HumberEducationTrust
Where everybody counts, every moment matters.

Whistleblowing Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Trust Board is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain these 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 This policy has been updated and implemented following consultation with the recognised trade unions. It has been formally adopted by the Trust Board.

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

2 Scope and purpose

2.1 The aims of this policy are:

2.1.1 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.

2.1.2 To provide staff with guidance on how to raise concerns.

2.1.3 To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

2.2 This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, governors, consultants, contractors, 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. The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters or "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that there are wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

3.1.1 criminal offence or activity;

3.1.2 miscarriages of justice;

3.1.3 danger to health & safety

3.1.4 damage to the environment;

3.1.5 failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;

3.1.6 a disclosure that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.

3.1.7 bribery;

3.1.8 financial fraud or mismanagement;

3.1.9 negligence;

3.1.10 breach of our internal policies and procedures, including our Code of Conduct;

3.1.11 conduct likely to damage our reputation or financial wellbeing;

3.1.12 unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;

3.1.13 unethical behaviour

3.1.14 the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

3.2 A whistleblower is a person who raises a **genuine concern** 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, and we will seek to agree with you under which policy the matter being reported will be dealt with.

3.3 This Whistleblowing Policy should be used for complaints relating to your personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the grievance procedure, anti-harassment and bullying policy, or preventing sexual harassment at work policy (as appropriate).

3.4 If a complaint relates to your own personal circumstances but you also have wider concerns regarding one of the areas set out at 3.1 above (for example, a breach of our internal policies), you should discuss with a member of the school/trust's leadership team which route is the most appropriate.

3.5 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy, you should seek advice from a member of the [school/academy/trust]'s leadership team.

3.6 If your concern is in relation to safeguarding and the welfare of pupils at the school you should consider whether the matter is better raised under the school's child protection policy and in accordance with the arrangements for reporting such concerns, i.e. via the designated safeguarding lead, although the principles set out in this policy may still apply.

4 Raising a whistleblowing concern

4.1 We hope that 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, using the attached Whistleblowing Form (**Appendix 5**). They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively.

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, or they are the subject of the complaint, then you can raise the matter with:

4.2.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Humber Education Trust.

4.2.2 The Headteacher/Principal. This is the member of the senior team who is responsible managing whistleblowing complaints.

4.2.3 The Chair of Governors

4.3 Contact details are set out at the end of this policy (see **Appendix 2**).

4.4 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.

4.5 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 and data protection

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. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to one of the other contact points listed in paragraph 4.2 and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offers a confidential helpline. Their contact details are given at the end of this policy.

5.3 Where we receive anonymous complaints, we will investigate the complaints as far as is reasonable taking into account:

5.3.1 the seriousness of the issue raised

5.3.2 the credibility of the concern; and

5.3.3 the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources

5.4 As part of the application of this policy, the school/Trust may collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of data protection legislation (including General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations, and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time). Records will be kept in accordance with our records management policy and in line with the requirements of data protection legislation.

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. Protect holds a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy. Alternatively, the list is available on GOV.UK[1].

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 a contractor, supplier or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise a concern with the third party directly 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 one of the other individuals set out in paragraph 4.2 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. We may in some circumstances, appoint an external person or body to investigate the concern. The investigator(s) will collate findings on the matter and may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing. This will be sent to the Head Teacher and/or Governing Body/Trust Board for actioning.

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, an outcome, 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, 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 one of the other key contacts in paragraph 4.2. Alternatively, you may contact the Chair of Governors/Trust. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2

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 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 genuine concern. 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 one of the contact people in paragraph 4.2 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. In some cases, the whistleblower could have a right to sue an individual personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

9.4 In order to support an employee who raises a concern under this Policy they can access HET's Wellbeing Support on a confidential basis. (**Appendix 4**)

10 Review of policy

This policy is reviewed every 2 years or updated with any changes to legislation, in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix 1
Examples of Concerns that may be Raised

This list shows the kind of issues that may be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy. However, there may be other concerns that can be raised under the policy that are not shown here; if you are aware of such an issue, please report it.

- Poor or unprofessional practice by a member of staff or an agency that results in the service user not getting the same quality of service which is available to others.

- Children or young people being put at risk by an individual's professional practice, or the leadership and/or management of the school, or the school's policies, procedures and/or ways of working.

- Allegations of a safeguarding nature not being taken seriously or appropriately handled.

- Improper/unacceptable behavior towards employees, volunteers, contracted workers or service users which could take the form of emotional, sexual or verbal abuse, rough handling, oppressive or discriminatory behavior or exploitative acts for material or sexual gain.

