

Fair Ways Education

Whistleblowing Policy

(Organisational)

Document Ref:	Version No:	Summary of Changes:	Author:	Release Date:	Approved By:	Relevant Lessons learned
OR35	1	Launch	Jon Colyer	July 2016		
For details of versions 1-8 please refer to Version Control Schedule at the end of the policy						
OR35	9	Added Head of HR to section 4	Ruby Brewer	May 2020	PSC	N/A
OR35	10	Full Review: Section 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 11 and title of section 8 updated.	Anoushka Dawson and Nicola Smith	April 2021	QSGC	N/A
OR35	11	Full review minor name changes & Point 3.3 Social care ombudsman contact details	Harriett Whitren-Jones	April 2022	QSGC	N/A
OR35	12	Full Review now a Whistleblowing Policy only and Complaints captured in a separate policy OR86	Harriett Whitren-Jones	February 2023	QSGC	N/A
OR36	13	Full review – 4.1 Change of monitoring responsibility of the whistleblowing Inbox.	Gemma Bentley	February 2024	QSGC	N/A

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Review Date: February 2025

(This policy has been rebranded for Children’s Homes Suite)



Fair Ways Vision, Mission and Values (2024)

Our vision

To build a community that changes lives, makes a difference to society and leaves a legacy greater than ourselves and our contributions.

Our mission

To grow a compassionate, resilient, and trauma-informed community, that embraces learning, so that we improve the lives and outcomes of individuals.

Our values

Our values form the heart of the work we do, defined by Fair Ways people, for Fair Ways people. These are the values by which we operate, by which we are governed, and to which we are held accountable.

We therefore expect every individual within the organisation to *play their part*:

P ROFESSIONAL	A CCEPTING	R EFLECTIVE	T RANSSPARENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · We do what we say we will. · We approach challenges with optimism and enthusiasm. · We don't judge, we notice. · We put the needs of the service before our own personal gains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · We don't give up on people. · We value all individuals and are willing to challenge them. · We embrace each other's differences as much as our similarities. · We accept responsibility for our actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · We give feedback, we invite feedback, we listen to feedback. · We look inward before we look outward. · We learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes. · We listen to each other, learn from each other and grow together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · We are always willing to explain why. · We have the courage to be open and honest. · We earn trust through our transparency. · We live by our values even when no-one is watching.



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1 Introduction

1.1 Fair Ways is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with. In order to do this, we take on board comments about our service and welcome comments when we get things right or wrong.

1.2 The central principles of this policy are:

- The welfare of the service user is paramount
- Any concern about the quality of care must be fully explored
- Issues will be looked into in a thorough, timely and consistent manner
- All parties should be treated with dignity and respect
- All staff and service users will be supported and treated fairly
- Staff will have an opportunity to respond to concerns
- Confidentiality needs to be upheld throughout.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time. This policy applies to all Fair Ways employees.

2 Definition of Whistleblowing

2.1 Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

3 Whistleblowing and Qualifying Disclosures

3.1 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 or professional 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

3.2 Qualifying disclosures can relate to activities 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. Fair Ways hopes that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures can be difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, every effort will be made to keep your identity anonymous and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

4 The Whistleblowing Reporting Procedure

4.1 In the first instance you should report any concerns you may have to your line manager or the HR department. If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you, you should raise the matter via whistleblow@fairways.co. The whistleblowing inbox is monitored by the Quality and Governance Team (DSO, Quality & Governance Director and the Quality & Governance Executive Assistant). If the matter relates to any of these people, please raise your concerns with a director not involved in the line management of the member of staff who the concern is about. These directors are:

- Director of Family Services – currently Jonathan Loney
- Director of Residential Services – currently Jonathan Loney
- Director of Health – currently Laura Rowe
- Director of Marketing and IT – currently Paul Moran
- Director of Talent and Performance – currently Wayne Okell
- Director of Human Resources – currently Harriett Whitren-Jones
- Director of Education – currently Laura Rowe
- Director of Finance - currently Rob Jesson

4.2 Fair Ways will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4.3 Fair Ways strongly recommends using the procedure set out above, however, if you feel you cannot report your concerns as above reports can be made externally. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to an external body. Protect operates a confidential helpline.

Their contact details are set out below:

Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)

Helpline: (020) 3117 2520

E-mail: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk

Contact details for organisations which relate to safeguarding concerns can be found in the relevant safeguarding policies: Safeguarding Children policies [DOC REF OR13] Safeguarding Adults [DOC REF OR46] point 4.6

- 4.4 Fair Ways aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform your line manager, one of the Directors or send details to whistleblow@fairways.co immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our grievance procedure.
- 4.5 You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 4.6 If Fair Ways conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

5 Associated Documents & Legislation

- Safeguarding Children policies [DOC REF OR13]
- Safeguarding Adults [DOC REF OR46]

Version Control Sheet for previous versions 1-7

Document Ref:	Version No:	Summary of Changes:	Author:	Release Date:	Approved By:	Relevant Lessons learned
OR35	1	Launch	Jon Colyer	July 2016		
OR35	2	Point 17.1 amended	Jonathan Loney	August 2016		
OR35	3	Annual Review		November 2016	QSGC	
OR35	4	Full Review	Jon Colyer and Ruby Brewer	May 2017	QSGC	A4.1
OR35	5	Addition to section RE: foster carers (s.12/13) and inclusion in s.5 of whistleblowing information previously in employee handbook	Ruby Brewer and Jon Colyer	March 2018	QSGC	2/5/3/17/18
OR35	6	Addition of 3.7 'vexatious complaints'	Addition made by Ruby Brewer	Aug 2018	QSGC	
OR35	7	5.7.1 independent whistleblowing charity details updated	Niki Smith	Mar 2019	PSC	
OR35	8	Full review: fostering section removed, references to new HR procedures added; avenues to complain about those on complaints email address.	Jon Colyer/Ruby Brewer	Feb 2020	QSGC	66