



Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

This policy is applicable to: Wolds Learning Partnership (WLP)

Version 2

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| <p>Important: This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the Website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.</p> <p>Name and Title of Author:</p> | |
| <p>Name of Responsible Committee/Individual:</p> | Board of Trustees |
| <p>Implementation Date:</p> | Autumn Term 2021 |
| <p>Review Date:</p> | Autumn Term 2023 |
| <p>Target Audience:</p> | Employees, agency workers, self-employed workers and professional visitors. |
| <p>Reference Documents:</p> | Department for Business Innovation and Skills 'Whistleblowing Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice' March 2015 Employment Rights Act 1996 Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 |



Policy Statement

The Wolds Learning Partnership (WLP) is fully committed to an ethos of openness, accountability and transparency, where employees are encouraged to voice any concerns they have in a professional, responsible, effective way. It is important to the organisation that issues such as suspected fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by workers or officers of the organisation is reported and properly dealt with. All individuals are therefore encouraged to raise any concerns they may have about the conduct of others at the WLP or the way in which the organisation is run. This policy details the way in which individuals may raise concerns they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and workers at the WLP, therefore whistleblowing concerns may be raised by employees, agency workers, self-employed workers and professional visitors. This policy does not cover issues such as an employee's concerns regarding their own pay or working hours, working conditions or volume of work as those issues should be addressed via other policies and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Board of Trustees** are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, ensuring that an appropriate framework is in place to enable staff and others to raise concerns.

The **CEO** is responsible for ensuring that staff and others do not suffer a detriment in the application of this policy and procedure. The CEO will also ensure that:

- Any individual who makes a disclosure of wrongdoing or malpractice in good faith is protected against victimisation.
- Anyone who victimises a whistleblower will be subject to WLP's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Any matters raised will be treated seriously, swiftly, consistently, fairly and professionally.
- Any matter raised will be promptly and thoroughly investigated by an appropriate senior person.
- The whistleblower's identity will, so far as is possible, remain confidential.
- Any employee or worker who knowingly makes false allegations against a colleague will be subject to the WLP's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Any employee who, in good faith, makes allegations that turn out to be unfounded will not be penalised for being genuinely mistaken.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for ensuring that all staff and workers are aware of this policy and procedure and will also ensure that:

- The policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Whistleblowers are treated with dignity and respect and offered access to appropriate support.

Leaders and staff with supervisory or leadership responsibilities must ensure they deal with whistleblowing issues swiftly, respectfully, thoroughly and professionally, whilst upholding confidentiality as far as possible.

All **staff and workers** have a responsibility for raising any concerns they have, thus providing the WLP with the opportunity to resolve any issues that arise. It is expected that wherever possible staff and workers raise concerns prior to malpractice or wrongdoing occurring. However, where this isn't possible, it is expected that staff and/or workers raise concerns at the earliest opportunity in line with this policy and procedure.

Equality and Diversity

WLP is committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines.



- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its pupil/student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged.

Vision and Values

The WLP's vision is to develop a culture of respect, honesty and high aspiration, encouraging staff and pupils/students to inspire each other and learn to value greatness, ambition and achievement of all kinds. This policy supports this vision as it is the intention of the WLP that staff and workers are able to raise concerns without fear of resulting detriment or victimisation.

Principles

Everyone should ensure they have an awareness and understanding of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Workers should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature. Any matter raised under the procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation will be shared with the worker who raised the issue. Although this list is not exhaustive, examples of situations in which it might be appropriate for an individual to report a wrongdoing include:

- Criminal offences (including financial impropriety such as fraud).
- Failure to comply with an obligation set out in law.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Endangering someone's health and safety.
- Damage to the environment.
- Covering up of wrongdoing.

No worker will be victimised for whistleblowing. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or learning and development of the worker will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.

Victimisation of a worker for whistleblowing will be viewed as a disciplinary offence. If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure, WLP's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may be used in addition to any appropriate external measures. Maliciously making a false allegation will be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

An instruction to cover up a potential wrongdoing will be viewed as a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue a concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, workers must not agree to remain silent and should escalate the issue to either a more senior manager or the Personnel Department.

