



Whistle Blowing Policy

Purpose of Policy

Bodywork Company is committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. To endorse this commitment, Bodywork Company encourages employees with serious concerns to come forward and disclose them. This applies to any activities involving the staff, senior management and any external organisations or agencies.

This policy provides guidelines so that staff can raise any concerns they may have and receive feedback on action taken. It also allows staff to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the college's response and offer protection from reprisals or victimisation for 'whistle blowing' in good faith.

Qualifying Disclosures

You will be protected as a whistle-blower if you make a 'qualifying disclosure' about misconduct. Examples include, but are not limited to;

- Criminal offences.
- Environmental damage.
- Non-compliance with a legal obligation.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Threats to any person's health and safety.
- A calculated attempt to cover up any of the above.

Protected Disclosures

In order for your disclosures to be legally protected you have to make it to the correct person, following the correct procedure. You must:

- Make the disclosure in good faith (which means without malice and with honest intentions).
- Reasonably believe that the information is true.
- Reasonably believe you are disclosing to the correct person.

Introduction

Full time staff are usually the first to recognise matters of concern at work. Unfortunately they may not state their concern because they feel that doing so would be disloyal to their colleagues or to Bodywork

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Company. They may also fear victimisation or harassment. This can lead to staff ignoring the concern rather than reporting what may merely be a suspicion of misconduct.

Bodywork Company is committed to the highest possible standards of accountability, openness and integrity. To concur with that commitment employees and others with serious concerns are encouraged to come forward and voice them.

It is acknowledged that certain cases will have to go forward in a confidential manner. The purpose of this policy document is to state clearly that employees can report concerns without fear of reprisals.

This Whistle Blowing Policy is intended to encourage and empower employees to raise serious concerns within Bodywork Company rather than ignoring a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside the college.

Aims and Scope of this Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.
- Provide procedures for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Permit you to take the matter further if you are unhappy with the college's response.

Bodywork Company has a separate grievance procedure for issues that concern your own employment. This Whistle Blowing Policy is intended to cover other issues such as something that:

- Is illegal.
- Is against the college's policy.
- Amounts to improper conduct.

Safeguards

Harassment or Victimisation

Bodywork Company acknowledges that the choice of whether to report a concern or not can be problematical, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the misconduct.

Bodywork Company will not tolerate victimisation or harassment and will protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. This does not mean that if you are already the subject of disciplinary procedures, that those procedures will be stopped as a result of your whistle blowing.

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Confidentiality

Bodywork Company will do its utmost to protect your identity should you disclose a concern. However, it must be noted that the investigation process may make known the source of the information and a statement by you may be needed as part of the evidence.

Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages you to put your name to your claim. Anonymous expressions of concern have much less impact, but they will be considered at the discretion of the college.

Factors to be taken into account within discretion would include the:

- Gravity of the issues raised.
- Credibility of the concern.
- Probability of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Untrue Allegations

If you raise a concern in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. In contrast if you make allegations that are malevolent or simply to cause annoyance or suffering, you may find yourself the subject of a disciplinary action.

How to Raise a Concern

In the first instance you should contact your Line Manager. This depends however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the misconduct. If you need to approach the Principal directly then you should do so.

Concerns are best raised in writing as this is documentary evidence. Set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible. If unable to put your concern in writing, please telephone or meet the appropriate person.

Please disclose the concern as soon as you are able in order to facilitate appropriate action. You are required to evidence sufficient grounds for disclosure.

How Bodywork Company Will Respond

The ways in which an issue may be pursued include:

- Bodywork Company investigation.

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- Referral to the Police.
- Liaison with an appropriate external body.

To protect both Bodywork Company and individuals, initial enquiries will be made to determine the need for an investigation and, if so, what form it should take.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

Bodywork Company will write to you within ten working days of a concern being received, to:

- Acknowledge receipt of the concern.
- Specify the format of the procedure.
- Provide an estimate of how long it will take to present a final response.
- Inform you of steps taken so far.
- Inform you whether further investigation will take place, and if not, why not.

If necessary, further information will be sought from you.

You have the right to be accompanied at any ensuing meeting by your Line Manager or a person who is not involved in the area of work to which the concerns relates.

If you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, Bodywork Company will advise you about the procedure and support you in any way they can.

Bodywork Company realises that you need to be certain that the matter has been properly addressed.

Therefore, subject to the legal constraints, you will be informed about the outcome of any investigation.

How The Matter Can Be Taken Further

The policy is intended to provide you with an avenue to raise concerns. Bodywork Company hopes you will be satisfied. In addition, if you feel it is right to take the matter outside Bodywork Company, the following are possible contact points:

- Relevant regulatory organisations or professional bodies.
- Your solicitor.
- The Police.

The Responsible Officer

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality).

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