



## **Whistleblower Policy**

### **PRIMARY PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THIS POLICY**

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### **LAST REVIEW DATE**

September 2025

### **NEXT REVIEW**

September 2026

# Whistleblower Policy

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## 1. Statement

This policy applies to all Albemarle College employees: teaching and administrative, full time, part time and contracted staff.

Albemarle has introduced this policy to enable any member of staff to report their concerns with confidence.

Albemarle is committed to achieving the highest standards of service, including honesty, openness and accountability and recognises the hugely important role employees have in achieving that goal. The College will not tolerate any malpractice or wrongdoing in the administration and delivery of its services. The expectation is that staff will want to raise concerns they have about the way services are being provided, or about possible misconduct issues.

Albemarle recognises that although staff are often the first to realise there may be something wrong within the College, that they may not express these concerns because they may feel that speaking out would be disloyal to their colleagues or the College. They may also be worried about repercussions if they make a stand. In these circumstances staff may clearly feel it is easier to ignore the issue rather than reporting what may only be a suspicion of danger, fraud or other unlawful or unethical conduct in the workplace.

## 2. Aims

This policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise any concerns or suspicions, however small they consider them to be,

without fear of victimisation or recrimination.

The College welcomes genuine concerns and is committed to dealing responsibly, openly and professionally in response. Without this cooperation the College cannot expect to fully protect the interests of the College, its students and staff. If a member of staff has a concern they should follow the procedure in this policy.

In aiming for best practice, Albemarle will ensure that all staff are trained in the whistleblowing procedures as part of their induction at the College.

### **3. Related policies, legislation and guidance**

#### 3.1 Policies

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Complaints Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Low-level Concerns and Allegations Against Staff Policy

Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff

Staff Code of Conduct

#### 3.2 Legislation and guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with relevant government legislation and guidance.

Full list of legislation and guidance

### **4. Grounds for whistleblowing**

#### 4.1 Wrongdoing at work

This procedure is designed to deal with disclosure of information by an employee which relates to some danger, fraud or other unlawful or unethical conduct in the workplace.

All types of wrongdoing are included whether they are acts committed by fellow employees, faults in College procedures or oversights which should be rectified. The procedure should be used even in the event that the act or omission causing concern

has finished or has not yet started.

## 4.2 Grievances

This procedure should not however be used where there is a complaint relating to personal circumstances in the workplace. The Grievance Procedure contained in the Staff handbook should be used in such cases.

## 4.3 Detriment

Provided that this procedure is used correctly and staff make the disclosure in good faith they will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting the wrongdoing. A failure to follow this procedure may however make the disclosure unreasonable and the protection given to staff by this procedure may be lost.

## 5. Procedure

### 5.1 Stage one

#### 5.1.1 Procedure

In the spirit of openness, staff are welcome to contact external agencies found in Appendix A to ask for assistance with any whistleblowing concern if they feel uncomfortable speaking with someone at the College. Staff should be aware there may be legal repercussions in taking this action.

If a member of staff has an allegation or low-level concern about another member of staff they should consult the College's Low-level Concerns and Allegations Against Staff Policy.

For other whistleblowing concerns, staff should speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). In the event that the DSL or member of the SLT is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, staff should inform the Principal. If the Principal is suspected staff should inform the Local Authority (LADO) directly.

#### 5.1.2 Response

Staff can expect a response regarding the disclosure, detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified and any action taken,

within five working days.

## 5.2 Stage two

### 5.2.1 Procedure

If no response is forthcoming after five working days, staff should notify the Principal, as appropriate.

### 5.2.2 Response

Once a concern has been acknowledged staff should expect a response detailing any action to be taken within five working days.

## 5.3 Stage three

### 5.3.1 Procedure

If no such response is forthcoming staff should once more inform the Principal of the disclosure.

## 5.4 Stage four

If staff do not receive a response within five working days they shall be entitled to notify a relevant and appropriate external body the College, including those within Appendix A.

## **6. Bypassing the procedure**

In extreme circumstances staff have the right to raise concerns directly with a relevant and appropriate external body without first having followed the stages above. This may however cause damage to the College and its reputation as well as constitute a breach of a staff's your own duty of confidentiality towards the College and this action should only be taken in extreme circumstances and after careful thought.

### 6.1 Extreme circumstances

The College will consider extreme circumstances exist where staff have a reasonable belief that:

- the College will subject the member of staff to detriment if they inform;
- a cover-up is being mounted by the College;
- a disclosure made previously to the DSL or SLT, in accordance with the stages above, has not prompted a

satisfactory response.

In any of these circumstances, whilst being careful to protect their own legal position, staff should contact an external agency listed in Appendix A.

#### Appendix A: External agencies

- The Health and Safety Executive
- Royal Borough of Westminster Children's Safeguarding Board
- The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)
- The Environment Agency
- The Information Commissioner
- The Department of Education (DFE)
- The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
- The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

In an Emergency – call the Police immediately on 999

#### Appendix B: Dealing with the media

Even where extreme circumstances are thought to exist, staff should under no circumstances approach a commercial body or the media with details of the suspected wrongdoing. If staff approach any such body and / or where their concern is disclosed for personal gain, the College may consider this to be gross misconduct and immediate disciplinary action may be taken against them.