

Whistleblowing Policy v3

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Version	Page No.	Paragraph / Bullet	Changes
Version 2.0			New policy, colleagues should read the full policy
Version 3.0	7 & 12		Amended Nominated Officer for 'SeeHearSpeakUp' and general amendments and corrections throughout policy. Added to 'related documents' and amended whistleblowing email address to akguuk.

Signed:

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Introduction

AKG Learning is committed to conducting its functions with honesty and integrity. It is our expectation that employees, including all our business partners and associates, will lead by example, acting in a proper manner at all times and abiding by the procedures, rules and safeguards put in place to protect the interests of AKG Learning and those it serves.

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.

This policy has been introduced to encourage everyone to speak up and reassure everyone in the business that it is safe to do so. If an employee feels that something is of concern, and they feel that it is something which they think AKG Learning should know about or investigate, they should use this procedure. AKG Learning will treat all disclosures under this policy consistently and fairly.

The purpose of this Policy is:

- a) To provide an explanation of what whistleblowing is
- b) 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.
- c) To provide employees with guidance as to how to raise those concerns; and
- d) To reassure employees that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Scope

This policy applies to any person who is, or has been, any of the following with respect to the Company:

- Employee.
- Officer.
- Director.
- Prospective employees.
- Former employees.
- Contractor (including sub-contractors and employees of contractors).
- Supplier (including employees of suppliers).
- Consultant; Auditor; Associate; and
- Relative, dependent, spouse, or dependent of a spouse of any of the above.

This policy is intended to apply to the above persons in all countries in which the Company operates a business.

Definitions

This policy has been put in place to ensure any concerns raised regarding any misconduct or improper state of affairs or circumstances in relation to the Company's business are dealt with effectively, securely, appropriately, and in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The Company encourages the reporting of any instances of suspected unethical, illegal, corrupt, fraudulent, or undesirable conduct involving the Company's business and provides protections and measures to individuals who make a disclosure in relation to such conduct without fear of victimisation or reprisal.

This policy will be provided to all employees and officers of the Company upon commencement of their employment or engagement.

The Company may, from time to time, invite officers, senior management and employees to attend training sessions to ensure ongoing education regarding the application of the policy.

Obligations

This policy is not intended to create any contractually binding obligation on the Group and does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract for engagements with the Group.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work.

This will include:

- a. Criminal offences (this may include, for example, types of financial impropriety such as fraud or bribery)
- b. Failure to comply with an obligation set out in law.
- c. Miscarriages of justice
- d. Endangering of someone's health and safety
- e. Damage to the environment
- f. Discrimination (racial, sexual, religious etc.)
- g. Covering up wrongdoing in the above categories

A whistle-blower 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 dangers affecting any of AKG Learning's activities, they should report it under this Policy.

In the UK, whistleblowing law is located in the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998). It provides the right for a worker to take a case to an employment tribunal if they have been victimised at work or they have lost their job because they have 'blown the whistle.'

If an employee is uncertain whether something is within the scope of this Policy you should seek advice from AKG Learning's Whistleblower Protection Officers, whose contact details are specified within this Policy.

Under AKG Learning's whistleblowing policy, victimisation of an employee raising concern is not acceptable. Any instances of victimisation will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with AKG Learning disciplinary policy.

Reportable Conduct

You may make a report or disclosure under this policy if you have reasonable grounds to believe that a Company director, officer, employee, contractor, supplier, consultant, or other person who has business dealings with the Company has engaged in conduct as detailed above and below:

- Dishonest, fraudulent, or corrupt; Illegal (such as theft, dealing in or use of illicit drugs, violence or threatened violence and criminal damage to property).
- Unethical including any breach of the Company's policies such as the Code of Conduct; Oppressive or grossly negligent.
- Potentially damaging to the Company, its employees or a third party; Misconduct or an improper state of affairs.
- A danger or represents a danger to the public or financial system, Harassment, discrimination, victimisation, or bullying.

Any disclosures that do not fall within the above definitions will not qualify for protection under the Act. It will be at the Company's discretion as to whether it considers there is a reasonable suspicion that the Reportable Conduct is occurring and/or whether the conduct constitutes "misconduct or improper state of affairs" under the Act.

