

# Reporting Concerns at Westtown School – General

## Why should I make a report about a concern or violation at Westtown School?

Central to the Westtown School [mission](#) and [Quaker heritage](#) is our collective testimony of truth. As Westtown School employees, students, parents, alumni/ae/x, or friends, we are asked to listen for the truth within, and to honor the experience and expression of truth in each other. Among other things, our commitment to truth means that we act with integrity. If it appears that our community standards may have been violated, we are encouraged to bring the matter to light. The success of our school and its mission requires us all to work together, in support of our values and expectations.

Questions about how to raise concerns and report violations, and what happens next, are addressed below.

## What type of situations should I report?

Westtown School standards, rules, and expectations are described in our Employee Handbook and handbooks for Lower, Middle, and Upper School students and parents, which can be found on the relevant portals on our website. If you are concerned about a possible violation of any of the school's rules, the law, or other commonly accepted standards of conduct, the school encourages you to bring your concern to light.

## Does the school really want to hear from me?

Yes. The essence of Quakerism is that every voice matters, and that truth can come from any corner.

Please note that current Westtown School employees are *required* to report certain kinds of misconduct, as described in the Employee Handbook.

# How to Make a Report: EthicsPoint and Other Options

## How can I make a report about a concern or possible violation of school rules?

You have many options, and this FAQ addresses each. When concerns arise, we strongly encourage Westonians to address them directly with an appropriate person at the school, if possible. Depending on the circumstances, that might mean that a student brings concerns to a teacher, an employee raises an issue with a supervisor or Human Resources, or a parent or alumnus/a/x brings a matter to the attention of a senior administrator.

Where that is not preferable or possible, the school offers EthicsPoint as a secure way of reporting violations, either anonymously or under one's name. Learn more about EthicsPoint below.

## **What is EthicsPoint?**

EthicsPoint is a reporting tool created by NAVEX Global. While the tool was created “to assist management and employees work together in addressing fraud, abuse, and other misconduct in the workplace, all while cultivating a positive work environment,” Westtown School has partnered with EthicsPoint in order to provide all Westonians — employees, students, parents, alumni/ae/x — with an alternative reporting option when direct communication is not preferable or possible, or when you wish to submit a report anonymously.

## **May I report a concern directly to someone at the school?**

Yes. Westtown School is about community. Face-to-face and direct conversations are encouraged. Advisors, deans, and teachers are important resources for students, and students are encouraged to seek out a trusted member of the staff or faculty if they have a question or concern about our community standards. Likewise, employees are encouraged to contact their supervisors or Human Resources, and alumni/ae/x and friends of the school may get in touch with an appropriate administrator. All reports will be handled with compassion and respect, and as much confidentiality and discretion as possible.

## **May I report a concern by phone or online?**

Yes. You may call or email an individual at the school. Contact information can be found through the online faculty/staff directory on our website. In addition, this EthicsPoint site gives you the ability to file a report either by phone or online, anonymously if you so choose.

## **What if I feel uncomfortable contacting someone at Westtown School directly?**

Sometimes a face-to-face or direct conversation is not preferable or possible. In such situations, you are encouraged to use EthicsPoint to report your concern or ask your question. It may be particularly helpful to make use of EthicsPoint if your concern has to do with a serious, sensitive, or complex interpersonal incident — for example, sexual misconduct, harassment, threats of harm, or bias incidents. In such cases, EthicsPoint provides a safe and supportive way forward, either online or by phone, under one’s name or anonymously.

## **Who can use the Westtown School EthicsPoint site?**

The system is primarily intended for Westtown School faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae/x, and parents on behalf of their student or alumni/ae/x children.

## **Where do EthicsPoint reports go? Who can access them?**

Reports made through EthicsPoint are entered directly on a secure server. EthicsPoint makes each report available only to specific individuals at Westtown School, based on the type of violation and location of the incident. Most reports are sent to the Head of School’s Office and the Dean of Finance (unless there is a conflict, in which case reports go to a neutral third party). Depending on the nature of the concern or incident, the report may then be evaluated by other school administrators or independent investigators. Each of these individuals is committed to receiving reports in confidence, and responding with as much discretion as possible.

