:

- It is not possible to give feedback to the person making the allegation
- Investigations may be hampered by the person to whom the allegation has been made not being able to ask follow up questions
- Anonymous Whistleblowers are not protected by the Corporations Act 2001

Giant Steps Tasmania will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of a discloser. Maintaining confidentiality is crucial in ensuring reprisals are not made against the discloser.

Giant Steps Tasmania will also take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of witnesses and of the person against whom the disclosure has been made. Any breach of either the confidentiality or non-victimization requirements, will be treated seriously by Giant Steps Tasmania, and may result in disciplinary action.

The submission of malicious and false reports designed to harm a member of Giant Steps Tasmania, or the organisation as a whole will be treated seriously by Giant Steps Tasmania and may result in disciplinary action.

Authorised by:	Paul Bowman
Position:	Chair of Board
Signature:	
Date revisions accepted:	
Original policy developed by:	Chris Jacobsen
Position:	(Previously) Education Administrator
Date Original Policy developed:	June 2016
Date of first review:	March 2018
Date of this review:	January – March 2026
Staff consultation period:	February 2026
Revisions prepared by:	Chris Jacobsen, Fairlight Educational Consulting
Date of next review:	March 2028