For the avoidance of doubt, Reportable Conduct does not include personal work-related grievances. A personal work-related grievance is a grievance about any matter in relation to a staff member's current or former employment, having implications (or tending to have implications) for that person personally and that do not have broader implications for the Company. Examples of personal work-related grievances are as follows:

- An interpersonal conflict between the staff member and another employee.
- A decision relating to the engagement, transfer, or promotion of the employee.
- A decision relating to the terms and conditions of engagement of the employee.
- A decision to suspend or terminate the engagement of the staff member, or otherwise to discipline the staff member.

Personal work-related grievances should be reported to your manager in accordance with the Company's Grievance Policy.

Internal Reporting

The Company relies on its employees maintaining a culture of honest and ethical behaviour. Accordingly, if you become aware of any Reportable Conduct, it is expected that you will make a disclosure under this policy.

All employees are responsible for adherence to this Policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected wrongdoing.

All employees who discover or suspect any type of wrongdoing in the workplace should immediately contact their Line Manager, to allow those in positions of responsibility and authority an opportunity to examine any such matter and take swift and appropriate action.

Appropriate time should be given to allow those in positions of responsibility and authority an opportunity to examine any such matter and take swift and appropriate action.

Anyone raising a report under this policy does not need to provide evidence in order for AKG Learning to look into the concerns raised.

Once a concern has been raised, it will be assessed, and consideration will be given as to what action may be appropriate. This may, for example involve an informal review or a more formal investigation. The employee raising the concern will be advised what further assistance may be needed.

If an employee has any personal interest in the matter, they should confirm this at the outset. If it is felt that the concern falls more properly within the scope of one of the other AKG Learning's policies, this will also be explained to the employee.

However, where the employee feels that their Line Manager within their service area has not addressed their concern, or they prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, they should contact our external reporting service provider, **SeeHearSpeakUp**.

SeeHearSpeakUp provides employees with the facility to raise concerns via the following confidential reporting channels -

i. By completing an online web referral report via the website - <https://fileaconcern.org/jobs22>

ii. By ringing **SeeHearSpeakUp** on the confidential helpline number

If you are calling from UK, please call **0800 026 0466**.

When an employee contacts **SeeHearSpeakUp** via the designated telephone number

above, they will speak with a call handler who will ask them for information, document feedback and ask follow- up questions to clarify information. The call handler will then prepare a report of their concern to be sent to AKG Learning's nominated Whistleblower Protection Officers who will be responsible for determining what course of action is to be taken.

AKG Learning's nominated Whistleblower Protection officers are:

No	Contact Name	Job Title/Role	Telephone No	Email Address
1	Zuhrah Samim	Head of HR	07734 241461	Zuhrah.samim@akguk.co.uk
2	Roberta Petkute	HR Business Partner	07734240455	Roberta.petkute@akguk.co.uk
3	Laura Gibbon	HR Business Partner	07734240726	Laura.gibbon@akguk.co.uk

You are encouraged to contact the Whistleblower Protection Officers to obtain any additional information you may require before making a disclosure or for any clarification regarding this policy. You may also disclose any Reportable Conduct to the Whistleblower Protection Officers via email on whistleblowing@akguk.co.uk.

If you are unable to use any of the above reporting channels, a disclosure can be made to an "eligible recipient" within the Company. Eligible recipients include:

- Officers.
- Directors.
- Senior Managers.
- Auditors or members of an audit team conducting an audit of the company.
- Actuary

The Whistleblower Protection Officer or eligible recipient will safeguard your interests and will ensure the integrity of the reporting mechanism.

Anonymity

Employees can raise reports anonymously under this policy. **SeeHearSpeakUp** will only share personal information with designated individuals within AKG Learning for the purpose of investigating a report, provided that the employee has given consent. AKG Learning does not promote anonymous disclosures by employees. Conducting a thorough investigation may become more challenging or even impossible if AKG Learning is unable to obtain additional information from the reporting employee. Additionally, it becomes more difficult to determine the credibility of any reports that are raised.

When contacting **SeeHearSpeakUp** to raise a report the employee will be provided with a Personal Identification Code. As a result, we have no means of identifying the employee unless they volunteer their contact details. The personal identification code, which is unique to their report, will allow the employee to re-access their report online by inputting their code to check for any feedback that AKG Learning has provided or should they wish to

provide additional information pertaining to their original report. Alternatively, the code can also be quoted by the employee should they wish to phone **SeeHearSpeakUp** again in the future.

