

Whistleblowing Policy

Version 2.0

1. Policy Statement

Learn with Confidence (LwC) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and ethical conduct. Staff must feel able to raise concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practice, or breaches of professional standards without fear of reprisal.

"This Whistleblowing Policy provides a framework for staff to disclose concerns about suspected wrongdoing or malpractice in a safe, confidential, and responsible manner."

Whistleblowing is an essential part of safeguarding culture. Staff must raise concerns if they believe:

- A child's safety or wellbeing is at risk
- Safeguarding procedures are not being followed
- Professional boundaries are being breached
- Trauma-informed practice is not being upheld
- Digital or online-safety procedures are being ignored
- Leadership is not responding appropriately to concerns

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone representing LwC.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Encourage staff to report concerns early
- Provide a clear, safe procedure for raising concerns
- Protect whistleblowers from victimisation or detriment
- Ensure concerns are investigated promptly and fairly
- Strengthen LwC's safeguarding culture

3. Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information relating to suspected:

- Wrongdoing
- Illegal activity
- Unsafe practice
- Breaches of safeguarding
- Breaches of professional conduct
- Serious breaches of trauma-informed practice
- Digital or online-safety violations
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

Whistleblowing applies when staff believe normal management routes may not address the concern adequately.

It is distinct from:

- **Grievances** (personal employment issues)
- **Low-level concerns** (minor staff-conduct issues that do not meet LADO threshold)

Low-level concerns should be reported to the DSL. Whistleblowing should be used when concerns are serious, repeated, or ignored.

4. Types of Concern Covered

Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

4.1 Safeguarding Concerns

- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures
- Failure to report disclosures
- Unsafe one-to-one practice
- Breaches of professional boundaries
- Ignoring trauma-informed practice
- Unsafe handling of disclosures
- Failure to escalate concerns appropriately

4.2 Professional Conduct Concerns

- Bullying, harassment, discrimination
- Breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct
- Inappropriate behaviour towards learners or families
- Misuse of authority or position

4.3 Digital & Online Safety Concerns

- Breaches of the Online Safety Policy
- Use of personal devices or accounts with learners
- Unsafe digital communication
- AI-related risks (deepfakes, grooming, misinformation)
- Inappropriate use of technology

4.4 Organisational Concerns

- Fraud or financial irregularity
- Criminal activity
- Health and safety risks
- Environmental harm
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

"Staff have the right to refuse to carry out instructions that would result in any of these activities without fear of disciplinary action."

5. Raising a Concern

5.1 Internal Reporting (Preferred Route)

Staff should report concerns to:

Learn with Confidence
5 King Court, Harwood Road, Horsham, RH13 5UR
Email: kat.perry@learnwithconfidence.co.uk
Tel: 01403 586029
learnwithconfidence.co.uk

1. **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – Kat Perry
2. **Deputy DSLs** – Elektra Robinson, Gayle Voller, Heather Jones
3. **Assistant Manager** – Heather Jones
4. **Director** – Kat Perry (if concern relates to safeguarding or senior staff)
5. **Any other member of staff if the above are deemed inappropriate**

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Written concerns should include:

- Nature of the concern
- Dates, times, locations
- Names of individuals involved
- Any evidence available

Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible.

5.2 Anonymous Reporting

Anonymous concerns are accepted and will be investigated as far as possible.

5.3 External Reporting

If staff feel unable to raise concerns internally, they may contact:

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline Tel: 0800 028 0285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing> ([gov.uk in Bing](#))

Staff may also report safeguarding concerns directly to:

- **West Sussex MASH**
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**
- **Police (999 or 101)**

6. Procedure

6.1 Receipt of Concern

The manager or DSL will:

- Acknowledge receipt promptly
- Assess whether the concern is whistleblowing, safeguarding, or grievance
- Ensure immediate safety measures if required

6.2 Investigation

Investigations will be:

- Fair
- Confidential
- Timely
- Conducted by an appropriate manager or independent party

6.3 Outcome

The whistleblower will be informed of:

- Whether the concern was substantiated
- Any action taken (where appropriate)
- Any further steps required

Corrective or disciplinary action will be taken if wrongdoing is confirmed.

7. Protection for Whistleblowers

LwC protects whistleblowers by ensuring:

- No reprisal, harassment, or victimisation
- Confidentiality of identity wherever possible
- Support from management
- Right to escalate externally if internal routes fail
- Protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA)

Malicious or knowingly false allegations may result in disciplinary action.

8. Confidentiality & Record-Keeping

All concerns and investigations will be:

- Treated confidentially
- Recorded securely
- Accessible only to authorised personnel
- Retained in line with GDPR and safeguarding requirements

9. Roles & Responsibilities

All Staff

- Raise concerns promptly
- Follow professional curiosity
- Uphold trauma-informed practice
- Report breaches of safeguarding, online safety, or conduct

Line Managers / DSL

- Receive and assess concerns
- Escalate appropriately
- Ensure whistleblower protection

Director / Assistant Manager

- Oversee investigations
- Ensure policy compliance
- Maintain organisational integrity

10. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Safeguarding guidance changes
- Organisational procedures change

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Feedback from staff informs ongoing improvement.

Version Control			
Version No.	Date	Author	Notes
1.0	21 June 2022	K Perry	
1.1	7 th October 2024	K Perry	Initial Draft
1.2	01.09.2025	KP	
1.3	5.9.26	KP	Amended