



# THE KNIGHT'S ACADEMY OF DANCE

## *Whistleblowing Policy*

**Last reviewed: September 2019**

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures



# THE KNIGHT'S ACADEMY OF DANCE

## Whistleblowing Policy

### *Statement of intent*

The Knight's Academy of Dance (***the dance school***) is committed to operating in an ethical and principled way. The aim of this policy and procedure is to provide employees and workers (***workers***) with a means for raising genuine concerns of suspected bribery, breaches of the law and other serious wrongdoings.

The dance school encourages workers to raise genuine concerns about suspected wrongdoing at the earliest practicable stage. This policy and procedure is intended to provide safeguards to enable members of staff to raise concerns about malpractice in connection with the dances school.

This policy and procedure also aims to encourage workers to raise genuine concerns through internal dance school procedures without fear of adverse repercussions being taken against them. The law allows workers to raise such concerns externally and this policy informs workers how they can do so. However, a failure to raise a concern under this procedure may result in a disclosure losing its protected status under the law.

This policy and procedure also seeks to balance the need to allow a culture of openness against the need to protect other workers against vexatious allegations or allegations which are not well-founded.

The principles of openness and accountability which underpin legislation protecting Whistleblowers are reflected in this policy and procedure. The dance school is also committed to ensuring compliance with the Bribery Act 2010.

This policy applies to all workers of the dance school including any casual workers, home-based casual workers, and voluntary workers engaged by the dance school. Workers might be unsure whether it is appropriate to raise their concern under this policy and procedure or whether it is a personal grievance, which is more appropriate to raise under the dance school's grievance procedure. Any worker in this situation is encouraged to approach Stacey Knight (***the Principal***) in confidence for advice.

### *Protected disclosures*

The law protects workers who, out of a sense of public duty, want to reveal suspected wrongdoing or malpractice.

The law allows workers to raise what it defines as a 'protected disclosure'. In order to be a protected disclosure, a disclosure must relate to a specific subject matter and the disclosure must also be made in an appropriate way. A 'protected disclosure' must, in the reasonable belief of the worker making it, also be made in the public interest.



A protected disclosure must consist of information and not merely be allegations of suspected malpractice.

### *Specific Subject Matter*

If, in the course of employment, a worker becomes aware of information which they reasonably believe tends to show one or more of the following, they must use this policy and procedure if:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed;
- an individual has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject;
- a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur;
- the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be, endangered;
- the environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be, damaged; or
- if information tending to show any of the above, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.

### *Procedure for Making a Disclosure*

Information which a worker reasonably believes tends to show one or more of the situations given above should promptly be disclosed to their line manager so that any appropriate action can be taken.

If it is inappropriate to make such a disclosure to their line manager, a worker can raise the issue with the Principal.

Workers are encouraged to identify themselves when making a disclosure. If an anonymous disclosure is made, the dance school will not be in a position to notify the individual making the disclosure of the outcome of action taken by the dance school. Anonymity also means that the dance school will have difficulty in investigating such a concern.

The dance school reserves the right to determine whether to apply this procedure in respect of an anonymised disclosure in light of the following considerations:

- the seriousness of the issues raised in the disclosure;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- how likely it is that the concern can be confirmed from attributable sources.

### *Procedure for Investigation of a Disclosure*

When a worker makes a disclosure, the principal will acknowledge its receipt, in writing, within a reasonable time.

The dance school will then determine whether or not it believes that the disclosure is wholly without substance or merit. If the dance school considers that the disclosure does not have sufficient merit to warrant further action, the worker will be notified in writing of the reasons for the dance school's decision and advised that no further action will be taken by the dance school under this policy and procedure.



Considerations to be taken into account when making this determination may include the following:

- If the Dance school is satisfied that a worker does not have a reasonable belief that suspected malpractice is occurring; or
- If the matter is already the subject of legal proceedings or appropriate action by an external body; or
- If the matter is already subject to another, appropriate Dance school procedure.

When a worker makes a disclosure, which has sufficient substance or merit warranting further action, the dance school will take action it deems appropriate (including action under any other applicable dance school policy or procedure). Possible actions could include internal investigation; or referral to relevant external bodies such as the police, OFSTED, Health and Safety Officer or the Information Commissioner's Office.

If appropriate, any internal investigation would be conducted by a manager of the dance school without any direct association with the individual to whom the disclosure relates, or by an external investigator appointed by the dance school as appropriate. Any recommendations for further action will be addressed to the Principal as appropriate in the circumstances. The recipient will take all steps within their power to ensure the recommendations are implemented unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

The worker making the disclosure will be notified of the outcome of any action taken by the dance school under this policy and procedure within a reasonable period of time. If the worker is not satisfied that their concern has been appropriately addressed, they can appeal against the outcome within ten working days. However, timescales should be flexible, taking into account that different types of concerns will require varying time for investigation.

All communications with the worker making the disclosure should be in writing and sent to the worker's home address. If investigations into the concern are prolonged, the dance school should keep the worker concerned updated as to the progress of the investigation and an estimated timeframe for its conclusion.

### *Safeguards for Workers Making a Disclosure*

A worker making a disclosure under this procedure can expect their matter to be treated confidentially by the dance school and, where applicable, their name will not be disclosed to anyone implicated in the suspected wrongdoing, without their prior approval. For confidentiality purposes, if the worker requests to raise their concern verbally, it would be appropriate for the dance school to allow the worker to do so.

The Dance school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that any report of recommendations, or other relevant documentation, produced by the dance school does not identify the worker making the disclosure without their written consent, or unless the dance school is legally obliged to do so, or for the purposes of seeking legal advice.



No formal disciplinary action will be taken against a worker on the grounds of making a disclosure made under this policy or procedure. This does not prevent the dance school from bringing disciplinary action against a worker where the dance school has grounds to believe that a disclosure was made maliciously or vexatiously, or where a disclosure is made outside the dance school without reasonable grounds.

A worker will not suffer dismissal or any detrimental action or omission of any type (including informal pressure or any form of victimisation) by the dance school for making a disclosure in accordance with this policy and procedure. Equally, where a worker is threatened, bullied, pressurised or victimised by a colleague for making a disclosure, disciplinary action will be taken by the dance school against the colleague in question.

### *Disclosure to External Bodies*

This policy and procedure has been implemented to allow workers to raise disclosures internally within the dance school. A worker has the right to make a disclosure outside of the dance school where there are reasonable grounds to do so and in accordance with the law.

Workers may make a disclosure to an appropriate external body prescribed by the law. Workers can also make disclosures on a confidential basis to a practising solicitor or barrister.

If a worker seeks advice outside of the dance school, they must be careful not to breach any confidentiality obligations or damage the dance school's reputation in so doing.

### *Accountability*

The dance school will keep a record of all concerns raised under this policy and procedure (including cases where the dance school deems that there is no case to answer and therefore that no action should be taken).

### *Further Assistance for Workers*

The dance school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of workers who make disclosures. If, at any stage of this procedure a worker feels that they are being subject to informal pressures, bullying or harassment due to making a disclosure, they should raise this matter, in writing, to the Principal.

Workers can contact the charity Public Concern at Work for confidential advice on whistleblowing issues. Contact details are as follows: 3rd Floor, Bank Chambers 6 - 10 Borough High Street London SE1 9QQ Whistleblowing Advice Line: 020 7404 6609 <http://www.pcaw.org.uk>

**Reviewed by Stacey Knight, Principal**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 2019**