



Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by: Lisa Robertson

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Introduction

New You Hair Academy is dedicated to fostering a culture of transparency, integrity, and accountability. In line with these values and in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), we have formulated this Whistleblowing Policy to provide a secure platform for our staff to disclose concerns related to wrongdoing in the public interest. This policy extends to all members of the New You Hair Academy community, ensuring a commitment to openness, confidentiality, and a supportive environment for raising concerns.

Legal Framework

This policy is in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), which provides legal protection to workers who disclose wrongdoing in the public interest. PIDA ensures that whistleblowers who raise legitimate concerns are protected from dismissal or detriment as a result of their disclosure.

This policy is also written in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), which requires all staff to be able to raise concerns about safeguarding practice, leadership decisions, or unsafe cultures without fear of reprisal.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to **all staff**, including:

- Full-time and part-time employees
- Casual and temporary workers
- Agency workers
- Contractors
- Volunteers and individuals on work experience placements

PIDA protects disclosures related to wrongdoing in the public interest, including:

1. Criminal offences (e.g., fraud, corruption, theft)
2. Breach of legal obligations
3. Miscarriages of justice
4. Health and safety dangers
5. Environmental damage
6. Cover-ups of wrongdoing in any of the above areas

Principles

New You Hair Academy encourages a culture of openness and transparency, valuing the courage and honesty of those who speak out against wrongdoing. This policy underscores our commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards and ensuring the well-being of our staff, learners, and the entire New You Hair Academy community.

Protection Against Reprisal, Harassment, and Victimisation

New You Hair Academy firmly opposes any form of retaliation against staff who report concerns in good faith. In line with PIDA, individuals who raise concerns are legally protected from dismissal or any form of detriment. To reinforce this, we have implemented:

- A zero-tolerance policy on victimisation and retaliation
- Confidentiality measures to protect whistleblowers
- Non-retaliation commitments, ensuring fair treatment
- Disciplinary action against those engaging in victimisation

Confidentiality

We understand the importance of confidentiality in **protecting whistleblowers**. While we will strive to protect the identity of individuals making disclosures, there may be circumstances where disclosure is necessary as part of an investigation. Where possible, we will seek the whistleblower's consent before revealing their identity.

Anonymous Allegations

New You Hair Academy encourages staff to put their names to allegations whenever possible. However, we also recognise the need for anonymity in certain cases. Anonymous allegations will be evaluated based on:

- Seriousness of the issue
- Credibility of the concern
- Likelihood of confirmation
- Protection of children's welfare

Untrue and Malicious/Vexatious Allegations

We emphasise the importance of honesty in raising concerns. If an allegation is made in good faith but is not confirmed upon investigation, no action will be taken against the whistleblower. However, malicious, vexatious, or personally motivated allegations will be considered a serious breach of trust and may result in disciplinary action.

Whistleblowing and Child Protection

The safety and well-being of students are paramount. If a concern relates to child welfare, staff are required to follow our safeguarding procedures, which may involve consulting with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or making a direct referral to social services.

Concerns that may not meet the threshold for formal allegation but relate to professional conduct or boundary issues should be reported in line with the Low-Level Concerns Procedure and Staff Code of Conduct.

Procedure for Making a Whistleblowing Allegation

New You Hair Academy has established clear steps for making a whistleblowing allegation:

1. Internal Reporting

- Initial whistleblowing contact: Head of Centre
- If concern relates to Head of Centre: Board of Directors
- If safeguarding concern about DSL: escalate to LADO

2. External Reporting

If a whistleblower believes their concern is not being addressed internally, they may escalate the issue to:

- Ofsted
- Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership
- LADO
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (0800 028 0285)

3. Child Protection Matters

- If the concern relates to child safety, staff must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- If necessary, staff are empowered to contact external safeguarding authorities directly.

4. Verbal Reporting

- If staff feel uncomfortable making a written allegation, they can request a confidential verbal meeting with an appropriate senior leader.

Response to Whistleblowing

Upon receiving a whistleblowing allegation, New You Hair Academy will:

- Acknowledgement will normally be provided within 5 working days.
- An initial assessment will be completed within 10 working days where possible.
- Decide on an appropriate course of action, which may include:
 - Internal investigation
 - Referral to external authorities (e.g., police, local authority, regulatory bodies)
 - Financial audit if concerns involve financial mismanagement
 - Disciplinary action if misconduct is identified

The Inquiry Process

A designated investigating officer will handle the case, ensuring confidentiality and fairness. If required, findings may be reported to external authorities, especially in cases involving criminal behaviour or safeguarding concerns.

The Inquiry Report

At the conclusion of an investigation:

- A written report will be prepared
- If action is necessary, it may result in disciplinary procedures
- The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, while maintaining confidentiality

Taking the Matter Further

If a whistleblower is dissatisfied with the outcome or no action is taken, they may escalate their concerns by:

1. Following internal complaints procedures
2. Contacting an external regulatory body or legal advisor
3. Seeking independent legal advice
4. Reporting the matter to the police, if necessary

Commitment to Fairness and Transparency

New You Hair Academy is committed to addressing concerns promptly and comprehensively, upholding the principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability throughout the whistleblowing process.