Whistleblowing

Version: **May 2026**	
Ratified by the Board of Trustees	
Signed by the Board of Trustees	**Date: May 2026**
To be reviewed annually	**Date: May 2027**

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1. Introduction

1.1. Thrive Education Partnership are committed to conducting business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards.

1.2. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.

1.3. The aims of this policy are:

a) To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing, including safeguarding concerns about children, as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

b) To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.

c) To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

1.4. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

1.5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies listed throughout.

All staff will receive a copy of this policy at induction and will be reminded of whistleblowing procedures as part of annual safeguarding training.

1.6. Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the organisation, including senior managers, teachers, officers, directors, support staff, grounds staff, employees, consultants, contractors, PGCE students, newly qualified teachers, term-time, part-time and fixed-term workers, casual and agency staff and volunteers and anyone else working for or providing services to a Trust School (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

2. What is whistleblowing?

2.1. Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

a) criminal activity, (for example, fraud, corruption of theft has been or is likely to be committed)

b) miscarriages of justice;

c) danger to health and safety to staff and/or pupils;

d) damage to the environment;

e) failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;

f) A disclosure that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur

g) bribery;

h) financial fraud or mismanagement;

i) negligence;

j) breach of our internal policies and procedures;

k) conduct likely to damage our reputation;

l) unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;

m) where a child is or you suspect a child is at risk of harm, or may have been harmed **(see also section 2.2 and the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy)**;

n) deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

2.2. Staff should follow the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy when they have concerns about a child. However, if a staff member has concerns about how safeguarding is being managed in the school, or about the conduct of colleagues in relation to safeguarding, this should be raised under this Whistleblowing Policy. Staff can also use this policy if they feel unable to raise safeguarding concerns through normal channels.

2.3. A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy and we will seek to agree with you which policy the matter being reported will be dealt with. This includes concerns about safeguarding practices or how safeguarding concerns are being managed in the school or Trust.

2.4. This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at

work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy or preventing sexual harassment at work policy, as appropriate.

2.5. If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy, you should seek advice from the Headteacher, or contact Protect for independent guidance. Contact details are at the end of this policy.

3. Raising a whistleblowing concern

3.1. We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your Headteacher or line manager (for central team staff). You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. For school-based concerns, your Headteacher may refer the matter to the CEO. For Trust-wide concerns, you should raise these directly with the CEO. Alternatively, you may raise a whistleblowing concern with Trustee, Janet Smith: via email jangregory@icloud.com

3.2. A written and oral complaint should detail the background and history of the concern, (giving dates) and the reason why they are concerned about the satiation.

3.3. However, where the matter is more serious (such as concerns about safeguarding practices, financial irregularities, or matters affecting multiple schools in the Trust), or you feel that your Headteacher has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact the CEO. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

3.4. What is NOT whistleblowing?

This policy should not be used for complaints about your personal employment circumstances. These should be raised under the Grievance Procedure. Examples include:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Workload concerns
- Interpersonal conflicts with colleagues
- Performance management processes

However, if your personal concern also involves wrongdoing that affects others or the organisation, you may raise it under this policy.

3.5. If your concern is regarding the CEO, you may contact the Chair of Trustees. If your concern relates to safeguarding and involves the CEO

or Chair of Trustees, you should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

3.6. We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern.

3.7. We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

3.8. NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

If you have concerns about safeguarding practices at the Trust or in any of our schools, and feel unable to raise these internally, you can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:

Telephone 0800 028 0285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The line is available from:

8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday

9:00 am to 6:00pm weekends

This is a statutory service for professionals who have concerns about how safeguarding is being handled in their organisation.

3.9. Staff induction

All staff will receive information about this Whistleblowing Policy as part of their induction, in line with our Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct).

This will include:

- How to raise concerns about safeguarding practices
- Contact details for the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line
- Protection available to whistleblowers
- The difference between raising a concern about a child (safeguarding) and raising a concern about safeguarding practices (whistleblowing).