- Any unlawful activities, whether criminal or a breach of civil law.

- Fraud, theft or corruption.

- Concerns regarding possible breaches of Health and Safety regulations.

- Leaking confidential information in respect of governing body activities or records.

- Misuse of pupil, employee, volunteer or financial data (including attainment information and personal details).

- Doing undisclosed private work which may conflict with working for the school, or which is being carried out during working time.

- Inappropriate contact with members of the public within school facilities, or whilst carrying out school duties outside of working time.

- Taking gifts or inducements.

- Inappropriate use of external funding or the school budget.

- Maladministration as defined by the Department of Education, Local Government Ombudsman or appropriate examination boards.

- Breach of any statutory code of practice.

- Breach of, or failure, to implement, or comply with any governing body or Multi Academy Trust policy.
- Misuse of school assets including, but not limited to, computer hardware and software, buildings, stores, vehicles and/or equipment.

Appendix 2

Contacts

Whistleblowing Officer	RACHEL WILKES, CEO HET 01482 755674 rwilkes@het.academy
Headteacher/Principal	Please update Headteacher information here.
Chair of Governors	Please update chair of governor information here.
Chair of Trust Board	GAVIN BARLEY 01482 755674 gbarley@het.academy
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 3117 2520 Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk
The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline	Helpline: 0800 028 0285 E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk
Department for Education	Telephone: 0370 000 2288
Employee's Trade Union	See Appendix 3

Appendix 3
Trade Union Contact List

Teachers Unions

NEU Ken McCall – Hull (Monday – Wednesday) Paula Burgin - Hull (Thursday – Friday) Laura Dandy – NE Lincs Advice Line	 Email: ken.mccall@neu.org.uk Email: paula.burgin@neu.org.uk Email: laura.dandy@neu.org.uk Tel: 0345 811 8111
NASUWT Kath Oliver -Hull NASUWT Local Secretary North East Lincolnshire Dinsdale Shaw (National Executive Member) Member Support Advice Service	 Tel: 07717 516642 secretary.hull@nasuwt.org.uk Email: secretary.grimsby@nasuwt.org.uk Email: dinsdale.shaw@exec.nasuwt.org.uk 03330145550 (8.00 am to 6.30 pm)
Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) 130 Regent Road, Leicester, LE1 7PG	 Email: employers@ascl.org.uk
NAHT Charlotte Hunter	 Email: charlotte.hunter@naht.org.uk

Support Staff Unions

UNITE the union Mick Simpson	 Email: mick.simpson@unitetheunion.org
GMB Elizabeth Marshall - Hull (TTO Thurs & Fri) Carl Burn - Hull David Shamma – NE Lincs	 Email: liz.marshall@gmb.org.uk Email: carl.burn@hullcc.gov.uk Email: branch@gmbhull1.org.uk Tel: 01482 218018 Email: david.shamma@gmb.org.uk
UNISON Clive Piper – Hull (Case Manager Schools) Sultan Mahmood – NE Lincs Sophia Farren – NE Lincs	Tel: 01482 318670 c.piper@unisonhull.org.uk 07756 074406 m.hunter@unisonhull.org.uk (admin) s.mahmood@unison.co.uk caseworker@unison-nelincs.org.uk

APPENDIX 4
Services Made Available to Employees - Information & Links to Support

HET's Services

If you feel isolated and are suffering from stress and anxiety, then you are able to contact the following counselling providers direct:

- **Space2B Heard** - Quote school name and Hull City Council (we purchase this service via the Occupational Health Unit, HCC. 5 free sessions for HET employees) Tel: 01482 705023
- **Schools Advisory Service** – 01773 814403, email: nurse@uk-sas.co.uk, or via the online portal: https://staff.schoolwellbeing.com/ using employer code **T237TG**
- **Let's Talk** - NHS – Tel: 01482 247111
- **Education Support Partnership** – Tel: 08000 562 561, https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/

Alcohol Support

- Drinkaware Home | Drinkaware
- Alcohol support - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Alcoholics Anonymous – Tel: 0800 917 7650 (24-hour helpline)
- Alcohol Concern
- Self-Help Addiction Recovery | UK Smart Recovery Free online support meetings

Bereavement

- Get support - Cruse Bereavement Support Tel: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Covid

- https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/ Tel: 119 (7am-11pm) for advice, Tel: 111 if you're feeling unwell

Domestic Abuse

- Support For Male Victims of Domestic Violence (mensadviceline.org.uk) Freephone: 0808 801 0327
- Information and support on domestic abuse (womensaid.org.uk)
- www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk (Live chat Mon-Fri 3-10pm), 24/7 Freephone: 0808 200 0247
- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects

- Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)

Drugs Support

- Honest information about drugs | FRANK (talktofrank.com)
- Factsheets and infographics – DrugWise

Education Support – Free Helpline Support by counsellors

- Education Support helpline - free and confidential emotional support for teachers and education staff

Explore by Wellness Topics – Nutrition, Mental Health, Fitness, Sexual Health, Sleep, Women's Wellness, Parenthood

- Healthline: Medical information and health advice you can trust.

