



# Truro and Penwith **Academy Trust**

## **ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 One of the basic principles of public service organisations is the proper use of public funds. It is vital, therefore, that all those working or otherwise involved in the public sector are aware of the risks of and means of enforcing the rules against wrongdoing. This document sets out the Trust's policy in relation to fraud and corruption.
- 1.2 The Trust already has procedures in place to reduce the likelihood of illegal acts occurring. These include financial regulations and procedures; a Code of Conduct for Directors, Governors and Committee Members; a register of financial interests for Directors, Governors and Committee Members; and systems of internal control and compliance auditing.
- 1.3 This policy is intended to provide advice and direction and help staff, managers, governors and directors who may find themselves having to deal with suspected cases of theft, fraud or corruption.

### **2. Basic Requirements**

- 2.1 As part of all public sector activity, everyone is expected at all times to observe the fundamental precepts of accountability (able to withstand public scrutiny), probity (exercise honesty and integrity) and openness (act openly and transparently).

### **3. The Trust's Policy**

- 3.1 The Board of Directors is totally committed to maintaining an honest, open and well intentioned atmosphere within the Trust. It is equally committed to the elimination of any wrongdoing within the Trust, and to the rigorous investigation and punishment of any such cases.
- 3.2 For purposes of clarity, fraud is taken to mean the intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the Trust which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain or unfair advantage. Corruption covers the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of any inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person.

#### **4. Awareness of Risks**

- 4.1 It is vital that everyone involved is aware of the risks and the need for vigilance at all times.
- 4.2 The range of potential acts of wrongdoing are many and various, but would certainly include such instances as:
- theft of cash or cash equivalents (eg fraudulent conversion of cheques)
  - theft of Trust property or wilful damage there to
  - all frauds with potential for direct pecuniary loss to the Trust (eg submission of invalid travel claims, illicit use of Trust or other official stationery)
  - all frauds involving inappropriate use of Trust property (including intellectual property) and resources (including time for which staff are being paid) for personal gain
  - any examples of accepting inappropriate gifts or hospitality from a contractor, potential contractor, employee or any other person (see Section 8)
  - any examples of failing to declare a direct pecuniary or otherwise conflicting interest in a contractor or potential contractor, or relationship with a potential employee
  - any example of providing inappropriate gifts or hospitality in order to influence the actions of any third party in their relationship with the Trust

#### **5. Staff Concerns**

- 5.1 In the event of any member of staff becoming aware of an irregular occurrence, he or she should act in the knowledge that they are able to report the matter in confidence to their line manager, a member of the academy's senior leadership team or Headteacher. If this line of reporting is not considered appropriate in a particular case or the staff member feels the line manager has failed to take appropriate action, staff will be free to approach the Trust Chief Executive or, failing this, the Chair of the Finance, Employment and Audit Committee or the Board of Directors.
- 5.2 Staff will be protected from any disciplinary action or other detriment in raising a genuine concern about fraud or corruption regardless of whether the subsequent investigation substantiates that concern.

#### **6. Reporting of Incidents**

- 6.1 Any line manager must pass on incidents reported to them by staff, from outside the Trust or following an initial investigation to the Trust Chief Executive within one working day. In view of the important rules surrounding collection of evidence, line managers must on no account carry out detailed investigations themselves.

- 6.2 It is essential to remember that a separate Trust complaints procedure exists for 'service complaints' and to recognise which action route to take in specific cases.

## **7. Action**

- 7.1 Following each reported incident, the Trust Chief Executive will as necessary liaise with other senior managers, the Chair of the Finance, Employment and Audit Committee and of the Board of Directors. In cases of serious fraud or theft (of more than £5,000 or unusual or systematic in nature) the Trust Chief Executive will also notify the Education Funding Agency (EFA) or other relevant funding agency. The EFA will agree with the Trust the most appropriate course of action which may include commissioning an external consultant to carry out a more detailed investigation.
- 7.2 Details of the investigating procedure will be notified separately which may involve the participation of the internal audit service or police intervention.

## **8. Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality**

- 8.1 To maintain standards of openness and integrity, it is essential that all gifts and hospitality received by members of staff, managers, directors and governors in relation to Trust business are properly recorded. For this purpose, individual gifts or hospitality exceeding a value of £25 (or cumulatively exceeding £50 over a 12 month period) should be declared by completion of the register.
- 8.2 The Chair of the Board of Directors should be notified as soon as practicably possible of any gift or hospitality of significant value (e.g. exceeding £250).
- 8.3 Entries in the register will be reviewed annually by the Chair of the Board of Directors.
- 8.4 The register of declarations will be maintained for use by the Trust Business Manager and will be available for inspection on request.