3.10. Roles and responsibilities:

Headteachers: Receive and investigate whistleblowing concerns at school level; escalate to CEO where appropriate

CEO: Receives concerns about Headteachers or Trust-wide matters; oversees investigations; reports to Board of Trustees

Chair of Trustees: Receives concerns about the CEO; ensures appropriate investigation

Local Governing Bodies: May be informed of whistleblowing concerns affecting their school (subject to confidentiality)

Board of Trustees: Has overall responsibility for the effectiveness of whistleblowing arrangements across the Trust

4. Confidentiality

4.1. We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

4.2. Anonymous disclosures are not usually investigated but the Trust will exercise its' discretion whether to investigate in these circumstances. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible and have been made in good faith. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to their Headteacher or one of the other contact points and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality.

4.3. **School-Level vs Trust-Level Concerns**

Raise with your Headteacher if the concern:

- Relates to practices within your school only
- Involves staff at your school (excluding the Headteacher)
- Can be resolved at school level

Raise directly with the CEO if the concern:

- Affects multiple schools in the Trust
- Relates to Trust-wide policies or practices
- Involves your Headteacher
- Relates to financial management at Trust level
- Concerns governance or Board decisions

- You work in the central Trust team

5. External disclosures

5.1. The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

5.2. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It is not appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

5.3. Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a parent, carer, pupil, external supplier or service provider. The law allows you to raise a concern in good faith with a third party, where you reasonably believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your Headteacher or CEO for guidance.

5.4. For concerns about safeguarding practices that have not been adequately addressed, you may contact:

- The Regional Schools Commissioner (for academy-related concerns)

  Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/schools-commissioners

- Ofsted (if concerns relate to welfare of children)

  Telephone: 0300 123 1231

  Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (for concerns about financial management or governance)

  Telephone: 0370 000 2288

  Email: ESFA.enquiries@education.gov.uk

For other types of concerns, refer to the list of prescribed persons on the Protect website or contact their helpline for advice.

6. Investigation and outcome

6.1. Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

6.2. In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

6.3. We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

6.4. Where appropriate, the matters raised may be referred to the police, an external regulatory body, or form the subject of an independent enquiry.

6.5. If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action. Employees may also be subject to disciplinary action if they disclose confidential information externally in some circumstances.

7. If you are not satisfied

7.1. While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.

7.2. If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with the CEO.

7.3. In the event that the CEO has handled your concern, you may raise with the Chair of Trustees.

7.4. If you remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with the Chair of Trustees, you may contact one of the external bodies listed within this

policy, or seek advice from Protect or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

8. Protection and support for whistleblowers

8.1. It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

8.2. Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment or informal pressure connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform your Headteacher immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

8.3. Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

8.4. Staff who raise concerns under this policy can access support through

- Our Employee Assistance Program; Schools Advisory Service (SAS Counselling)

  01773 814402

  counselling@uk-sas.co.uk

- Education Support Partnership (free confidential helpline for education staff)

  Telephone: 08000 562 561

  Text: 07909 341229

  Email: support@educationsupport.org.uk

  Available 24/7

- Protect (for advice on whistleblowing concerns)

  Helpline: 020 3117 2520

8.5. The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. No member of staff will be penalised for raising a genuine safeguarding concern, even if it later proves to be unfounded, provided the concern was raised in good faith.

8.6. Staff have a professional duty to report safeguarding concerns, and the Trust will support staff who do so in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

9. Responsibility for the success of this policy

9.1. Thrive Education Partnership has overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

9.2. All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the Headteacher.

10. Flowchart of the Whistleblowing process

Do you suspect wrongdoing or dangers at work?

Is the disclosure regarding:

- A criminal activity
- A miscarriage of justice
- An act creating risk to health and safety
- An act causing damage to the environment
- A breach of other legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirement
- Bribery
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Negligence
- Breach of internal policies and procedures
- Conduct likely to damage our reputation
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Where a child is or you suspect a child is at risk of harm or may have been harmed
- Concealment of any of the above

No →

- Refer to relevant policy, e.g. grievance policy
- Discuss with line manager or Head, as appropriate
- Discuss with HR, as appropriate

Yes ↓

Does this relate to safeguarding?

yes →

Is this concern about a child?

Follow Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Is this a concern about safeguarding PRACTICES or how colleagues handle safeguarding?

