


UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent

Administrative Guidelines: Fraud and Ethics Hotline
Submitted by: Internal Audit Dept.
Approved by Superintendent: 
Effective Date: October 1, 2008

The Fraud and Ethics Hotline will be operated by an independent third party: Lighthouse Services, Inc.

Scope: These guidelines apply to United Independent School District employees, including part-time, temporary and contract employees.

Purpose: United Independent School District is committed to the highest possible standards of ethical, moral and legal business conduct. In line with this commitment and United Independent School District's commitment to open communication, these guidelines aim to provide an avenue for employees to raise concerns with the reassurance that they will be protected from reprisals or victimization for whistle blowing in good faith. If an employee feels that their anonymity is not required then they should follow our existing grievance procedure.

These guidelines are intended to cover serious concerns that could have a large impact on United Independent School District, such as actions that:

- May lead to incorrect financial reporting;
- Are unlawful;
- Are not in line with board policy, including the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators; or
- Otherwise amount to serious improper conduct.

Regular business matters that do not require anonymity should be directed to the employee's supervisor and are not addressed by these guidelines. **Do not use the fraud and ethics hotline to report complaints or grievances involving wages, working conditions, discrimination, and other personnel issues. These issues should be reported in accordance with Board Policy DGBA (Local), Employee Complaints/Grievances.**

Safeguards:

Harassment or Victimization: Harassment or victimization of the complainant will not be tolerated.

Confidentiality: Every effort will be made to protect the complainant's identity. Please note that the information provided by you may be the basis of an internal and/or external investigation into the issue you are reporting and your anonymity will be protected to the extent possible. However, your identity may become known during the course of the investigation.

Anonymous Allegations: These guidelines allow employees to remain anonymous at their option. Concerns expressed anonymously will be investigated, but consideration will be given to:

- The seriousness of the issue raised;
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Malicious Allegations: Malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

Procedures: The fraud and ethics hotline procedure is intended to be used for serious and sensitive issues. Serious concerns relating to financial reporting, unethical or illegal conduct should be reported in the following way:

- Toll Free Hotline:
 - English 1-800-398-1496
 - Spanish 1-800-216-1288

Callers to the Hotline will have the ability to remain anonymous if they choose. Please note that the information provided by you may be the basis of an internal and/or external investigation into the issue you are reporting and your anonymity will be protected to the extent possible by law. However, your identity may become known during the course of the investigation. Complaints are submitted by Lighthouse to United Independent School District, and may or may not be investigated at the sole discretion of United Independent School District.

Employment-related concerns should continue to be reported through your normal channels such as your supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator, or to the Human Resources Employee Relations Director (956-473-6351). Reference board policy DGBA (Local).

Timing: The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action.

Evidence: Although the employee is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, the employee needs to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

United Independent School District reserves the right to modify or amend these guidelines at any time as it may deem necessary.