

SIGTA LTD

Whistle Blowing Policy

Date	Version	Description	Checked	Approved
15-01-26	2.1	Annual review of this policy review completed. Minor updates to format and content (format). Examples of whistle blowing now included within the policy (see section 11). Additional information on staff CPD included (see section 12). Introduction of version control table to record amendments made.	 Mike Driscoll IQA - SIGTA	 Alison Foxwell CEO -SIGTA

Next revision due: 15-01-27

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

SIGTA Ltd (hereinafter referred to as "the Provider") is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and transparency. This Whistleblowing Policy aims to provide clear guidelines for employees, apprentices, and stakeholders to report any concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage a culture of openness and accountability.
- Ensure that individuals can raise concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.
- Provide a clear procedure for reporting concerns.
- Ensure that all reports are taken seriously, investigated promptly, and appropriate action is taken.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, apprentices, contractors, and stakeholders of the Provider. It covers concerns about, but not limited to:

- Financial irregularities.
- Corruption or bribery.
- Misuse of company assets.
- Breaches of legal obligations.
- Health and safety risks.
- Environmental damage.
- Any other unethical or illegal conduct.

4. Definitions

Whistleblower: A person who reports concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing.

Malpractice or Wrongdoing: Actions that are illegal, unethical, or not in line with the Provider's policies and standards.

5. Reporting Concerns

5.1 Internal Reporting

Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns internally in the first instance. Concerns can be reported to:

- Immediate Supervisor or Line Manager.
- Quality Lead
- Designated Whistleblowing Officer.

5.2 Confidential Reporting

If an individual feels uncomfortable reporting their concerns through the standard internal channels, they can report directly to the designated Whistleblowing Officer:

Whistleblowing Officer Contact Information:

- Name: Alison Foxwell
- Phone: 01273 416989
- Email: afoxwell@sigta.co.uk

5.3 External Reporting

In cases where internal reporting is not appropriate, individuals may report concerns to external bodies such as:

- Relevant regulatory bodies (e.g., Ofsted, Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)).
- Local Authorities and Regional Police and Crime Commissioners
- Professional associations.
- Awarding and End Point Assessment Organisations

6. Protection for Whistleblowers

The Provider is committed to protecting whistleblowers from any form of retaliation or victimisation. Any individual who raises a concern in good faith will not suffer any adverse consequences, even if the concern turns out to be unfounded. Retaliation against a whistleblower is a serious disciplinary offence and will be addressed accordingly.

7. Investigation and Outcome

7.1 Investigation Process

All reported concerns will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. The investigation process will involve:

- Acknowledgement of the receipt of the concern within 5 working days.
- Initial assessment to determine the validity of the concern.
- A thorough investigation conducted by an impartial team or individual.
- Regular updates to the whistleblower on the progress of the investigation.

7.2 Outcome

Upon completion of the investigation, the findings will be reviewed, and appropriate action will be taken. The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, subject to legal and confidentiality considerations.

The outcome and whistleblowing investigation process will be reported to the Board of Trustees/Directors to ensure clear and compliant evaluation.

8. Confidentiality

All reports of malpractice or wrongdoing will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The identity of the whistleblower will be protected unless disclosure is required by law or necessary for the investigation.

9. Record Keeping

Records of all whistleblowing reports, investigations, and outcomes will be maintained securely and confidentially by the Whistleblowing Officer.

10. Review of Policy

This Whistleblowing Policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal requirements.

11. Examples

Examples of whistleblowing include: -

- **Safeguarding and Safety:** Reporting the physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of students. This also includes reporting significant health and safety hazards (e.g., inoperable fire equipment, toxic materials).
- **Financial Mismanagement:** Reporting fraud, corruption, or the improper use of public money or school funds.

- **Academic Fraud:** Disclosing the falsification of academic records, student eligibility, or exam results.
- **Legal Violations:** Reporting that a school is operating without proper insurance or, as seen in [this example](#), with a similar case of misleading regulators, providing false information to government bodies.
- **Neglect of Duty:** Disclosing failures to provide required Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support.
- **Cover-ups:** Intentionally concealing any of the above wrongdoing

12. Staff communication, CPD and training

Staff Training and Communication Statement

Training Commitment

We are committed to ensuring everyone is covered by this policy and understand their rights and the procedures for raising a concern.

- **Induction Training:** All new employees, contractors, and volunteers will receive whistleblowing training as part of induction to ensure they are aware of this policy from day one.
- **Regular Refresher Training:** We will provide regular training to all SIGTA staff to maintain awareness and reflect any updates in legislation or best practice.
 - Identify a whistleblowing disclosure versus a personal grievance.
 - Handle disclosures sensitively, fairly, and confidentially.
 - Protect whistleblowers from any form of retaliation or detriment.

Communication Strategy

This policy is a "living document" that we will actively promote throughout the organisation to ensure it remains visible and accessible.

- **Accessibility:** The policy will be available, included in the Employee Handbook, and available in hard copy upon request.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** We will use meetings, newsletters, forums, staff briefings, and posters to remind workers of the reporting channels available to them.
- **Open Dialogue:** We encourage an open culture where concerns can be discussed in 1:1 meetings or team forums before they escalate.
- **Feedback and Updates:** We will periodically share anonymised high-level data on the types of concerns raised and any subsequent improvements made to demonstrate that "speaking up" leads to positive change.

13. Contact Information

For any questions or further information regarding this policy, please contact:

Alison Foxwell – Chief Executive

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