



# Whistleblowing Policy

Gaia Education is committed to the highest possible standards and seeks to ensure that it works ethically, openly and transparently. It is the duty of every person who has a genuine concern to speak up. Our Code of Conduct sets out the standards we expect from all of our staff, contractors, volunteers and Board members.

This policy refers to any worker at Gaia Education or someone who is:

- An employee on a fixed or temporary contract
- A sub-contractor of services to Gaia Education
- A volunteer
- A Board member

Hereby referred to as staff and relevant others.

The policy also gives guidance to external partners, stakeholders or members of the public who have any genuine concerns about the conduct of Gaia Education. This policy is in place to encourage people to come forward with their concern without fear of dismissal, harassment or victimisation.

This Policy helps to strengthen our Safeguarding Package and reinforces Gaia Education's policies relating to safeguarding:

- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- IT Policy
- Code of Governance
- Anti-Bribery Policy

## 1. What does this policy cover?

Whilst there are policies in place to mitigate any breaches of conduct within the organisation this policy covers major concerns. Examples of concerns which might be raised are:

- Safe conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Concerns relating to miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks to the public as well as staff
- Issues surrounding safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Damage to the environment
- When it appears that a charity's assets are not being used for charitable purposes.
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Other unethical conduct

The policy covers Gaia Education's internal operations, its external work and its international projects.

## 2. Safeguards in place

### 2.1 Taking your complaint seriously

All complaints will be dealt with objectively and with a balanced approach. All complaints will be taken seriously and promptly and will be thoroughly investigated based on the facts.

### 2.2 Harassment or victimisation

Gaia Education recognises that raising a concern is not always an easy process. Gaia Education will not tolerate harassment or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern and will take all measures to protect the individual.

If you have a reasonable belief that harm is being done, even if you are found to be mistaken, this policy protects staff members from losing their job as a result of making a complaint or from suffering any retribution in the workplace.

### 2.3 Confidentiality

Whilst we cannot promise complete confidentiality Gaia Education will make every effort to protect your identity and the concern will only be shared with the relevant parties.

### 2.4 Anonymity

We encourage you to leave your name and details so that we can effectively deal with your concern. If you have expressed a desire to remain anonymous, and it is not possible to deal with the concern, you will be approached to discuss the implications, which may result in the concern not being taken any further.

## 3. Procedure for raising a concern

Please note – if you think someone is in immediate risk of harm, do not wait to fill out this procedure. Instead, contact your local authorities. In the UK, you can contact the police by dialling 999.

### 3.1 Procedure for raising a concern – Members of Staff

- Please make the complaint in writing directly to the People Care group composed by two members of staff and a Board member through the email [peoplecaregroup@gaiiaeducation.org](mailto:peoplecaregroup@gaiiaeducation.org)
- If the concern involves one of the members of the People Care group, then the person contacted should be the Board member responsible for the email [gaiiaeducationboard@gaiiaeducation.org](mailto:gaiiaeducationboard@gaiiaeducation.org)

### 3.2 What happens after I raise a concern?

- The People Care group will discuss with the Board if the matter requires any further investigation.
- All comments and complaints will be taken seriously.



- We aim to respond to you within 10 working days.
- To ensure we take the right action, we may need to examine the circumstances of your complaint in more depth. We will contact you to explain this.
- When the investigation is complete, we will contact you to discuss the outcome.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, then please contact the OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator at <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/raise-a-concern-about-a-charity>

### **3.3. Procedure for raising a concern – Public**

- To make a direct complaint to Gaia Education, please use the contact form at <https://gaiaeducation.org/about/contact/> and in the subject area write People Care group
- Alternatively, you can submit your concern in writing directly to Gaia Education's People Care group at [peoplecaregroup@gaiiaeducation.org](mailto:peoplecaregroup@gaiiaeducation.org)
- If you want to raise a concern but do not want to speak directly to Gaia Education, please contact the OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator at <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/raise-a-concern-about-a-charity>

### **3.4. What happens after I raise a concern?**

- Your feedback will be logged and passed to the appropriate member of staff.
- All comments and complaints will be taken seriously. We aim to respond to you within 10 working days.
- To ensure we take the right action, we may need to examine the circumstances of your complaint in more depth.
- We will contact you to explain this.
- When the investigation is complete we will contact you to discuss the outcome.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, then please contact the OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator at <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/raise-a-concern-about-a-charity>

