

SPTA Whistleblowing Policy

Key points

- The law allows employees to make a 'protected disclosure' of certain information. In order to be 'protected', a disclosure must relate to a specific subject matter and the disclosure must also be made in an appropriate way
- Whistleblowing protection is confined to a disclosure which, in the reasonable belief of the employee making the disclosure, is made in the public interest
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 provides protection to workers who raise concerns about serious fraud or malpractice at their place of work by making a protected disclosure
- SPTA actively encourages a culture of honesty and openness and therefore all employees are required to bring up to their Manager or other designated person any issue that, in the employees opinion, might constitute bribery, corruption, criminal offences, failure to comply with legal obligations, health and safety and environmental risks.
- Individual employees have the facility to raise individual concerns regarding their own employment and these should be done in accordance with the SPTA Grievance Policy and Procedure
- The whistleblowing policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside of the scope of other procedures, although the Principal / Senior Leader reserve the right to determine which procedure is appropriate
- SPTA recognises that the decision to report a concern can be difficult, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. SPTA will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect the employee when they raise a concern
- If at any time, the employee feels they have suffered detriment as a result of the whistleblowing, the employee is advised to contact their union representative or the Principal / Senior Leader
- SPTA is committed to encouraging all individuals, including contractors / partner organisations, to raise serious concerns and will always seek to protect the anonymity of individuals raising concerns
- SPTA aims to keep the employee informed of the progress of investigation but the need for confidentiality may sometimes prevent specific details being provided to them
- All allegations will be investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken
- Concerns or allegations raised which fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. child protection) will be referred for consideration under those procedures
- SPTA may take action against any employee who is found to be victimising another person for using this policy or deterring a person from reporting genuine concerns under it; and/or making the disclosure maliciously, with a view to a personal gain or where there were no reasonable grounds for believing the information supplied was accurate

Process overview

- Disclosure
 - The employee should promptly disclose the information to their Line Manager
 - If the Line Manager is thought to be involved, the employee should make the disclosure to the Principal / Senior Leader or a SPTA Director
 - The employee may also ask their union representative to raise a matter on their behalf
- Investigation
 - The Line Manager (or other person the matter has been disclosed to) will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of the investigation
 - The employee will be informed in writing within 10 days of the concern being received acknowledging receipt, how they propose to deal with the matter, including potential timescales
 - The employee may need to attend further meetings to assist in the investigation and will have the right to accompaniment at these meetings