



Whistleblowing policy

The Axholme Academy

January 2018

Review date: January 2021

Introduction

This whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise concerns within the academy rather than overlooking a problem or reporting it outside the academy.

Aims

- To ensure staff that they are afforded protection from reprisals and victimisation for raising a concern
- To set out an approach for raising concerns in a confidential manner with line managers in the first instance or to the Chair of Governors.
- To Inform staff on how to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the response

Safeguards

The Whistleblowers' Charter contains a number of safeguards, based on the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**. Protections are afforded the employee when they report a concern, provided the concern is made in good faith which means that the employee believes it to be substantially true, is not making a false or malicious allegation and is not seeking to gain personally from raising the concern.

What to report

This whistleblowing policy covers concerns which may be about activities that are -

- fraudulent
- unlawful
- against the academy's procedures or policies
- below established standards or practices
- result in waste or loss to the academy
- demonstrate improper conduct

Examples include;

- theft of assets
- inappropriately claiming benefits or allowances
- avoiding payment for services
- not following any academy adopted procedures and codes, these include the Financial procedures such as the Finance Manual and the Human Resources policies such as the sickness and leave policy, and governance procedures such as the gifts and hospitality policy

Raising a concern

If about the safety of a child or a vulnerable adult then immediate contact should be made with the child protection team on 01724 296500 or via email at childprotectionteam.shs@northlincs.gov.uk or the vulnerable adult team on 01724 297979 or 01724 298160. If the concern relates to suspected terrorism immediate contact should be made with the police on 0845 6060222

In all other cases employees should bring the matter to their line manager, and be able to speak in confidence to this person. If that person is involved, they should approach the next level of management, again confidence should be ensured. Either manager should be able to deal with the issue directly and make the appropriate referral to the Chair of Governors if the concern is of a fraudulent nature.

If you do not wish to raise a concern with the academy, you may wish to contact Public Concern at Work, by telephoning 0207 404 6609 or e-mail whistle@pcaw.co.uk. Public Concern at Work is an independent charity providing free advice for persons who wish to express concern about fraud and other serious malpractice in the workplace.

How managers will deal with a concern

Managers should;

- be responsive to concerns and encourage staff to voice any reasonably held concerns as part of supporting the academy's zero tolerance of fraud culture. Concerns should be taken seriously and treated with confidence.
- Obtain and note as much detail as possible from the reporting employee, note any evidence or documents that may support the concern. However you must not try and investigate the matter yourself, approach or accuse any individuals directly or contact the police
- evaluate the concern objectively and determine whether further action is required, in cases of suspected fraud contact the Principal as soon as possible before proceeding any further
- support the employee and reiterate the safeguards that are included in this policy.

If in doubt speak to the Principal who can advise how best to manage a concern raised in accordance with this policy.

How the concern will be dealt with by the academy

All Information received is considered. The resulting action taken by the academy will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- be investigated internally with support from HR
- be referred to the police

Prior to an investigation initial enquires will be conducted to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of other existing procedures (e.g. child protection or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

Unless the complainant has not provided a name or contact, within ten working days of a concern being received, HR will write to the complainant:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- telling them whether any initial enquiries have been made
- telling them whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not

If the matter proceeds to investigation it will be carried out in accordance with the investigation and prosecution policy, which is available from the academy.

Outcome of Investigations

Once the investigation has been concluded, the employee may receive information on the outcome subject to legal constraints.

The Responsible Officer

The governing body has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy within the academy and any concerns or allegations should, in the first instance, be brought to the attention of either the individual's line manager or the Principal. Any proven allegations will be brought to the appropriate committee of the governing body and support will be provided for the chair of governors by audit and HR where appropriate.

Reviewed by the Governing Body on 5th February 2018

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Next review: January 2021