



**YOUTH ORGANISATION SINCE 2015**

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

Reviewed: 2026

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for staff, volunteers, and others associated with the Aspire in Arts to raise genuine concerns about wrongdoing, risk, or malpractice in a safe and confidential manner.

The Aspire in Arts is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and accountability in all its activities. This policy ensures that individuals can raise concerns without fear of victimisation or disadvantage.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all:

- Employees (full-time, part-time, and temporary)
- Volunteers and contractors
- Agency staff and work placement supervisors
- Partner organisations and external providers

This policy should be used to raise concerns about malpractice, illegal acts, or failures to comply with professional standards occurring within Aspire in Arts.

### **3. Definition of Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is when an individual reports concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice in the public interest. It is distinct from grievances, which are personal employment matters.

Examples of issues that may be reported under this policy include:

- Safeguarding or child protection failures
- Criminal activity or suspected criminal activity
- Fraud, corruption, or financial mismanagement
- Health and safety risks
- Discrimination, harassment, or bullying
- Breach of legal or professional obligations
- Concealment of any of the above

### **4. Policy Statement**

Aspire in Arts:

- Encourages all staff and stakeholders to raise genuine concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Will take all concerns seriously and investigate them promptly and fairly.
- Will ensure that individuals who raise concerns in good faith are protected from victimisation or dismissal, even if the concern is not substantiated.
- Will maintain confidentiality, where possible, throughout the process.
- Will take disciplinary action against anyone who victimises a whistleblower or deliberately makes false allegations.

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

- Ensure the implementation and review of this policy.
- Investigate and manage concerns raised under this policy in a fair and timely manner.
- Report any safeguarding-related disclosures immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

- Take immediate action if a concern involves the welfare or safety of a learner.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are addressed in line with statutory guidance and the Aspire in Arts Safeguarding Policy.

### **All Staff and Stakeholders**

- Have a duty to report any concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice that could harm learners, staff, or the organisation.
- Must act in good faith when making a disclosure.

## **6. Procedures for Raising a Concern**

### **1. Initial Reporting**

- Concerns should normally be raised with your line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If the concern involves the line manager, it should be reported directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another senior manager.

## 2. Safeguarding Concerns

- o Any whistleblowing concerns relating to a learner's safety or wellbeing must be reported through the safeguarding procedures immediately.
- o The DSL will liaise with the referring school, parents/carers (where appropriate), and external safeguarding agencies in line with statutory requirements.

## 3. Escalation

- o If the concern is about the conduct of senior management, it may be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Police, or Ofsted.

## 4. Investigation

- o Aspire in Arts will investigate all disclosures promptly, ensuring fairness and confidentiality.
- o The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the whistleblower, where appropriate.

## 7. Protection for Whistleblowers

Under the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)**, individuals who raise concerns in good faith are protected from:

- Dismissal or disciplinary action
- Detriment or victimisation
- Any form of retaliation

If an individual believes they are being treated unfairly as a result of whistleblowing, they should raise this with senior management or follow the grievance procedure.

## 8. Confidentiality

Aspire in Arts will make every effort to protect the identity of whistleblowers. However, in some cases (e.g. legal or safeguarding investigations), it may be necessary to disclose their identity to relevant authorities.

Anonymous reports will be considered, although it may be more difficult to investigate them fully without supporting evidence.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the number and nature of whistleblowing disclosures to ensure that issues are being addressed effectively.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by legislative or organisational changes.