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Whistle Blowing Policy

Policy Statement

Heritage Skills Academy is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity, and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of Heritage Skills Academy’s work to come forward and voice those concerns.

Policy Purpose

All Heritage Skills Academy staff have protection under whistleblowing laws if they raise concerns in the correct way. HSA hopes that individuals will feel comfortable raising issues with their managers informally. Should they not feel comfortable doing this for any reason, this policy is designed to give staff opportunity to formally raise concerns. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- Provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- Reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

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1. Aim

- To encourage you to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- To provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- To ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- To reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimization if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

2. Definitions

Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within Heritage Skills Academy rather than overlooking a problem or ‘blowing the whistle’ outside.

Employees are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong within Heritage Skills Academy. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to Heritage Skills Academy.

3. Policy

Who does the Policy apply to?

The policy applies to all employees, including contract staff, sub-contractors, partners, stakeholders and contractors working for Heritage Skills Academy. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with Heritage Skills Academy in their own premises.

What Types of Concerns are Covered in the policy?

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Issues relating to safeguarding
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of public funds

- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual, physical or other abuse of clients
- Other unethical conduct
- Actions which are unprofessional, inappropriate or conflict with a general understanding of what is right and wrong

4. Safeguards and Victimisation

Heritage Skills Academy recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service.

Heritage Skills Academy will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

5. Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness. This policy encourages you however to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that:

- Staff must disclose the information in good faith
- Staff must believe it to be substantially true
- Staff must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- Staff must not seek any personal gain

6. How to Raise a Concern

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate supervisor/manager or their superior. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach a more senior level of management within Heritage Skills Academy.

If for whatever reason, an individual feels that they cannot raise their concern directly to Heritage Skills Academy and they believe their concerns are substantially true, the law recognises that it may be appropriate for them to raise the matter with another prescribed person, such as a regulator or professional body. A list of prescribed persons and bodies is available on the GOV.UK

7. Responding to Concerns Raised

- Heritage Skills Academy is committed to ensuring that all concerns raised will be dealt with appropriately, consistently, fairly and professionally
- Heritage Skills Academy will arrange a meeting as soon as possible to discuss the concerns, to which you may be able to bring a colleague for support.
- Heritage Skills Academy will respond after the meeting to your concerns. Internal enquiries and investigations may need to take place, dependent the type of disclosure. External investigators will be brought in if required.
- Heritage Skills Academy commits to keeping the individual who raised the concern, informed at all stages of the process, where possible. The Heritage Skills Academy will not be able to communicate any matters which would infringe any duty of confidentiality owed to others.

- Anonymous concerns are less powerful and more difficult to investigate. The Heritage Skills Academy will consider them at its discretion, taking into account; seriousness of the concern, credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegations.

8. Protection and Support for those Raising Concerns

- Heritage Skills Academy is committed to providing good practice and support to any staff who raise a genuine concern under this policy, even if their concern turns out to be mistaken.
- Any individual raising a concern must not suffer any detriment for doing so.
- No member of staff should threaten or retaliate against an individual raising a concern and Heritage Skills Academy will not tolerate any such action. Any person found involved in such an action will be subject to formal disciplinary action.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Managing Director at least annually.