

8th Darlington (Cockerton Green) Scout Group – Whistleblowing Policy

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Reviewed by: Executive Leadership Team

1. Purpose

The 8th Darlington (Cockerton Green) Scout Group is committed to providing a safe, transparent, and ethical environment for all members. This Whistleblowing Policy aims to ensure that volunteers can raise concerns about suspected wrongdoing or malpractice without fear of reprisal, and that such concerns are properly addressed.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers of the 8th Darlington (Cockerton Green) Scout Group who have a genuine concern about suspected wrongdoing or dangers in connection with the group's activities. It covers the disclosure of information related to:

- Criminal activity
- Danger to health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Breach of legal obligations or regulatory requirements
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Breach of internal policies and procedures
- Conduct likely to damage the group's reputation or financial well-being

3. Volunteer Responsibilities

Leaders and members are expected to:

- Follow the group's code of conduct.
- Report concerns promptly using the appropriate policies and procedures.
- Cooperate with any investigation under this policy.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of all parties involved.

4. Reporting Concerns

Initial Reporting:

- Volunteers should normally raise concerns with the Group Scout Leader (GSL). Concerns can be reported in person or in writing.
- If the concern involves the GSL or if the volunteer feels uncomfortable raising the issue with them, the concern should be reported to a member of the Board of Trustees.

Escalation:

- If a volunteer feels that their concern has not been adequately addressed, or if the matter is serious, they may escalate the concern to a member of the Board of Trustees.

Anonymous Reporting:

- Anonymous reports are discouraged as they may hinder a thorough investigation, but they will be considered at the discretion of the GSL.

5. Handling of Concerns**Acknowledgment:**

- The recipient of the whistleblowing report will acknowledge receipt of the concern within five working days.

Investigation:

- An initial assessment will be conducted to determine the appropriate action. This may include an internal investigation or referral to an external body.
- The volunteer will be informed of the outcome of the initial assessment and whether an investigation will proceed.

Confidentiality:

- All reports will be handled in confidence. The identity of the whistleblower will be protected unless disclosure is required by law or is necessary for the investigation.

6. Protection for Whistleblowers

- Volunteers or members who raise genuine concerns will not face any form of reprisal or detrimental treatment.
- Any volunteer who feels they have suffered unfavourable treatment as a result of whistleblowing should report this to the GSL immediately.

7. False or Malicious Allegations

- Volunteers must not make allegations dishonestly or maliciously. Deliberate misuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

8. Monitoring and Review

- The GSL will maintain a record of all whistleblowing reports and their outcomes.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant incident to ensure its effectiveness.