

CRESCONOVA ACADEMY

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Version control

Date	Action	Next review
	New policy	N/A
	Policy reviewed and approved by Board	

1 About this policy

- 1.1 This policy covers all employees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers of Cresconova Academy (the **Academy**).
- 1.2 This policy outlines what you should do if you suspect something happening at work is putting you or others in danger, or is illegal or unethical.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2 What is whistleblowing?

- 2.1 Our aim is to maintain the highest standards of integrity in everything we do. We recognise that all organisations can occasionally be affected by conduct that is dangerous, against the law, or breaches ethical or professional codes. Should you have any such concerns, we encourage you to report them immediately – this is called 'whistleblowing'. You can be assured that we will take your concerns seriously, they will be thoroughly investigated, and you can be confident there will be no reprisals.
- 2.2 The types of concerns you may want to raise with us by whistleblowing might include:
 - 2.2.1 any activity you suspect is criminal;
 - 2.2.2 any activity you suspect puts health and safety at risk;
 - 2.2.3 any activity you suspect may damage the environment;
 - 2.2.4 any failure to comply with legal or regulatory obligations;
 - 2.2.5 any failure to meet professional requirements; and/or
 - 2.2.6 any attempt to conceal one or more of these activities.
- 2.3 Speak to Christine Braun, Chief Creative Officer if you are not sure whether something you have become aware of is covered by this policy.

- 2.4 If your complaint is about the way people are behaving towards you, you should refer to our Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy or our Safeguarding policy for guidance on how to proceed.

3 How to raise a whistleblowing concern

- 3.1 In most cases, you should start by raising your concerns with your manager, either face-to-face or in writing. If you would prefer not to go to your manager, you should tell the Chief Creative Officer, Christine Braun. You should also do this if your concerns are of a very serious nature.
- 3.2 You should say that you are raising your concerns under this policy and explain what they are. Include all the key facts, dates, and the names of the people involved.
- 3.3 You will be invited to a meeting to discuss your concerns, and you are entitled to be accompanied at this and any subsequent meetings by a colleague or trade union representative. If you bring a companion, we ask that you both agree to keep your disclosures confidential before and after the meeting and during any investigation that may follow.
- 3.4 After the initial meeting, we will investigate your concerns and we may ask you to attend further meetings. To investigate properly, we may involve specialists with particular knowledge or experience of the issues you have raised.
- 3.5 You will be kept informed about how our investigations are progressing and how long they are likely to take. Sometimes we may be unable to give you details about the investigation (or any action it leads to) as we need to protect confidentiality and comply with legal obligations. If this happens we will do our best to sit down with you and explain why we are acting in the way we are.
- 3.6 Your concerns will be addressed fairly, but we cannot guarantee the outcome of our investigations will be the one you want. If you are not satisfied with how we have conducted the investigations, you can take the matter to one of our trustees for further consideration.
- 3.7 Most concerns are raised with us in good faith, but occasionally someone makes a false allegation out of malice or because they believe they have something to gain. Anyone found doing this will face action under our Code of Conduct and is at risk of being dismissed for gross misconduct.

4 Confidentiality and anonymity

- 4.1 You are always encouraged to raise concerns openly, and if you prefer to do so in confidence, we will do all that we can to ensure your identity remains hidden. We may want to disclose your identity to people involved in the investigation, but will always discuss this with you first.
- 4.2 We discourage anonymous whistleblowing. Concerns raised anonymously are very difficult (and sometimes impossible) to investigate. We cannot properly establish whether your allegations are credible without being able to ask you for more details or for clarification, and this makes it hard to reach an informed decision. This is why we urge you not to report matters anonymously.

5 How to protect whistleblowers

- 5.1 If you raise a concern in good faith under this policy, we will support you fully even if we find through our investigations that you made a mistake. If you feel you have been treated detrimentally as a result of raising a concern, you must tell us at once.
- 5.2 All whistleblowers are afforded the same protection, so you must not threaten others who have raised concerns or carry out reprisals against them. You may face disciplinary action which could include dismissal for gross misconduct, if we find that you have.

6 Reporting your concerns to an external agency

- 1.1 This policy outlines the process for raising, investigating, and resolving wrongdoing within the workplace. It is rarely necessary for anyone outside the Academy to become involved when a whistleblowing allegation is made.
- 1.2 In some exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for you to go to an external body such as our regulator, the Charity Commission. We strongly recommend that you speak to the independent charity Protect for free, confidential whistleblowing before approaching an external agency - <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>
- 1.3 Alerting the media to a concern, particularly before or during an internal investigation, is almost never justified or appropriate. We strongly discourage you from doing so, and will treat any contact with the press as a serious disciplinary issue justifying dismissal unless exceptional circumstances exist. We would normally expect you to have taken all reasonable steps to deal with the matter internally or with an external regulator, and to have taken full advice from a lawyer or Protect before being justified in approaching the press.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. Document management information can be found at the top of this document.

Name:

Signed:

Role:

Date: