



HARMONIZE ACADEMY

WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

POLICY WRITTEN BY:	PRINCIPAL
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Trust, Respect, Compassion, Forgiveness

Harmonize Academy Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Whistle-blowing (Employee Confidential Reporting) encourages and enables staff to raise serious concerns within Harmonize Academy rather than overlooking the problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

Staff will often be the first to realise if there is something seriously wrong with Harmonize Academy. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Academy.

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Staff who make a 'protected disclosure' are protected from being treated badly or being dismissed. The key whistleblowing legislation is the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) (PIDA) which applies to almost all workers and staff who ordinarily work in Great Britain. The situations covered include criminal offences, risks to health and safety, failure to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice and environmental damage.

For a disclosure to be protected it must be made to an appropriate body. For example, disclosing a health and safety issue to the Health and Safety Executive is likely to be protected, but not if the concern was disclosed to the media.

Scope of Policy

Who does the policy apply to?

The policy applies to all staff, (including those designated as sessional workers, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers or work experience placements), and those contractors working for Harmonize Academy on the school premises, for example, agency staff, builders, drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with Harmonize Academy at their own premises.

The Aims of the Policy

- To provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- To ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- To reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

What types of concern are covered?

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law.
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other staff and students.
- Damage to the environment.
- The unauthorised use of public funds.
- Possible fraud and corruption.
- Sexual or physical abuse of pupils, staff or other workers.
- Other unethical conduct in the public interest or attempts to cover up the above.

NB. Other procedures are available to employees of the Academy Trust e.g. the Grievance Policy and Procedures which relates to complaints about your own employment. This policy also does not replace other complaints procedures which are for public use.

Safeguards

Harmonize Academy recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service.

Harmonize Academy will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages you, however, to put your name to your concern whenever possible.

Please note that:

- Staff must disclose the information in good faith.
- Staff must believe it to be substantially true.
- Staff must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations.
- Staff must **not** seek any personal gain.

How to Raise a Concern

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate line manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach a more senior level of management within the Academy Trust.

Procedure for making a disclosure

- 1.0 Any complaint or disclosure made under this policy should be made to a member of the senior leadership team of the Academy Trust (Principal, Vice Principal, Assistant Principals, and School Business Manager). The complainant will be asked to make their complaint in writing. However, where this is not possible, the member of the senior leadership team will make a note of the complaint – the content of which they will seek to confirm with the complainant. All disclosures will be treated in a confidential manner appropriate to the issues involved.
- 2.0 The senior leadership member involved will ensure that the school business manager (or representative) is informed of the complaint so that it can be registered and recorded.
- 3.0 The senior leadership member will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. The investigation may be conducted by the senior leadership member concerned, or by another appropriate person who is not conflicted in any way by the subject of the complaint. Where appropriate to the circumstances, the investigation may involve recourse to the Academy Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures in respect of the allegations involved. Where the complaint involves evidence of a potential criminal act, the senior leadership member will report the matter to the Police or other appropriate enforcement agency **at the earliest opportunity.**

- 4.0 The Chair of Governors will liaise with the Local Authority in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Principal.
- 5.0 Notwithstanding any involvement of the Police or other external agency, the person designated to investigate the complaint will carry out a full investigation of the facts and will produce a written report for the senior leadership member (or for another member of the senior leadership team who has not been involved in the investigation process and who is not conflicted by the subject of the complaint). The report will set out their conclusions and the reasons for these, together with any recommendations for further action by the Academy Trust. The receiving officer will determine the facts presented and may, if they consider it appropriate, call for or seek directly any additional information considered necessary for their reasonable consideration of the matters involved. Any recommendations or other report requiring consideration by the Governing Body will be acted upon at the earliest possible date.
- 6.0 Once the complaint investigation has been concluded, the complainant will be informed of the outcome in writing by the senior leadership member involved. The overall outcome of the complaint, and the date at which the complainant was informed of this, will be included in the relevant personnel register held by the school business manager.
- 7.0 A complainant who is an employee of the Academy Trust and who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may pursue the matter through the Grievance Policy and Procedures. Any complainant who is not an employee may pursue the matter through the Complaints Policy and Procedures.
- 8.0 Any complaint or disclosure relating to a member of the senior leadership team should be made to the Chair of the Governing Body who will consider this in conjunction with the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee. The Chair of the Governing Body will ensure that the complaint is investigated in accordance with the provisions of sections 1-6 set out above. The Chair of the Governing Body may seek the assistance of an external person who is suitably qualified and experienced in such matters to assist them in undertaking any investigation of the matters involved. Where a complaint/disclosure is against or involves the Chair of the Governing Body those governors who are not conflicted will arrange for the matter to be investigated as described above.

Additional information on making complaints related to employment, i.e. raising grievances, making complaints about bullying, etc, are contained in the Staff Handbook.

Monitoring of Complaints and Disclosures made under this Policy

The Governing Body will receive an annual report from the Principal regarding the number of complaints made under this policy and procedure together with the overall outcome. This will be for monitoring purposes and will not provide any details which might lead to the disclosure of information of a confidential nature. The objective of this report will be to assist the Governing Body in its role as the body responsible for the oversight of the overall conduct of the Academy Trust.