

## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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### Policy Statement

Barnet and Southgate College is committed to providing high quality education and training and to ensuring that our learners achieve to the very best of their ability.

The College aims, at all times, to create and maintain a safe environment for all learners, staff, volunteers and visitors in partnership with Local Authority Safeguarding teams, the Police and other relevant organisations.

### Introduction

Barnet and Southgate College is committed to honesty and openness in its drive to achieve the highest possible ethical standards in public life. This policy enables staff, volunteers and those associated to the college to raise concerns about the conduct of others in the College in a confidential manner and to report any mal-practice, illegal acts or omissions.

With the exception of: Safeguarding; harmful behaviour in relation to learners or radicalisation and extremism; staff meetings, line management meetings, supervision sessions, PDR reviews, team meetings and other formal and informal meetings between staff and their line managers are forums to initially raise concerns. All questions, comments and observations regarding staff practice are taken with positive intent.

Therefore, if something is troubling you that you think the college should be aware of or investigate, please be proactive and use this policy to determine what action you can/should

take. Where the policy refers to All or Everyone it is referring to: employees, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, governors and all associated with the College.

**Other related Policies and Procedures to consider:**

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults 2015

Managing Allegations against Staff 2015

Health and Safety Policies ??????

Financial Conduct ??

Grievance Policy????????????

Dignity at Work Policy????????

Equality and Diversity Policy and Scheme

Staff Code of Conduct (inc Supplement Working with Learners – a guide for staff)

This is list of other documents to be referred to when considering a disclosure. However, there may be others that are more relevant. Please ask HR or Safeguarding and Equality Team for guidance if required.

**1. Policy Aims**

- To provide guidance on rights and responsibility to report any matters believed to compromise the safety, welfare or reputation of learners, staff or the College.
- To reassure that all will be listened to and protected from possible reprisal or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.
- To make clear that everyone is subject to this policy.
- To be aware that there are other college processes for staff, governors and volunteers to raise concerns arising from their employment or college activities as outlined above. For further guidance contact HR or the Safeguarding and Equality team.

**2. Key Principals**

- To assist in the provision of a safe working and learning environment where good practice can be celebrated and poor practise challenged, changed and stopped.
- A serious concern is something that someone sincerely believes in good faith to:
  - be unlawful
  - involve harm of a sexual, physical, emotional or other nature to anyone
  - is against College rules, values and procedures
  - amounts to gross mis-conduct
  - involves damage to the environment
  - is a health and safety risk to learners, staff or College community
  - involves fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity including but not limited to funding body or examination body requirements
  - involves unauthorised use of public funds
  - involves covering up a wrongdoing by others
  - involves spreading extremist views of a political; faith or ideologist nature which could promote radicalisation and/or terrorism
  - involve poor safeguarding practices or unsafe practices and potential failings in the colleges safeguarding procedures

Refer to other policies (as above, but not limited to) to see how your concern is best dealt with. Contact HR or Safeguarding and Equality Team for further guidance.

- Any investigation arising does not presume guilt; it is conducted to establish the facts of a matter. There may be positive benefits irrespective of whether mal-practice is found; for example changes to College policies and procedures.
- If you have done something wrong and raise it under this policy you will not have automatic immunity for your own wrongdoing. However, the College will make proper account of your coming forward or raising it.
- Barnet and Southgate College will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern and hope that staff, governors and volunteers feel able to raise any genuine concern openly.
- The College will not tolerate malicious reporting under the whistleblowing policy and will support appropriate disciplinary action if proven to be the case.

### **3. Responsibilities**

Barnet and Southgate College recognises that from time to time we all have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved through conversation, dialogue and meetings as described above. However, if the matter is in connection with mal-practice such as unlawful conduct, fraud or harm to the public or the environment we are obliged to record and report as appropriate.

- Reporting of concerns should follow the College processes and procedures so as an investigation can take place as appropriate.
- A report should be as factual as possible include dates, times, conversations, etc and where possible be in writing.
- Managers receiving a concern under the Whistleblowing procedure are have a duty to thoroughly investigate the matter and, where appropriate, take action through College procedures. Barnet and Southgate College will not tolerate any attempt to cover-up any issue raised through the Whistleblowing process.
- Urgent and serious concerns should always be raised immediately. In addition, the earlier the concern is expressed then generally the easier it is to take action.

### **4. Procedure**

- Your concern can be raised in the first instance with your line-manger; other relevant manager; member of ELG or Governor verbally or in writing. At this point it will be established whether the Whistle Blowing policy is the best procedure to follow. (Please refer to other policies at the beginning of this document)
- If the concern is regarding the Principal you may report directly to the Chair of Governors who may refer to another party as appropriate.
- You will be asked to make a written factual statement including background, events and suchlike, and where possible including names, dates and places which led to your concern.
- This will be used to assess what action should be taken. This may involve:
  - an internal review
  - internal inquiry
  - referring to a member of the ELG

- a formal investigation involving an external body eg the Police
- The College will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance may be needed. The College aim to do this within 10 working days of receipt of a written statement.
- You will be offered support and are entitled to bring along a trade union representative or work colleague to any stage of the procedure or meeting.
- Where a concern is relatively easily resolved by the implementation of agreed actions or procedures there may be no need for an investigation.
- It may be helpful for us to know how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter we ask that you tell us at the outset.
- Wherever possible we will give you as much feedback as we can with due regard to confidentiality, data protection and information sharing protocols.

## 5. How the matter can be taken further if necessary

- This policy provides a clear route and procedure to follow to raise serious concerns within the College and for the concerns to be dealt with and settled appropriately. However, if the person raising the concern considers that this has not happened then they may contact an appropriate external body such as:
  - the Police (including the Anti-Terrorist hotline)
  - the Board of Governors
  - the College external auditor
  - a relevant examination or assessment body
  - a relevant funding agency
  - a local authority
  - local safeguarding children's board

## 6. Record Keeping

- The Principal and CEO has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Procedure and will ensure the maintenance of a confidential record of concerns raised and the outcomes, and will report as necessary to the Governing Body.

## 7. Independent Advice and Support

If you feel unable to raise the issue with your manager or the college direct here are suggested links to advice and support.

If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want independent advice at any stage, you can contact the independent charity **Public Concern at Work** (PCaW) on 020 7404 6609 or at [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk).

### **Employee Assistance Programme**

<http://hub/collegeinfo/news/news/ layouts/WordViewer.aspx?id=/collegeinfo/news/news/Documents/EAP.doc&DefaultItemOpen=1>

The Helpline's team of professionally qualified counsellors, advisors and lawyers can offer support and practical advice on a variety of personal, family, legal and work-related problems. **Telephone: 0800 328 1437**