KALEIDOSCOPE
Multi Academy Trust

Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by:	Kaleidoscope Trust Board	**Date:** September 2026
Next Review:	September 2027	

Whistle Blowing Policy

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Definition	3
Principles	4
Legislation	4
The Procedure	5
Records	7
Confidentiality	7
False or Malicious Allegations	8
Anonymous Allegations	8
Harassment and Victimisation	8
External Bodies / Sources	8
Promotion, Monitoring, Evaluation or Review	9
Other Relevant Policies / Guidance	9
Appendix 1:External Sources	10

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Kaleidoscope Multi-Academy Trust (KMAT) and its schools are committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability. We want any of our workers who have concerns about any aspect of the Trusts/School's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

1.2 A whistleblowing policy and procedure is about the ways in which concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing may properly be raised within the School/Trust and if necessary outside of the School/Trust.

2. DEFINITION

2.1 Whistleblowing inside the workplace is the reporting by workers of wrong doing on the part of the senior leadership teams, those undertaking governance roles or by fellow workers. Workers may include contractors and agency staff.

2.2 There are existing procedures in place for employees to lodge grievances concerning their employment, and for any safeguarding issue to be raised. Parents and members of the public can raise issues under the Complaints Procedure.

2.3 The following is not an exhaustive list but is a guide to the range of issues which may be covered under this Policy:

- Conduct which is a criminal offence or breach of a legal obligation
- Sexual, physical or verbal harassment or abuse of workers or volunteers at the School or of other adult members of the school community, *(note: if the person raising the concern is an employee and are themselves the alleged victim they should normally raise this under the Grievance Procedure (disclosures about sexual harassment are protected disclosures but a protected disclosure must be in the public interest (see below))*
- Discrimination on any of the grounds under the Equality Act or victimisation *(note: if the person raising the concern is an employee and are themselves the alleged victim they should raise this under the Grievance Procedure)*
- Health and safety issues, including action likely to cause danger to any person and / or to cause serious damage to property
- Action likely to cause or which has caused damage to the environment
- Breaches of financial regulations, fraud or corruption including unauthorised or inappropriate use of public funds
- Breach of policies
- Unethical or improper conduct
- Failure to take reasonable steps to report or rectify any situation likely to give rise to significant, avoidable financial loss to the School or otherwise seriously prejudice the school
- Abuse of authority or the use of school authority for any unauthorised purpose
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of these matters.

2.4 When safeguarding issues are raised these should be dealt with under the statutory Allegations of Abuse Guidance.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 The principles of this policy and procedure are to:

- Create an ethical, open culture
- Encourage workers to feel confident about raising concerns
- Ensure that all those involved in the procedure including the Whistleblower are protected from discrimination on any grounds under the Equality Act 2010 and that the Whistleblower is protected from any form of harassment or victimisation
- Ensure that any attempts to cover up any concerns disclosed to the School is recognised as a disciplinary offence
- Protect the reputation of the School and the welfare of all pupils and workers at the School
- Promote good practice and deter malpractice
- Establish safe routes for the communication of concerns and a fair and impartial investigative procedure
- Remind staff of the duty of confidentiality which is implied by the law in every contract of employment and prohibits employees from publicly disclosing employers' confidential information, unless it is in the public interest that information is disclosed or unless the School fails to properly consider or deal with the issue
- Safeguard against abuse of the procedure by ensuring that the malicious raising of unfounded allegations is recognised as a disciplinary offence
- Make clear the right of the worker to consult with their trade union or Protect (an independent charity which provides confidential advice for employees) and uphold the right of the worker to disclose a concern to a 'prescribed body' if the School does not deal with the matter,
- Ensure there is a review mechanism using the comments and experience of those who have invoked the whistle blowing procedure.

4. LEGISLATION

4.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is designed to protect 'whistleblowers' from detriment and unfair dismissal. The people protected by the Act include employees, workers, third party contractor staff, agency staff and those participating in work experience. Dismissal related to making a public interest disclosure is automatically unfair. The qualifying service for claiming unfair dismissal is six months for anyone appointed on or after 1 July 2026.

4.2 Workers are eligible for protection under the Act if:

- they honestly think what they are reporting is true
- they think they are telling the right person
- they reasonably believe their disclosure is in the public interest.

4.3 The Employment Rights Act 2025 amends the Employment Rights Act 1996 so that whistleblowing protections now specifically apply to disclosures relating to sexual harassment: a disclosure about sexual harassment is explicitly defined as a protected

disclosure. (This means that those who make disclosures related to sexual harassment they reasonably believe to be in the public interest are protected from detriment (adverse treatment) or unfair dismissal if either result from them having made the disclosure.) The School takes its duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment very seriously.

