



Venture
Learning

Whistleblowing Policy

Venture Learning

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Introduction

Venture Learning is committed to creating and maintaining a culture of openness within our organisation so that individuals feel encouraged and confident to raise any concerns relating to suspected misconduct at an early stage.

Venture Learning promotes a culture in which staff feel confident raising concerns and understand that doing so contributes to safeguarding, organisational improvement and the welfare of pupils.

We also recognise the negative effect which malpractice can have on the organisation, and therefore encourage the raising of genuine concerns, or any suspicions concerning misconduct.

This Policy is intended to cover concerns that are made in the public interest. Matters of an individual or personal nature, or complaints relating to discrimination, victimisation or harassment should be pursued through the grievance procedure (please refer to the Grievance & Disciplinary Policy and the Equalities Policy).

Venture Learning will maintain a confidential record of all whistleblowing concerns raised, investigations undertaken and outcomes reached. Records will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's records retention schedule.

Information relating to a whistleblowing disclosure will only be shared with those who need to know in order to investigate and address the concern, unless disclosure is required by law, safeguarding responsibilities or regulatory obligations.

We appreciate that those reporting concerns may be apprehensive. Venture Learning will ensure that individuals will suffer no detrimental treatment as a result of voicing their concerns. We will not tolerate victimisation, harassment, bullying or any other detrimental treatment of any member of staff who has made a disclosure under this Policy. Complaints about such behaviour will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.



Key Staff and Contacts

Provision Based Contacts

Name	Role
Rhys Griffiths	Chair Of The Proprietary Body
Rich Hill	Headteacher
Gemma Waddington	Deputy Headteacher
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Independent Advice

Protect, the UK's whistleblowing charity, provides confidential advice and guidance for whistleblowers. <https://protect-advice.org.uk>

The NSPCC also provide whistleblowing advice through their Whistleblowing Advice Line. It provides support for professionals who are worried about how child protection issues are being handled in their workplace. The NCPSS Whistleblowing Advice Line offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation. (help@NSPCC.org.uk / 0800 0280285)



Section 1: Disclosures

1.1 Types of Disclosure

Disclosures can be made under this policy if there are genuine concerns relating to any of the following areas of malpractice, or suspected malpractice:

- criminal activity;
- practices endangering the health and safety of staff, students or third parties;
- practices harming the environment and/or local community;
- failure to comply with legal obligations;
- any form of financial malpractice including bribery, impropriety or fraud;
- breaches of data protection;
- failure to safeguard children in line with statutory requirements; or,
- deliberate attempts to conceal any of the above.

A concern can be reported whether it is historical, present, continuous or prospective.

Whistleblowing concerns may include low-level concerns relating to the conduct of adults working with children where behaviour is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct but may not meet the harm threshold.

1.2 Making a Disclosure

In the first instance, staff should bring the matter to the attention of to their immediate line manager. If the disclosure contains allegations that include an immediate line manager they should be reported to the Head Teacher. Any matters concerning the Head Teacher should be reported to the Chair Of The Proprietary Body.

This policy applies to employees, agency staff, volunteers, governors/proprietors, contractors and other individuals working on behalf of Venture Learning.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing and should include the background and history of the concern (providing supporting information and giving relevant dates where possible) and the reason the reporting member of staff is particularly concerned about the situation.

This policy encourages staff to put their name to an allegation whenever possible. Anonymous concerns may still be investigated at the discretion of Venture Learning dependant on the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern, the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. No action will be taken against an individual who raises a genuine concern even if the concern raised is not confirmed by any subsequent investigation.

If, however, an employee makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding concerns can be reported directly to:

- Nottinghamshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)



- Nottinghamshire Police
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

where they believe children are at risk of harm or concerns are not being addressed appropriately.

1.3 Confidentially

Any disclosure made under this policy will be treated as far as reasonably practicable in a confidential and sensitive manner. If confidentiality is not reasonably practicable, for instance, because of the nature of the information, this will be explained to the reporting member of staff.



Section 2: Response to Allegations

2.1 Initial Response

Once a concern has been raised, Venture Learning will investigate this. If the complaint has not been made anonymously, the reporting member of staff will be asked to attend a meeting as part of this investigation.

Venture Learning will keep the reporting member of staff informed as to the progress of the investigation, as far as is possible and appropriate bearing in mind, in particular, any confidentiality obligations that apply.

Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- be investigated internally;
- invoke disciplinary procedures;
- be referred to the police;
- be referred to a relevant external body.

2.2 Taking Concerns Further

This policy is intended to provide staff with an avenue within Venture learning to raise concerns. We hope staff will be satisfied with any action taken. If they are not, and if they feel it is right to take the matter outside Venture Learning, the following are possible contact points:

- the local Citizens' Advice Bureau;
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;
- a relevant voluntary organisation; or,
- the police.

Venture Learning recognises the lawful right of employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons under the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern..

