

# Whistle Blowing Policy

The Rushmere Academy



September 2025

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| TO BE REVIEWED:                | SEPTEMBER 2027                      |

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## RUSHMERE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

### Our Commitment

Rushmere is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards of openness, integrity, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, we expect all employees and others with whom we work to raise any serious concerns they may have regarding any aspect of Rushmere's work, conduct or practice.

This policy provides a safe and appropriate process for raising concerns and sets out how those concerns will be dealt with.

This policy applies to all Rushmere employees and workers, including those who are:

- Full-time or part-time employees

- Self-employed
- Temporary or agency workers
- Work experience students
- Volunteers
- Any other individuals working on behalf of or within Rushmere

## Aims of This Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Encourage employees and others to feel confident about raising concerns and to question or challenge practices where appropriate.
- Provide clear and appropriate channels through which concerns can be raised confidentially.
- Ensure that concerns are taken seriously, investigated appropriately and responded to in a timely manner.
- Provide feedback, where appropriate, on any action taken as a result of a concern being raised.
- Ensure individuals understand how they can pursue their concerns if they are not satisfied with the response.
- Reassure individuals that they will be protected from victimisation, harassment or other detrimental treatment where they have raised a genuine concern in good faith.
- Promote a culture in which concerns can be raised openly and responsibly.

Rushmere recognises that deciding to report a concern can be difficult. However, if an individual has a genuine and reasonable belief that something is wrong, they should feel confident in raising that concern. By doing so, they may be helping to protect colleagues, learners, clients, the organisation and the wider community.

Rushmere will not tolerate harassment, victimisation, bullying or any form of detrimental treatment of an individual who raises a genuine concern in good faith. Appropriate action will be taken to protect individuals who raise concerns under this policy.

## Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated sensitively and, wherever possible, confidentially.

Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the identity of the individual raising the concern where they have requested confidentiality. However, there may be circumstances where it is necessary for an individual to identify themselves or act as a witness as part of an investigation or other formal process.

Individuals will be informed where it is necessary or appropriate to disclose their identity, wherever this can reasonably be done.

## Types of Concerns

Concerns that may be raised under this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct that may constitute a criminal offence or breach of the law.
- Failure to comply with legal or regulatory requirements.
- Concerns relating to miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks to employees, learners, clients, visitors or members of the public.
- Actions that may cause damage to the environment.
- Unauthorised or inappropriate use of Rushmere funds or resources.
- Suspected fraud, financial misconduct or corruption.
- Sexual, physical, emotional or other forms of abuse or neglect of clients or learners.
- Unethical or dishonest conduct.
- Serious professional misconduct.
- Actions that are unprofessional, inappropriate or contrary to expected standards of behaviour.
- Any other serious concern relating to the way Rushmere operates or provides its services.

## Procedure for Raising a Concern

Where possible, individuals should raise their concern with a Director of Rushmere.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Individuals should provide as much relevant information as possible, including details of the concern, dates, individuals involved and any supporting evidence.

Where an individual feels unable to raise their concern with a Director, they may be able to raise it with an appropriate prescribed person or body, depending on the nature of the concern.

An individual should only consider approaching a prescribed person or body where they reasonably believe that:

- The concern may be covered up or not dealt with appropriately.
- They may be treated unfairly or suffer detrimental treatment if they raise the concern internally.
- The concern has already been raised internally but has not been adequately addressed.
- There is another legitimate reason why raising the concern directly with Rushmere would not be appropriate.

## Responsibilities of Individuals Raising Concerns

Individuals raising a concern are expected to:

- Make disclosures honestly and in good faith.
- Have a reasonable belief that the information they are providing is true.
- Provide accurate and relevant information wherever possible.
- Avoid making malicious, deliberately misleading or knowingly false allegations.
- Not use the whistleblowing process to seek personal gain or for matters that should appropriately be dealt with through another Rushmere procedure.

## Protection from Victimisation

Rushmere is committed to ensuring that individuals who raise genuine concerns in good faith are treated fairly and are not subjected to harassment, bullying, victimisation or other detrimental treatment as a result.

Any allegation of victimisation or retaliation against an individual who has raised a genuine concern will be taken seriously and may be subject to further investigation and appropriate action.

## False or Malicious Allegations

Rushmere recognises that concerns may sometimes be raised which, following investigation, are not substantiated. This does not mean that the individual has acted improperly, provided that they genuinely believed the concern to be true and raised it in good faith.

However, knowingly making false, malicious or deliberately misleading allegations, or using the whistleblowing process for personal gain, may result in disciplinary or other appropriate action.