

Inspiring Future Teachers

Whistle-blowing Procedure

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Responsible Body – IFT Partnership Board





1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Whistle-blowing procedure sets out a process to allow 'individuals' to raise concerns about conduct or practices of 'others' within Inspiring Future Teachers
- 1.2. For the purposes of this procedure both 'individuals' and 'others' will include all direct employees of Inspiring Future Teachers (IFT), IFT Hub staff, Lead Mentors, Subject Leads, PGCE Tutors, IFT board members and IFT trainees and apprentices.
- 1.3. Concerns regarding staff in placement schools should be addressed in line with the relevant school policy.
- 1.4. The procedure sets out the process which Inspiring Future Teachers (IFT) will use to respond to such concerns, and also supports the individual to raise the concerns externally where appropriate.

2. Definition

- 2.1. Whistle-blowing inside the workplace is the reporting by employees or representatives of Inspiring Future Teachers (as detailed above) of information about alleged wrongdoing such as:
 1. Criminal offences;
 2. Breach of any legal obligation;
 3. Miscarriages of justice;
 4. Danger to the health and safety of any individual;
 5. Damage to the environment;
 6. The deliberate concealing of any of the above.
- 2.2. The procedure should only be used where there are reasonable grounds for the belief in the alleged wrongdoing and should not be used for an employee's individual grievance which should be dealt with in line with the IFT Grievance Procedure
- 2.3. Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE) dated September 2019 (as amended from time to time) and the HISP Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or the police immediately. Anyone can make a referral.
- 2.4. The '**Representor**' is the person raising the concern.

- 2.5. The '**Assessor**' is the person who hears the concern. This will be the line manager of the Representer or the Prescribed Person.
- 2.6. The '**Prescribed Person**' provides an alternative route for employees to raise concerns other than their line manager. At IFT, employees may either contact the HISP HR officer (d.odonnell@hispmat.org) or the IFT Assistant Director – Compliance and Operations (lyndsaycameron@inspiringft.org).
- 2.7. The '**Investigator**' is a senior member of staff who is independent of the concerns raised.

3. Principles supporting the procedure

- 3.1. **Ensure the highest possible standards of honesty, openness and accountability**
This procedure encourages all individuals to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or practices of others and sets out the process that should be followed.
- 3.2. **Establish safe routes for communications of concerns**
Where appropriate, appoint individuals or a group outside the normal line management to receive complaints of irregularities or other concerns.
- 3.3. **Protect all staff equally**
IFT will support and not discriminate against concerned persons, but also recognise that other colleagues have the right to protect themselves against unfounded false or malicious accusations.
- 3.4. **Establish a fair and impartial investigation procedure**
All complaints will be treated equally, regardless of who raises the concerns. The purpose of the procedure is always to secure a response to concerns.

4. Legislation

- 4.1. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 a Whistleblower is protected from detriment and unfair dismissal. IFT will support and not discriminate against concerned persons who apply the Whistleblowing procedure.

5. The Procedure

- 5.1. All parties will agree that the concern raised will be kept confidential (as far as reasonably practicable to progress the complaint) while this procedure is being used. If a Representor requests that their identity be protected, it will not be disclosed unless IFT is required to do so in law. Anonymous complaints will be taken seriously and will follow this procedure, however investigations may be limited without the ability to interview the Representor.

- 5.2. The Representor should raise their concerns verbally or in writing to their Line Manager or the Prescribed Person.

- 5.3. The Assessor should:

- Ensure that a written statement of any verbal concern raised is made as soon as possible after the initial discussion;
- Interview the Representor as soon as possible, and within seven working days of the concern being raised in writing;
- Obtain as much information as possible from the Representor about the grounds for the belief of wrongdoing;
- Discuss with the Representor the further steps which may be taken;
- Advise the Representor of the appropriate route if the matter does not fall under this procedure; and
- Report all matters raised under the procedure to the Director of IFT (unless the matter is in relation to the Director, in which case this should be reported to the HISP Learning Partnerships HR Officer).

- 5.4. The Representor may be accompanied to the interview with the Assessor by a recognised trade union representative or work colleague. The Assessor may be accompanied by an independent member of their trust or school staff to take notes.

- 5.5. If reasonably practicable, within ten working days of the interview the Assessor will inform the Representor of next steps as appropriate:

- The outcome and recommended action to be taken by IFT
- The matter will be further investigated internally

- The matter will be investigated by an external party
- The route that the employee should take to pursue the matter, if not within this procedure
- That no further action will be taken

5.7. The Assessor may engage another senior colleague, independent from the concern, to undertake an investigation. The Assessor or Investigator may also discuss the issue, in confidence with other suitable professionals, such as independent HR consultants or solicitors to assess the nature of the case and to inform the outcome of the investigation. Written records will be taken throughout any investigation.

5.8. The conclusion of any investigation will be reported by the Assessor to the Representor as soon as reasonably practicable and, where possible, within 28 working days of the concern raised. However, it will not always be possible to respond within that time frame. If this is the case, the Representor will be advised of any delay including the reason for it and the likely timescale.

5.9. All responses to the Representor will be in writing. If the Representor is dissatisfied with the outcome they may appeal to the Chair of the

6. Malicious accusations

6.1. Deliberately false or malicious accusations made by a Representor may be dealt with under IFT disciplinary procedures.

7. External Sources

7.1. IFT encourages all parties to make use of this internal process before considering referring concerns externally. If an employee believes that the right action is to take the matter externally, it may be appropriate for contact to be made with:

- Protect <https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-us>
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- HM Revenues & Customs
- Health & Safety Executive
- Serious Fraud Office with the Police
- The Local Authority's Designated Officer



- Information Commissioner
- Department for Education or Ofsted

8. Monitoring, review and evaluation

8.1. All matters raised under this procedure will be recorded by the Assistant Director – Compliance and Operations and reported on a confidential and regular basis to the Director of IFT. The IFT Partnership Board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that any recommendations have been implemented.

8.2. The Assistant Director – Compliance and Operations will review the procedure annually and will assess its implementation and effectiveness, and this review may involve seeking feedback from those who have had reason to invoke this procedure. The procedure will be promoted throughout the organisation.