

Connect Us Academy CIC

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose

Connect Us Academy CIC is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, integrity, safeguarding, and accountability in all aspects of our work with young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy encourages employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors, and partners to raise concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, risks to safety, or safeguarding concerns without fear of retaliation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Trustees and Directors
- Freelancers and contractors
- Students, placement workers, and agency staff

3. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about wrongdoing that is in the public interest.

Examples include:

- Abuse, neglect, or harm to a child, young person, or vulnerable adult
- Safeguarding failures
- Criminal activity
- Fraud, theft, or financial misconduct
- Health and safety risks
- Breaches of legal or regulatory requirements
- Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation
- Misuse of organisational funds or resources
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above

This policy is not intended for personal employment grievances, which should be addressed through the appropriate complaints or grievance procedure.

4. Raising a Concern

Anyone covered by this policy should raise concerns as soon as possible.

Concerns may be reported to:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- A Director or Trustee

The person raising the concern should provide:

- Details of the issue
- Dates, times, and locations where relevant
- Names of those involved (if known)
- Any supporting evidence

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

5. Safeguarding Concerns

Where a concern involves the safety or welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult, it must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults will always take priority over organisational interests.

Where required, concerns will be referred to:

- Local Authority Safeguarding Teams
- Police
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Other relevant regulatory bodies

6. Confidentiality

Connect Us Academy CIC will treat whistleblowing concerns confidentially wherever possible.

The identity of the person raising the concern will not be disclosed without their consent unless:

- Required by law;
- Necessary to protect a child, young person, or vulnerable adult; or
- Required as part of a formal investigation.

7. Protection from Retaliation

No person who raises a genuine concern in good faith will suffer:

- Dismissal
- Disciplinary action
- Loss of opportunity
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Any other detrimental treatment

Any retaliation against a whistleblower will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

8. Investigation Process

Upon receiving a concern, Connect Us Academy CIC will:

1. Acknowledge receipt where possible.
2. Assess the nature and seriousness of the concern.

3. Take immediate action if there is a safeguarding risk.
4. Conduct an appropriate investigation.
5. Keep the whistleblower informed where possible.
6. Take any necessary corrective or disciplinary action.

The extent of feedback provided may be limited by confidentiality and data protection requirements.

9. Malicious or False Allegations

Concerns raised honestly and in good faith will be supported, even if they are not ultimately substantiated.

However, deliberately false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

10. External Reporting

If an individual believes that a concern has not been properly addressed internally, they may report it to an appropriate external body, such as:

- The Local Authority
- The Police
- The Charity Commission (where applicable)
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Other relevant regulators

11. Record Keeping

All whistleblowing concerns and investigations will be recorded securely and retained in accordance with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes in legislation, regulation, or organisational practice.

Policy Owner: Bhaltinder Khuman Directors

Approved Date: 20/06/2026_____

Review Date: _19/06/2028_____