

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

### **Definition**

Whistleblowing is raising a concern about misconduct or malpractice within an organisation. For the purpose of this policy, we expand this definition to include raising a concern about misconduct or malpractice by members of staff/volunteers regardless of whether it took place within the organisation or elsewhere.

### **Protection**

Qualified Tutor is committed to delivering a high quality service, promoting organisational accountability and maintaining public confidence.

This policy provides individuals in the work place with protection from victimisation or punishment when they raise a genuine concern about misconduct in the school or by its staff/volunteers elsewhere. The policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace, in order to promote good governance and accountability in the name of public interest.

The Act covers behaviour, which amounts to:

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- Miscarriage of justice
- Danger to health and safety of an individual and/or the environment
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above

This policy is not a substitute for grievance or complaints but rather is designed to nurture a culture of openness and transparency within the organisation, making it safe and acceptable for employees and volunteers to raise concerns they may have about misconduct or malpractice in good faith.

A disclosure in good faith will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and the employee or volunteer will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice within the school.

Concerns should normally be reported to the company founder who will advise of action to be taken in response including whether to refer to LADO (020 8359 4066). Concerns will be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.

In the event that a member of staff/volunteer feels unable to raise an issue directly with the school or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, have concerns regarding internal child protection failures or about the way a concern is being handled by the organisation, alternative whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline can be contacted:

📞 Call on 0800 028 0285 (Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 8.00pm)

✉️ Email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

✉️ Write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

### **Guidance for Staff**

This guidance has been written for staff working with children and young people in educational settings.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this may be difficult to carry out, it is imperative to do so, particularly where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to your colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person being left at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone like YOU to safeguard their welfare.

***Don't think 'what if I'm wrong' – 'think what if I'm right'***

### **Reasons for whistleblowing**

- Every individual has a duty to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem developing or worsening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent being implicated yourself

### **What stops people from whistleblowing**

- Starting a chain of events that may spiral
- Disrupting work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

### **How to Raise a Concern**

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or unease as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is raised, the easier and sooner action can be taken
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach your Line Manager, company founder, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy (Deputy DSOs)

- If your concern is about the company founder, contact the NSPCC
- You must also put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, including names, dates and places wherever possible
- A member of staff or volunteer must not decide the validity of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern

### **What Happens Next?**

- You will be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence

### **Self-Reporting**

There may be occasions where a member of staff or volunteer has a personal difficulty, such as a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff and volunteers have a duty to discuss these issues with their Line Manager so that professional and personal support can be offered to them thereby ensuring that their role and duties at school will not be compromised in any way. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children or relevant others.

### **Further Advice and Support**

It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your Line Manager, Company Founder and/or the NSPCC.

Where an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, it is advisable for the manager or practitioner about whom the complaint is made to gain legal and union advice. LADO and the DfE will be advised by the Company Founder (the 'case manager') and the DBS will be advised by the DSL of any allegation they consider meets the threshold for reporting i.e. where a member of staff or volunteer:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/relating to a child
- Behaved towards a child/children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they he or so may not be suitable to work with children (transferable risk).

Where the accused person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence, the case manager may want to involve the police immediately. Historical allegations of abuse that are reported/come to light after a member of staff/volunteer has left Qualified Tutor that meet the threshold for reporting should be referred to the police.

In line with their legal duty, the DSL will make a prompt referral to the DBS in the event that a member of staff/volunteer is dismissed/removed/resigned due to safeguarding concerns. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.

*For further details see:*

*Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy  
Managing Allegations against Staff Policy*

*"Absolutely without fail- challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong"  
(reproduced with acknowledgement to "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos)*

**This policy was approved by the Qualified Tutor Company Founder Julia Silver**

**July 2020**

**Review Frequency: ANNUAL**