Employees who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should raise the matter to the Whistleblower Protection Officers, who will take appropriate measures to preserve confidentiality, if legally possible. Seeking out the name of an anonymous whistleblower is not acceptable and anyone who has been found to do so will be managed in accordance with the AKG Learning's Disciplinary Policy.

Responding to a Whistleblowing Report

Assuming they have not reported the matter anonymously, all reports raised under this policy will be acknowledged in writing no more than 7 working days after receipt of the report.

You will be advised as to:

- a) Whether or not you are required to attend meetings and provide further information
- b) How AKG Learning proposes to deal with the matter.
- c) Whether any initial enquiries have been made; and
- d) Whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

AKG Learning's nominated officers will be designated to follow up on reports raised and will arrange for reports to be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Should personal details be provided by a whistle-blower, the nominated officer will maintain contact with the person making the report, request further information where necessary and provide feedback to that individual.

Where you have chosen to remain anonymous, your identity will not be disclosed to the investigator or to any other person and the Company will conduct the investigation based on the information provided to them.

Where possible, the Whistleblower Protection Officer will provide you with feedback on the progress and expected timeframes of the investigation. The person against whom any allegations have been made will also be informed of the concerns and will be provided with an opportunity to respond (unless there are any restrictions or other reasonable bases for not doing so).

To the extent permitted by law, the Whistleblower Protection Officer may inform you and/or a person against whom allegations have been made of the findings. The Company will document the findings in a report; however, any report will remain the property of the

Company and will only be shared with you or any person against whom the allegations have been made if the Company deems it appropriate.

AKG Learning will not accept maliciously made allegations. Those who make such allegations may face disciplinary action.

In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including employees with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. Where necessary, we may appoint an external investigator to assist in conducting the investigation. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

All investigations will be conducted in a fair, independent, and timely manner and all reasonable efforts will be made to preserve confidentiality during the investigation.

Where an employee is required to attend a meeting or interview this can be arranged away from the workplace if the employee wishes, and they may be accompanied by a representative, colleague, or friend.

In the event that an employee is required to give evidence in any disciplinary or criminal proceedings they will be given advice about the procedure.

We will aim to keep employees who raise reports informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes legal constraints or the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result.

Employees should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

If at any time throughout the investigation it becomes evident that formal disciplinary action may be a possible outcome, the investigation will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the AKG Learning's Disciplinary policy.

The time to undertake an investigation into any matters raised under this policy is dependent on the nature and complexity of the information provided. However, all reports received are treated seriously and will be diligently followed up by AKG Learning.

Feedback

Feedback should be provided to the person who made the disclosure within a reasonable period, but no more than 3 months from the date of the acknowledgement of receipt of the report raised. If the employee has elected to remain fully anonymous, they are encouraged to contact **SeeHearSpeakUp** by phone to seek feedback quoting their personal identification code or to access their report online to view or to seek feedback on their report.

Protection of Whistleblowers

It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions when raising a report. We aim to encourage openness and will support employees who raise genuine concerns under this Policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

In the UK, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives legal protection to UK employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers because of publicly disclosing serious concerns. Under current UK rules, a worker's disclosure is protected if they reasonably believe it is made in the public interest.

AKG Learning has endorsed the provisions set out in legislation to ensure that employees or those named under other protected categories within legislation will receive detrimental treatment for raising legitimate concerns.

Detrimental treatment can include dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. Any employee or others who believe that they have suffered any such treatment, should contact **SeeHearSpeakUp** using one of the reporting channels available and provide information relating to their concern, or alternatively speak to a Whistleblower Protection Officer.

The Company is committed to ensuring that any person who makes a disclosure is treated fairly and does not suffer detriment and that confidentiality is preserved in respect of all matters raised under this policy.

Protection of Confidentiality

The reporting channels for receiving concerns under this policy have been designed, established, and operated in a secure manner that ensures the confidentiality of the person making the disclosure and any persons referred to in the disclosure. AKG Learning hope that employees will feel able to raise matters openly under this Policy. However, if an employee would like to raise their concern confidentially, AKG Learning will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the person raising the concern. If it is necessary for anyone investigating a concern to know their identity, AKG Learning will discuss this with them.

