



# Whistleblowing Procedures

Revised: January 2024

To be reviewed: July 2024

## Principle Academy Vision

We put children first, pioneering excellence and championing each and every child.

## Employee Code of Conduct

The Pioneer Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This procedure should be followed where you wish to draw attention to issues of bad practice, possible fraud or corruption or other matters which seem to you to be against the interests of the public, the Academy or its staff.

The Academy and its employees have a duty to ensure that service users are respected and treated in a proper manner and that the standards of the services it provides are maintained at the highest possible level. The Academy also has a duty to ensure that resources (finance and staff) paid for with public money are used effectively and efficiently and without waste. Members of staff have a right to be treated with respect by their colleagues, service users and the Academy as their employer.

The Academy is committed to protecting employees who use the procedure and “blow the whistle” in good faith from victimisation. Employees should therefore never treat another employee of the Academy less favourably because they have reported or may be considering reporting an issue of concern under this procedure.

This procedure needs to be considered legislation which deals specifically with how to combat fraud and corruption.

## When to use the procedure

If you have serious concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of anyone acting on behalf of the Academy you may not be sure whether there is a case for investigation. In these circumstances it may be helpful to remember that you have a duty both to members of the public and your colleagues. As a guide it might be helpful to ask the questions:

- is this situation unacceptable to me?
- is this wasteful?

- could this be done better?

If the answer is "yes" then you should follow the procedure set out below even if this could place you in an embarrassing situation with a particular colleague or group of colleagues.

You are expected to raise issues promptly and in good faith and can expect matters raised to be investigated properly and fairly.

## **Procedure**

You can raise concerns orally or in writing. Whichever you decide to do, you should make a note so that you have a record for future reference. This note should include what occurred, where and when, and also who you submitted the complaint to and when. If you decide to raise a matter orally you may be requested to make a written statement at a later stage depending on the circumstances. The seriousness of the issue will influence who you decide to raise it with. It may be:

- Your immediate line manager
- The CEO
- A Trustee of the Board

If the issue is of a very serious nature, for example concerning maltreatment of service users, maladministration or an illegal act, you may decide that it is appropriate to contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees with statutory responsibility for taking action on illegality or maladministration. If the issue involves possible fraud or corruption you may decide to contact the Department of Education.

If you feel the issue is sufficiently serious for you to put it in writing, you can write directly to one of the people referred to above marking the envelope "Personal". This will be opened by the officer concerned and you will be guaranteed a response within seven days. This can be sent to your home address if you indicate that is what you want.

If someone gives you information which is of concern to them, you should treat it seriously in accordance with this procedure and not dismiss it without giving it proper thought.

## **Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018**

While issues raised anonymously will still be looked into, it is much better for complainants to identify themselves so the matter can be properly dealt with. Everything possible will be done to protect your identity, but you may be requested to act as a witness if disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation of the issues you have raised.

If you raise an issue under this procedure in good faith and believing it to be true, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018 protects you from any repercussions on your present position or future career. The Act does not protect anyone who is acting maliciously, making false allegations or who is seeking personal gain.

## **Employees who are the subject of complaints**

If you are the subject of a complaint under this procedure it will be investigated in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedure. This means you will have all the rights contained in the procedure such as representation at the investigatory interview.

## **External Advice**

This procedure is intended to provide an effective way for you to expose malpractice in the workplace. If you are not satisfied with the procedure and if you have concerns about fraud or corruption you can contact the Academy's External Auditor,

Azets UK  
Chartered Accountants  
First Floor, River House  
1 Maidstone Road  
Sidcup  
Kent  
DA14 5RH

or you can contact the Audit Commission Complaints Unit on 020 7798 7999 or [enquiries@nao.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nao.org.uk)

**DATE LAST REVIEWED:**

**11<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**SIGNED BY CHAIR OF TRUSTEES:**

