



Whistleblowing Policy

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1. Introduction

Whistleblowing is the process by which a worker reports a concern in the public interest relating to suspected wrongdoing, risk, or illegal conduct within a workplace. It applies where the person raising the concern is not making a personal complaint, but rather reporting something that may harm students, staff, or the wider public.

This policy applies to all:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Agency staff
- Students on placement
- Contractors, partners, and external service providers

2. Purpose

Active Futures Academy is committed to:

- Safeguarding and protecting children and young people
- Maintaining high standards of transparency, ethics, and accountability
- Ensuring staff can report concerns safely without fear of retaliation
- Addressing problems internally wherever possible while protecting legal rights

3. What Can Be Reported (Qualifying Disclosures)

Concerns suitable for whistleblowing include, but are not limited to:

Student Safety & Welfare

- Safeguarding failures or concerns being ignored
- Risk of harm, neglect, abuse, or grooming not acted upon
- Unsafe restraint practices or violation of government behaviour guidance

- Serious failures in supervision that place students at risk

Professional & Legal Compliance

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with statutory requirements (e.g., Keeping Children Safe in Education, Prevent Duty, Health & Safety law)
- Serious breach of Active Futures Academy policies (e.g., restraint, safeguarding, data protection)
- Dishonesty, corruption, or fraud

Operational & Ethical Concerns

- Financial malpractice or misuse of funds
- Gross misconduct or behaviour that falls below expected professional standards
- Discrimination affecting groups of students or staff
- Covering up wrongdoing

Not covered by this policy:

Personal grievances should be raised under the AP grievance or complaints policy instead, unless there is public interest risk.

4. Safeguards & Protections

4.1 Protection from Harassment or Victimisation

Active Futures Academy will not tolerate retaliation against a whistleblower. Anyone found to retaliate may face investigation and action.

4.2 Confidentiality

We will protect identity where possible. Confidentiality may not be guaranteed if police or courts require evidence or disclosure is required by law.

4.3 Anonymous Reports

Anonymous disclosures will be considered especially if the issue is serious and evidence is available.

4.4 Unfounded Reports

No action will be taken where concerns were raised reasonably and honestly. Malicious or vexatious allegations may lead to disciplinary review.

5. Responsible Officer

Active Futures Academy's Safeguarding Lead is the Responsible Officer. Where allegations involve senior leaders, concerns may be redirected to the Directors, LADO, police or external agencies.

6. Legal Framework

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Prevent Duty

Note: Disclosure to the media is rarely protected unless legal conditions are met.

7. How to Raise a Concern

7.1 Internal Reporting Routes

- Line Manager
- Senior Leader
- Safeguarding & Compliance Lead
- Directors

Reports should ideally be in writing, including names, dates and evidence. AP will document verbal disclosures and confirm for accuracy.

7.2 Active Futures Academy Response

Within 10 school working days:

- Acknowledge receipt
- Confirm next steps if possible
- Explain investigation decision or reasons if not pursued
- Give resolution timeline if possible

Actions may include internal investigation, police, LADO or regulator referrals, or immediate safeguarding action.

Support available:

- Employee Assistance Programme if subscribed
- GP referral
- Education Support Partnership
- Mediation for relationship rebuilding only

7.3 External Reporting

You may report to:

- Police
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ofsted
- Department for Education (DfE)
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (0800 028 0285)
- Protect (020 3117 2520)
- ACAS (0300 123 1100)
- Education Support (08000 562561)

8. Recording & Monitoring

The Responsible Officer will maintain a confidential log of concerns, actions and outcomes.

9. Review & Approval

Approved by Active Futures Academy directors. Reviewed annually or when statutory guidance changes.