

Waltham Leas Primary Academy



Whistleblowing Policy

Last reviewed on: **September 2025**

Next review due by: **September 2026**

1. About this policy

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers, students and agency workers.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

This policy aims to:

Encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and that their confidentiality will be respected

Let all staff in the academy know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the trust

Set clear procedures for how the academy will respond to such concerns

Let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern

Assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue)

2. Legislation

The requirement to have clear whistle-blowing procedures in place is set out in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#).

This policy has been written in line with the above document, as well as [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

3. What is whistleblowing?

Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is “in the public interest”. Examples of whistle-blowing include (but are not limited to):

Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption

Pupils' or staff health and safety being put in danger

Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement

Breaches of financial management procedures

Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Damage to the environment

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the academy count as whistle-blowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

When staff have a concern they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance or complaints procedures.

4. Procedures

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your Year Group Leader. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your Year Group Leader, for any reason, you should contact the Head, Deputy Head or Designated Safeguarding Lead. If it is believed that the Head Teacher may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to Helen Spauls (Chair of Governors). We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern.

You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4.1 When to raise a concern

Staff should consider the examples in section 3 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or academy procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

4.2 How to raise a concern

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

5. Responding

When a concern is received by the headteacher/deputy head teacher/DSL – they will:

Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative

Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure.

Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken.

Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:

- o The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, as appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police.
- o The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps.

6. Outcome of investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the head, Governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

7. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the academy will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

8. Confidentiality

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy.

Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern. This includes a no gossip expectation or discussions about the case with those not involved.

9. External disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external.

10. Protection and support for whistleblowers

We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform a member of the senior leadership team immediately.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.

However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

9. Contacts

Protect operates a confidential helpline. The contact details are below:

Responsible Officer	Jane Thompson
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: 0203 117 2520 Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk
North East Lincolnshire Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)	Helpline: 01472 326118 Email: lado@nelincs.gov.uk
Front Door CSC (Children's Social Care)	Helpline: 01472 326292 option: 2 Email: NELCChildrensFrontDoor@nelincs.gov.uk