

Guardians UK

Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

Guardians UK seeks to provide a culture of trust and openness amongst its staff and therefore encourages honest and appropriate feedback on all aspects of its operations. Whistleblowing procedures protect staff members who report colleagues they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties.

Under certain circumstances employees are protected from suffering any detriment or termination of employment if they make disclosures about organisations for whom they work. Making such a disclosure is called Whistleblowing.

Qualifying Disclosures

1. Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as 'qualifying disclosures'. A 'qualifying disclosure' means a disclosure of information that the employee genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that the company has committed a 'relevant failure' by:
 - a) committing a criminal offence;
 - b) failing to comply with a legal obligation;
 - c) a miscarriage of justice;
 - d) endangering the health and safety of an individual;
 - e) environmental damage; or
 - f) concealing any information relating to the above.
2. These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening or is likely to happen. Guardians UK will take any complaints you wish to raise relating to the above matters very seriously.
3. The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who 'blow the whistle' where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is likely to occur. The disclosure must be 'in the public interest'. We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

Procedure

1. In the first instance you should report any concerns you have to Helen Lewis, Director, (helen.lewis@guardiansuk.com) who will treat the matter with the utmost confidence.
2. You may also make a formal representation in writing to the Trustees of AEGIS (the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students), c/o Yasemin Wigglesworth, Executive Officer (info@aegisuk.net)
3. The NSPCC have a whistleblowing helpline which is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures within an organisation. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 or can email: help@nspcc.org.uk
4. In addition, Protect provide a free, confidential advice line for concerned staff to call before whistleblowing. The helpline is 020 3117 2520 and their website is: www.protect-advice.org.uk

Treatment by Others

Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.

Low Level Concerns

Guardians UK recognizes that the safety and wellbeing of students in our care depends on the vigilance of all our staff and suppliers. We rely on prompt communication of any concerns, no matter how small, about any conduct by an adult which causes doubt about that adult's suitability to work with or have access to children. This includes any adult whether staff, volunteers, host families, visitors to host families, school staff, drivers.

Where an adult's behaviour towards a child or another adult is deemed inappropriate but does not meet the threshold set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Director of Guardians UK, Helen Lewis, should be informed

Email: helen.lewis@guardiansuk.com

Tel: 01823 703190

The Director will then examine the evidence and discuss the behaviour with the adult concerned before reminding them of the company's expectations, provide necessary training, set realistic goals and monitor the situation going forward. If further allegations were to be made and were found to be justified, then more serious steps would be taken that could involve a termination of their contract with Guardians UK.

If there are low level concerns about the Director, then either of the Guardians UK Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL), Jakki Henderson or Jennifer Trinder should be informed by any of the following methods:

Website: www.guardiansuk.com Email: info@guardiansuk.com Tel: +44 (0)1823 703199

Email: jakki.henderson@guardiansuk.com

Tel: 01823 703191

Email: jennifer.trinder@guardiansuk.com

Tel: 01823 703194

Guardians UK will always act if alerted to the possibility of abuse of any person, whether in or outside of our care. The notification and prompt handling of all concerns is fundamental to safeguarding students. It helps to identify and prevent abuse and also to protect adults against misunderstanding or misinterpretation. It also encourages transparency, openness and trust as well as clarifies expected behaviour.

Those raising concerns or reporting allegations in good faith will always be supported, including adults about whom concerns or allegations have been raised but not substantiated.