



Wonder
Learning Partnership
Educate | Empower | Engage | Enrich

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

This policy is applicable to the Wonder Learning Partnership (WLP)

Important: This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the Wonder Learning Partnership website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version date on your copy matches that of the document online.

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Introduction

The Wonder Learning Partnership (WLP) is fully committed to an ethos of openness, accountability and transparency. It is important to the organisation that criminal acts by workers or officers of the organisation are reported and dealt with properly.

This policy does apply to the following areas of misconduct.

1. Criminal offences (including financial impropriety such as fraud).
2. Failure to comply with an obligation set out in law.
3. Miscarriages of justice.
4. Breach of health and safety law.
5. Damage to the natural environment.
6. Covering up criminal activity and wrongdoing.

All individuals are therefore encouraged to raise any concerns using the Whistle blowing Policy if conduct of others at the WLP is deemed to be criminal.

This policy does not cover issues such as an employee's wellbeing, relationships, concerns regarding their working conditions, volume of work, or working conditions, as those issues should be addressed via other policies and procedures.

This policy details how individuals may raise concerns they have and how those concerns will be dealt with. The policy applies to all colleagues and workers at the Wonder Learning Partnership, therefore whistleblowing concerns may be raised by employees, agency workers, self-employed workers, and professional visitors.

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, without prejudice, is protected against victimisation.
- Anyone who victimises a whistleblower who has made a disclosure in good faith, without prejudice, 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:

- WLP's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Any employee who, in good faith without prejudice, makes criminal allegations that turn out to be unfounded, will not be penalised for being genuinely mistaken.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for ensuring that all colleagues 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 colleagues **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 criminal wrongdoing at work. Workers should be watchful for illegal 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.
- Breach of health and safety law.
- Damage to the environment.
- Covering up of wrongdoing.

No worker will be victimised for legitimate 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 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 a more senior manager.

If a Whistleblowing incident is reported that does not meet the definition of this policy, those making the allegation will be informed and referred, with prejudice, to access policies and procedures that are available on the Trust website.

Whistleblowing

The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about the matters specified in this policy. Whistleblowing occurs when a worker passes 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.
- Breach of health and safety law.
- An act causing damage to the natural environment.
- A breach of any other legal obligation.
- Concealment of any of the above.

The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter – it is the schools or Trust's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

A worker who makes such a protected disclosure without prejudice has the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because he/she has made a disclosure.

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 school 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
Jonathan Britton	Chief Executive Officer	jbritton@wlp.education
Luke Sloman	Chief Financial Operating Officer	lslooman@wlp.education
Adam Marham	Chair of Board of Trustees	amarham@wlp.education
John Sinclair	Vice Chair of Board of Trustees	jsinclair@wlp.education
Michael Clarke	Chair of Finance Committee.	mclarke@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 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 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 another as named below.

The manager must undertake a preliminary investigation and must then discuss the matter with the Headteacher, Director, Chief Finance and Operating Officer, or Chief Executive Officer. If the matter meets the criteria set out in this policy, 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 Headteacher, Director, Trust leader 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.

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>

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.