



Whistleblowing Policy

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Introduction

Liberty Training is committed to high standards of openness, integrity, accountability and to operating in an ethical way. We expect everyone working at the College to conduct themselves and carry out their role in an ethical way, in compliance with other relevant policies and procedures.

It is recognised that there may be occasions where individuals do not work in a manner that is conducive to an ethical working environment. An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of the College to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve their employer and not disclose confidential information about the College affairs. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information that they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation, then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisals.

The College encourages individuals to raise genuine concerns about suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible from the concern arising or becoming aware of the concern, and without fear of adverse reprisals or discrimination taken against them. This policy and procedure is intended to provide safeguards to enable members of staff to raise concerns about malpractice in connection with the College.

The Law allows individuals to raise such concerns externally and this policy informs individuals how they can do so.

The College is also committed to ensuring compliance with the Bribery Act 2010 and local authority safeguarding requirements enabling concerns about the behaviours of those working with children or vulnerable adults to be made to the Safeguarding Team in relation to learners or staff or directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Learners at the College and their parents are encouraged to raise genuine concerns about suspected wrongdoings by making a complaint under the College's Complaints Procedure.

Whistleblowing Definition

Whistleblowing in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and subsequent amendments provides legal protection for individuals who disclose information to expose acts, such as criminal acts.

Whistleblowing is the act of disclosing information about wrongdoing in the workplace. This could mean highlighting possible unlawful activities in the organisation, failures to comply with legal obligations, miscarriages of justice or reporting on risks to the health and safety of individuals or to the environment.

Such activities could be a violation of a law, rule or regulation, or a threat to public interest, such as fraud, health and safety violations or financial regulations, corruption or the cover up of any of these. By 'blowing the whistle', you may highlight illegal activity in the workplace, and may protect others in the future.

It does not matter whether or not the information is confidential and the whistleblowing can extend to malpractice occurring in the UK and any other country or territory.

This policy is not designed to question financial or business decisions taken by the College, nor should it be used to reconsider any matters that have already been addressed under another relevant policy such as complaint under the College, grievance, capability or disciplinary policy.

Qualifying Disclosures

Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as "qualifying disclosures". A "qualifying disclosure" means a disclosure of information that the employee genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that the Company has committed a "relevant failure" by:

- committing a criminal offence;
- failing to comply with a legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- endangering the health and safety of an individual;
- environmental damage; or
- concealing any information relating to the above.

These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen. The College will take any concerns that you may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who 'blow the whistle' where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is likely to occur. The disclosure has to be "in the public interest". We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

The Procedure

In the first instance you should report any concerns you may have to the Head of College/Designated Safeguarding Lead (for safeguarding concerns) who will treat the matter with complete confidence.

If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you, you should raise the matter with the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body.

If you do not report your concern internally, you should take them directly to the appropriate organisation or body.

Liberty College is a family-run business and thus the Directors have appointed a Head of College and an Advisory Board to ensure that internal reporting of concerns is appropriate. However, we have also devised a procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns (illustrated in the How To Report Concerns Poster, appendix 1) which includes contact details for LADO and other organisations, should such a situation arise that one does not feel that the internal procedures have been acceptable. Staff are advised during safeguarding training that, should such an occasion arise, they must report their concerns to the appropriate organisation. Liberty instils in their staff that non-action is not an option and that the welfare of the learner is paramount.

Treatment By Others

Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.