



Whistleblowing Policy

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Whistleblowing Policy

The Thomas Deacon Academy is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, the Board encourages employees with serious concerns about the Academy's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy provides the basis on which employees can raise any concerns that may have, and receive feedback on action taken and gives protection from reprisals or victimisation for 'whistleblowing' in good faith.

Whilst the Academy has a grievance policy, this policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope in individual grievances.

Matters that may be suitable to be raised under this policy are where an action

- is unlawful;
- is against Academy policies;
- amounts to improper conduct;
- seems likely to harm a member of the public or the environment;
- represents a cover up of these sorts of issues;
- concerns potentially poor or unsafe practices of conduct by colleagues with regards to children in their care;

The Academy recognises that the decision to report a concern can be difficult, not least because of the fear of reprisals from those responsible for the malpractice. The Academy Board will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take all possible measures to protect employees who raise concerns in good faith.

The Academy will protect the identity of employees who raise concerns and do not want their name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated, however that the investigation may reveal the source of the information, and statements made by the employees who raised the issue may be required as part of the evidence.

If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation no action will be taken against the employee. However, if employees make allegations that are malicious or vexatious, the Academy may opt to use the disciplinary process and procedures as a means of penalty.

Raising a concern

The earlier employees express their concerns, the earlier the Academy is in a position to take action.

As a first step, an employee should normally raise concerns with their immediate Line Manager, an appropriate leader of the Academy or the CEO/Principal.

The level at which concerns are raised depends on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice.

Concerns can be communicated verbally but will be asked to be confirmed in writing. This should set out background and history of the concern, giving names dates and places and the reason why the employee is concerned about the situation.

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The Academy will decide on the most appropriate action – this will be assessed in line with the seriousness of the concern raised. Actions could involve:

- Internal investigation;
- Referral to the police;
- Referred to the Academy auditor;
- External investigation;
- Utilisation of the internal disciplinary processes.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action with no need for formal investigations to take place.

Within two weeks of a concern being raised the Academy will write to the employee who raised the issue:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been raised;
- Indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter and provide a final response;
- Giving an estimate of how long further investigation will take.

When any meeting is arranged with the employee they will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, professional organisation/representative.