



ENERGY COAST UTC

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

2022- 2025

Approved: Full Governing Body

Signed: 

Date: October 2022

Date for Review: September 2025

Revision History:

Revision History			
Revision	Date	Owner	Summary of Changes
1	October 2017	BLS	First edition
2	September 2019	BLS	To reflect changes to the Academies Financial Handbook 2019
3	November 2020	CBT	To improve clarity of procedure and reflect any legislative updates – as part of HR review
4	September 2022	KAW	Policy review
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About This Policy

- 1.1 Energy Coast UTC is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty, integrity, openness and accountability in all of its activities. We expect all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with our Code of Conduct. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.
- 1.2 The aims of this policy are:
 - (a) To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
 - (b) To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken where appropriate.
 - (c) To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns through the steps outlined in the policy without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue)
 - (d) To let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern
- 1.3 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2. Personnel Responsible for the Policy

- 2.1 The Energy Coast UTC Governing Body has overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.
- 2.2 The Whistleblowing Officer has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, and must ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.
- 2.3 The Whistleblowing Officer, in conjunction with the Governing Body should review this policy from a legal and operational perspective at least once a year.
- 2.4 All managers have a responsibility to act on the concerns raised, in accordance with this policy. Failure to do so in may lead to disciplinary action.
- 2.5 All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

3. Legislation

3.1 The requirement to have clear whistle-blowing procedures in place is set out in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#).

This policy has been written in line with the above document, as well as [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. What is Whistleblowing?

4.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- (a) criminal activity that has been, is being or is likely to be, committed;
- (b) failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- (c) miscarriages of justice;
- (d) danger to health and safety;
- (e) damage to the environment;
- (f) fraud and corruption;
- (g) unauthorised use of public funds;
- (h) breach of our internal policies and procedures including our Code of Conduct;
- (i) abuse of students or staff;
- (j) harassment or victimisation of students or staff;
- (k) conduct likely to damage our reputation or financial wellbeing;
- (l) unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- (m) other unethical conduct;
- (n) the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

4.2 A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above which is in the public interest. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

4.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, Energy Coast UTC's existing policies should be used i.e. the Staff Grievance Policy or Staff Disciplinary Policy.

4.4 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from the Whistleblowing Officer, whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

5. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

5.1 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases, they may refer the matter to the Whistleblowing Officer.

5.2 However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact one of the following:

- (a) The Whistleblowing Officer, Rob Phizacklea
- (b) The Principal; or, where the concern relates to the Principal;
- (c) The Designated Whistleblowing Governor, Alistair Bulloch

Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

5.3 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

5.4 We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

6.2 We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistle-blowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officer, or one of the other contact points listed in 4.2 above, and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

7. Investigation and Outcome

7.1 Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure.

7.2 In some cases we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

7.3 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

7.4 If we conclude that a whistle-blower has made false malicious or vexatious allegations, the whistle-blower

will be subject to disciplinary action. If, however the allegation is made in good faith, but not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the whistle-blower.

8. If you are Not Satisfied

- 8.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy you can help us to achieve this.
- 8.2 If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts in 4.2. Alternatively, you may contact the Chair of Governors. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

9. External Disclosures

- 9.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 9.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely if ever be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. For concerns relating to child protection, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line can be contacted. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.
- 9.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a student, supplier or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise the matter with the third party directly. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager or one of the other individuals set out in 5.2 for guidance.

10. Protection and Support for Whistle-blowers

- 10.1 It is understandable that whistle-blowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 10.2 Whistle-blowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.
- 10.3 You must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links with the following:

- Energy Coast UTC staff grievance policy
- Energy Coast UTC complaints procedure
- Energy Coast UTC child protection policy

Appendix 1 - Contacts

Whistleblowing Officer	<p>Rob Phizacklea, Assistant Principal</p> <p>01900 606446</p> <p>Rob.Phizacklea@energycoastutc.co.uk</p>
Designated Whistleblowing Governor	<p>Kerri Black</p> <p>Contacted via Clerk to the Chair of Governors (Laura Devlin)</p> <p>01900 606446</p> <p>clerk@energycoastutc.co.uk</p>
Principal	<p>Kerryann Wilson</p> <p>01900 606446</p> <p>Kerryann.wilson@energycoastutc.co.uk</p>
Chair of Governors	<p>Barbara Stephens</p> <p>Contacted via Clerk to the Chair of Governors (Laura Devlin)</p> <p>01900 606446</p> <p>clerk@energycoastutc.co.uk</p>
<p>Protect</p> <p>(Independent whistleblowing charity)</p> <p>NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line</p> <p>(Independent whistleblowing advisors relating to child protection concerns)</p>	<p>Helpline: 0203 117 2520</p> <p>E-mail: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk</p> <p>Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk</p> <p>Helpline: 0800 028 0285</p> <p>E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk</p> <p>Website: www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/</p>