



All Saints'
Academy
Cheltenham

Whistleblowing Policy

Reviewed:	January 2021
Next Review:	July 2023
Staff Owner:	Mrs Katie Jordan
Trustee Owner:	Mr Henry Watson

Whistleblowing Policy

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1. Introduction

The policies of All Saints' Academy, with its distinctive Anglican and Catholic foundation, exist to support the Sponsor's Christian vision, ethos and values that are embedded in the day-to-day and long term running of the Academy. Each policy evidences the commitment of the Sponsor to developing Body, Mind and Spirit.

2. The Aims of the policy are to:

- a. Reassure employees that the Academy attaches great importance to identifying and remedying wrongdoing within the Academy;
- b. Provide information on what type of concerns are covered by the Whistleblowing Policy;
- c. Explain how a concern can be raised and whom to; and
- d. Ensure that the policy provides protection for employees who disclose malpractice and wrongdoing.

3. Persons who are Protected

- 3.1 The policy applies to all employees, former employees, and contractors working on the Academy premises and land.
- 3.2 It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Academy in their own premises.

4. What is the Whistleblowing Policy?

- 4.1 Many employees at some time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. More often than not, these concerns are relatively minor and can be easily resolved. However, when those concerns are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice or dangers to the public or environment, it can be difficult to know what to do. You do not need to be directly affected by the conduct, issue, or malpractice in question to raise an issue.
- 4.2 The Whistleblowing policy is about helping people have a voice to raise legitimate concerns or worries about the Academy's activities and practices. The Academy has adopted this policy to make it possible for anyone who has serious concerns to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of reprisal or victimisation. These issues will be taken seriously and treated on a confidential basis.

5. What is the Policy for?

The Board of Trustees has introduced the Whistleblowing policy to:

- a. encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- b. provide avenues for employees to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- c. ensure that employees receive a response to their concerns and that employees are aware of how to pursue them if still not satisfied; and
- d. reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have reasonable belief that they have made any disclosure in good faith.

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6. What kind of areas are covered?

6.1 Whistleblowing is when an employee provides certain types of information, which has come to their attention, to raise a concern about danger or illegality that affects others. Example areas of concern may be:

- a. any unlawful act or breach of civil law;
- b. breach of a statutory code of practice;
- c. failure to implement or comply with financial regulations or standing orders;
- d. sexual, physical or verbal abuse of children or adults;
- e. health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees and students;
- f. damages to the environment;
- g. failure to comply with appropriate professional standards;
- h. fraud, corruption, dishonesty;
- i. loss of income to the Academy;
- j. discrimination in employment or the provision of education; and
- k. any other matter that cannot be raised by any other procedure, including concealment of any of the above.

6.2 Or it may be something that:

- a. makes employees feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards; or
- b. is against the Academy's Financial Regulations or other policies.

6.3 Personal grievances (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination) are not covered by whistleblowing law or this policy and should be reported under the Academy's Bullying and Harassment Policy and Grievance Policy instead.

7. How to raise a concern

7.1 Employees of the Academy who are working at the Academy can raise concerns by phone, email, or in writing. The more information that can be supplied, including dates, times, details, and names, the greater the opportunity to establish the facts.

7.2 Although employees are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for the concern.

7.3 Employees should normally raise concerns with the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. However, dependent upon the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice (for example, if it is believed that senior management is involved) an approach can be made to any of the following as appropriate:

- a. The Chair of Trustees – Mrs S Padfield (spadfield@asachelt.org)
- b. Any other Trustee – all Trustees have Academy email addresses or can be contacted through the Clerk to Trustees (clerk@asachelt.org)
- c. The Academy's auditor – Bishop Fleming, 1-3 College Yard, Worcester, WR1 2LB. Phone: 01905 732100
- d. The Diocese of Gloucester – Rachel Howie, Director of Education (rhowie@glosdioc.org.uk)

7.4 Any person may seek external advice from the following:

- a. the external auditor;
- b. a trade union or professional association;
- c. the Citizens Advice Bureau;

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- d. the relevant professional body – Secretary of State for Education (Phone: 03700 000 2288 or www.gov.uk/contact-dfe);
- e. Protect, a charity providing support on whistleblowing – www.protect-advice.org.uk or Phone: 02031172520.

