



Whistleblowing (Speak Up) Policy and Procedure

Waldorf Cambridge

Registered charity number: 1028116 | Companies House number: 028669850

Reviewed: October 2026 | Next review: September 2027

Endorsement

Full endorsement is given to this policy by:

Name: Joel Chalfen (interim Safeguarding Trustee)

Position: Trustee with Safeguarding responsibility

Pending Board re-approval, Michaelmas Term 2026

1. Purpose and scope

Waldorf Cambridge is committed to conducting its work with integrity and transparency. We encourage a culture where staff and workers can raise genuine concerns early, in the public interest, without fear of detriment. This policy sets out:

- how to raise a whistleblowing concern;
- how we will respond;
- protections and support for those who speak up.

Who is covered: all workers (employees, agency staff, trainees, secondees, casual workers, contractors) and those working in our premises (e.g., supply/agency staff). While volunteers and trustees may not have statutory whistleblowing protection in law, we will apply this policy to them and take steps to prevent any unfair treatment when concerns are raised in the public interest.

When to use this policy: when you reasonably believe there is wrongdoing, risk or malpractice that is in the public interest. Use the Grievance Policy for personal employment concerns.

2. What is whistleblowing?

A “whistleblowing” (protected) disclosure is information you reasonably believe tends to show one or more of the following in the public interest:

- criminal offence;
- failure to comply with a legal obligation;

- miscarriage of justice;
- danger to health and safety;
- damage to the environment;
- deliberate concealment of any of the above;
- sexual harassment of a worker - unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (an explicit, standalone category of protected disclosure since the Employment Rights Act 2025, s.23, in force from 6 April 2026);
- safeguarding concerns, including poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime.

Examples include fraud or financial mismanagement; unsafe practice that risks harm to pupils; breaches of safeguarding procedures; data protection breaches; systemic bullying/harassment affecting others; serious conflicts of interest; unauthorised disclosure of confidential information; and deliberate covering up of wrongdoing.

3. Our commitment and protections

- No victimisation: No one will suffer dismissal, disciplinary action, or other detriment for raising a genuine concern under this policy. Retaliation will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.
- Confidentiality: We will keep your identity confidential as far as reasonably possible. If we need to share it (for example with the LADO, police or a regulator), we will discuss this with you where we can.
- Anonymous disclosures: Will be considered where possible, though investigation and feedback may be limited.
- Support: You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meeting. Independent advice is available (see Appendix B and C).
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may result in disciplinary action.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- All workers and volunteers: speak up promptly about concerns in the public interest; keep information confidential; co-operate with any investigation.
- Line managers: receive concerns, ensure they are logged and escalated appropriately; preserve confidentiality; ensure no victimisation.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Charlotte Burdett - first point of contact for safeguarding concerns and poor/unsafe practice.
- Teaching & Learning Lead: Tina Hobday - available for advice if scope is unclear.
- Pastoral Lead: Charlotte Burdett - available for advice if scope is unclear.
- Link Trustee (Safeguarding): Anya Kingsley - alternative contact where the concern involves leadership.

- Chair of Trustees: Richard Nobles - final escalation point for any unresolved concerns.
- Board of Trustees receives anonymised reports and ensures policy effectiveness.

Note: Where the concern is an allegation against an adult who works or volunteers at the setting - including trainee teachers, supply staff and staff employed by a contractor or agency, who are managed in the same way under KCSIE 2026 - the recipient must consider at the point of disclosure whether a LADO referral is appropriate. The LADO must in any event be contacted within one working day and before any internal investigation (see section 8 and Appendix D).

5. How to raise a concern (internal route)

You can raise your concern verbally or in writing. Include: what happened, when and where, who was involved, why you are concerned, and any evidence. If you believe a child is at immediate risk, contact Children's Services or the police (999) first and then inform the DSL.

- Safeguarding/child welfare - Contact the DSL (Charlotte Burdett). If the concern involves the DSL or you believe it has not been addressed, go to the Teaching & Learning Lead (Tina Hobday), then the Link Trustee (Joel Chalfen) or Chair (Richard Nobles). If the concern is about an adult's conduct towards a child, follow section 8 (LADO referral).
- All other whistleblowing concerns (e.g., fraud, health & safety, data protection, serious malpractice) - Raise with your line manager. If not appropriate, raise with the Chair (Richard Nobles).
- Record-keeping - The recipient will make a confidential record and pass it to the DWO (unless the case clearly belongs to the DSL/LADO route). You will receive a written summary and a high-level plan for next steps where appropriate.

6. Investigation and outcome

- We will make an initial assessment of the concern and decide on the form of investigation. This may be managed internally or, where appropriate, by an external investigator.
- We aim to update you on progress where we can, mindful of confidentiality and legal constraints.
- Outcomes may include: no case to answer; management action; referral to the LADO, police or regulator; disciplinary action; or system/policy changes.
- You must keep the process and any information obtained strictly confidential.

7. Whistleblowing vs. personal grievance

Use the Grievance Policy for concerns about your own employment (e.g., personal bullying, terms and conditions), unless the issue is also a matter of wider public interest. If unsure, seek advice from Protect (Appendix C) or HR.

8. Allegations against adults who work or volunteer in the setting (LADO)

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

Then do not investigate internally. As soon as a concern is reported, the recipient must consider whether a LADO referral is appropriate - this should not wait for further information-gathering. Ensure the immediate safety of the child(ren) and contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. This applies equally to allegations against trainee teachers, supply staff and staff employed by a contractor or agency (KCSIE 2026). Follow any advice about suspension and notifications (see Appendix D for local contacts). We will co-operate with statutory agencies and only resume any internal process when advised it will not jeopardise external enquiries.

