

English National Ballet School

Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

English National Ballet School is committed to conducting itself with honesty and integrity, and it expects staff to maintain high standards. Staff are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within a school. However, they may be reluctant to express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the School. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations from occurring or to address them when they do occur.

This Policy complies with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (updated April 2020) and will not seek to inhibit justifiable whistleblowing by restrictive 'gagging orders'.

Policy Aims

- 1.1** To encourage staff and students to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate.
- 1.2** To provide staff and students with guidance as to how to raise their concerns.
- 1.3** To reassure staff and students that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Who Is Covered By This Policy?

- 2.1** This Policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the School, including board members, directors, employees and freelancers (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy). It also applies to all current students at English National Ballet School.
- 2.2** All staff and students are responsible for the success of this Policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

What Is Whistleblowing?

3.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers within the School environment. **This may include:**

- Criminal activity
- Miscarriages of justice
- Danger to the health and safety of both employees, students and the public
- Damage to the environment

- Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
- Bribery
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- The unauthorised use of School funds
- Negligence
- Breach of the School's internal policies and procedures
- Conduct likely to damage the School's reputation
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns (see paragraph 4 below)
- The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

3.2 A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If a member of staff or a student has any concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the School's activities (a whistleblowing concern) they should report it under this policy.

3.3 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 those cases, the member of staff should follow the Grievance Procedure.

3.4 This Policy should not be used for complaints relating to a student's own personal circumstances, such as the way they have been treated by a member of staff. In those cases, the student should follow the Complaints Procedure.

3.5 If a member of staff or student is unsure whether something is within the scope of this Policy, they should seek advice from a member of the Senior Management Team if appropriate. The Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding has a direct report to Board which staff and students may find reassuring. Alternatively, independent advice can be found via the Protect organisation (Public Concern at Work) or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline is available.

Safeguarding

4.1 Nothing within this Policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2024).

4.2 You should follow this procedure to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the School, or potential failures by the School or staff to properly safeguard the welfare of students, if you are concerned that the School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are not being followed correctly.

Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

5.1 The School hopes that in many cases staff or students will be able to raise any concerns with their tutor, line manager or the Senior Management Team, and are encouraged to do so. A member of staff or student may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if they prefer. Reports should contain the background and history of the concern (including relevant dates) and the reason for concern about the situation. They may be able to agree a way of resolving the member of student or staff concern quickly and effectively. In some cases, they may refer the matter up to the Senior

Management Team or to a member of the Nominations and Governance subcommittee.

5.2 The earlier concerns are expressed, the easier it is to act and resolve.

5.3 Where the matter is more serious, or the member of staff or student feels that their tutor, line manager or the Senior Management Team has not addressed the concern, or they prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, they should contact the Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding. If the concern involves the Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding, a member of staff or student should contact the Executive Director or a member of the Nominations and Governance subcommittee. If the concern involves a Director, a member of staff or student should contact the General Manager in the first instance who will escalate appropriately. Board email contacts can be accessed through either of the Directors, General Manager or Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding.

Confidentiality

6.1 The School hopes that staff and students will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this Policy. However, if an individual wants to raise a concern confidentially, the School will make every effort to keep their identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know the individual's identity, the School will discuss this with them.

6.2 The School encourages staff and students to put their name to their allegation whenever possible. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if it cannot obtain further information from the individual raising the concern. 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 Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If an individual is in doubt, they can seek advice from:

Protect whistleblowing advice:

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1025557&subid=0>

NSPCC whistleblowing advice line:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Investigation And Outcome

7.1 Once an individual has raised a concern, the School will arrange a meeting with them as soon as possible to discuss their concern. A member of staff or student may bring a colleague, union representative / parent or guardian to any meetings under this Policy. The companion must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

7.2 The School will take down a written summary of the individual's concern and provide them with a copy after the meeting. The School will also aim to provide an indication of how it proposes to deal with the matter.

7.3 The School will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation within 5 working days of the concern being raised. The School will inform the individual of the outcome of its assessment. The individual may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information.

7.4 In some cases, the School 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 School to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

7.5 Where appropriate, the matters raised may be referred to the police or an external auditor.

7.6 The School will aim to keep the individual who raised the concern informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the School giving the individual specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. Any information about the investigation should be treated as confidential.

7.7 The overriding principle which the School will bear in mind is what is in the best interest of the students or others affected by any possible malpractice.

7.8 If the School concludes that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

External Disclosures

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

8.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for staff or students to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. The School strongly encourages individuals to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

8.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of the School's staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a supplier or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect individuals if they raise the concern with the third party directly. However, the School encourages staff or students to report such concerns internally first. Staff should contact their line manager or the Senior Management Team for guidance. Students should talk to their tutor or the Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding in the first instance.

8.4 Staff and students should under no circumstances approach a commercial body or the media with details of the suspected wrongdoing. If you approach such a body this may make the disclosure unreasonable and the protection given to you by this procedure may be lost. Additionally, the School may consider this to be gross misconduct, and disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Protection And Support For Whistleblowers

9.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. The School aims to encourage openness and will support individuals who raise genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

9.2 Staff and students must not suffer any detrimental treatment because of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, suspension, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If an individual believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they

should inform the Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding immediately. If the matter is not remedied, they should raise the issue formally using the School's Grievance or Complaints Procedure.

9.3 Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Contacts

Public Concern at Work (independent whistleblowing charity)

Helpline: 020 3117 2120

Email: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-protect-advice-line/>

Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

NSPCC

Whistleblowing helpline: 08000280285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Document Change History

This is version 6.0 of the English National Ballet School Whistleblowing Policy. This policy is for internal and external use.

This statement is subject to regular revision and maintained electronically. Electronic copies are version controlled.

Version: 1.0	Date: 09.03.2020
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Policy created.
Version: 2.0	Date: 10.06.2020
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Reviewed at Wellbeing & Safeguarding committee, approved by Board of Governors June 2020.
Version: 3.0	Date: 10.11.2020
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Policy Reformatted and updated with KCSiE 2020.
Version: 4.0	Date: 12.12.2021
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Policy checked in line with KCSiE 2021.
Version: 5.0	Date: 18.10.2023
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Policy checked in line with KCSiE 2023. Board members added in as possible contacts.
Version: 6.0	Date: 25.03.2025
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Policy updated to reflect latest legislation change in reporting procedure.