



Kings Academy Trust

Believe • Achieve • Succeed

Whistleblowing Policy

Our Mission, Vision & Values

Our mission is to **work with those who need us the most.**

Our vision is to **create a blended Trust that includes SEND academies, mainstream primary and PRUs and to create hubs that drive Academy improvement.**

Our values are:

- To be inclusive
- To provide nurturing/caring environments
 - For children to feel safe
- To work with integrity and a strong moral compass

To have the highest expectations and standards

Trust Whistleblowing Contacts

Nominated Staff Contact: Mrs M Navin

Nominated Trustee: Mrs J Collinson

Date of Issue: September 2020

Date of Last Review: September 2026

Date of Next Review: September 2027

Safeguarding concerns

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice and potential failures within the safeguarding arrangements of any Academy within Kings Academy Trust.

Safeguarding concerns about a child should ordinarily be reported immediately through the Academy's safeguarding procedures to the DSL or DDSL.

Where a member of staff has concerns about safeguarding practice, believes a concern is not being appropriately addressed, or feels unable to raise the matter through normal internal safeguarding routes, they should use this Whistleblowing Policy. Staff may also contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 0280285, where appropriate.

For more details/information on Safeguarding refer to the following documents:

- KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION 2026
- WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2026
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in educational settings.
- The Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies.

Introduction

Openness, probity and accountability are vital components of public service. Employees and other workers who discover lapses in these areas are encouraged to come forward and disclose their concerns to someone who can be Trusted to take action. This process is known as 'whistle-blowing'. The Trust will take reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those who need to know, or where disclosure is required by law or safeguarding obligations

For the purposes of this policy, references to the Headteacher include Executive Headteachers and Heads of School, where applicable.

This policy applies to employees, workers, agency staff and others working on behalf of the Trust and those working in the Academy or on Academy premises. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Academy on their own premises.

The policy has been introduced to:

- allow workers to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- identify avenues for workers to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- ensure that workers receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied;
- reassure workers that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have reasonable belief that there is malpractice or impropriety

Examples of areas covered

This policy is intended to cover areas of concern such as the following:

- conduct which may be a criminal offence;
- extremism- radicalisation;
- failure to comply with a legal obligation;
- Miscarriage of Justice
- Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing
- dangerous procedures endangering the health and safety and welfare of pupils and workers and of other persons using the Academy buildings or site;
- possible damage to the environment;
- the unauthorised use of public funds including action which may breach financial regulations;
- fraud, bribery and corruption;
- sexual, mental or physical abuse of pupils;
- breach of procedures and regulations set by examination boards/awarding bodies.
- sexual harassment, including concerns that the Trust has failed to comply with its statutory duties relating to the prevention of sexual harassment or third-party harassment.

A concern relating solely to an individual's own employment circumstances will normally be dealt with through the Trust's grievance, dignity at work or other appropriate employment procedure. However, a concern may fall within this Whistleblowing Policy where the individual reasonably believes the matter is in the public interest and involves relevant wrongdoing.

IMPORTANT : Extremism and Radicalisation

It is essential to report situations regarding activities that could possibly lead to forms of extremism and radicalisation. We all need to look out for unusual patterns in behaviour/attendance. When delivering lessons, we look out for indicators for example, inappropriate discussions/ choice of images etc. Report any concerns immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Raising Concerns

As a first step you should normally raise concerns, either verbally or in writing, with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher has created the concern or has failed to take appropriate action the Chair of the Academy's governing body should be notified. Where the concern involves the Headteacher, where the employee feels unable to raise the matter with the Headteacher, or where the concern has not been appropriately addressed, it may be raised directly with the Trust's Nominated Staff Whistleblowing Contact, the CEO, or the Nominated Trustee. Where the concern relates to the CEO, it should be raised with the Nominated Trustee or Chair of the Trust Board.

- Any concern should be raised at the earliest opportunity possible. As much information as possible should be supplied, including: dates, times and names.
- Although you will not be expected to provide conclusive proof of the allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that you have reasonable grounds for your concern.
- If you make an allegation but it is not confirmed by a subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against you.