Whistleblowing

The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. Whistleblowing occurs when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing. The whistleblower must be acting in the public interest and they must reasonably believe that they have witnessed or are aware of:

- A criminal offence.
- A miscarriage of justice.
- An act creating risk to health and safety.
- An act causing damage to the environment.
- A breach of any other legal obligation.
- Concealment of any of the above.



It is not necessary for a worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed – a reasonable belief is sufficient. The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter – it is the WLP’s responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

A worker who makes such a protected disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because he/she has made a disclosure.

The WLP encourages workers to raise their concerns under this policy in the first instance. If a worker is not sure whether or not to raise a concern, they should raise the issue with their line manager or a member of the SLT. If a worker would prefer, or feels it is more appropriate, concerns can also be reported to a named Trustee and/or member of WLP staff (please see details below).

| Name | Role | Contact Email |
|-------------|---|--|
| Kim Bevan | Member of Board of Trustees | kbevan@wlp.education |
| Jo Brighton | Head of Personnel & Staff Wellbeing – WLP | jbrighton@wlp.education |

Safeguarding

All workers must act on any concerns or information that gives them concern about the safety and wellbeing of a child or children arising from circumstances or events in or outside of school. Safeguarding concerns may relate to the conduct or behaviour of a worker towards an individual child or children; information that suggests a worker is unsuitable to work with children, or; belief that the senior leadership team or the Board of Trustees has failed to take appropriate action in response to a safeguarding concern raised.

Workers should raise such concerns with their manager in the first instance, however if this is not viewed to be appropriate the worker may wish to raise their concern(s) with the CEO, Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team, the Local Governing Body or the Board of Trustees (if the worker is concerned that members of those groups may be implicated they should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer at East Riding Council). If the concern is regarding abuse to children the East Riding Front Door (Safeguarding & Partnership Hub – Early Help Service) number is (01482 395500) or the out of hours Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on (01482) 393939.

If the concern is that a worker has or may have behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he/she would pose a risk of harm to children, the CEO or Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team, the Local Governing Body or the Board of Trustees will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer to discuss how the allegation should be investigated. It may be viewed as appropriate for the East Riding Safeguarding Children Board Guidance and DfE Statutory Guidance should be followed.

All concerns will be treated with the strictest confidence by all concerned. The WLP will protect the identity of whistleblowers as much as possible; however, it may not always be possible to do so. All staff involved in any related investigations must maintain confidentiality during and after its conclusion.

Whistleblowing Routines

In the first instance, unless the individual reasonably believes his/her line manager to be involved in the wrongdoing, or if for any other reason the individual does not wish to approach his/her line manager, any concerns should be raised with the individual’s line manager. If he/she believes their line manager is involved, or for any reason does not wish to approach their line manager, the individual should report the matter to



the Headteacher or another member of the SLT.

The manager must undertake a preliminary investigation and must then discuss the matter with the CEO or Headteacher. A more thorough investigation may then be undertaken as appropriate. This will include an interview and statement from the individual who raised the issues, potentially other witness statements alongside the collation of any relevant evidence. The manager investigating the issue will report to a panel made up of the CEO, the Headteacher and a member of the Board of Trustees, which will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. If disciplinary action is required, the manager investigating the issue will investigate the matter with assistance from the Personnel Department, in line with the disciplinary policy and procedure. If there are allegations against a Headteacher, CEO or member of the Executive Team the Personnel Department will work directly with the Board of Trustees. On conclusion of any investigation, the individual will be advised of the outcome of the investigation (including the actions that the Board of Trustees has either taken or intends to take). If no further action is to be taken, the rationale for this decision will be shared with the individual. If the individual reasonably believes that appropriate action has not been taken, he/she should report the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made, including:

- HM Revenue and Customs.
- Financial Services Authority.
- Office of Fair Trading.
- Health and Safety Executive.
- Environment Agency.
- Director of Public Prosecutions.
- Serious Fraud Office.
- ACAS.

A list of prescribed persons/professional can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies-2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

Named

Monitoring Compliance with and Effectiveness of the Policy and Procedure

Effectiveness and compliance of this Policy and Procedure will be monitored via the reporting and auditing of case resolution as issues arise.

Associated Documentation

Grievance Procedure.

Health and Safety Policy.

Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

East Riding Safeguarding Children Board.

Review

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed within two years of the date of implementation.