

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Whistleblowing Policy

Policy type	Trust Core Policy
Adopted by the Trust Board	27 th April 2017
For review	April 2020
Person responsible	Chief Operating Officer

This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented with no amendments.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) is committed to delivering high quality education and to that end expects high standards from its employees and contractors. In order to maintain those high standards a culture of openness and accountability is vitally important.
- 1.2 The aims of this policy are threefold:-
- to encourage employees to raise concerns about malpractice within the organisation without fear of reprisal;
 - to reassure employees that their concerns will be taken seriously;
 - to provide information about how employees should raise concerns and explain how the Trust will respond.

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust employees, former employees, agency staff and contractors engaged by the Trust.

3. Blowing the Whistle on Malpractice

- 3.1 Malpractice covers a wide range of concerns. The types of activity that should be disclosed include, but are not limited to, the following:-
- fraud or corruption
 - financial maladministration
 - failure to comply with legal obligations
 - endangering of an individual's health and safety
 - damage to the environment
 - a criminal offence
 - failure to follow financial and contract procedure rules
 - miscarriages of justice
 - deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above
 - breach of Trust policy
- 3.2 Employees should raise concerns with their manager as soon as malpractice is suspected. They do not need to wait for proof of malpractice before raising it. Remember that the whistle-blower is a witness to events and not a complainant.
- 3.3 When reporting a concern an employee should provide as much information and detail as possible, for example, full names, dates of events and any relevant documentation. This will help the investigator to focus the investigation on the main issues quickly.
- 3.4 There will be some cases where it is not appropriate for employees to raise concerns with their manager, for example where they suspect their manager already knows about the DSAMAT Whistleblowing Policy and appears to be 'turning a blind eye', or where it is suspected that the manager may be involved. In those cases, concerns should be reported to the appropriate Line Manager or Senior Manager.

- 3.5 Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. An employee who invokes the Whistleblowing Policy will be advised whether an investigation takes place or not. Depending upon the nature of the matter raised, it may not be possible for the Trust to give the whistle-blower very much information or give details of the action taken. When making a decision the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Board of Directors will consider whether continuing with an investigation is in the public interest.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1 The Trust understands that employees may be reluctant to come forward with information about the wrongdoing of a colleague or manager or indeed at all. As such, the Trust recognises that whistle-blowers may wish to raise concerns in confidence. If a whistle-blower makes a request for the matter to be kept confidential then their identity will not be revealed without discussing the matter with them first.

5. Anonymous Allegations

- 5.1 Employees are encouraged to give their name when raising concerns. Anonymous allegations are more difficult to investigate. The decision whether to investigate an anonymous allegation will be made by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Directors.

6. Protection for the Whistle-blower

- 6.1 All concerns raised under this procedure will be treated seriously and a decision made about whether or not an investigation is appropriate. Depending upon the nature of the matter it may be referred to the LDBS, LA or the police. The whistle-blower will be kept informed about the progress of the investigation and the action which has been taken although they may not be told the outcome. In some cases the investigation may result in criminal or disciplinary proceedings. If this happens the whistle-blower may be invited to give a written statement or give evidence at a hearing. The Trust will support the whistle-blower in this process and ensure that they are clear about what will happen.
- 6.2 The Trust will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect whistle-blowers if they have raised a concern in good faith. Any employee who is found to have victimised or harassed an employee who has raised a concern will face disciplinary action.

7. Allegations not made in good faith

- 7.1 Concerns that are raised frivolously, maliciously, for personal gain or where they are known to be untrue may result in disciplinary action or, in the case of agency staff, the termination of the agency contract. In the case of contractors, the matter will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Operating Officer so that a decision can be made about the appropriate action to take.

8. Advice and Support

- 8.1 The Trust recognises that employees may wish to seek advice and support from their trade union before blowing the whistle. Alternatively, employees may wish to seek advice from Public Concern at Work (PCAW), an independent organisation which is entirely separate from the Council. PCAW have lawyers who provide confidential advice, free of charge, to people concerned about wrongdoing at work. They can be contacted by telephone on 020 7404 6609 or via e-mail on helpline whistle@pcaw.org.uk

9. Blowing the Whistle Outside Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust

- 9.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to raise concerns outside the Trust to the appropriate 'prescribed regulator'. This should only be done where an employee is raising a genuine concern in good faith and where they believe that the information being passed on is substantially true, i.e. more than just suspicion. Employees are advised to discuss concerns with a legal advisor or PCAW before reporting them outside the Trust.

10. Complaints and Grievances

- 10.1 This policy should not be confused with other policies that exist for dealing with complaints or grievances. For example, complaints about the quality of service delivery should be addressed through the Trust's complaints procedure. Employees who are aggrieved about their own employment situation should consider whether to use the grievance procedure.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1 The Trust has delegated to the Finance & Operations Committee the responsibility for reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The Trust will approve all major changes to this policy. The policy will be promoted and published throughout the Trust.
- 11.2 The policy will be reviewed every three years or if there are changes to the relevant legislation.