



Central Coast
Conservatorium
Of Music

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CENTRAL COAST CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC Inc

Whistleblower Policy

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Section 1: Our Purpose

1.1 Introduction

The Central Coast Conservatorium of Music Inc.'s Code of Conduct and other policies have been developed to align with our values to ensure that we observe the highest standards of fair dealing, honesty and integrity in our business activities.

Our Whistleblower Policy (this "Policy") has been put in place to ensure employees and other Disclosers can raise concerns regarding any misconduct or improper state of affairs or circumstances (including unethical, illegal, corrupt or other inappropriate conduct) without being subject to victimisation, harassment or discriminatory treatment.

This Policy aims to:

- encourage Disclosers to report an issue if they reasonably believe someone has engaged in serious wrongdoing;
- outline how CCCM will deal with whistleblowing reports; and
- set out the avenues available to Disclosers to report serious wrongdoing to CCCM.

Whilst it is generally expected that these issues will be raised through the normal channels of line management, reporting by other avenues may be appropriate or necessary in certain situations.

1.2 Vision

The vision of the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music Inc (CCCM or the Con) has evolved to 'Music for Life', which seeks to describe the contribution that music makes to the lives of the community, as well as the concept that it is a life-long skill and enhances enjoyment for life. To achieve this vision, the Con creates programs for all stages, ensuring that there is an engaging Schools program that provides an affordable, entry level introduction to music which is augmented by 1:1 tuition options, ensemble programs at several levels and musicianship to the highest grades.

To achieve our vision, it is crucial that all of our employees and partners understand, follow, and adhere to our values. Our values revolve around four core themes:

Culture

We endorse music of diverse cultural and stylistic backgrounds and embrace Australian indigenous culture.

Students

We prioritise child safety through training, awareness, policy and practice. By working closely with the Central Coast schools and developing peer support and mentoring programs, we have taken an approach that has sound pedagogical principles and makes music fun. Our students are guided to excellence and achievement of their musical potential.

Teachers

We strive to create a supportive and stimulating workplace for music teachers by providing professional development and a collegiate environment.

Inclusiveness

We seek to inspire a love of music by involving our community in music learning and performance. We foster the musical journey of those with disability and embrace students of all ages.

We have put guidelines and policies in place to ensure we live by these values in our day-to-day work.

Together with our values, we want to have feedback and encourage people to speak up when they see activity or behaviours that they feel are wrong or do not match our values. The goal of this policy is to provide very clear guidelines on how we approach and manage this feedback. With our whistleblowing policy, we aim to ensure:

- Every employee should have the chance to speak up anonymously when they feel we are not adhering to our values. They should have a place to report misconduct, every report will be heard and acted on, and we, where necessary, will make improvements based on the results.
- CCCM believes everyone should be able to make reports anonymously. We commit to protecting informant's identities and they only need to reveal themselves if they choose to.
- We will investigate every report of misconduct. At the end of the investigation, we will document the results and provide feedback when appropriate.

CCCM wants our employees to know they can provide information on any concerns they have, understand where they can report their concerns, know what happens after they make a report, and ensure they feel safe in providing a report. CCCM also wants to let them know about their right to be anonymous as well as how we, as an organisation, will ensure they are not subject to any retaliation or other abuse because they made a report.

1.3 What conduct should be reported

It is important that CCCM outlines what behaviours we want to be reported under this policy. We want to hear from you if you witness or know about any behaviours that are:

- Fraudulent
- Illegal
- Corrupt
- Dishonest
- Unethical
- Violate the law or any legal code
- Are creating an unsafe environment
- Breach any of CCCM policies
- Cause discrimination
- Cause harassment and/or bullying of any kind
- Any conduct which is detrimental to CCCM and could cause financial or non-financial loss

Items not covered by this policy

Personal work-related grievances are not covered under this Policy and should be reported to your line manager in accordance with the CCCM Staff Handbook.

