



<b>DIVISION</b>	<b>ADOPTION DATE</b>
II College Employees	08/2009
<b>POLICY NAME</b>	<b>REVISIONS</b>
02.01.03 Whistleblower Protection	Revised: 11/2009, 08/2018, 09/2021

02.01.03      **WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION**

Joliet Junior College (College) recognizes its obligation to its employees and constituents to maintain the highest ethical standards. JJC recognizes and will adhere to the duties and obligations provided for both employers and employees under the Illinois Whistleblower Act [740 ILCS 174/1 et seq]. To protect the integrity of the College’s learning community, and to ensure the highest standards of conduct by and among members of the College community, the College will investigate any alleged *Improper Activity* by its employees or students. Anyone found to have engaged in an *Improper Activity* is subject to disciplinary action(s) according to procedures outlined in the Board Policies, Personnel Procedures Manual, College collective bargaining agreements, the Student Handbook, and the Student Code of Conduct, up to and including dismissal or expulsion, and civil or criminal prosecution when warranted.

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of the College who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal, unethical or dishonest. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures. Appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities. Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; using College resources for personal gain; or fraudulent financial reporting.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern about illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity, the employee is to report the potential wrongdoing in accordance with the policy and related procedures.

All members of the College community are strongly encouraged to report any potential *Improper Activity*. The preferred method of reporting any issue of concern is for the employee, student, or other constituent to file a written report describing the potential *Improper Activity* and the person or persons involved to the Ethics Officer. Reports can be

filed anonymously online or by phone and the steps are outlined in Institutional Procedure 2.01.03.00 Whistleblower Protection.

The College will not tolerate any (i) retaliatory actions against any employee or constituent for making a good faith report of a potential *Improper Activity*, or (ii) direct or indirect use or attempted use of the *Official Authority or Influence* of an employee's position or office for the purpose of interfering with the right of another employee or constituent to make a *Protected Disclosure* directly to the College or through the College's whistleblower hotline.

The College will take whatever action necessary to prevent and correct violations of this policy; notwithstanding the foregoing, any individual who files a *Baseless Allegation* shall not be protected under this policy.

JJC's Whistleblower Policy shall incorporate the following definitions:

**Baseless Allegation**

Any allegation of improper activity made without reasonable cause to believe that the information disclosed is true. Individuals making such allegations may be subject to institutional disciplinary action and/or legal claims by individuals wrongfully accused of such conduct. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

**Improper Activity**

Any activity undertaken by a College trustee, employee or student which is found, after due process, to be in violation of any applicable local, state, or federal law, rule, or regulation, or College policy or procedure, including but not limited to, those relating to corruption; malfeasance; sexual harassment; bribery; theft; fraud; coercion; conversion; or misappropriation or misuse of assets.

**Official Authority or Influence**

Promising to confer, or conferring, any benefit; effecting or threatening to effect, any reprisal; taking, or directing others to take, or recommending, processing, or approving any personnel action, including but not limited to, appointment, promotion, transfer, assignment, performance evaluation, suspension, or other disciplinary action.

**Protected Disclosure**

Any good faith communication that discloses or demonstrates an intention to disclose an alleged *Improper Activity*.

In accordance with the Whistleblower Act [740 ILC5 174/1 et seq.], the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act [5 ILCS 430/1 et seq.], and the Illinois Human Rights Act [775 ILCS 5], any College employee who reasonably believes that fraudulent or other improper activity has been conducted by another employee and reasonably reports the activity will not be subjected to an adverse employment action because of reporting the activity.

***Employees represented by a bargaining unit may be governed by the appropriate bargaining unit agreement.***