4.4 The PIDA sets out the full statutory rights and obligations of workers who whistleblow.

5. THE PROCEDURE

5.1 The Whistleblower (the person raising the concern) should:

- Raise their concern with their line manager or the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher. This should normally be done in writing for the avoidance of doubt. The Whistleblower should set out the background / history of the concern(s) giving relevant details (e.g. names, date) and the reason why they are concerned. If the Whistleblower feels unable to put their concern in writing they can arrange to meet the line manager or the Headteacher or ask their trade union representative to raise their concern on their behalf or support them in raising the concern. The Whistleblower must declare any personal interest they have in the matter.
- If the line manager believes the concern to be genuine and that it is appropriate to use the Whistleblowing Procedure, the manager should contact the Headteacher.
- If the line manager / Headteacher believes the concern to fall within the scope of the Grievance Policy, Allegations of Abuse Guidance or the Complaints Procedure they should follow the procedures set out within these.
- Should it be alleged that the Headteacher/Executive is involved in the alleged malpractice; the Chair of the Local Partnership Committee should be contacted. Should it be alleged that the Chair of the Local Partnership Committee is involved in the alleged malpractice, the Headteacher should be notified and then Chair of Trustees should be contacted. If it should be alleged that the CEO is involved in the alleged malpractice; the Chair of Trustees should be contacted. If it should be alleged that the Chair of Trustees is involved in the alleged malpractice; CEO will be contacted and will themselves contact the Vice Chair of Trustees.
- The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher (or if the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher is the subject of the allegation, Chair of Local Partnership Committee in consultation with the CEO) will determine who the Investigator should be.
- If the Whistleblower feels unable to raise their concern with their line manager or the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher, in the first instance, they may contact the Chair of the Local Partnership Committee directly. If this occurs the Whistleblower will be asked to justify why they feel unable to raise the concern with their line manager or the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher.

5.2 The Whistleblower must not attempt to investigate a concern themselves. Whistleblowers will need to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

5.3 The Investigator should:

- Interview the Whistleblower as soon as possible, in confidence, or earlier and as a matter of urgency if there is an immediate danger to loss of life or serious injury.
- Obtain as much information as possible from the Whistleblower about the grounds for concern.

- Consult with the Whistleblower about further steps which could be taken;
- Advise the Whistleblower of the appropriate route if the matter does not fall under the School's Whistleblowing Procedure.
- *Where the Investigator is not the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or the Local Partnership Board*, report all matters raised under this procedure to the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or, where relevant, the Chair of Local Partnership Committee and CEO.

5.4 At the interview with the Investigator, the Whistleblower may be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or a work colleague. The Investigator may be accompanied by a notetaker.

5.5 As soon as reasonably practicable following the interview, the Investigator will decide (*if the Investigator is the Headteacher/Executive or Chair of the Local Partnership Committee*) or recommend to the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or Chair Local Partnership Committee, one or more of the following:

- that the concern can be resolved without the need for further investigation by action agreed with the Whistleblower
- that urgent action be taken before a further investigation takes place, e.g. suspension of an employee / worker, if sufficient initial evidence indicates this is warranted (see the School's Disciplinary Policy for details on suspension)
- that the matter be investigated further internally by the School
- that the matter be investigated by the external auditors of the School
- that the matter be reported to the Local Authority and / or Department for Education
- that the matter be reported to the Police
- that the route for the Whistleblower to pursue the matter if it does not fall within this procedure; or
- that no further action is taken by the School.

The decision / recommendations and the reason(s) for the decision / recommendations should be recorded.

5.6 Where a referral is made to a statutory authority the whistleblowing procedure will be halted until the external authorities have concluded their investigation. Where this is confirmed in writing to be appropriate by the external authority, the school may then continue with the Procedure.

5.7 The grounds on which no further action is taken include:

- the Investigator is satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, there is no evidence that malpractice within the meaning of this procedure has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- the matter is already (or has been) the subject of proceedings under one of the School's other procedures or policies
- the matter concerned is already the subject of legal proceedings, or has already been referred to the Police, the external auditors or other public authority.

5.8 The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or Chair of Local Partnership Committee will ensure that any recommendation is implemented unless there is good reason for not doing so in whole or in part. Such a reason will be reported to the next meeting of the Local Partnership Board with the Trust Board updated by the CEO.

5.9 The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or Chair of Local Partnership Committee will write to the Whistleblower as soon as possible:

- stating that their concern is being looked into
- indicating how the school propose to deal with the issue
- telling them whether any further investigations will take place (and if not, explaining why this is the case) and
- supplying them with information on staff support mechanisms.

5.10 If it is decided that the matter be investigated further internally, any further investigation will be concluded within a reasonable period.