9. External disclosures (prescribed persons)

We encourage staff to raise concerns internally first. However, you may make a disclosure to a relevant prescribed person or body (see Appendix B) if you reasonably believe the information is substantially true and is within that body's remit. You can also seek confidential advice from Protect or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (Appendix C). If you are a charity worker or volunteer and your concern is about the proper administration of the charity, you can report to the Charity Commission (Appendix B).

10. Data protection and confidentiality

We will process personal data gathered under this policy in line with data protection law and our Data Protection Policy. We will keep records securely and only as long as necessary.

11. Training, awareness and monitoring

- This policy is included in induction and annual safeguarding training.
- Leaders will promote a speak-up culture, including how to escalate concerns beyond line management.
- The DWO collates anonymised monitoring information for the Board at least annually: number and types of concerns raised; actions taken; referrals to external bodies.
- The Board reviews this policy annually and after any significant legislative or guidance change.

12. Review and approval

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if required by changes in law or statutory guidance. This review (October 2026) updates the policy to reflect KCSIE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), and the Employment Rights Act 2025.

Approved by the Board on: (date to be inserted on Board approval, Michaelmas Term 2026)

Signed (Chair of Trustees, Joel Chalfen): _____

Appendices (statutory framework, contacts & resources)

Appendix A - Legal and statutory guidance summary (England)

A1. Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (inserting section 43B and related provisions into the Employment Rights Act 1996) - Provides employment protections for workers who make qualifying disclosures. Amended by section 23 of the Employment Rights Act 2025, which adds sexual harassment as an explicit category of protected disclosure, in force from 6 April 2026. Latest consolidation checked: October 2026.

A2. Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) (Amendment) Order 2025 (SI 2025/604, commenced 26 June 2025), as further amended by the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) (Amendment) Order 2026 (SI 2026/478, in force 2 June 2026) - Updates the official list of prescribed persons to whom workers may disclose concerns externally.

A3. Department for Education - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 - Statutory guidance effective 1 September 2026, superseding KCSIE 2025; requires a strong whistleblowing culture and clear routes beyond the school (e.g., NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line), and clarifies that allegations against trainee teachers, supply staff and agency/contracted staff are handled in the same way as allegations against directly employed staff, with LADO referral considered as soon as a concern is raised.

A4. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026, published 18 March 2026, superseding the December 2023 edition) - Statutory multi-agency guidance framing LADO processes for allegations against adults who work with children.

A5. Department for Education - Blowing the whistle to the Department for Education - Departmental policy/guidance; last checked October 2026.

A6. Ofsted - Sharing concerns/whistleblowing about children's social care services - Guidance on raising concerns to Ofsted as a prescribed person for children's social care (and certain education matters).

A7. Charity Commission - Report serious wrongdoing at a charity - Regulator guidance and reporting route to the prescribed person for the proper administration of charities.

A8. ACAS - Whistleblowing at work - Non-statutory best-practice guidance on the whistleblowing framework and fair handling.

Appendix B - Prescribed persons and regulators relevant to Waldorf Cambridge

Use the most current GOV.UK list: Whistleblowing: list of prescribed people and bodies (GOV.UK list last updated 15 September 2026; checked October 2026).

- Secretary of State for Education (Department for Education) - education matters. Contact: 0370 000 2288; www.gov.uk/contact-dfe.
- Ofsted (HMCI) - regulation/inspection of children's social care; certain education matters. Contact: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk; 0300 123 3155.
- NSPCC - child welfare and protection. Contact: help@nspcc.org.uk; 0800 028 0285.
- Charity Commission for England and Wales - proper administration of charities and funds. Contact: whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk.
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) - health and safety at work. Contact: 0300 003 1647; www.hse.gov.uk/contact/tell-us-about-a-health-and-safety-issue.htm.
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) - data protection / FOI. Contact: 0303 123 1113; icocasework@ico.org.uk; www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/protection-for-whistleblowers-guidance/.
- A legal adviser or an MP (disclosure while obtaining legal advice or to an MP).

Appendix C - Independent advice and support

- Protect (the UK whistleblowing charity) - free, confidential advice for workers. Advice line: 020 3117 2520; www.protect-advice.org.uk.
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line - for concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in any organisation. Phone: 0800 028 0285; Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
- ACAS - information and advice on employment rights and processes (including distinguishing whistleblowing from grievances). www.acas.org.uk/whistleblowing-at-work.

Appendix D - Local safeguarding contacts (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough)

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk | Office: 01223 727 967 | Emergency Duty Team (out of hours): 01733 234 724
- Children's Social Care (Mon–Fri): 0345 045 5203
- Police (non-emergency): 101 | Emergency: 999
- Check the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership website for updates before making contact.

Appendix E - Process map (at-a-glance)

- Identify concern → Is a child at immediate risk? • Yes → Contact Children's Services / Police (999) → inform DSL. • No → step 2.
- Safeguarding/poor or unsafe practice? • Yes → Contact DSL (Charlotte Burdett) → if allegation against adult → contact LADO within 1 working day.
- No / not sure → Raise with line manager or DWO.
- If unresolved or not appropriate to raise internally → consider external disclosure to a prescribed person (Appendix B) and/or seek advice (Appendix C).
- Investigation & outcome → We will assess, investigate fairly, keep records securely, and protect you from detriment.

Appendix F - Key terms (plain English)

- Worker: anyone who works for us under a contract of employment or other contract to perform work or services (includes agency staff and contractors but excludes most volunteers).
- Public interest: the concern affects others (e.g., pupils, the public, the charity) rather than being a purely personal issue.
- Prescribed person: a regulator/body designated in law to receive whistleblowing disclosures.

Document control

- Policy owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Safeguarding owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Approval: Board of Trustees
- Review cycle: Annual (or earlier if law or statutory guidance changes)