



Whistleblowing Policy

Updated in September 2024



1. Purpose

This policy is designed to provide clear guidelines for employees, contractors, and other stakeholders with which to report any malpractice or unethical, illegal, or otherwise improper conduct within Ashcroft Technology Academy (the Academy) and for the Academy to deal with these reports.

The aim is to provide a mechanism to report concerns, without delay, in a responsible and secure manner and without fear of retaliation, whilst also ensuring the right of the Academy or colleagues within the Academy to protect themselves against false allegation and malicious accusation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, temporary agency staff, contractors, suppliers, and other stakeholders of the Academy who have knowledge of or suspect misconduct, including but not limited to:

1. Commission of a criminal offence
2. Fraud or financial mismanagement
3. Breach of legal or regulatory obligations
4. Academic or professional malpractice
5. Unethical behaviour or improper conduct
6. Health and safety violations
7. Harassment or discrimination
8. Corruption or bribery
9. Environmental damage
10. Sexual, racial, physical or other abuse of students or colleagues
11. Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
12. Child protection and/or safeguarding concerns
13. Any other actions that could harm the Academy, its employees, its students or the public

3. Reporting Procedures

3.1 Initial Reporting Channels

Reports should be made to the immediate line-manager. If the line-manager believes that the concern is serious and meets the threshold for whistleblowing, he or she should refer the member of staff to the Principal. If the whistleblower is uncomfortable reporting to their line-manager, or if the line-manager is implicated, the report should be made to the Principal, or the Chair of the Executive Board, if the concern relates to the Principal.

3.2 Reporting in Good Faith

Reports should be made in good faith, based on reasonable belief that the information disclosed is true. Malicious or knowingly false reports are a serious violation of this policy and will result in disciplinary action.

4. Protection Against Retaliation

The Academy is committed to protecting whistleblowers from retaliation. Retaliation against anyone who has made a report in good faith, or has participated in an investigation, is strictly prohibited. Any employee found to have retaliated against a whistleblower will face disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal.

5. Investigation Process

5.1 Acknowledgment of Report

Upon receiving a report, the Principal will acknowledge receipt of the report (usually within 48 hours of receipt).

5.2 Investigation

The Principal (or Chair of the Executive Board, if the concern relates to the Principal) will appoint an Investigating Officer and an investigation will be conducted in a timely and confidential manner. The extent and nature of the investigation will depend on the seriousness of the concern raised.

5.3 Outcome

The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome of the investigation, while maintaining confidentiality and respecting privacy laws. If the report is substantiated, appropriate action will be taken.

6. Confidentiality

All reports and the identity of the whistleblower will be treated with strict confidentiality. Information will only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis to those involved in the investigation, unless disclosure is required by law.

7. Records and Documentation

All reports and investigations will be documented and stored securely and retained.

8. Training and Awareness

All employees will receive the Whistleblowing Policy annually as part of the Academy's programme for safeguarding training.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as necessary before an anniversary to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with legal requirements. Any updates will be communicated to all employees and stakeholders.