



# Whistleblowing Policy

Reviewed September 2025

## **Expolink**

Freephone 0800 374199

Expolink is an external and independent organisation which provides a confidential hotline service for whistle blowing. Expolink can be contacted any time, night or day, in complete confidence with any relevant concerns. The call will not be traced or monitored.

## **Protect**

Helpline: 020 3117 2520

Protect is an external and independent organisation which provides a confidential hotline service for whistle blowing

E-mail: [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk) Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

**If you have a concern/complaint relating to the welfare of a child refer to our charities Safeguarding policy. The responsibility of safeguarding is everybody's!**

## **1. Policy Statement**

1.1 Amber Valley School Sport Partnership (AVSSP) seeks to run all aspects of the charities activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

1.2 This policy covers all employees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, including Trustees, casual workers and agency workers.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

1.4 This policy takes account of the Whistleblowing Arrangements Code of Practice issued by the British Standards Institute and Public Concern at Work.

1.5 When an individual makes a disclosure, the charity will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

## **2. Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation**

2.1 AVSSP Trustees have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy. Trustees delegate day- to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Designated Safeguarding Team of the Charity (details in section 11 of this policy).

2.2 AVSSP Trustees have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all employees are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

## **3. Aims**

The aims of this policy are:

To encourage employees 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.

- To provide employees with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- To reassure employees that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

## **4. What is whistleblowing?**

4.1 **Whistleblowing** is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- (a) criminal activity;
- (b) failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation (or regulatory requirements);
- (c) miscarriages of justice;
- (d) danger to health and safety;
- (e) bribery;
- (f) financial fraud or mismanagement;
- (g) negligence;
- (h) breach of the Charities internal policies and procedures;
- (j) conduct likely to damage the Charities reputation;
- (k) unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- (l) inappropriate use of Charity assets or funds;
- (m) the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

This list is not exhaustive.

4.2 A **whistleblower** is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If an employee has any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the charities activities (**a whistleblowing concern**), they should report it under this policy.

4.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to a member of staff's own personal circumstances, such as the way they have been treated at work. In such cases, they should use the Charities Complaints Policy.

4.4 If an employee is uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy, they should seek advice from the Charity Lead or other senior managers listed in section 11 of this policy.

## **Whistle-blowing Policy 5. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern**

5.1 Employees should be able to discuss any concerns about wrongdoings or dangers at work as part of the normal professional interaction between them and their line manager and, in many cases, these will be dealt with to mutual satisfaction. Alternatively, an employee may wish to raise any concerns with their line manager more formally, either in person or in writing. The line manager may be able to agree

a way of resolving the concern quickly and effectively. In some cases, they may refer the matter to the Charity Lead.

5.2 However, where the matter is more serious, or the employee feels that the charity lead has not addressed their concern, or they prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, they should contact the Chair of Trustees found in section 11 of this policy.

5.3 The Charity lead will arrange a meeting with the employee as soon as possible to discuss their concern. The employee may bring a colleague to any meetings under this policy. The companion must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

5.4 The Charity will record a written summary of the concern and provide the employee with a copy after the meeting. The charity will also aim to provide an indication of how it proposes to deal with the matter.

5.5 In instances where a concern involves the Charity Lead, the employee should contact the Chair of Trustees (whose contact details are set out at paragraph 11).

5.6 Contractors and volunteers, should raise any whistleblowing concerns directly with the Charity Lead.

5.7 Trustees should raise any whistle blowing concerns directly with the Chair of Trustees. Any concerns with raising the matter with the Chair of Trustees should be raised with the Safeguarding Lead Trustee (found in section 11 of this policy).

## **6. Confidentiality**

6.1 The charity hopes that employees will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if an employee wants to raise a concern confidentially, the charity will make every effort to conceal their identity. If it is necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know the employee's identity, the charity will discuss this with the employee first.

6.2 The charity does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if it cannot obtain further information. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Charity Lead and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If the employee is in any doubt, advice is available from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, which offers a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the foot of this policy.

## **7. Investigation and Outcome**

7.1 Once an employee has raised a concern, the Charity will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. The charity will inform the employee of the outcome of the assessment. The employee may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

7.2 In some cases, the Charity may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable the Charity to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

7.3 The Charity will aim to keep the employee informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the Charity giving specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. The employee should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

7.4 If the Charity concludes that a whistleblower has made false accusations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **8. After an Investigation**

8.1 While the Charity cannot always guarantee the outcome an employee may be seeking, it will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, members of staff can help the charity to achieve this.

8.2 If an employee has genuine concerns about how the Charity has handled their whistleblowing disclosure, they can write to the Charities Clerk to Trustees. The Clerk may investigate whether this policy's procedures have been followed in the case in question and notify the employee of his/her findings accordingly. The Clerk may ask for another assessment (7.1) to take place but does not have the power to re-investigate the original complaint/disclosure.

## **9. External Disclosures**

9.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases, an employee should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

9.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for an employee to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate to alert the media. The Trust strongly encourages its members of staff to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity Protect, operates a confidential helpline. It also holds a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at paragraph 11 of this policy.

9.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of charity staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party. In some circumstances, the law will protect an individual if they raise the matter with the third party directly. However, the Charity encourages its staff to report such concerns internally first. Employees should contact their line manager or the Charity Lead for guidance.

## **10. Protection and Support for Whistleblowers**

10.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. The Charity aims to encourage openness and will support employees who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

10.2 Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If an employee believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Charity Lead immediately. If the matter is not remedied, they should raise it formally using the Charities Complaints Procedure.

10.3 In instances where an allegation of such treatment involves the Charity Lead, the employee should raise it with the Chair of Trustees.

10.4 Members of staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Any employee involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **11. Contacts**

**Protect** (Independent whistleblowing charity) Helpline: 020 3117 2520

E-mail: [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk) Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

**Expolink** (Independent whistleblowing advice hotline: Freephone 0800 374199

### **Charity Lead**

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11.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by AVSSP.