



Wirral Met College

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Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

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PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE PROCEDURE (WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY)

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Wirral Met College (the College) is a general Further Education College that is managed within a framework set by the Instrument and Articles of Government. The College is committed to ensuring propriety and transparency within its operations and should any individual have reason to raise any concerns about suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to the College's operation, in line with the definitions set out in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, this policy covers how individuals can raise whistleblowing concerns.
- 1.2 Concerns that are covered by this policy include the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, damage to the environment and any breach of legal obligations and health and safety concerns which are not covered by the College's Health and Safety Policy and Process.

2. THE POLICY:

- 2.1 The Policy can be accessed via the College website for anyone who wishes to use it. Other accessible forms can be provided on request by our Quality Department.
- 2.2 The Policy is the responsibility of the Clerk to the Governors.
- 2.3 This policy does **not** cover the following areas where the College has other specific Policies that relate to:
- **Complaints** relevant to a student or employer's individual circumstances which are dealt with through the Complaints procedure.
 - **Grievances** relevant to staff which are dealt with through the Grievance Procedure;
 - **Dignity at Work** relevant to staff, which is dealt with through the Dignity at Work Policy;
 - **Disciplinary matters**, that are dealt with through staff and student disciplinary policies.
- 2.4 We encourage individuals to put their name to any disclosure(s) they make because concerns expressed anonymously may mean that proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if further information cannot be obtained from the individual. It may also be more difficult for the College to establish whether any allegations are credible. Anonymous concerns will therefore be considered at the discretion of the College
- 2.5 Members of staff who make a disclosure have protections as a whistleblower that will ensure confidentiality and this will be managed by the Clerk to the Governors.

PROCEDURE ON PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE (WHISTLEBLOWING)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended that publicly funded bodies should institute Codes of Practice on what is commonly termed “whistleblowing”. This procedure provides the framework to implement the policy. A whistleblower is a person who makes a disclosure in good faith, that they reasonably believe to be true.

2. PROCEDURE

- 2.1 The concern(s) should preferably be submitted in writing (either by letter or e-mail) to the Quality Department, who, together with the Clerk to the Governors, will assess whether the concern(s) fall within the scope of the Whistleblowing Policy or may be covered by other College policies.
- 2.2 If it is confirmed that the concern(s) comply with the criteria in the Whistleblowing Policy, then the procedure outlined below will be used.
- 2.3 In line with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 if an individual has any specific needs which require reasonable adjustments to be made to the format of any meetings/discussions they may attend under this policy, they should accordingly request the same.
- 2.4 The procedure has four stages: -

Stage 1

Raising the concern(s).

Stage II

Investigation by the Clerk to the Governors into the concern, set out formally in a report.

Stage III

Necessary action.

Stage IV

Appeal.

2.5 Stage I

The initial concern should be presented to the Clerk to the Governors. This should be in writing or, if this is not possible, arrangements to speak with the Clerk, initially on the telephone, can be made through the Quality Department. Information should be provided in a format that will allow follow up on the concern. The Clerk will send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the individual as soon as possible.

2.6 Stage II

- 2.6.1 This stage will be the formal investigation by the Clerk.
- 2.6.2 The Clerk will notify the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors that they intend to carry out an investigation in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 2.6.3 If the concern(s) relate(s) to the Principal the Clerk will notify the Chair of the Board of Governors. If the concern(s) relate to the Chair of the Board of Governors, the Clerk will notify the Principal.
- 2.6.4 Where it is necessary to broaden the scope of investigation to include others (for example, auditors or staff with relevant experience that are in no way linked to the concerns), this will be subject to ensuring confidentiality.
- 2.6.5 All investigations must be mindful of the Proceeds of Crime Act, where appropriate, with respect to potentially “tipping off” criminal offenders through any investigations.
- 2.6.6 Where appropriate, at any point in the process the College or person/body may refer the matter to the police or other relevant statutory body.

2.7 Stage III Board of Governors/Principal Action

This stage represents the follow up action to be taken, using procedures already in place within the College or, where appropriate, referral to an external body. Such as, for example, in the case of criminal activity, referral to the police.

2.8 Stage IV Appeal Process

If the individual who raises a concern is not satisfied with the outcome, they may raise it within 10 working days of the outcome, with: -

- (i) the Chair of the Board of Governors or, in the event that the concern relates to the Chair,
- (ii) with the Chair of Audit Committee

3. TIMESCALES

An acknowledgement of the concern will normally be provided within 10 working days of receipt. The College will then progress any concerns without unreasonable delay.

4. ACCESS TO EXTERNAL BODIES

- 4.1 The aim of this policy and procedure is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the College. In most cases individuals should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

- 4.2 The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

5. TRADES UNIONS

The College recognises that staff may wish to seek advice and be represented by their trade union officers when using this procedure and welcomes and endorses the role that such officers play in these matters.

6. MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

The College regards the malicious raising of false allegations as a serious matter which, if this was found to be the case, would be followed up appropriately.

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE PROCEDURES (WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY)

The person with whom concerns should be raised under the College's procedure on Whistleblowing is:-

[Lesley Venables, Clerk to the Governors](#)
[C/O Louise Kelly, Administrator to the Governors](#)
[Conway Park Campus](#)

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