



Policies & Procedures

Whistleblowing Policy

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Policy Author:	HR
Approved by:	Board of Governors
Date of approval:	May 2026
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Senior Manager responsible:	Director of Governance

Alternative Formats:

If you require this document in an alternative format, please use the following contact information:

welcome@coastland.ac.uk

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Change Log Table

Version	Effective Date	Change Type	Section(s) Affected	Summary and reason for Change
1.0	March 2026	New Policy		
1.1	May 2026	Minor Change	1.4 4.1.5 4.2	From 6 April 2026, sexual harassment is included as a new category of wrongdoing in relation to which a worker may make a protected disclosure. The protection applies to disclosures made on or after that date, regardless of when the alleged conduct occurred, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025 (Commencement No.2 and Transitional and Saving Provisions) (Amendment) Regulations 2026) (SI 2026/323).
		Minor Change	10.1	Updated company name for EAP to Optima Health.
		Minor change	Appendix 1	Updated Form to raise whistleblowing concern to include sexual harassment.

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Whistleblowing is one of the most effective ways of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work.
- 1.2. We recognise that raising a whistleblowing concern can be daunting. However, we encourage you to report concerns internally as soon as possible where you suspect wrongdoing. We are here to listen and will take all concerns that you raise seriously.
- 1.3. This policy sets out the procedure for raising a whistleblowing concern and the support and protection that is available to you when you do so.
- 1.4. If your concern relates to a personal grievance that is not in the public interest (for example, an allegation that your contract of employment has been breached), you should raise it under our separate grievance procedure.

If you are unsure about whether your concerns are best dealt with under the whistleblowing policy or grievance procedure, please speak to the HR department for further advice.

- 1.5. This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

2. Responsibility for the policy

- 2.1. The Board of Governors (the **Board**) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.
- 2.2. The Whistleblowing Officer has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy and you should refer any questions about this policy to them in the first instance. The Whistleblowing Officer must ensure that regular and appropriate training is provided to all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy.
- 2.3. This policy is reviewed at least annually by the Whistleblowing Officer and the Board.
- 2.4. All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the Whistleblowing Officer who will involve the Board where appropriate.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all employees and workers employed by us. Other individuals, including our contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and volunteers are also encouraged to follow the procedure set out in this policy.

4. Whistleblowing Concerns to which this Policy relates

- 4.1. Whistleblowing is the act of reporting suspected wrongdoing or risk of wrongdoing relating to:
- 4.1.1. a criminal offence; such as fraud or corruption
 - 4.1.2. a failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
 - 4.1.3. a miscarriage of justice;
 - 4.1.4. a risk to the health and safety of an individual;
 - 4.1.5. sexual harassment;
 - 4.1.6. damage to the environment; or
 - 4.1.7. an attempt to cover up any of the above.
- 4.2. For the avoidance of doubt, concerns relating to sexual harassment fall within the scope of whistleblowing under this policy where the concern is raised on or after 6 April 2026, irrespective of when the alleged incident or incidents occurred.
- 4.3. It is not necessary for you to prove the wrongdoing. However, to be protected by whistleblowing laws against detrimental treatment or dismissal, you must reasonably believe that wrongdoing (related to one of the categories listed above) is being, has been, or is likely to be committed and that your disclosure is in the public interest.

5. Stage 1 - Raising a whistleblowing concern

- 5.1. If you have a genuine concern relating to any type of wrongdoing that is covered under this policy, you should raise it with your line manager.
- 5.2. If your concern relates to your line manager, or for any reason you do not wish to approach your line manager, you should raise your concern with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or the HR department.
- 5.3. If the concern is about the Principal and CEO, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, you should report your concern to the Director of Governance.
- 5.4. Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible using the form in Appendix A of this Policy. It is important that you set out clearly:
- 5.4.1. the details of the suspected wrongdoing;
 - 5.4.2. the names of any individuals involved; and
 - 5.4.3. and what action (if any) you are seeking.

In some cases, it may be necessary to ask you to attend a meeting to clarify the nature of your concern. This will be arranged as soon as possible. You may, if you wish, bring a colleague or a trade union representative with you to the meeting. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation. Where it is considered appropriate, a member of the HR department may also be present. If you have not made your concern in writing, we will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting.

- 5.5. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the concern will be managed in line with the appropriate policy/procedure.

6. Stage 2 - Responding to your whistleblowing concern

- 6.1. The manager to whom you raise your concern will decide if an investigation is required and, if it is, the most appropriate person to conduct it. The relevant manager will write to you confirming that they are conducting an investigation and the timescale for completion.
- 6.2. The level of investigation and time this will take will vary depending on the nature of the suspected wrongdoing. In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator (or investigators) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.
- 6.3. Following the investigation, the relevant manager will inform you in writing, as quickly as possible after completion of the investigation, of the outcome and any next steps or action that will be taken. While we aim to provide you with comprehensive feedback, in some cases this may not be possible, for example where data protection rules apply or there are sensitive issues that need to remain confidential.
- 6.4. While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.
- 6.5. If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts in Paragraph 5. Alternatively, you may contact the Chair of the Board or our external auditors. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

7. Confidentiality and anonymity

- 7.1. We want you to feel comfortable about raising a whistleblowing concern openly and actively encourage you to do so.

- 7.2. Where you raise a whistleblowing concern openly, we will maintain your confidentiality as far as possible. If we need to identify your identity to anyone, we will notify you beforehand.
- 7.3. In the alternative, you may decide to raise a whistleblowing concern anonymously.
- 7.4. We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously, although we will investigate any concern that is reported anonymously as best we can, an anonymous report is likely to be more difficult for us to investigate and we will not be in a position to provide you with any feedback. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible.

Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officer.

If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from **Protect (020 3117 2520)** the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline.

[Protect](#)

8. Our commitment to You

- 8.1. You have the right not to be subjected to any detrimental treatment (including being unfairly penalised, disciplined or dismissed) because you have raised a whistleblowing concern.
- 8.2. If you raise a whistleblowing concern in accordance with this policy, we will ensure that you are treated with respect and provided with adequate support and protection.
- 8.3. If you are told not to raise or pursue a whistleblowing concern, or you believe that you have been subjected to detrimental treatment because you have raised a whistleblowing concern, you should report the matter to the HR department. In the alternative, you can raise it under our Grievance procedure if it applies to you.
- 8.4. Any such behaviour will not be tolerated and will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
- 8.5. If we find that an individual has knowingly raised false allegations, this will also be treated as a disciplinary offence.

9. Raising your whistleblowing concerns externally

- 9.1. We encourage you to raise your whistleblowing concerns internally in the first instance. If you feel that appropriate action has not been taken, you should report the matter to the correct prescribed body or person (see list on [GOV.UK](#)).
- 9.2. We strongly advise you seek advice if you are thinking of raising your concern with the media or on social media as you will not have protection under whistleblowing laws unless certain conditions are met. The independent whistleblowing charity,

Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

10. Further guidance and contact details

- 10.1. If you need further guidance or support, you can contact the whistleblowing charity [Protect](#) or [Citizens Advice](#) for free confidential advice.

Whistleblowing Officer	VICKY SMYTH, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE 01305 208 960 vicky_smyth@weymouth.ac.uk
CEO	KATE WILLIS 01305 761 100 kate_willis@weymouth.ac.uk
Champion for Raising Concerns	CHRIS EVANS – CHAIR OF BOARD governance@weymouth.ac.uk
Coastland College external auditors	BISHOP FLEMING 01752 234324 csullivan@bishopfleming.co.uk
Confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	Optima Health EAP 0800 174 319 https://carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk/ Username – wkmc Password – employee

Appendix 1

Whistleblowing Policy – Form to Raise a Whistleblowing Concern

This form is intended for use by any individual working for the College (including contractors, workers and volunteers) who wants to raise a concern about wrongdoing.

This form should be used to report wrongdoing within the College that you believe is in the public interest.

If your concern relates to a personal complaint that is not in the public interest (for example that your contract of employment has been breached), you should raise it under our separate grievance procedure or other relevant procedure. If you are unsure about whether your concerns are best dealt with under the whistleblowing policy or grievance procedure, please speak to the HR department for further advice.

This form should be completed and delivered to your line manager in an envelope marked "confidential" or sent as an email attachment with "confidential" in the subject line. If your concern relates to your line manager, or for any reason you do not wish to approach your line manager, you should send the form to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or the HR Department.

Once you have submitted this form, we will invoke the procedure set out in our whistleblowing policy. We will respect your wish for confidentiality as far as this is possible.

Formal whistleblowing concern

Name:

Job title:

Department/organisation:

Date:

Summary of your concern:

Please set out your concern with as much detail as possible, including the date, time, location, the identities of those involved in the wrongdoing and details of any witnesses. You may attach additional sheets if required.

Nature of your concern:	
Please specify if your concern is about a potential: criminal offence; failure to comply with a legal obligation; miscarriage of justice; risk to the health and safety of an individual; sexual harassment; damage to the environment; or attempt to cover up any of these.	
Outcome requested:	
Please set out how you would like to see the issue dealt with, and why and how you believe that this will resolve the issue.	
Declaration:	
I confirm that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that, if I knowingly make any false allegations, this may result in disciplinary action being taken against me by the organisation.	
Form completed by:	
Signature:	
For completion by the organisation:	

Date form received by the organisation:	
Name of recipient and job role:	
Signature:	

Alternative Formats:

If you require this document in an alternative format, please use the following contact information: welcome@coastland.ac.uk

Equality Analysis

Name of Policy:	Whistleblowing Policy
Person Responsible:	Sophie Long, Director of HR
Date of Analysis:	5 November 2025

1: Identify aims of the activity

What is the purpose of the policy and who is intended to benefit?

The Whistleblowing Policy is designed to provide a clear and supportive framework for staff, contractors, volunteers, and other stakeholders to report suspected wrongdoing in the workplace. It aims to:

- Encourage early reporting of concerns in the public interest.
- Protect individuals from retaliation or detrimental treatment.
- Ensure concerns are investigated fairly and confidentially.
- Promote a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct.

Intended Beneficiaries:

- **Employees and workers:** who are protected when raising concerns.
- **Contractors, volunteers, and suppliers:** who are encouraged to report wrongdoing.
- **The organisation:** which benefits from early detection and resolution of issues.
- **Students and visitors:** indirectly benefit from a safer, more ethical environment.

2: Assess likely impact

How might this policy have an impact on staff, visitors or students in terms of disability, age, race, gender, religious belief, trans-identity, sexuality?

☒

Positive Impact

☐

No Impact

☐

Negative Impact

If you have identified **negative** impacts, you need to revise your activity to ensure that you are not disadvantaging any group on the grounds of disability, age, race, gender, religious belief, trans-identity, sexuality.

If you have identified **positive** impacts or **no impact**, please explain your decision

3: Checklist

1. Which of the following groups have you consulted?

☒

Staff

☐

Students

☐

Committee

☐

Other stakeholders
(please specify below)

Board

2. How frequently will you monitor the impact(s) of this activity?

☐

Termly

☐

Annually

☒

Other (please specify below)