



Whistleblowing Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis; however, should a need arise, it will be reviewed when required. This policy will be read, understood, and signed by all staff yearly and when changes have been made in line with government and DofE guidelines and changes.

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Whistleblowing Policy

Change History

Date	Description of change	Signed

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Rationale

The staff seeks to run all aspects of Alternative Acres with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. If members of staff, parents, directors, or the Alternative Acres community become aware of activities that give cause for concern, the school has this Whistleblowing Policy. This policy allows concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter, bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion, if necessary, under the disciplinary procedure.

Aims

The aims of this whistleblowing policy are to:

- Enable employees of Alternative Acres to raise any perceived matters of impropriety in a confidential manner.
- Highlight the school's commitment to maintaining integrity.
- Resolve any perceived matters of impropriety as close as possible to their point of origin.
- Operate in a way that will not result in the victimisation of any individual who raises a complaint under this policy.

All staff and volunteers must comply with the latest 'Keeping children safe in education' guidance, which includes taking action to protect a child at risk and making appropriate referrals to social care. Safeguarding issues raised by a whistle-blower will be handled in line with child protection procedures.

This section should be read in conjunction with:

- The child protection policy & procedures
- The 'managing allegations against staff' policy
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) procedures
- 'Keeping children safe in education' (DfE 2024)
- 'What to do if you're worried about a child' (DfE 2015)

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure



The Director is responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy.

- Ensure all Alternative Acres personnel, pupils, and parents are aware of and comply with this policy.
- Provide guidance, support, and training to all staff.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

This Procedure should be made available to all Alternative Acres employees.

Introduction

1. The term "whistleblowing" refers to the confidential raising of problems or concerns within an organisation by a member of staff. This is not "leaking" information but refers to matters of impropriety, such as a breach of law, school procedures, or ethics. Whistleblowing is different from raising a grievance (which is dealt with under the staff grievance procedures).
2. The staff of Alternative Acres seeks to run all aspects of the school's business with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. The school provides this Whistleblowing Policy as a framework for raising concerns confidentially and ensuring that such concerns are thoroughly investigated.
3. Alternative Acres is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice. The school treats these issues seriously and has developed a system for confidentially raising concerns.

When might the whistleblowing policy apply?

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns, knowing they will be taken seriously. A whistle-blower should ask themselves:

- Is the action illegal?
- Is it against the codes of conduct issued by Alternative Acres?
- Does it contradict what the employee has been taught?
- Is it about an individual's behaviour or general working practices?
- Has the whistle-blower witnessed the incident?

If an individual raises malicious or unfounded concerns, this will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action. Concerns such as manipulation of finances, criminal activity, abuse of position, or breaches of Alternative Acres procedures should be considered under this policy.



Concerns about a child

Concerns related to a child's welfare should first be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If the issue is unresolved, the concern should be raised with the Director or another member of designated staff. If further action is needed, staff may contact the Nottinghamshire LADO or, in cases of immediate risk, refer directly to social care services.

Concerns about a colleague/adult

Concerns regarding a member of staff or volunteer's behaviour towards children should be reported to the Director. If the concern involves the Director, or if staff believe it is not being taken seriously, it should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Procedure

Staff are encouraged to report concerns to their line manager or the Director. All reports will be treated confidentially. Anonymous allegations will be considered if they are credible and serious.

How will the matter be progressed?

The individual(s) receiving the concern will conduct a preliminary investigation to establish the facts. If necessary, third parties (e.g., legal advisors or the police) may be involved. All actions and findings will be recorded, and the disciplinary procedure may be applied as necessary.

Respecting Confidentiality

Alternative Acres is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of whistle-blowers and protecting them from reprisals. Attempts to harass or victimise a whistle-blower will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

Conclusion



Alternative Acres aims to maintain good internal controls to prevent fraud or malpractice. This Whistleblowing Policy provides a framework for raising concerns confidentially, ensuring that concerns are taken seriously and acted upon.