

## Whistleblowing Policy

**Policy Owner:** Director

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## 1. Policy Statement

Swift Learning is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability. This Whistleblowing Policy sets out a clear process through which individuals can raise concerns about actual or suspected wrongdoing in the workplace. It is designed to promote a culture of openness and to ensure that serious concerns are dealt with appropriately. The policy reflects the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and supports the safeguarding and welfare of all learners, staff, and associated individuals.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to encourage individuals to raise concerns as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately, and that their confidentiality will be respected. It also aims to provide protection from detriment or retaliation for individuals who raise concerns in good faith.

This policy applies to all employees (including full-time, part-time, temporary, and agency staff), volunteers, contractors, consultants, governors, trustees, and any other individual connected to the organisation who may wish to report a concern.

## 3. Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure of information relating to suspected wrongdoing, misconduct, or potential dangers within the organisation. This may involve issues such as safeguarding or child protection failures, criminal activity, breaches of legal or professional obligations, health and safety risks, financial malpractice or fraud, professional misconduct, or any attempts to conceal such matters. It is important to distinguish whistleblowing from personal grievances, such as bullying, disputes with colleagues, or unfair treatment, which should instead be raised through the organisation's grievance or complaints procedures.

## 4. Raising a Concern

Concerns should be raised as early as possible. Individuals may raise concerns verbally or in writing with any of the following:

- Their immediate line manager.
- The Designated Whistleblowing Officer.
- **The Director** - Email: [Paige@Swift-Learning.co.uk](mailto:Paige@Swift-Learning.co.uk)

If an individual believes the matter cannot be resolved internally, or is not being addressed appropriately, the concern may be referred to an external authority, such as:

- **Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline:** 0300 123 3155  
Email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)
- **Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work):**  
Tel: 020 3117 2520 | Website: [www.protect-advice.org.uk](http://www.protect-advice.org.uk)

All concerns will be treated with discretion and appropriate confidentiality.

## **5. Confidentiality and Anonymity**

All whistleblowing concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. Individuals are encouraged to identify themselves when raising a concern, as anonymous disclosures may be more difficult to investigate. However, anonymous concerns will still be considered and investigated where possible.

## **6. Investigation Process**

All concerns raised under this policy will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and fairly. An initial assessment will determine whether a full investigation is required. If a formal investigation is appropriate, it may be conducted internally or by an appointed external party. The individual raising the concern will be informed of the outcome, where possible and appropriate, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints. If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the concern to a more senior figure internally or to an appropriate external body.

### **6a. Handling and Timescales**

When a concern is raised, Swift Learning will take prompt action to assess and address it. The process typically begins with an initial screening to determine the seriousness of the issue and whether it falls within the scope of whistleblowing.

#### **Step 1: Initial Acknowledgment**

Once a concern is received, it will be acknowledged within five (5) working days. A designated member of staff (such as the Head of Provision, Director, or Whistleblowing Officer) will make an initial assessment to determine the nature and urgency of the matter.

#### **Step 2: Preliminary Review**

A brief review will be carried out within ten (10) working days to assess whether a full investigation is required. This may involve gathering basic facts or speaking to the person who raised the concern to clarify details.

#### **Step 3: Investigation**

If a full investigation is warranted, this will normally be initiated within ten (10) to fifteen (15) working days of the initial disclosure. The timeframe for completing the investigation will

depend on the complexity of the issue but will aim to be concluded within four to six weeks. More complex or sensitive matters may take longer.

#### **Step 4: Outcome and Feedback**

Where appropriate, and within the limits of confidentiality and legal considerations, the person who raised the concern will be informed of the outcome or the action taken as a result of the investigation. Feedback will usually be provided within ten (10) working days of the investigation's conclusion.

**Note:** If the concern relates to safeguarding or child protection, procedures will follow the statutory guidance laid out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* and the matter will be addressed with urgency.

### **7. Protection from Detriment**

Swift Learning is committed to ensuring that no one who raises a concern in good faith is subjected to any form of victimisation, reprisal, or detriment. Any such behaviour will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter. Individuals who believe they are being penalised for raising a concern should report this immediately.

### **8. Malicious Allegations**

While all concerns raised in good faith are protected under this policy, malicious, knowingly false, or vexatious allegations will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

### **9. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body, or sooner if required due to legislative changes or operational developments. All staff will receive appropriate training and reminders of the procedures outlined in this policy as part of ongoing professional development and safeguarding compliance.