

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Company Operations

ADO SERVICES C.I.C.

Incorporating ADO River Valley

Version 1.5 ©2024

2023-2026

Last Ratification By Management Committee	March 2023
Next Review By Management Committee	March 2026
Latest Update by ADO River Valley	March 2024

1. Whistleblowing Policy Overview

The Whistleblowing Policy is extracted from the **ADO River Valley Staff Handbook**, a legal document that links inextricably with the **ADO River Valley Statement of Particulars**, a legally binding contract between ADO River Valley and their employees.

For the purposes of openness and remaining visible to our committee and other stakeholders our internal ADO River Valley Whistleblowing Policy is now available within the ADO Library in an abridged version.

This policy is also closely linked to **The Safeguarding Policy**, which provides details of the many mechanisms where whistleblowing can often be initiated. Similarly, this can be linked with the **Risk Assessment Policy**, which should identify the causal effect that may have led to a whistleblowing case. There is also a relevance to the **Health and Safety Policy** for keeping employees and students safe within the workplace or ADO River Valley sites in general.

The Policy is valid for the following services:

EMPLOYEES OPERATING WITHIN ADO SERVICES (INCORPORATING ADO RIVER VALLEY)

1. Introduction

The whistleblowing policy is intended to cover serious concerns which fall with **the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**. We are committed to running our business with honesty and integrity and within the restraints of the law.

Whistleblowing is the everyday term used to describe a disclosure made to someone in authority alleging corruption, malpractice or wrongdoing on the part of another person. In employment, whistleblowing refers to an employee (“whistle blower”) making a disclosure about a colleagues’ conduct in the course of employment, or about employer’s practices.

It is also a term used when identifying the many possible signs of potential Safeguarding issues within the workplace, when working with students and the subsequent confidential reporting of the matter or disclosure to the appropriate senior staff member or authority, under anonymity.

2. The Legal Position

Employees and workers who make a ‘protected disclosure’ are protected from being treated badly or being dismissed as a result of making the disclosure. The Act offers protection to any person who makes a disclosure relating to the following serious offences;-

- Criminal offences.
- Risks to health and safety.
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation.

- A miscarriage of justice.
- Environmental damage.
- Abuse of a student.

For a disclosure to be protected it must be made to an appropriate body. For example, disclosing a health and safety issue to the Health and Safety Executive is likely to be protected, but not if the concern was disclosed to the media. The raising of a concern will be covered by this policy provided the employee has a reasonable belief that the disclosure is made in the public interest.

ADO River Valley is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students. It is also important that teaching and learning can be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary safeguarding issues, hazards and risks.

3. Procedure

ADO River Valley will take all such concerns seriously and any individual raising legitimate concerns under this policy will not be subjected to any detriment either during or after employment. All such concerns raised will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken accordingly. An internal procedure is fully covered in the Safeguarding Policy and additionally in the Health and Safety Policy.

4. Safeguarding Complaints

We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make and we will support employees during the process. We will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect employees and students when concerns are raised to us in good faith.

Every effort will be made to keep the identity of the whistle blower who makes a disclosure under this policy confidential, at least until a formal investigation is under way. In order to ensure that a fair investigation can take place the whistle blower will also be expected to keep the fact that they have raised a concern, the nature of the concern and the identity of those involved confidential.

It may be that during an investigation, disciplinary or legal proceedings that the company no longer maintains the whistleblowers' confidentiality. If that does occur, then the company will endeavour to notify the whistle blower in advance.

5. Untrue Allegations

If an employee makes an allegation, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, employees make an allegation maliciously, vexatious, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them and dependent upon the circumstances, this may be treated as Gross Misconduct.

6. Review

All ADO River Valley policies and procedures follow ITIL guidelines to ensure version control, change control and release management of any documents. As a matter of policy, documents can be updated at any time to reflect changes to ADO River Valley procedures, legal changes, OFSTED directives or any other reason to ensure the policies and procedures are accurate and correct. This involves consultation with stakeholders and approval from the directors and the ADO River Valley governance committee. All policies and procedures are reviewed at the very least on an annual basis. Regular communication through newsletters, social media, text systems and through our website within the ADO River Valley Library is part of our Release Management.

7. Contact

This document was produced by the ADO River Valley Operations team. This version supersedes any previous versions and will be reviewed annually.

All correspondence with regard to this policy, or any other operational policy and procedure should be directed to the ADO River Valley by e-mailing education@adorivervalley.co.uk or calling 0208 855 6778, requesting to speak to the School Business Manager or in writing c/o School Business Manager, ADO River Valley School, 126 Upper Wickham Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 3DP.