Please note that no telephone calls are recorded by **SeeHearSpeakUp**. However, the key detail of the conversation is noted by the **SeeHearSpeakUp** call handler who takes the call. All information received from you will be treated confidentially and sensitively.

If you report on an anonymous basis, you will still qualify for the protection in this policy. If you make a disclosure under this policy, your identity (or any information which would likely identify you) will only be shared if:

- You give your consent to share that information; or
- The disclosure is allowed or required by law (for example where the concern is raised with a lawyer for the purposes of obtaining legal advice).

Where it is necessary to disclose information for the effective investigation of the matter, and this is likely to lead to your identification, all reasonable steps will be taken to reduce the risk that you will be identified. For example, all personal information or reference to you witnessing an event will be redacted from any report, you will be referred to in a gender-neutral context, where possible you will be contacted to help identify certain aspects of your disclosure that could inadvertently identify you.

The Company will also take the following measures for protecting your identity:

- All paper and electronic documents and other materials relating to disclosures will be stored securely.
- Access to all information relating to a disclosure will be limited to those directly involved in managing and investigating the disclosure.
- Only a restricted number of people who are directly involved in handling and investigating a disclosure will be made aware of your identity (subject to your consent) or information that is likely to lead to your identification.
- Communications and documents relating to the investigation of a disclosure will not be

- sent to an email address or to a printer that can be accessed by other employees; and
- Each person who is involved in handling and investigating a disclosure will be reminded about the confidentiality requirements, including that an unauthorised disclosure of your identity may be a criminal offence.

If you are concerned that your identity has been disclosed in relation to a disclosure, and without your consent, you should inform a Whistleblower Protection Officer or eligible recipient immediately.

Protection from Legal Action

You will not be subject to any civil, criminal, or administrative legal action (including disciplinary action) for making a disclosure under this policy or participating in any investigation.

Any information you provide will not be admissible in any criminal or civil proceedings other than for proceedings in respect of the falsity of the information.

Protection against Detrimental Conduct

The Company (or any person engaged by the Company) will not engage in 'Detrimental Conduct' against you if you have made a disclosure under this policy.

Detrimental conduct included actual or threatened conduct such as the following (without limitation):

- Termination of employment.
- Injury to employment including demotion, disciplinary action.
- Alteration of position or duties.
- Discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation.
- Victimisation.
- Harm or injury including psychological harm.
- Damage to a person's property.
- Damage to a person's reputation.
- Damage to a person's business or financial position.
- or any other damage to a person

The Company also strictly prohibits all forms of Detrimental Conduct against any person who is involved in an investigation of a matter disclosed under the policy in response to their involvement in that investigation.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to protect you from Detrimental Conduct and will take necessary action where such conduct is identified. If appropriate, the Company may allow you to perform your duties from another location or reassign you to another role (at the same level) or make other modifications to your workplace or your duties to protect you from the risk of detriment.

If you are subjected to Detrimental Conduct as a result of making a disclosure under this policy or participating in an investigation, you should inform a Whistleblower Protection

Officer or eligible recipient in accordance with the reporting guidelines outlined above.

You may also seek remedies including compensation, civil penalties, or reinstatement if:

- You suffer loss, damage, or injury because of disclosure; and
- The company failed to take responsibility precautions and exercise due diligence to prevent any Detrimental Conduct.

Additional Support and Guidance

Any employee who makes a disclosure under this policy or is implicated as a result of a disclosure that is made may access the Company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which is a free and confidential counselling service. You can speak with an expert from our external EAP by calling 0800 756 0834, this service is completely confidential.

Where appropriate, the Company may also appoint an independent support person from the Human Resources team to deal with any ongoing concerns you may have.

This policy is underpinned by associated legislation and guidance as listed below:

- **The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-auditors-and-independent-examiners-of-charities/the-public-interest-disclosure-act--2>

Other Matters

Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant Company policies, including Code of Conduct and Grievance Policy.

Related Documents and Forms

- Code of Conduct
- Grievance Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Review

AKG Learning may unilaterally introduce, vary, remove, or replace this policy at any time, in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in practices, actions required by other organisations or changes in legislation.

The Head of HR is the author of this document and is responsible for ensuring that this

policy is reviewed at least annually.

The review will ensure that our procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly in achieving the required judgements.