

## Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy

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<b>Version No</b>	3
<b>Operational from</b>	September 2025
<b>Policy prepared by</b>	Nick Preston
<b>Policy Approved by</b>	Judith Allen – CEO
<b>Whistleblowing Contact</b>	Nick Preston – <a href="mailto:npreston@education-wise.org">npreston@education-wise.org</a> – 0117 379 0450
<b>Review date</b>	September 2026

## Purpose

Educationwise is committed to maintaining a culture of transparency, integrity, and accountability. This policy sets out how individuals can raise serious concerns about wrongdoing or unethical behaviour without fear of retaliation. It operates in line with the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)** and subsequent amendments, ensuring legal protection for those who make protected disclosures in the public interest.

## Scope

This policy applies to all **staff, learners, contractors, suppliers, and partners**. Anyone with a reasonable belief that wrongdoing is taking place is encouraged to raise concerns under this policy.

A disclosure will qualify for protection under PIDA if it relates to wrongdoing in the public interest, such as:

- Criminal offences.
- Breaches of legal obligations.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks.
- Environmental damage.
- Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing.

Personal employment grievances (e.g. disputes with a manager) should be raised under the **Grievance Policy**, not under whistleblowing.

## What can be reported?

- Fraud, financial malpractice, or illegal activities.
- Breaches of health and safety standards.
- Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- Misuse of resources or facilities.
- Conduct that endangers individuals or compromises organisational integrity.

## How to report concerns

1. **Directly to your tutor or manager:** Learners and staff are encouraged to raise concerns with their immediate contact first.
2. **Whistleblowing Contact:** If you feel unable to raise the concern with your tutor or manager, or the concern involves them, report it directly to **Nick Preston** – [npreston@education-wise.org](mailto:npreston@education-wise.org) | **0117 379 0450**.

3. **Anonymous reporting:** Concerns can also be submitted confidentially to [hr@education-wise.org](mailto:hr@education-wise.org), which is monitored by the HR Director. Anonymous concerns will be considered and investigated as far as possible.
4. **Escalation:** If you are dissatisfied with the response, escalate to a senior leader, the CEO, or the Chair of the Board.

## Confidentiality and protection

- Whistleblowers' identities will be kept confidential wherever possible.
- Confidentiality may only be broken if legally required (e.g. by regulators or law enforcement).
- All personal data will be handled in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## No retaliation

Whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns in good faith will not suffer any detriment. Any retaliation, harassment, or victimisation of a whistleblower is a serious disciplinary matter and will be addressed under the **Disciplinary Policy**.

## Investigating concerns

- Concerns will be acknowledged within **5 working days**.
- Investigations will normally be completed within **30 working days**, although complex cases may take longer.
- The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome and any action taken, unless legal or confidentiality requirements prevent full disclosure.

## Escalating externally

If internal reporting does not resolve the concern, or if you feel unable to raise it internally, you may contact the appropriate regulator or authority, for example:

- **HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).**
- **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).**
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE).**
- **Environment Agency.**
- **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).**
- **Department for Education (DfE) / Apprenticeship Service.**
- **Ofsted.**

For advice, you can also contact **Protect** (independent whistleblowing charity):

- Email: [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk)
- Tel: 0203 117 2520
- Website: [www.protect-advice.org.uk](http://www.protect-advice.org.uk)

## False or malicious allegations

- No action will be taken against anyone who raises a concern in good faith, even if not substantiated.
- However, deliberately false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

## Independent advice

Confidential, independent advice can be obtained from **Protect** (contact details above).

## Monitoring and review

This policy will be **reviewed annually** or sooner if legislation, case law, or regulatory expectations change. Updates will be approved by the Board and communicated to all staff and learners.