

Whistleblowing Policy

Document Summary

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1: What is whistleblowing?

If you see or find out about something you think is wrong at the College, you should report it. You should go first to any other senior person or to the Student Welfare Officer. Making a disclosure internally first rather than going to a third party is as recommended in the Dept. for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Guidance, 2015. If you cannot or do not wish to do this for any reason, you should follow this whistleblowing policy.

Raising concerns about wrongdoing can be one of the most difficult and challenging things to do in a work environment. Under this policy, you may come forward with legitimate concerns without fear of being blamed or suffering any disadvantage for doing so.

2: What types of concerns can be raised by whistleblowers?

The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 (Updated 15 April 2020) provides protection for workers who reasonably believe that they are acting in the public interest and where the disclosure falls into one of more of the following categories:

- A criminal offence that has, is being, or is likely to be committed
- Unauthorised or inappropriate disclosure, misuse or loss of confidential, personal and /or sensitive information
- A miscarriage of justice
- Risk or damage to the environment
- A danger to the health and safety of employees or others
- Attempts to suppress or hide information relating to wrongdoing.

The concern can be about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now or that you believe is likely in the future.

As long as you hold a reasonable belief that the information is true then you will be covered by the protection set out in this policy regardless of whether you are mistaken, or the matter cannot be proved.

Whistleblowing does not cover concerns where there is no public interest element such as a concern about your own employment or related matters. To raise such a concern please refer to the complaints procedure.

3: Can I raise a concern anonymously?

Yes, you can - it is possible for you to raise your claim anonymously if you wish to do so. However, this may mean that it is difficult to investigate fully if you haven't provided enough information.

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We assure anyone reporting a concern that any harassment or victimisation of staff will not be tolerated and would encourage you to provide us with your name so we can fully investigate the matter. You may ask for confidentiality when doing so and we will respect this.

If you ask for confidentiality, we will make every effort to protect your identity unless required to disclose it by law. If it becomes clear that we are unable to resolve the issue without revealing your identity, we will endeavour to discuss this with you, subject to you disclosing your details to us, which we will treat with the utmost confidentiality and taking into account your views and our wider legal obligations before deciding whether or not to proceed with the investigation.

4: Raising a concern internally

If raising a concern internally, please follow the given procedure:

- Step 1
Where possible you should raise any matter of concern, serious or otherwise, with your Student Welfare Officer or with any other senior person. This may be done either verbally or in writing.

- Step 2
If you feel unable, for whatever reason, to raise the matter with any of the above, you may go to one of the Directors.

- Step 3
If you wish to remain anonymous, you can place a note in the box located in Reception.

- Step 4
If these steps have been followed and you still feel you have concerns, or that they have not been addressed, or that you cannot discuss the matter with any of the above, then you should contact the Chair of the Board of Governors by email at: u.clarke@dandh.org.uk

When raising your concern, it is helpful for you to provide an explanation with as much detail as possible including dates and times of incidents, any eyewitness details and any supporting documents that you have.

5: Raising a concern externally

Where attempts to raise matters internally have been unsuccessful or, exceptionally, you feel you cannot raise their concerns internally, you may consider raising the matter with the relevant regulatory authority. For more advice on this you can contact the charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609.

6: What happens next?

The person with whom you raise the matter of concern will listen to and consider your concern in full and determine whether any action is needed. This may mean reporting it to a more senior member of staff or the Chair of the Board of Governors.

We will try to keep you informed about the actions that we are taking in relation to the concern, including how we propose to deal with the matter, whether we need further assistance from you, any action that is taken and the outcome of the investigation. However, we may not be able to provide you with much detail where we have a duty to keep the confidence of other people.

7: Support for whistleblowers

Whistleblowing may be very difficult. We will take every step to ensure we protect and support whistleblowers internally.

We do encourage whistleblowers to use the internal process first if possible, in order to avoid matters escalating when that might not be necessary. However, we recognise that people may feel more comfortable seeking external support in this situation.

The independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 can provide support. Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about at work. They will also provide advice on the circumstances in which it may be appropriate for you to contact an outside body.