Whistle Blowing Policy

Henry David Learning

Woodland Rise School

August 2026

Reviewed: August 2026

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Proprietary Body Signed off

ZL & JH

Introduction
Woodland Rise School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect staff and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the organisations work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis, should the concern be related to Safeguarding pupils.

The Whistle Blowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. Any concern can be voiced without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

This policy applies to all staff employed by Woodland Rise School, including any contractors, e.g. agency worker, builders, drivers etc.

Principles
All staff will be trained in whistle blowing legislation and this policy on joining Woodland Rise School. Woodland Rise School recognises that all staff have a duty of care, moral and legal obligations to report all incidents where they consider pupils to have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed in the course of their work.

Failure to report an issue which has resulted in harm to a pupil, or a pupil being placed at serious risk of harm may result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including dismissal. Woodland Rise School considers that these obligations to report such incidents override any other considerations such as loyalty to colleagues.

All concerns will be treated in confidence, and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the person raising the concern if requested. At the appropriate time, however, he/she may need to come forward as a witness.

Woodland Rise School will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect anyone raising concerns.

If a person makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person. If, however, a person makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including dismissal or termination of contract for services, whichever is appropriate.

A person raising a concern is encouraged to put their name to an allegation whenever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful and any action taken could be limited. Anonymous concerns will be considered at the discretion of the Heads of Centre.
In exercising this discretion, the factors to be considered would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern, and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

The Grievance procedure should be used to raise concerns relating to staff's own employment.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedure which already affects staff.

Types of Concerns
The policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside of the scope of other procedures.
These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice

- Neglect, sexual, emotional, financial, verbal or physical abuse of pupils, grooming or any practices relating to the same
- Health and Safety risks, including risks to the pupils as well as other staff/contractor
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of funds, fraud and corruption
- Serious maladministration
- Other unethical conduct

Any serious concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of staff or others acting on behalf of Woodland Rise School can be reported under the Whistle Blowing Policy.
This may be about something that:

- Makes a person feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards Woodland Rise School subscribes to
- Falls below established standards of practice
- Amounts to improper conduct.

How to Raise a Concern
In the first instance, concerns should normally be raised with a member of the Leadership Team without delay after the alleged incident/wrongdoing. However, depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice, HR representative based at Head Office may be more appropriate. HR@henrydavidlearning.co.uk

The Leadership Team staff member will attempt to determine if the issue being raised is a concern that falls within this policy or if it is an issue of performance which should be dealt with by retraining or increased supervision. Concerns should be raised as early as possible; they may be raised verbally or in writing.

A written report should use the following format:

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates)
- The reason for the particular concern

There is no expectation to provide evidence or prove beyond reasonable doubt the truth of an allegation, but there should be reasonable grounds for the concern.

How Woodland Rise School will Manage the Complaint
All concerns will be acknowledged on receipt and will be dealt with as swiftly as possible, depending on the concern raised.
Where appropriate, the concern raised may be

- Resolved informally
- Investigated by the Heads of Centre or Head Office, or through the disciplinary process
- Referred to the Police
- Referred to the relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations OFSTED or The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquires will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

The overriding principle is the interest and safety of pupils. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. safeguarding children or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

The amount of contact between the Leadership team, Heads of Centre or Head Office and the person raising the concern will be dependent on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought.

Anyone raising a concern will be given feedback that is appropriate to the concern that is raised, whilst ensuring confidentiality of any actions that have been taken.

Anonymous whistle- blowers will not ordinarily be able to receive feedback and any action taken to look into a disclosure could be limited.

Nottingham City Allegations Officer (LADO)	Caroline Hose Telephone 0115 876 5166 (City)
LADO email for Referrals and New Enquiries	**LADO@nottinghamcity.gov.uk**
Health & Safety Executive	Telephone: 0300 003 1647 Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5pm Wednesdays 10am to 5pm
Department of Education	https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe DfE helpline Telephone: 0370 000 2288 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
OFSTED	Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Telephone: 0300 123 1231
NSPCC	Email: help@nspcc.org.uk Telephone: 0808 028 0285
Public Concern at Work	www.pcaw.org.uk or telephone 020 3117 2520
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH	Telephone 0115 876 4800 Emergency Duty Team (EDT): 0115 915 9299 for urgent out-of-hours concerns and immediate harm, alongside the Police (999) for immediate danger. Referrals are made to the MASH, requiring a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) to be submitted after the call for non-urgent issues