



Subject: Whistleblowing	Number: POL00101
Approved by:	Type: Policy
Managing Director	Issued: February 2021
	Revision: 2.2
	Effective: October 2023

1. Objectives

The Robert Holme Academy is committed to the highest standards of quality, openness, accountability and integrity. It is important that any malpractice, misconduct fraud or ill treatment is reported and dealt with appropriately. The Robert Holme Academy is committed to supporting staff members that feel malpractice or deficiencies are occurring irrespective of whether they are impacted directly by any wrongdoing.

In this case, whistleblowing is the way in which staff can formally raise legitimate concerns or report wrongdoing, without fear or repercussion.

In order to provide a safe environment and service, the Robert Holme Academy recognises the importance of staff being able to openly report concerns as they may be the first to suspect or witness that wrongdoing may be taking place. In many cases, the earlier an issue or concern is raised, the sooner corrective action can take place. Staff are therefore encouraged to raise any concerns they have in relation to the conduct of other members of staff, the way we operate or any other issues that they feel compromise a safe and happy working environment.

The Headteacher and Managing Director are committed to taking concerns seriously. The difficulties some staff may experience in raising concerns is acknowledged. Concerns will be investigated confidentially, appropriately and in a timely manner.

2. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to staff members at the Robert Holme Academy. A separate process (see complaints procedure) is in place for parents of pupils to raise concerns. This is available on the website.

If the concern refers to something of personal grievance, or complaint rather than public interest, the issue should be raised using the Staff Grievance procedure.

If the concern relates to an immediate or current risk to a student, the issue must be logged immediately using the Safeguarding & Child Protection procedure.

References to ‘staff’ in this policy, includes staff that are employed on a temporary, fixed term, permanent or sessional basis. This includes staff that are engaged as agency workers or self-employed contractors.

This policy is not a contractual term of employment and grants no legal rights upon the staff member.

Issues that may be raised through the whistleblowing procedure include any ‘qualifying disclosure’ which are in the public interest. These include, but are not limited to, a:

- criminal offence;
- miscarriage of justice;
- breaching of a legal obligation;
- danger to the health and safety of an individual;
- deliberate attempt to cover up of information that may highlight any of these matters; or
- activities that are damaging to the environment.



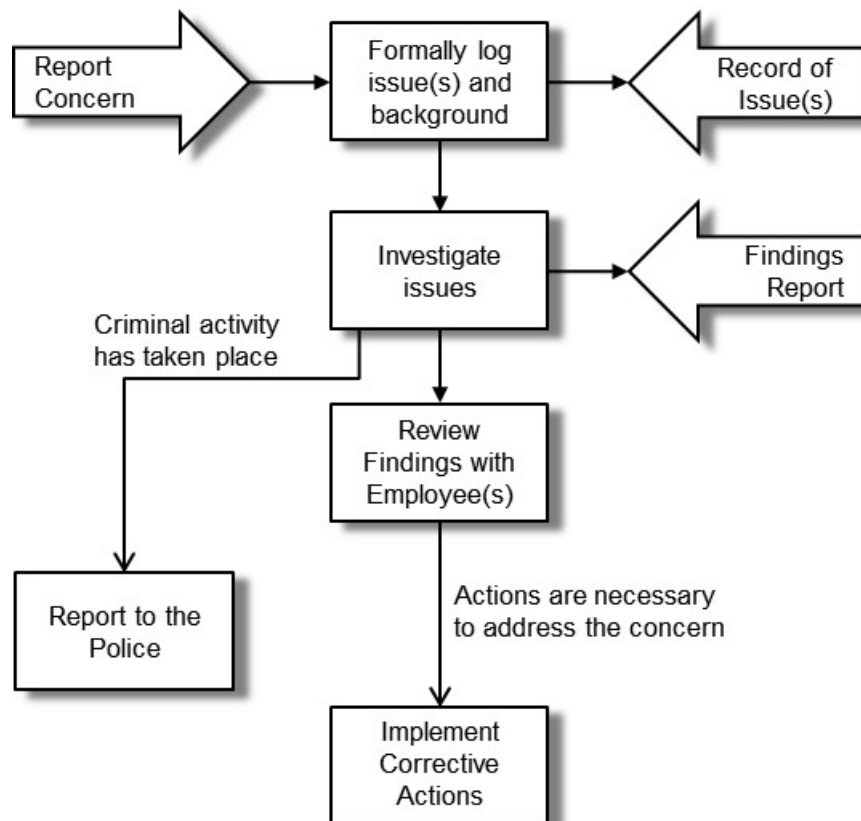
3. Procedure

3.1 Responsibilities

The Managing Director and Headteacher are responsible for reviewing and documenting any concerns that are formally raised by staff. The Managing Director and Headteacher are also responsible for identifying and implementing appropriate corrective actions.

Staff are responsible for reporting the issues that impact on the safe, efficient and effective operation of the Robert Holme Academy.

3.2 Process



Staff members should report a concern if they observe, have been informed of, or suspect something that gives cause for concern within the scope of this policy (above)

Concerns are reported to a Headteacher. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, then it should be reported directly to the Managing Director.

If a concern relates to the Headteacher and Managing Director or the member of staff feels uncomfortable reporting the concern within the school, then the concern should be reported directly to Scott Belton, Project and Practice Development Officer for Access and Inclusion at the local authority for investigation (contact details Scott.belton@northlincs.gov.uk).

Independent support and guidance on how to raise a concern is available through staff Unions and the protect-advice.org.uk website, or the Protect Adviceline on 020 3117 2520.



Where possible, staff should make note of the details regarding any concern, including:

- what occurred or is reported to have occurred;
- the individuals involved;
- any witnesses; along with;
- background information.

Staff should keep a copy of documentation supporting their concerns. All records and supporting documentation are treated as confidential unless otherwise agreed.

Issues raised verbally will be formally documented, along with any supporting information.

A written record of the issues raised, along with confirmation of receipt of the whistle blow will be provided within 5 working days.

The concern is then fully investigated and findings are documented in a findings report. The report will include a plan of any corrective actions.

Feedback and actions to be taken will be provided to the member of staff raising the concerns within 10 working days.

Corrective actions will be implemented and tracked to closure. The status and progress of corrective actions, including any necessary changes to policy and procedure are tracked through regular management review.

3.3 *Untrue Allegations*

If a concern is deemed to be untrue, as long as the concern was raised in good faith, no action will be taken against the employee raising concerns. However, allegations that are found to be malicious, frivolous or inappropriate may result in disciplinary action and potential legal action.

3.4 *Anonymity and Confidentiality*

Concerns raised anonymously may be difficult to investigate. RHA would therefore like Whistle-blower's to put their name to any concerns they report. The Headteacher and Managing Director will respect and protect the identity of any Whistle-blower who raises concerns. The staff member will be informed if their identity needs to be disclosed to gather further evidence, along with the rationale for doing so.

3.5 *Anonymous Concerns*

Anonymously concerns that are raise will be treated as seriously as other concerns. Concerns will be investigated and appropriate actions will be taken, based on the credibility, seriousness and the likely impact of the concerns raised. However, anonymous submissions may make the ability to report follow up actions difficult.



4 **References**

Further information can be found in:

1. DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2022), available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101454/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf
2. DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' (July 2022), available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
3. The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (April 2013)
4. The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) Employment Rights Act 1996
5. Independent contact for reporting and/or escalating concerns about the School:
scott.belton@northlincs.gov.uk
6. Whistleblowing guidance for employers. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf
7. Advice to employees is available at: <https://protect-advice.org.uk> or on the Protect Adviceline on 020 3117 2520.