



Akademeia High School

Whistleblowing Policy for Staff Members

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1. Introduction

Every member of the staff at Akademeia High School is responsible for creating a safe and comfortable environment for the students. Staff members are frequently the first to notice any cases of wrongdoings or potential threats to students’ wellbeing. Whistleblowing enables early detection of potential threats to the school’s community and facilitates prompt and appropriate response. For this reason, Akademeia High School values and appreciates any employees coming forward to report their concerns to the senior management.

Staff members may be hesitant to report their concerns (particularly if other staff member is involved), as they do not want to act against their work peers or may be anxious of negative consequences for themselves if their suspicion is proven untrue. In order to address these doubts, Akademeia High School is introducing Whistleblowing Policy to assure all staff members that any report will be treated equally seriously and investigated properly, keeping the whistleblower’s identity confidential.

The purpose of this policy is to support and facilitate whistleblowing and to make sure that staff members can do so without any fear of subsequent disadvantage or discrimination.

2. Aims

The policy aims to:

- Create an appropriate procedural framework in which protection and welfare of children is of highest importance at all times and is the responsibility of all staff.



- Assure all Staff members that they are supported and heard while raising any concerns (including against other staff members).
- Clarify steps that need to be taken in order to report any cases of wrongdoing.
- Reassure all staff members that their identity will be kept confidential and that they will be protected from any reprisals, if the report is made in good faith.

3. Whistleblowing – explanation

Whistleblowing has been defined as “the disclosure by an employee or professional of confidential information which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the work place, be it of the employee or his/her fellow employees’ (Public Concern at Work Guidelines, 1997).

In Akademeia High School, whistleblowing is seen as an action which aims to safeguard our students. In particular, whistleblowing is considered an act, where disclosure of information is in the public interest. This includes (but is not limited to) the following cases:

- Safety of a student or other staff member is in danger;
- Mental wellbeing of a student or staff member is threatened;
- A criminal offence (including historical cases);
- Misuse of financial resources;
- Abuse of authority;
- Corruption;
- Any form of discrimination;
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information;
- Intentional or non-intentional coverup of wrongdoing of other staff members.

It is understood that reporting any concerns (particularly against staff members) may be a difficult decision for multiple reasons. This may include fear of not being believed or misinterpreting information. Staff members may also worry that their disclosure may disrupt regular functioning of the school and may negatively affect their career, if allegations are proven untrue. Analogically, staff members may be anxious about damaging the career of other staff members. For these reasons, Akademeia High School appreciates and values any cases of whistleblowing, as they may support school’s efforts to provide safe environment for our students. Therefore, Akademeia High School will protect the identity of the whistleblower.

4. Raising concerns

If a staff member wishes to raise a concern anonymously, they should write an e-mail to whistleblowing@akademeia.edu.pl, using their private (anonymous) account.

If an allegation against staff member is raised, it will be immediately brought to the attention of the Headmaster.

If a staff member feels comfortable enough to make a report in person, they can approach the Headmaster (in person or via e-mail). In all cases (criminal or not) the Headmaster must be informed as soon as possible and certainly within 48 hours.



If the concern is about the Headmaster, the matter should be referred to the ISP Regional Director.

5. Response of Akademeia High School to whistleblower's concerns (professional)

The Headmaster/or ISP Regional Director in case of concern related to Headmaster, will immediately start an investigation regarding the concerns reported. The investigation will be conducted in adherence to the following principles:

- All concerns will be treated seriously.
- During an investigation, principle of objectivity will be kept.
- Keeping the identity of whistleblower confidential.
- Acknowledging that an act of whistleblowing may be a difficult experience to a person making it.
- The first step of the investigation will include a decision on persons involved in the investigation. If allegations are of criminal nature, the police will be informed as well.
- The investigation will attempt to establish the facts of the reported issue. During all interviews conducted during the investigation, official notes will be taken in order to keep a written record.
- Depending on the gravity of the allegation and the information provided, the staff member against whom an allegation has been made may be suspended.
- The final outcome of the investigation will be a written report, which will describe the course of investigation and actions taken. It will be stored in a safe place for further reference if necessary.
- If the investigation confirms original allegations, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken against the relevant member of staff.
- If allegations are found to be false, the case will be officially closed.

6. Response of Akademeia High School to whistleblower's concerns (safeguarding)

All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount and must not delay raising concerns because of concerns relating to a colleague's career. Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the student and supports the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation.

If any staff member suspects any other member of staff of behaving in such a way as to harm, commit an offence against or in relation to a child, or behave in an inappropriate manner towards a child, should report their concerns to the Headmaster. The following steps should be taken:

- Staff should record their concerns.
- Staff should immediately report the issue to the Headmaster who will lead an internal investigation, seeking evidence if necessary.
- In the case where the allegation is about the Headmaster, the matter should be referred to the ISP Regional Director.

The same steps should be taken in case of former staff members and historical allegations. Staff member who has been reported, will be asked to attend an official meeting with the Headmaster and another senior staff member to provide an explanation of the issues raised. The reported staff member may bring a witness to the meeting, if they wish. During the meeting, notes will be taken to

prepare a formal document describing the course of the meeting. The document should be signed by all participants of the meeting.

Depending on the outcome of the meeting, further steps will be taken. If allegations are found to be substantiated, the reported staff member will face disciplinary consequences (including written warning, and/or suspension or immediate dismissal). Where appropriate, external institutions (e.g. the police) will be informed. If allegations are found to be false, the case will be officially closed.

The circumstances should be kept strictly confidential, and all parties involved should make every effort to ensure confidentiality while an allegation is under investigation, unless abuse should be referred to the police.

7. Further arrangements

Senior management of Akademeia High School will take all necessary steps to implement AHS Whistleblowing Policy for Staff members, including:

- Delivering trainings on Safeguarding (at least once in a school year) for all staff members;
- Monitoring the use of whistleblowing policy by assessing whether it is being used according to its aims;
- Reviewing the policy if necessary.

The policy will be presented to all staff members at the beginning of each school year.

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