- Knowingly making a false allegation or deliberately providing false information may be dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary procedures. A concern which is raised reasonably but is subsequently unsubstantiated will not result in disciplinary action.
- You may invite your trade union/professional association representative or a workplace colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.
- Anonymous concerns will be considered, although anonymity may make the concern more difficult to investigate and may limit the feedback that can be provided

How the Trust/Academy will respond

The assessment will be made by the person receiving the concern or another appropriately independent person. They will then determine whether the concerns which have been raised warrant any action on the part of the Academy. Such an assessment may include a preliminary investigation. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. Where the concerns do warrant further action, the matter will be referred to an appropriate person who will follow the appropriate procedure. Anyone implicated in the concern will **not participate in deciding how it is investigated**

Disciplinary investigation;

- referral to Department for Education (DfE) In these circumstances, the DfE will assess whether all Academy processes have been applied and that the Assessor has done everything possible to resolve the issue. If this is not the case, the DfE will refer the matter back to the Assessor
- informing the police;
- referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection (LADO).

Within five working days the person with whom the concern has been raised will write to the worker: acknowledging that the concern has been received;

- indicating how the Academy proposes to deal with the matter;
- informing whether further investigations will take place and if not why not;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- supplying information on staff support mechanisms, which may include confidential counselling.

The amount of contact between the person considering the issues and the worker will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the Academy will seek further information from the worker. Any meeting arranged for these purposes may be offsite, if requested. The Academy accepts that all workers need to be assured that the matters will be properly addressed. Subject to legal constraints, workers who have raised the concern will be informed of the outcomes of any investigation, to an extent which does not prejudice the right to confidentiality of others concerned.

Protection for whistle-blowers

Workers who make a qualifying protected disclosure are protected by the Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and subsequent legislation. A worker does not need to prove that wrongdoing has occurred. They must reasonably believe that the information disclosed is in the public interest and tends to show that relevant wrongdoing has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.

The Trust will not tolerate any victimisation, harassment, dismissal or other detriment towards an individual because they have raised a protected disclosure. A concern that is raised reasonably but is subsequently found to be mistaken or unsubstantiated will not result in disciplinary action against the person who raised it.

Workers are encouraged to raise concerns through the Trust's internal procedure wherever appropriate. However, the law also provides protection in specified circumstances for disclosures made to prescribed persons or bodies and, in more limited circumstances, other external disclosures.

What you should do if your concern is not addressed

A worker is encouraged to use the Trust's internal whistleblowing arrangements wherever appropriate. However, there may be circumstances in which a worker considers it necessary to raise their concern externally.

A worker may make a disclosure to an appropriate **prescribed person or body** where they reasonably believe that the matter falls within that body's remit and that the information disclosed and any allegation contained within it are substantially true.

Disclosure to other external parties, such as the media, is protected only in more limited circumstances and is subject to additional statutory conditions. Anyone considering making such a disclosure may wish to seek independent advice from their trade union, Acas, Protect or a legal adviser.

Examples of relevant external bodies are provided below.

Nature of concern	Relevant external body
Child Protection /Criminal activity Police /Extremism Radicalisation Sexual Exploitation	Police / LA Children's Services ('The Bridge/MASH team)
Exam malpractice	Local authority assessment coordinator The awarding body Ofqual
Environmental damage	Environment Agency
Breach of governance regulations	Department for Education
Financial Irregularities	Department for Education
Serious misconduct of a teacher	The Teaching Regulation Agency
Health and Safety	Health and Safety Executive
Income Tax / VAT	HMRC
Building regulations	Building Safety Regulator

Depending on the circumstances, other appropriate bodies may include:

- Ofsted;

- The Secretary of State,
- Member of Parliament;
- National Audit Office;
- Health and Safety Executive;

You may also seek confidential external advice from:

- your trade union or professional association
- citizens advice
- Acas
- Protect

SAFEGUARDING CONNECTING POLICIES

All safeguarding and related policies are available on individual Academy websites within Kings Academy Trust, and on the Trust's central website at <https://www.kingsAcademyTrust.org/>