**What if I make an EthicsPoint report that implicates my supervisor or other senior administrator? Will they get the report?**

No. The EthicsPoint system is designed so that implicated parties – including senior Westtown School administrators, Head of School, and trustees – are not notified about or granted access to reports in which they have been named.

## **Using EthicsPoint: Anonymity and Contact Information**

**When I make an EthicsPoint report, do I have to give my name?**

You have options. You may choose to include your name and/or contact information, or you may choose to remain anonymous. Making a report of a possible violation, or even asking a question about an ethical dilemma, can be emotionally difficult. For this reason, some people may feel more comfortable withholding their name or identifying information.

**How do I make an anonymous report through EthicsPoint? How is my anonymity guaranteed?**

On the EthicsPoint system you do not have to provide your name or any contact information. In addition, if you wish to remain anonymous, you – as the reporting party – need to ensure that the body of your report does not reveal your identity by accident. For example, if you wish to remain anonymous, avoid identifying information like “I was talking to my roommate on G2, Jan Smith...” or “In my 33 years of employment...”.

EthicsPoint does not generate or maintain any logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your computer or device to EthicsPoint is available. The EthicsPoint web portal never identifies a visitor by screen name and the EthicsPoint system strips away Internet addresses so that anonymity is totally maintained. Plus, EthicsPoint is contractually committed not to pursue a reporter’s identity.

**What about EthicsPoint report follow-ups – are they as secure as the first one?**

Yes. All EthicsPoint correspondences are held in the same confidence as the initial report, continuing under the umbrella of anonymity.

**Is the EthicsPoint telephone toll-free hotline confidential and anonymous too?**

Yes. When you call the hotline, you will be invited to provide the same information that you would provide in a web-based report, and an interviewer will type your responses into the EthicsPoint website. But you may decline to answer any questions about your identity. These reports have the same security and confidentiality measures applied to them during delivery.

**What if I want to be identified in my EthicsPoint report?**

There is a section in the report for identifying yourself, if you wish.

# Investigations and Follow-up

## **What happens after I submit a report?**

Any report that provides sufficient information about a possible violation of Westtown School community standards will result in follow-up. If the information provided in the report is insufficient to allow for meaningful and productive follow-up, an attempt will be made to learn more.

Generally, follow-up will include inquiry or investigation by appropriate Westtown School administrators or independent investigators, followed by fact-finding and a decision about consequences. These steps are described below.

## **Who investigates my report?**

Depending on the nature of the incident and the individuals involved, reports may be investigated by school administrators, such as the Director of Human Resources in employee matters and the division principals and deans in student matters.

Where a report describes a particularly sensitive or complex matter, it will be investigated by an independent third-party investigator. Reports particularly suited to independent investigation will likely include sexual misconduct incidents, other serious incidents, and/or incidents involving former employees or alumni/ae/x.

Note that where criminal conduct is at issue, the school will refer matters to local law enforcement as appropriate, and legal or criminal consequences may ensue.

## **What does an investigation look like, and how is it decided?**

Investigations of possible violations will be impartial. Investigations will be as prompt and thorough as possible. All individuals involved in the process are appropriately trained. In keeping with Westtown School values and guiding principles, investigators are committed to working with students, employees, and others in a respectful, compassionate manner. Throughout an investigation, efforts will be made to keep all parties informed, to the extent that confidentiality, impartiality, and the integrity of the investigation will allow.

Employees with questions about the investigation process should consult the Employee Handbook, and are encouraged to direct questions to Human Resources. Students and parents may refer to the student handbook for their division, and are welcome to contact their principal or a dean in their division with questions.

### **How can the school follow up if my report is anonymous?**

The school's goal is to understand even the most complex situations properly. Although investigations may be limited by the amount of information available, EthicsPoint makes it possible for the school or its investigators to seek further information — even when a reporting person has chosen to remain anonymous. Here's how it works:

When you file a report through the Westtown School EthicsPoint website or through the EthicsPoint Call Center, you receive a unique username and are asked to choose a password. You can use your username and password to return to the EthicsPoint system later, either online or by phone, in order to add more detail or to answer questions from a school representative. In this way, you can engage in an anonymous dialogue with an investigator. If you file a report, you are strongly encouraged to return to the site in the time specified to answer follow-up questions. If you wish to limit your involvement in an investigation to this kind of anonymous dialogue, you will want to withhold your name and any identifying information.