5.11 Following the completion of their inquiry, the Investigator will set out in a written report: their findings, the evidence on which these findings are based and their conclusions / recommendations. The Investigator will decide (*if the Investigator is the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or Chair of Local Partnership Committee*) or recommend to the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or Chair of Local Partnership Committee, one or more of the following:

- the School take Disciplinary action against the worker(s) alleged to have been involved in the wrongdoing or malpractice
- the matter be investigated by the external auditors of the School
- the matter be reported to the Local Authority and / or Department for Education
- the matter be reported to the Police
- the route for the member of staff to pursue the matter if it does not fall within this procedure or
- that no further action is taken by the School.

5.12 The outcome of any agreed investigation will be reported by the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or Chair of Local Partnership Committee to the Whistleblower within a reasonable period. All responses to the Whistleblower will be made in writing and sent to the Whistleblower's home address. In some circumstances, it may not be possible to reveal the full details of the outcome of the inquiry, for example, where this relates to personal issues involving a third party or legal constraints.

5.13 If the Whistleblower has not had a response within a reasonable timeframe, they may appeal to the Chair of Local Partnership Committee or, if appropriate, the appointed external body, but will inform the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher or Chair of Local Partnership Committee (as appropriate) before doing so.

6. RECORDS

6.1 Records of meetings held as part of the Whistleblowing Procedure and the outcome of those meetings will be kept detailing:

- the nature of any concerns / allegations
- the results of any investigation
- the action taken and the reasons for it
- any subsequent developments.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

7.1 The Whistleblower's identity will be kept confidential unless the Whistleblower otherwise consents. In the absence of such consent, the Investigator will not reveal the identity of the Whistleblower except:

- where the Investigator is under a legal obligation to do so
- where the information is already in the public domain
- on a strictly confidential basis to a professionally qualified lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or
- where it is essential that the Whistleblower provides evidence at a disciplinary hearing or other proceedings

7.2 Confidentiality should be maintained during all stages of the Whistleblowing Procedure. This is to be done by ensuring that only people who need to know have access to the details of the case. Other staff should not normally be informed of a disciplinary process unless they are required to be interviewed as part of that process and/or there is an effect on day to day working relationships. If it is considered necessary to inform other staff then no details of the case should normally be discussed. In this situation the views of the affected individuals should be sought in relation to the information which is conveyed to other staff.

7.3 All records relating to the procedure must be marked private and confidential and kept and used securely in accordance the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

7.4 All staff involved in the Whistleblowing Procedure should ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times. A breach of this requirement may lead to disciplinary action.

8. FALSE OR MALICIOUS ACCUSATIONS

8.1 Deliberately false or malicious accusations made by a Whistleblower will be dealt with under the School's disciplinary procedure.

9. ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

9.1 This policy encourages workers to put their name to their allegation whenever possible.

9.2 Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the School. In exercising such discretion, the following factors will be taken into account:

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

10. HARRASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

10.1 Any employee who victimises or harasses a member of staff as a result of them having raised a concern will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Policy.

11. EXTERNAL BODIES / SOURCES

11.1 No-one should disclose to an external source without first going through the internal procedure without compelling reasons. Compelling reasons could be the involvement of the Local Partnership Committee as a whole.

11.2 Workers making disclosures to prescribed bodies have their employment rights protected.

11.3 If the Whistleblower does take their concerns outside the School, they should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information. Whistleblowers should not take concerns directly to the media. If the School believes that its reputation has been damaged by unfounded allegations in the public domain it reserves the right to take action.

*See **Appendix 1** for further information about external bodies.*

12. PROMOTION, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

12.1 The Trust will share this Policy with all its workers and review this policy regularly and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

13. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES / GUIDANCE

Allegations of Abuse Guidance (for safeguarding related concerns)
Complaints Procedure
Disciplinary Policy and Guidance
Grievance Policy and Guidance

All our policies and guidance can be found at
www.supportservicesforeducaton.co.ukwww.supportservicesforeducaton.co.uk

APPENDIX 1

External Sources

The external sources ('prescribed bodies') which could be used include:

- The Local Authority (this would be normally be the first point of contact if someone in a local authority school felt that they should report to someone outside the school) The whistleblowing contact for schools in North Somerset Local Authority is the Director of People and Communities
- Member of Parliament
- Relevant professional body or regulatory organisation (for example Ofsted / Ofqal, National Audit Office, Health and Safety Executive)
- Police – for concerns of criminal behaviour

For further information about prescribed bodies, please see the list of prescribed bodies on the GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk .

Individuals may choose to consult with their trade union or Protect (the leading authority on public interest whistleblowing).

The contact details of Protect are:

The Green House
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA

Website: Protect - Speak up stop harm (protect-advice.org.uk)

Tel: 020 3117 2520 (Advice Line)

E-mail: use the form on the following webpage Contact our Advice Line - Protect - Speak up stop harm (protect-advice.org.uk)