Finances

- Free and impartial help with money, backed by the government | MoneyHelper
- Education Support: financial support to teachers & education staff

Health Blog – Metabolism, Relax, Beat Stress

- Health Blog - Live a healthier life (healthyworkinguk.co.uk)

LGBIQ Support

- Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline
- LGBT Foundation - Home

Men's Health

- Your Body, Your Health | Men's Health Forum (menshealthforum.org.uk)
- CALM - Campaign Against Living Miserably Men aged 15 to 35, Tel: 0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)
- Andy's Man Club Mental health support groups for men - groups who meet in our local areas

Menopause

- https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/
- www.menopausematters.co.uk

Mental Health Support

- MIND – Tel: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Mindfulness – HeadSpace

- Headspace for Educators - This is a free website and phone app which offers meditation, support for stress, sleep deprivation, guides to focus/quick resets as well as mini-workouts/cardio that you can do on the go.

To sign up for this free resource, click the link above and subscribe. You will need to prove employment by uploading a copy of your payslip once *ALL personal data and figures are blanked out.* They just need name and employer details.

Relationships

- Relate – Relationship support for everyone

Relaxation Support

- Relaxation exercises - Mind

Stress / Anxiety / Panic

- Education Support: financial support to teachers & education staff Tel: 08000 562 561 – free resources & counselling
- Get help with stress - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Samaritans Confidential support for distress/despair. Tel: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)
- Anxiety UK – Tel: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 10pm; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 8pm)
- No Panic – Tel: 0300 772 9844 Support with panic attacks and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Support for Carers

- Caring for someone else - Mind

Supporting Someone Else

- Helping someone else - Mind

Victim Support

- Get help - Victim Support Tel: 0808 168 9111 (free 24-hour helpline)

Women's Health

- Women's Health Concern (womens-health-concern.org) Factsheets and helpful resource

Appendix 5
Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing Policy Humber Education Trust

Report Form

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT - Whistleblowing Policy

Report submitted to:		Date Submitted:	**Report No. (Office Use Only)**
Report from: (full name)		Address for correspondence:	
Job Title/Designation:		Post Code:	
Grade:	School:	Telephone Number:	

NOTE: Please start your report with the background and history of the issue, giving relevant dates and the reason you are concerned about the situation.

In accordance with the Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowers') Policy, which I have read, I wish to make the following disclosure:

CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Please sign at the end of your report.

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT – Whistleblowing Policy

Continued:

CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

IMPORTANT

Sign and date the form at the end of your report. Take a photocopy of the form for your own records. Now follow the procedure on page 5.

To be signed by the officer receiving the report

Received by (PRINT NAME):	Date Received:	Signature of recipient:

Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowers) Procedure

PLEASE READ THIS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ABOVE PROCEDURE

PERSON MAKING THE REPORT

1. Complete the report form giving full details and take a photocopy for your records.

2. Deliver, by hand if possible, the two copies of the report to your line manager, or if, for some reason, that is not possible, to your head teacher/CEO

3. The receiving officer will sign both copies and return one copy to you.

4. You are encouraged to put your name to your report, but anonymous reports may be forwarded by mail, marked “PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL”.

5. The receiving officer will respond to your concerns and the matter may, following initial enquiries, need further investigation, or it may need referring to other agencies, depending on the circumstances. If any urgent action is required, this will, wherever possible, be taken by the chair of governor’s/head teacher/CEO/Chair Trust Board before any investigation is undertaken.

6. You may be asked to attend meetings with management representatives, aimed at seeking further information and clarification. During any meetings, you have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative, providing there isn’t a conflict of interest.

7. The procedure gives a list of people from whom you may obtain advice and guidance.

8. You will be informed of the outcome of any investigations, as soon as possible.

OFFICER RECEIVING THIS REPORT

1. Within 5 working days of receiving the form, the receiving officer will:

- Return a copy of the form back to the employee (discloser);
- inform other personnel, if applicable.

2.Anonymous reports should be forwarded to the Chair of the Local Governing Body/Head teacher or the CEO/Chair Trust Board directly.