Still, sometimes anonymous reporting may limit the school's ability to investigate fully, respond, or take further action, depending on the level of information available. If you feel that it is important for the school to fully and thoroughly investigate the matter you are reporting, your name and/or contact information may help.

### **At the conclusion of an investigation, who decides what happened? How is that decision made?**

When all available, relevant evidence has been collected, an impartial person or group of people will determine what that evidence shows. Although this process is sometimes called "fact-finding," it is not really a decision about what happened, but rather a decision about whether the report or allegation is substantiated by the available, relevant evidence.

The individual or group charged with fact-finding will depend on the nature of the incident and the people involved. For example, the Director of Human Resources and the relevant supervisor are fact-finders in most employee cases, and the principals or deans in most student cases. Cases of particular seriousness, sensitivity, and complexity, such as sexual misconduct, will be referred to independent investigators for fact-finding. Students and parents with questions about procedures should consult the handbook for their division, and direct questions to division principals and deans. Employees should review the section entitled "Investigation and Review Process" in the Employee Handbook and seek further information from Human Resources.

Decisions at Westtown School are made in the manner of the Society of Friends whenever possible — that is, by means of discernment, and with a view to seeking a unified sense of the meeting among decision-makers. Cases referred to independent investigators for fact-finding will be determined according to an evidentiary standard of "credible and persuasive."

## **How will the school respond to violations?**

If an investigation results in a finding that a school policy or standard was violated, an impartial authority will determine the school's response.

In cases involving misconduct by a current employee or current student, the person or group of people making the decision will depend on the nature of the incident and the people involved. The Employee Handbook and divisional student handbooks provide further details. The Head of School is the final authority regarding corrective, remedial, and disciplinary actions for employees, in consultation with Human Resources and the employee's supervisor. Consequences to students for misconduct may range from remedial and educational measures to warnings or minor penalties to suspension or dismissal from the school. Consequences to employees for misconduct may range from verbal counseling to probation to termination.

If an investigation results in a finding of misconduct by a trustee, or the current or a former Head of School, consequences will be determined by the Board of Trustees.

Misconduct by a former employee during the time of employment at Westtown School, by an alumnus/a/x while enrolled, by any visitor or friend of the school while on campus or during a school function or event, or any other current or former member of the broader school community, will be addressed by the Head of School in consultation with appropriate colleagues.

Note that where criminal conduct is at issue, the school will refer matters to local law enforcement as appropriate, and legal or criminal consequences may ensue.

## **Tips & Best Practices**

### **I am a school employee, and I am concerned about retaliation if I make a report.**

Westtown School prohibits retaliation. Retaliation, defined as the taking of adverse action against another because of that person's good-faith report or complaint of a conduct violation, is itself a serious offense, and will not be tolerated by the school.

### **I am a student, and I am concerned that I will be bullied if I make a report.**

At Westtown School, behavior that constitutes bullying will not be tolerated. We define bullying as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves the use of a real or perceived power imbalance (such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity) to control or harm another person. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying can be verbal (e.g., teasing, taunting, threats of harm); or social (e.g., spreading rumors, purposeful exclusion of someone with the intent to harm, telling others not to be friends with someone); or physical (e.g., hitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, making rude hand gestures).

Students who feel they have experienced or witnessed bullying are strongly encouraged to report the behavior to a teacher, dean, or advisor, or to use this EthicsPoint site to make a report.

**I am aware of conduct that violates Westtown school policy, or is unethical, but it doesn't affect me. Why should I report it?**

As a Friends school, we work together in community to create a respectful, ethical, and inclusive climate, and to further our mission. Preserving our values and upholding our standards is a collective responsibility. In addition, remember that people who break the rules or act unethically may need help or intervention. Speaking up is an act of caring.

**I am not sure if what I have observed or heard is a violation. What should I do?**

File a report. EthicsPoint and Westtown School will follow up on your report so it can be properly understood. We'd rather you report a situation that turns out to be harmless than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you weren't sure.

**Can I still file a report if I don't have a computer or access to the Internet?**

Yes. You can file an EthicsPoint report from any device with a web browser and Internet access. If you don't have a device of your own, you can find a computer with Internet access at many public locations, including public libraries. If a device or computer isn't for you, call the EthicsPoint toll-free hotline, which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.