New Seaham Academy

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

September 2026

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards [in accordance with our Code of Conduct]. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.

1.2 The aims of this policy are:

(a) To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.

(b) To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.

(c) To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2. WHO IS COVERED BY THIS POLICY?

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the organisation, including senior managers, teaching staff, non teaching staff, administrative staff, consultants, contractors, trainees, part-time and fixed-term workers, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy).

3. WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?

3.1 **Whistleblowing** is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

(a) criminal activity;

(b) miscarriages of justice;

(c) danger to health and safety;

(d) damage to the environment;

(e) failure to comply with any legal obligation or regulatory requirements;

(f) bribery;

(g) the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

3.2 A **whistleblower** is a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a **whistleblowing concern**) you should report it under this policy.

3.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases you should use the Grievance Procedure.

3.4 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from The Headteacher, whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

4. RAISING A WHISTLEBLOWING CONCERN

4.1 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases they may refer the matter to the Headteacher.

4.2 However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact the Headteacher, Steve Bilton, whose contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

4.3 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any

meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4.4 We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

5.1 We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

5.2 We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible and have been made in good faith. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Headteacher and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6. EXTERNAL DISCLOSURES

6.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

6.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely if ever be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a

list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as students, parents, suppliers, contractors, agency staff including supply teachers, Governors or Trustees. The law allows you to raise a concern in good faith with a third party, where you reasonably believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager or the Headteacher for guidance.

7. INVESTIGATION AND OUTCOME

7.1 Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

7.2 In some cases we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

7.3 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

7.4 If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

8. IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED

8.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy you can help us to achieve this.

8.2 If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with the Chair of the Board of Trustees

9. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

9.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

9.2 Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Headteacher immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

9.3 Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

10. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS POLICY

10.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

10.2 The Headteacher has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, and must ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.

10.3 The Headteacher, in conjunction with the Board of Governor should review this policy regularly from a legal and operational perspective.

10.4 All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

11. CONTACTS

The Headteacher	Steve Bilton 0191 5813046 Email newseaham@durhamlearning.net
Chairman of the Board of Governors	Angela Carling c/o New Seaham Academy
Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

Equality and Diversity

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of age, race, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, sex, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, religion/ belief or political/ other personal beliefs.

We believe that this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010, as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage and it helps to promote equality across the school.

Modern Slavery Act

Advance Learning Partnership (Trust) is committed to ensuring that modern slavery and human trafficking are prevented from taking place within the Trust and its supply chain.

The Trust is committed to sourcing responsibly and improving our Practices to combat slavery and human trafficking in our business and supply chain.

Accessibility Statement

We are committed to ensuring that our policies are accessible to all

individuals. If you require this policy document in an alternative format, such as Braille, large print, or another language, please do not hesitate to contact our office. Immersive Reader tools are a useful way for an enhanced reading experience. PDF and word have this as a function. Your accessibility needs are important to us, and we are here to assist you in any way possible.