8. How the Academy will respond

- 8.1 The Principal has the duty to determine the Academy's procedures for responding to enquiries, bearing in mind the following guidance;
- 8.2 Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and what form it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
- 8.3 Within ten days, the person to whom a concern was passed will write to the informant:
 - a. acknowledging that the concern has been received;
 - b. indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
 - c. giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
 - d. explaining whether any initial enquiries have been made;
 - e. supplying information on employee support mechanisms; and
 - f. explaining whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.
- 8.4 The Academy will respond to the concerns. Where appropriate the matters raised may:
 - a. be investigated by the Board of Trustees,, the Auditors, or through a disciplinary process;
 - b. be referred to an external auditor;
 - c. form the subject of an independent enquiry; or
 - d. be referred to the police.
- 8.5 The amount of contact between the persons considering the issues and the person raising the issue will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided.
- 8.6 If necessary, the investigator will seek further information from the person making the complaint. Where any meeting is arranged the employee can be accompanied by a union or professional representative or a colleague in the Academy.
- 8.7 The Trustees accept that the informant may need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Subject to legal constraints, the Academy will communicate with the informant about the outcomes of any investigation.
- 8.8 Whilst vexatious or malicious calls will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary/other actions, the Trustees will seek to fully support an employee raising a genuine concern.

9. Anonymous Reporting

- 9.1 Employees are encouraged to give their name when raising concerns. A concern expressed anonymously is much less powerful and is often more difficult to investigate.
- 9.2 Whilst it is accepted that anonymous allegations do not carry the same weight, any such reports received by the Academy will be considered at its discretion and where such a decision is made, appropriate investigations made as far as possible into the circumstances. In exercising this discretion account will be taken of the seriousness, credibility of the matters raised and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from the sources quoted.

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9.3 The decision whether to investigate an anonymous allegation will be made by the Principal and/or the Chair of Trustees.

10. Anonymity

10.1 The Academy understands that employees may be reluctant to come forward with information about the wrongdoing of a colleague or manager - or indeed at all. As such, the Academy recognises that whistleblowers may wish to raise concerns in confidence. If an employee (the whistleblower) makes a request for the matter to be kept confidential, their identity will only be disclosed to those directly involved in investigating the allegation.

10.2 The Academy will endeavour to maintain such an employee's anonymity throughout the enquiry, but this may not be possible as it may be obvious to those under investigation who has made the allegation, or attempting to maintain the employee's anonymity may hinder the investigation. If we consider it is necessary to formally identify the employee, we will always discuss this with them in advance.

10.3 In cases where disciplinary action is taken, it may be necessary for the whistleblowing employee to attend as a witness or provide witness evidence. We will try to gather evidence to support the allegation without requiring attendance at a hearing, but this may not always be possible. We may also need to disclose the employee's identity to other investigating agencies but will discuss this with the employee before doing so.

11. Responsibilities

11.1 The Board of Trustees are responsible for the general policy and following up any concerns.

11.2 The Board of Trustees are responsible for making and reviewing its policy.

11.3 The Principal is responsible for:

- a. the implementation of the policy and procedures;
- b. determining the procedures to be followed in the Academy; and
- c. ensuring that employees know the procedures and know the persons with whom concerns may be raised, and their contact details.

12. Equal Opportunities

In implementing this policy account must be taken of the Academy's equal opportunities policies and procedures.

13. Monitoring and Review

13.1 The Board of Trustees will review their policy at least once every three years or when new guidance is issued.

13.2 The Principal will report any cases of whistleblowing to the Board of Trustees after the matter has been resolved.

14. Date of Next Review: January 2024

Signed: 

Date: 08.02.2021

Chair of Trustees