

25 October 2019

Dear Staff and Colleagues,

We are writing to provide you with information regarding a whistleblowing allegation which was received by the school in July 2019.

Due to the allegation being received so close to the end of last term, it was decided that it would be more appropriate to start the investigation in September 2019. Allan Morris & Steve Cox undertook a full investigation, which the Trustees have now reviewed. The report itself is very thorough and we wish to thank those who participated in providing statements. As you will all be aware, the details of the report must remain confidential, however we are able to share the findings and key recommendations.

On the key allegation of bullying, we can confirm that the allegation was not substantiated. The investigation took the legal definition of bullying as the threshold and found that there was no evidence of this. However, the investigation did find that the historical 'tone from the top' could lead some staff to perceive or feel that they had been bullied. We appreciate that this is a nuanced position, but the important thing moving forward is the recommendations.

The report makes several recommendations, which the Trustees have reviewed. We will be passing the entire report to Avanti as part of the handover, but the key recommendations include, but are not limited to –

- Setting up a pastoral role so individuals are able to discuss personal concerns without the need of going to their line managers;
- Staff wellbeing survey to be run on a bi-annual basis;
- Undertake a full review of all HR practices to ensure staff wellbeing matters are being properly maintained and appropriate support provided.

The Board of Trustees would hope that all staff feel safe, secure and respected in all aspects of their work at SAB and in the future with Avanti. As such we would actively encourage all staff to ensure they are familiar with the Whistleblowing policy and Prevention of Staff Bullying and Harassment policy. We would also hope that staff would feel confident to put these policies in to action should they need to.

We hope that the following information is helpful to you all. The Prevention of Staff Bullying and Harassment Policy defines harassment as:

“Unwanted, unreasonable and/or offensive behaviour which adversely affects a person’s dignity and well-being and which can create an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating environment adversely impacting on the individual”.

The Prevention of Staff Bullying and Harassment Policy defines bullying as:

“A form of harassment. It is a range of repeated, undermining behaviours (actions, comments and/or physical contact) usually vindictive, with the purpose of controlling individuals and making them unhappy, unsure and insecure in their relationships and role”.

It is hoped that the transfer to Avanti will be completed within the next few weeks, which will bring the school a new lease of life. In the meantime please look after yourselves and your colleagues as we go forward. You have all done an amazing job over this very challenging period, we truly recognise that and will continue to be a supporting role until the transfer..

Kindest regards  
The Board of Trustees