“Personal workplace grievances” means a grievance about any matter in relation to the Discloser’s employment, or former employment, having (or tending to have) implications for the discloser personally. This includes:

- an interpersonal conflict between the discloser and another employee;
- a decision relating to the engagement, transfer or promotion of the discloser;
- a decision relating to the terms and conditions of engagement of the discloser; and
- a decision to suspend or terminate the engagement of the discloser, or otherwise to discipline the discloser.

However, Personal Work-Related Grievances do not include:

- any conduct that would be considered victimisation of an individual because they have made, may have made, or propose to make a report under this Policy; or
- a matter that would have significant implications for CCCM.

These matters do form part of the Whistleblower Policy. Please refer to the Complaints and Grievances Policy.

1.4 Who falls under this policy

The following would be considered an “eligible person” (or “Discloser”) and would fall under CCCM’s whistleblowing policy.

- Employees (including teachers, administrators, directors, managers, interns, volunteers and secondees)
- Contractors, consultants, service providers, suppliers, business partners
- Former employees

This policy applies to all CCCM’s businesses, divisions, and offices. It also applies across all jurisdictions where we operate. If local legislation, regulation, or laws provide a higher level of protection than what is included in this policy, the local legislation will take precedence.

The protections in this Policy will also apply to anyone who has made a disclosure of information relating to CCCM to a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or legal representation in relation to whistleblowing protection laws.

Section 2: Process for Making A Report

2.1 What options do employees or eligible persons have for making a report

If an employee or eligible person wants to make a report, they have different channels available where they can do this. Detailed instructions for how to use and approach each of these channels is included here.

2.1.1 Internal Reporting for Employees

Employees should first report any matters of concern to their direct line manager.

Where this is not appropriate, where the person making a report does not feel comfortable making an internal report, or where an employee has made an internal report but no action has been taken within a reasonable time, the report can be made to the CCCM CEO or Board Chair.

2.1.2 External Reporting

A Discloser should contact the Board Chair of CCCM to make a report. The Discloser must first inform the Board Chair that they wish to make a report under this Policy.

Reports made under this Policy should describe the grounds for the report and provide as much detail as possible of all relevant facts and supporting documentation (if any).

Information contained in reports and provided by Whistleblowers in the course of an investigation will be kept confidential, except as required by law or where disclosure is necessary to regulatory authorities, law enforcement agencies or professional advisors to CCCM.

2.1.3 Reporting to Eligible Recipients

If a Discloser is unable to use any of the above reporting channels, a disclosure can be made to an “eligible recipient” within the company. Eligible recipients in relation to CCCM are:

- 2.1.1 Officers;
- 2.1.2 Directors;
- 2.1.3 Senior Managers; and
- 2.1.4 the auditor or member of an audit team conducting an audit;

Reports to an eligible recipient:

- 2.1.5 must be made in person or by telephone; and
- 2.1.6 the Discloser must first inform the eligible recipient that they wish to make a report under this Policy.

If a report involves the CEO, this will be directed to the Chair of CCCM for investigation and further action.

Disclosures may be made to CCCM’s auditor, Bishop Collins Audit Pty Limited. via

Email: mail@bishopcollins.com.au

Postal address: PO Box 3399 Tuggerah NSW 2259

Telephone: 02 4353 2333

2.2 You can remain anonymous

CCCM respects and protects your identity if you choose to make an anonymous report. You can choose to remain anonymous while making a report, interacting with the person investigating your case during an investigation of your report, as well as after your case is closed. At any given time, you can identify yourself, but this is your choice and at no point do you need to do this or will you be forced to provide your identity.

If you decide to disclose your identity, CCCM will work to protect your identity and will outline and document who in the organisation will know you submitted your report. CCCM will also take all steps necessary (and outlined in this policy) to ensure you do not suffer any retaliation.

It is worth noting that CCCM will make every endeavour possible to investigate your report, but in some cases, there are limitations as to what can be achieved if the informant decides to remain anonymous.

No employee, officer or contractor of CCCM may engage in detrimental conduct against a Discloser who has made or proposes to make a report in accordance with this Policy, because of such report or proposed report.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that a Discloser will not be subject to any form of victimisation, discrimination, harassment, demotion, dismissal or prejudice, because they have made a report. However, this Policy will not protect the Discloser if they are also involved in or connected to the improper conduct or illegal activities that are the subject of a report.

