



Running Deer Whistle-Blowing Policy

Reviewed 27/02/2024 – next review 01/03/2025

1. About this Policy

- 1.1. We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. The aim of this policy is to encourage employees and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of the organisation's work to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, suppliers, and the employees of contractors or suppliers, casual workers, agency workers,, and volunteers.
- 1.3. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

2. What is Whistle-Blowing?

- 2.1. 'Whistle-blowing' means the reporting by employees of suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act within the organisation. This includes bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations
- 2.2. Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the School. 'Whistle-blowing' is viewed by the School as a positive act that can make a valuable contribution to the School's efficiency and long-term success. It is not disloyal to colleagues or the School to speak up.
- 2.3. This policy is intended to enable those who become aware of wrongdoing at Running Deer affecting some other person or service, to report their concerns at the earliest opportunity so that they can be properly investigated. It does not replace existing procedures;

- If your concern relates to your own treatment as an employee, you should speak with your manager or raise your concern through the appropriate grievance procedure.
- If a parent has a concern, it should be raised under the Complaints Policy.

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1. We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistle-blowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

4. How to Raise a Concern

- 4.1. In many cases you will be able to raise your concern with your manager. However, if you would prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, you should contact a Governor, an Executive Director or the Non-Executive Board of Directors.
- 4.2. You may raise your concern by telephone, in person or in writing. The earlier you express your concern, the easier it is to take action. You will need to provide the following information:
- the nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true; and
 - the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates).
- 4.3. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your suspicion, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that you are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for your concern.
- 4.4. It is likely that you will be interviewed to ensure that your disclosure is fully understood. The amount of contact between you and the officers considering the issues will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of your information.
- 4.5. You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns. You may invite a trade union, professional association representative or a friend to be present for support during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

5. Child Protection Disclosures

- 5.1. If your concern relates to child protection, you must refer to the relevant Child Protection Policy for guidance on the disclosure process.

6. How the Organisation will Respond to Your Concerns

- 6.1. The overriding principle for the organisation will be the public interest. In order to be fair to all employees, including those who may be wrongly or mistakenly accused, initial inquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

- 6.2. The investigation may need to be carried out under terms of strict confidentiality, i.e. by not informing the subject of the complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so. In certain cases however, such as allegations of ill treatment of others, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. Protection of others is paramount in all cases.
- 6.3. Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the person investigating your concern will write to you: to acknowledge that the concern has been received and indicate how the organisation proposes to deal with the matter, to supply you with information on support mechanisms, and to tell you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

7. External Disclosures

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. 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. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone outside the organisation.
- 7.3. The organisation's prescribed external contacts are:
- The Local Authority (Devon County Council)'s Local Area Designated Officer for safeguarding. If you believe the concern meets the remit of the LADO, please telephone 01392 384964 or email ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk for a notification form. Further information can be found here: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/child-protection/managing-allegations-against-adults-working-with-children>
 - The Police (Devon and Cornwall Police) please telephone 101.
 - Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline (0207 404 6609) and provides information about whistleblowing on their website (www.pcaw.org.uk).
- 7.4. If you raise concerns outside the School you should ensure that it is to one of these prescribed contacts. A public disclosure to anyone else could take you outside the protection of the Public Interest Disclosure Act and of this Policy. You should not disclose information that is confidential to the School or to anyone else, such as a client or contractor of the School, except to those included in the list of prescribed contacts.
- 7.5. This Policy does not prevent you from taking your own legal advice

8. Protection and Support for Whistle-Blowers

- 8.1. We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 8.2. Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you

should raise it with the Board of Directors immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

- 8.3. You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.

9. Untrue, Malicious, and Bad Faith Allegations

- 9.1. If you make an allegation in good faith and reasonably believing it to be true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, the organisation will recognise your concern and no further action will be taken.
- 9.2. Allegations which are maliciously, frivolous, or for personal gain are serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

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10. Recording and Monitoring

- 10.1. The Managing Director will maintain a corporate register containing all concerns that are brought to their attention. All officers allocated to look into a concern must ensure the Managing Director is provided with sufficient details for the corporate register.
- 10.2. The Managing Director will review the corporate register and produce an annual report for the Governing Body. The report will include a summary of the concerns raised, the post to which the concerns related (if not confidential) and any lessons learned. The report will not include any employee names. The aim of this is to ensure that:
- the organisation and/or the relevant department or subsidiary learns from mistakes and does not repeat them; and
 - consistency of approach across the departments.
- 10.3. The corporate register will be available for inspection by external audit, after removing any confidential information.

11. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

- 11.1. The Board of Directors of Running Deer C.I.C. have overall responsibilities for implementation, monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing this policy. The Board may delegate some or all of these responsibilities from time-to-time. The Head of School of Running Deer School has responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with the requirements of the School.
- 11.2. This policy will be reviewed annually and published at least annually, and if necessary, more frequently in response to specific guidance, incidents or developments in local, national, or organisational policy.

Contact Details

Running Deer C.I.C:

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Running Deer C.I.C.
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TQ13 8NE

Running Deer School:

Equality and Diversity
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