



Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy

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Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy

The Whistleblowing policy is designed to sit alongside other Severn Academies Educational Trust policies, eg Safeguarding, Complaints, Financial Code of Practice and Grievance (this list is not exhaustive).

1. Introduction and purpose

- 1.1 The Directors and staff at Severn Academies Educational Trust ("The Trust") operate all aspects of the Trust's activities with full regard to high standards of conduct and integrity. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.
- 1.2 This policy covers all employees, trustees, directors, governors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.3 The policy is designed to ensure that you can raise your concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within the Trust without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal.
- 1.4 This policy is intended to encourage and enable you to raise serious concerns in the first instance within the Trust rather than ignoring a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside the organisation.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.
- 1.6 This policy is not intended to be used in place of raising general concerns about your treatment at work for which the Grievance Policy or the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy might be a more appropriate vehicle to attempt to resolve a dispute.
- 1.7 This policy has been written in line with the government guidance on whistle-blowing. We also take into account the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Employment Rights Act 1996.

2. What is whistleblowing?

- 2.1. Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing, danger or malpractice in relation to our activities. This includes:
 - bribery
 - facilitation of tax evasion
 - fraud
 - any other criminal activity
 - miscarriages of justice
 - breach of any legal obligation
 - danger to the health and safety of any individual
 - damage to the environment
 - the deliberate concealing of information about any of the above
 - concerns about the Safeguarding of Children under Keeping Children Safe in Education or
 - unethical conduct which does not uphold the values of the Trust.

This list is not exhaustive.

3. How to raise a concern

- 3.1. We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your Headteacher. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, you should contact the CEO. Contact details are at the end of this policy.
- 3.2. A meeting will be arranged with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1. We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity confidential and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

5. External disclosures

- 5.1. The aim of this policy 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.
- 5.2. 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. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. You can contact Protect (Formerly Public Concern at Work), an independent charity providing advice to those who feel that they have a concern they wish to raise under Whistleblowing. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6. Protection and support for whistleblowers

- 6.1. We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 6.2. 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 inform the CEO immediately.
- 6.3. You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.
- 6.4. However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 6.5. Protect, a Whistleblowing Charity, operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

7. Contacts

CEO
Mr C King
T: 01562 542574
E: ceo@saet.co.uk

Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) Independent Charity
Telephone 020 3117 2520
Email whistle@protect-advice.org.uk
Website: www.pcaw.org.uk