Information about a Discloser's identity and information that is likely to lead to the identification of the Discloser may be disclosed in the following circumstances:

- Where the information is disclosed to ASIC, APRA or the Australian Federal Police;
- Where the information is disclosed to a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice in relation to the operation of applicable whistleblowing protection laws; or
- Where the Discloser consents.

2.3 What Is the investigative process?

It is important for CCCM to be transparent with our employees and outline what is the process for us to investigate a report submitted through our whistleblowing channels. Below, we have provided the different steps a case manager or member of our whistleblowing team will go through once a report is received until the case is closed.

Our general investigative process is:

- Report (anonymous or otherwise) is received.
- A case manager (who could be the CEO, Board Chair or Auditor) is assigned to the report to assess it and confirm its receipt.
- The case manager will do an initial assessment to confirm it is a valid report and request permission to investigate.
- The case manager will begin the investigation. This can include corresponding with the informant if there is a channel to do this.
- The case manager will investigate and update management and the informant per policy guidelines.
- Once the case manager has finalised the investigation and report, management and the informant will be updated.
- At this point, the case manager will hand everything over to management, or the Board, as appropriate, for any subsequent action to take place

2.4 How we use third parties

CCCM is a small, not-for-profit organisation regulated by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission and the NSW Department of Fair Trading. It does not at the present time use third parties in our whistleblowing program and strategy. We may choose to use a legal or accounting investigative firm, HR consultants or whistleblowing platforms to ensure we protect informants' identities and use technologies to ensure no one in our organisation can identify them as the organization grows in future years.

2.5 Who Is alerted to a report

Once a report is submitted (anonymous or not), this report goes to the Chair of CCCM's Audit and Finance Committee. The charter for this standing Board committee is available in CCCM's Corporate Governance Statement on its website. The Chair will then assess the report and may authorise or carry out the investigation or assign it to a case manager, who will manage the investigation.

Certain senior managers might be alerted to the report as part of the reporting process or if they are involved in the investigation in some manner.

Any information that could potentially identify an anonymous informant will be held in the strictest confidence and will not be shared, unless CCCM is compelled by law.

2.6 What is the process of updating the informant

As part of our investigative process, CCCM will update the informant of the progress of the investigation. These updates can include the following:

- CCCM has confirmed the receipt of a report from the informant.
- CCCM has begun the investigative process.
- The investigation is currently ongoing.
- The investigation has been closed.

CCCM's commitment is that the informant will be updated once a month while the investigation is ongoing. The informant will then be updated once the investigation has been closed.

CCCM will strive to provide as much feedback on the investigation as possible. However, due to CCCM's privacy guidelines there will often be information that cannot be shared with the informant.

2.7 Support for Disclosers

Support available for Disclosers includes:

- appointing an independent support person from the organisation to deal with any ongoing concerns they may have; or
- connecting the Discloser with third party support providers such as Lifeline (13 11 14) and Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636).

Use of these support services by a Discloser may require the Discloser to consent to disclosure of their identity or information that is likely to lead to the discovery of their identity.

Section 3: How Disclosers Are Protected

3.1 Anonymity after submitting a report

Section 2.2 discussed how an eligible person can remain anonymous during the process of submitting a report. After submitting a report, the following policies around anonymity are in place to protect a discloser's identity.

- The discloser has the right to remain anonymous and does not need to identify themselves at any time during the investigation process
- CCCM uses tools and may use technology that helps protect a discloser's identity during and after submitting a report
- At no time will CCCM force the discloser to reveal their identity
- The discloser can refuse to answer questions they feel could identify themselves. If the discloser reveals themselves at any time, you will document who will have access to their identity. This can include the case manager, CEO, Board Chair, Auditor etc.

