



Whistleblowing Procedure

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Approved By	Trust Board	Status	Statutory
Last Review	July 2023	Next Review	July 2024

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details
28/06/2022	'Public Concern at Work' has now become 'Protect' and has been updated throughout
July 2023	No changes

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Note The job title Headteacher is interchangeable with Head of School in all North Star Academy Trust’s Policies.

1. About this procedure

The Board of Trustees is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity and it expects all the trust's staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

This procedure covers all the trust's

- Employees;
- Trustees;
- Governors;
- Consultants;
- Those on work experience or work-shadowing;
- Volunteers;
- Casual and/or agency workers.

This procedure

- Does not form part of any employee's contract of employment;
- May be amended at any time;
- Should not be used for complaints relating to an employee's personal circumstances, such as the way s/he has been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the trust's grievance procedure;
- Will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees will regularly monitor the number of Whistleblowing disclosures.

2. What is whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing, or dangers, in relation to any of the school's activities. This may include:

- Criminal activity;
- Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- Miscarriages of justice;
- Danger to health and safety;
- Damage to the environment;
- Bribery;
- Financial fraud or mismanagement;
- Breach of our internal policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct;
- Conduct likely to damage our reputation or financial wellbeing;

- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- Negligence;
- The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

Anyone who is unsure as to whether, or not, to use this procedure, or who wants impartial advice at any stage, should contact the independent charity Protect which operates a confidential helpline. Its advisers will give free, confidential advice. The contact details can be found at the end of this procedure.

3. How to raise a concern

Please complete the form at Appendix 1 to this procedure and give it to the Head of School, or Chair of Trustees.

You will receive an initial response within 10 working days, and be invited to a meeting with the Head of School, Chair of Trustees, or a nominated governor/trustee (as appropriate) as soon as possible, to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings held under this procedure. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4. Confidentiality

The Board of Trustees/Governing Body hopes that all staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this procedure and discourages you from making an anonymous disclosure.

Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult, or impossible, to investigate, particularly if further information cannot be obtained from the whistleblower. It is also more difficult to establish the credibility of any allegations. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, the Board of Trustees will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it, where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

Where you choose to raise a concern anonymously, it will be treated in the same way as where a whistleblower's name is known.

Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed are able to contact Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, which offers a confidential helpline. Contact details are at the end of this procedure.

5. External Disclosures

The aim of this procedure is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. You are strongly encouraged to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect operates a confidential helpline and contact details can be found at the end of this procedure.

6. Investigations and Outcome

Once you have raised a concern, an initial assessment will be carried out to determine the scope of any investigation. You will be informed of the outcome of the assessment and may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential. Accordingly, the need for confidentiality may prevent you being given specific details of the investigation, or its outcome, or any disciplinary or other action taken as a result.

Where it is concluded that a whistleblower has made false allegations, maliciously, or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

7. Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

The trustees and governors aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this procedure, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should raise it formally using the school's Grievance Procedure.

If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using the trust's Grievance Procedure.

Whistleblowers will be protected from threats and/or retaliation. Staff who are involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, and in some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue individuals personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

Protect (independent Whistleblowing Charity)

Helpline 020 3117 2520

Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk

Appendix 1

Whistleblowing Disclosure Form

Name(s) of the person(s) that you wish to make a disclosure about		
First Name	Last Name	Position

What is the wrong-doing that you wish to disclose?
<p>Please give as much information as possible. Be specific and include: Dates time and places Names of the people involved The effect that you think that it may have had</p>

What evidence do you have to support your concern

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Personal details of person raising concern.

Completion of these boxes is optional but your completion aids a full and thorough investigation.

You can choose to give your details but remain anonymous, in which case every effort will be made to keep your identity secret and only reveal it, where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

Full name and position in the trust	Email address	Telephone numbers

I wish to remain anonymous