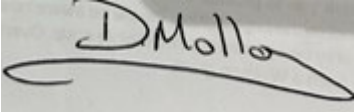
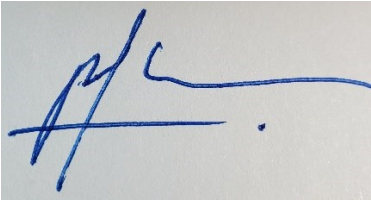




# First **Star** Scholars **UK**

## Whistleblowing Policy

<b>Date of Last Review</b>	<b>07/10/2024</b>
<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Date (Month/Year) of Next Review</b>	<b>10/2025</b>
<b>Date Policy was Ratified</b>	<b>07/10/2024</b>
<b>Named Lead for Writing/Review</b>	<b>Emily Hollis MBE</b>
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>CEO</b>	<b>07/10/24</b>
	
<b>FSSUK Board of Trustees – Chair</b>	<b>07/10/24</b>
	

## Introduction

First Star Scholars UK is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the Trustees and those working in First Star Scholars UK, both employees and volunteers.

This policy aims to help the Trustees and employees/volunteers to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues or their employer with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

## What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides legal protection for workers from detrimental treatment or victimisation from their employer if, in the public interest, they blow the whistle on wrongdoing. A whistleblower is a member of staff (paid or volunteer) who reports certain types of wrongdoing.

This procedure applies, but is not limited to, allegations about any of the following:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of the law
- Alleged miscarriage of justice
- Serious Health and Safety risks
- The unauthorised use of public funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual, physical or verbal abuse, or bullying or intimidation of employees, clients or service users
- Abuse of authority
- Other unethical conduct

The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, for example the general public.

As a whistleblower you have specific substantial protection in law, if you were to be treated unfairly or lose your job, because you 'blow the whistle'.

You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future.

## What if Your Concern does not Qualify as Whistleblowing

If your concern does not fall with the list above and you are a staff member, you should follow the Grievance Policy, to raise your concern. If you are not a member of staff, you should use our Complaints Policy. Please also refer to our Bullying and Harassment Policy.

## Reporting Your Concern

If you see or hear about something that you think is wrong, you should report it to our Whistleblowing Lead – Diarmuid Molloy, CEO, and they will take action to respond to your concerns. If your concern is of a safeguarding nature, you should report this to our Designated

Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Diarmuid Molloy, and follow the procedures laid out in our Safeguarding Policy.

Except in an emergency, you should do so only during office hours Mon to Fri and ideally make contact by email first:

Name	Email
Diarmuid Molloy	Diarmuid.molloy@firststaruk.org

Whether you provide information verbally or in writing, it should contain as many relevant facts and detail, as are available. Such as:

- Your name and how you wish to be contacted, such as a telephone number, email or postal address
- Background - relevant dates and the names and positions of anyone who may be able to contribute information
- You will not be expected to prove any allegation, but you do need to provide information to establish the basis for it

If you aren't sure what to do, or are too scared to report your concern, Protect is a charity that supports whistleblowers by providing advice on their website.

The Government also produces advice for whistleblowers, which you can access here:

[Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The CEO will treat the matter with complete confidence. If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you, you should raise the matter with the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body.

If the concern is regarding either the CEO or the DSL, you should raise your concerns with the Chair of Trustees.

### **Notification of the Outcome of the Concern**

The charity recognises that an employee raising a concern would wish to be assured that the matter has been fully addressed. Feedback will be provided on the outcome of the complaint, wherever possible.

In some circumstances however, it may not be appropriate or permissible to share this information (for example where legal / disciplinary or regulatory authority action is pending or if sharing information may infringe the duty of confidence owed to a third party). Where it is not appropriate to provide detailed feedback, the employee will be advised that the matter has been addressed or concluded as far as is practicable.

Where a matter is not to be considered further the employee who raised the complaint will be advised of this in writing.

If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you, you should raise the matter with the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body (which can be found using the links above and in Appendix 1).

**Confidentiality**

All allegations will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity unless you wish this to be done.

However, if the matter is subsequently dealt with through other procedures such as the disciplinary procedure, or if the allegation results in court proceedings, then you may have to give evidence in open court, if the case is to be successful.

**Anonymous Allegations**

We encourage whistle blowers to put their name to an allegation wherever possible, as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate/prove. Allegations made anonymously are much less powerful but anonymous allegations may be considered, taking into account the following.

- The seriousness of the issue raised
- The credibility of the allegation
- Whether the allegation can realistically be investigated from factors or sources other than the complainant

**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.

**Untrue Allegations**

No disciplinary or other action will be taken against a whistle blower who makes an allegation in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so, even if the allegation is not substantiated by an investigation.

However, disciplinary action may be taken against someone who makes an allegation without reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so. That is making an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, where there is no element of public interest.

**Version Control - Approval and Review**

Version No.	Approved by	Approval Date	Main Change	Review Period
1.0	Diarmuid Molloy	7 October 2024	New policy format approved	Annually

## **Appendix 1 - Further Information**

### Public Concern at Work

This charity is an independent authority on public interest and whistleblowing. It promotes compliance with the law and good practice. They also aim to influence public policy and legislation.

<http://www.pcaw.org.uk/>

### ACAS

The Arbitration Conciliation & Advisory Service website provides guidance on whistle-blowing for both employers and employees

[www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1919](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1919)

### Direct.Gov

Information on whistleblowing can be accessed through the government websites.

[www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/overview](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/overview)

### The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

CIPD is the professional body for those involved in the management and development of people. They have a factsheet on whistleblowing.

[www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/empreltns/whistleblw/whistle.htm](http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/empreltns/whistleblw/whistle.htm)

### The Charities commission

The Charities Commission regulates and registers charities in England and Wales. The Commission investigates accusations of wrongdoing and has powers to effect change in the charity. Additional support is available at [www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity/staff-volunteers](http://www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity/staff-volunteers).