

# Whistle Blowing Policy



Reviewed October 2018

## **Introduction**

The Stour Academy Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. If employees and others working with us (including volunteers) have concerns regarding any aspect of our work we encourage them to come forward and voice their concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

## **Aim**

This policy is intended to encourage individuals to raise serious concerns internally within the Trust, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside.

This policy aims to ensure individuals:

- feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- are provided with avenues to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- receive a response to their concerns and are aware of how to pursue the matter further if they are not satisfied with the outcome
- can be reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation if they make a disclosure
- are aware that, in the case of Trust employees, a false or malicious disclosure will be addressed in accordance with the Trust Discipline and Conduct Policy and Procedure

## **Scope**

The Whistle Blowing Policy applies to all employees, agency workers, volunteers and those contractors working on Stour Academy Trust premises (e.g. cleaners, builders and drivers, etc.) Suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Trust in their own premises are also covered by the policy.

Concerns that are raised will be addressed in accordance with the associated Whistle Blowing Procedure and these can include matters such as:

- conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur the result of which the Trust fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud and corruption, sexual or physical abuse of clients, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- disclosures related to past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees (see below)
- past, current or likely damage to the environment
- concerns about any aspect of service provision
- other concerns regarding the conduct (including breaches of known standards or the Trust's policies) of officers or the Trust or others acting on behalf of the Trust.

The Trust's Complaints Procedure should be used to raise any issues, concerns or complaints of a health and safety nature and which are not confidential.

If employees wish to raise a concern regarding issues relating to their own employment, the Trust's Fairness at Work Policy should be used.

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the individual's identity if this is their wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if the individual is required to come forward as a witness.

### **Anonymous Allegations**

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual. However anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the Trust's discretion. In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### **Untrue Allegations**

Disciplinary action will only be taken against individuals who knowingly make false, malicious or vexatious allegations.

### **Bribery Act 2010**

The Stour Academy Trust has a zero tolerance approach to acts of bribery and corruption. Any instances of suspected bribery and corruption must be reported. If you do not feel able to report your concerns to your line manager, the Whistle Blowing Procedure can be used to confidentially raise this matter.