Continue with Whistleblowing Policy

No ↓

Do you believe your head teacher to be involved in the wrongdoing, or do you have any other reason for not raising with your head teacher?

yes →

Contact the CEO if the matter is more serious, or you feel the headteacher has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason. CEO contact details are set out at the end of this policy

If your concern relates to safeguarding and involves the CEO or Chair of Trustees, you should contact the:

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or;

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

No ↓

Raise your concerns with your head teacher

Next steps →

- We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern, we will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting, we will also give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter
- We will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation, we will inform you of the outcome of our assessment, you may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information
- We may appoint an Investigating Officer or team of investigators to investigate your concerns, the investigators may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing
- Feedback on timings and the progress of the investigation will be provided to you where possible and appropriate
- Where appropriate, the matters raised may be referred to the police, an external regulatory body, or form the subject of an independent enquiry

Next steps ↓

Are you satisfied that your concerns have been fully investigated?

yes →

No further action is required from you. Appropriate action will be taken to make the necessary improvements.

No ↓

If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with the CEO. In the event the CEO has handled your concern, you may raise it with the Chair of Trustees.

11. Appendix A – Contacts

Calthorpe Academy:	Mounir Meghalsi (Head Teacher)
	Calthorpe Academy Darwin St Highgate Birmingham B12 0TP Email: m.meghalsi@calthorpe.thrive.ac
Kingsbury Academy:	Amjid Zaman (Head Teacher)
	Kingsbury Academy Kingsbury Road Coundon Coventry CV6 1PJ Email: a.zaman@kingsbury.thrive.ac
The Warwickshire Academy	Paul Hostead (Head Teacher)
	The Warwickshire Academy Wheelwright Lane Coventry CV7 9RA Email: p.hostead@wa.thrive.ac
Corley Academy	Mark White (Head Teacher)
	Corley Academy Church Lane Corley CV7 8AZ Email: m.white@corley.thrive.ac
Mary Elliot Academy	Rebecca Davies (Head Teacher)
	Leamore Lane Walsall WS2 7NR Email: rdavies@mary-elliot.walsall.sch.uk
Baginton Fields Academy	Vikki King (Head Teacher)
	Sedgemoor Road

	Coventry West Midlands CV3 4EA Email: v.king@bagintonfields.thrive.ac
Thrive CEO:	Richard Chapman Thrive Education Partnership 18-19 Bennetts Hill Birmingham B2 5QJ Email: r.chapman@thrive.ac
Chair of the Trust:	Lucy Bennett Thrive Education Partnership 18-19 Bennetts Hill Birmingham B2 5QJ E-mail: l.bennett@thrive.ac
Education Support Partnership (Free confidential helpline for education staff)	Telephone: 08000 562 561 Text: 07909 341229 Email: support@educationsupport.org.uk Available 24/7
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (For safeguarding concerns)	Helpline: 0800 028 0285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk Available: 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm weekends
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity - formerly Public Concern at Work)	(Independent whistleblowing charity) Helpline: 020 3117 2520 Email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk"
Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)	Birmingham LADO Telephone: 0121 675 1669 Email: LADO@birmingham.gov.uk Coventry LADO Telephone: 024 7697 5000

	Email: LADO@coventry.gov.uk Walsall LADO Telephone: 01922 654 170 Email: LADO@walsall.gov.uk
Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Equality Advisory Support Service	Telephone – 0808 800 0082 http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/ask Website: Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) - GOV.UK

12. Changes

Description	Date	Page	Section
Inclusion of all HT's	July 23	8	11
Addition of Chair of Trustees			4.4
Addition of DFE			6.4
Addition of Chair of Trustees			8.3
Addition of DFE	January 24	6	6.4
Flowchart	January 24	8	11
KCSIE 2025 compliance (safeguarding, NSPCC line, staff induction, LADO routes)	May 2026	3, 4, 5, 7	3, 4, 5, 7 | 1.3, 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 9.5, 9.6
MAT governance clarification (escalation routes, roles, school vs Trust-level, what is NOT whistleblowing)	May 2026	4-5	4, 5 | 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.9, 4.10, 5.3
External disclosure updates (Protect rebrand, regulators, NSPCC contacts)	May 2026	6-7, 9-10	6.2, 6.4, 8.4, Appendix A
Flowchart updates	May 2026	6-8	11

Update of Headteachers and contact details	May 2026	13-14	Appendix A
Sexual Harassment	June 26	2.1 f	4
Sexual Harassment	June 26	2.4	5
EHRC	June 26	11	15
Replaced Trustee contact for Whistleblowing	October 26	5	3.1