WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Introduction

All of us at one time or another experience concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these are easily resolved. However, when the concern feels serious regarding any aspect of our work, health and safety or a possible fraud that might affect others or the organisation itself, it can be difficult to know what to do.

You may be worried about raising such a concern and may think it best to keep it to yourself, perhaps feeling it's none of your business or that it's only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, managers or to the organisation. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

The directors of the North West Academy are committed to running the organisation to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage employees and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. This whistle blowing policy is designed to reassure you that it is safe and acceptable to speak up and to enable you to raise any concern you may have.

The policy applies to all those who work for us; whether full-time or part-time, self-employed contractor, an agency worker or as a volunteer. If you have a whistle blowing concern, please let us know. This whistle blowing policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the organization itself are at risk.

If in doubt - raise it!

Our Assurances to You

The Directors are committed to this policy. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith (or honestly), it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course, we cannot extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue.

With these assurances, we hope you will raise your concern openly. However, we recognise that there may be circumstances when you would prefer to speak to someone in confidence first. If this is the case, please say so at the outset. If you ask us not to disclose your identity, we will not do so without your consent unless required by law. You should understand that there may be times when we are unable to resolve a concern without revealing your identity, for example where your personal evidence is essential. In such cases, we will discuss with you whether and how the matter can best proceed.

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Please remember that if you do not tell us who you are, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter. We will not be able to protect your position or to give you feedback. Accordingly, you should not assume we can provide the assurances we offer in the same way if you report a concern anonymously.

How to Raise a Concern

Please remember that you do not need to have firm evidence of malpractice before raising a concern. However, we do ask that you explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern. If you have a concern, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your manager or team leader. This may be done verbally or in writing.

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with one of the Directors.

Independent Advice

If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want confidential advice at any stage, you may contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work on 0207 404 6609 or by email at helpline@pcaw.co.uk. They can talk you through your options and help you raise a concern about malpractice at work.

How We Will Handle the Matter

Once you have told us of your concern, we will assess it and consider what action may be appropriate. This may involve an informal review, an internal enquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who will be handling the matter, how you can contact them, what further assistance we may need from you and agree a timetable for feedback. If you ask, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it. If we have misunderstood the concern or there is any information missing, please let us know.

When you raise the concern, it will be helpful to know how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If we think your concern falls more properly within our grievance or other relevant procedure, we will let you know.

Whenever possible, we will give you feedback on the outcome of any investigation. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you about the precise actions we take where this would infringe a duty of confidence we owe to another person.

While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will strive to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.

External Contacts

While we hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise your concern internally with us, we recognise that there may be circumstances where you can properly report a concern to an outside body. In fact, we would rather you raised a matter with the appropriate regulator – such as the Northern Ireland Audit Office or the Health & Safety Executive of Northern Ireland – than not at all.

The above is to be reviewed at appropriate intervals by the North West Academy Limited to ensure a fair whistle blowing policy is maintained.

Reviewed: 13/02/2026

Signed: 

(Chief Executive, North West Academy of English)

Queries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

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