Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

S&B Automotive Academy is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. We encourage all employees and stakeholders to raise genuine concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or risks to people, learners, or the organisation without fear of victimisation.

This policy provides a safe and confidential way for concerns to be raised and ensures they will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately. It also makes clear the distinction between whistleblowing, grievances, and complaints.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Enable staff to raise concerns where wrongdoing may be occurring.
- Provide clear routes for disclosure inside and outside the organisation.
- Reassure employees that they can raise concerns without fear of reprisal.
- Ensure concerns are investigated fairly, promptly, and confidentially.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, apprentices, contractors, agency workers, volunteers, and board members. It covers disclosures relating to:

- Criminal offences.
- Breaches of legal obligations.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks.
- Environmental damage.
- Radicalisation or exposure to extremist views (Prevent Duty).
- Safeguarding failures or neglect of learner welfare.
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

It does not cover personal grievances relating to individual employment terms—these should be raised under the Grievance Procedure.

4. How to Raise a Concern

- Concerns should first be reported to the HR Lead, who will then allocate to the appropriate Team Leader to investigate.

- If not suitable, concerns may be raised with the CEO, Deputy CEO, or Chair of Directors.
- If the concern relates to the Leadership Team, staff can raise it with the HR Lead, Chair of the Board, or directly with external authorities such as:
    - **Ofsted**
    - **ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency)**
    - **Awarding Bodies**

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing and should include as much detail as possible to support an investigation. Anonymous disclosures will be considered but may limit the ability to investigate fully.

5. Safeguards and Confidentiality

- Whistleblowers will not suffer any detriment, victimisation, or disciplinary action as a result of raising a concern in good faith.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, but may not be guaranteed where disclosure is required for investigation.
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

6. Investigation Process

- The recipient of the disclosure will record the concern and notify the HR Lead.
- An investigation will be initiated within 5 working days.
- The whistleblower will be informed of progress and the outcome, where appropriate.
- Outcomes may include internal action, disciplinary proceedings, or referral to external agencies.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- **All Employees:** Raise concerns promptly where wrongdoing is suspected.
- **Line Managers:** Receive concerns, provide support, and ensure concerns are investigated fairly and promptly.
- **Leadership Team:** Oversee whistleblowing arrangements and ensure accountability.
- **Safeguarding Lead:** Provide an alternative safe route for disclosures, particularly relating to learners.

8. Links to Other Policies

- Keeping children safe in education (Safeguarding) Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

- Invigilation Policy
- Academic Integrity and use of AI Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or when deemed necessary for a change to the policy to provide continued support for all stakeholders.