3.2 Potential retaliation

A discloser might be concerned that directors, staff, management or the organisation might retaliate against them. In this case, CCCM will protect the discloser from:

- Being terminated or having their employment ceased
- Performance management
- Harassment on the job or workplace bullying

- Warnings or disciplinary actions
- Discrimination
- Any other action that can be perceived as retaliation for making a report

3.3 Considered risk of retaliation

“Considered risk of retaliation” means the discloser believes retaliation is near or imminent, and they are targeted for retaliation. The informant should contact the Board Chair or Auditor, who will take the action felt appropriate as well as come up with recommendations for how the situation can be resolved. Potential steps to protect the discloser from a considered risk of retaliation can include:

- The discloser taking leave
- The discloser being reassigned to other duties
- The discloser being reassigned to another location

3.4 Already retaliated against

If the discloser feels that they have already been retaliated against, they should escalate this immediately to the Board Chair or Auditor. The Board Chair will take the action they feel is appropriate as well as come up with recommendations for how the situation can be resolved. Potential steps to protect the discloser after retaliation has occurred can include:

- The discloser taking leave
- The discloser being reassigned to other duties
- The discloser being reassigned to another location

3.5 Retaliation not adequately resolved

If the discloser feels their report of retaliation was not resolved adequately the case can be escalated in writing. The report will need to go to the Board Chair or Auditor

and they will investigate the matter and the process for how the retaliation was dealt with.

3.6 How CCCM deals with retaliation

CCCM does not tolerate any attempts to retaliate against a discloser who has made a report. Any employee or associated person that found retaliating will face disciplinary action, including the potential to be terminated from their roles.

3.7 Separation of issues

CCCM will be able to still raise any issues related to work or performance related issues. While CCCM will protect the discloser from any retaliation, it is also important that they are still effective in their job. CCCM can still raise any performance or contract issues with the discloser as long as they are kept separate and not influenced at all from any reports that have been made.

3.7 Protection & immunity for others

Other parties that might have to bear witness or are involved in the investigation will be protected from retaliation in the same manner as the discloser.

3.8 Legislative/Regulation protection & assistance

If in any jurisdictions or locales where CCCM operates has whistleblowing protection laws that provide a higher level of protection than what is included in this policy, the local legislation will take precedence.

Section 4: Our Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Roles

The roles within CCCM's whistleblowing program include the following:

- The Board Chair will act as the program owner and whistleblowing protection officer (WPO)
- Day-to-day manager of CCCM's whistleblowing program rests with the CEO
- Case managers that investigate individual reports, where appointed

4.2 Responsibilities

The following are the responsibilities of each role in CCCM's whistleblowing program.

Program owner/whistleblowing protection officer: This role is performed by the Board Chair. This individual owns the entire program and is measured on its overall success. This includes employees knowing and understanding the program, an easy, safe and secure process of making a report, investigating reports, as well as being a point of escalation for any concerns or retaliation that has taken place. While this individual reports into the organisation, the results of their work goes directly to the Board of Directors.

Day-to-day manager: This role is performed by the CEO. The day-to-day manager views incoming anonymous reports, assigns these reports to case managers, and manages them as they conduct investigations. This person is the first line of escalation and works collaboratively with case managers to ensure anonymous reports are heard and acted upon.

Section 5: Governance

5.1 Changes to CCCM's Whistleblowing Policy

From time to time, CCCM's whistleblowing policy will need to change to keep up with our values, our growth, best practices, improvements, as well as legislation and regulations. Any changes to our whistleblowing policy will be communicated with all employees and any relevant stakeholders. This policy and any changes made do form any contract of employment

Any changes to CCCM's whistleblowing policy must be approved by the Board.

All changes will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and the Board can comment and provide feedback as necessary. All changes will also be documented in CCCM's whistleblowing policy and will be made available to all employees.

5.2 Reporting to the Board of Directors

The Audit and Finance Committee of the Board of Directors is updated every quarter on CCCM's whistleblowing program, inclusive of reports, investigations, and results. Reports or investigations carrying an undue amount of risk will be reported by the Committee to the Board of Directors outside of the quarterly updates. The Board of Directors at any time can ask about anonymous reports, investigations, as well as the state of CCCM's whistleblowing program.

CCCM's whistleblowing policy program resides in the Audit and Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. They are responsible and accountable for the implementation and effectiveness of CCCM's whistleblowing program.

