



Whistleblowing Policy

Review Summary	
Adopted:	January 2016
Review Cycle:	Bi-annual
Last Review:	June 2021
Next Review:	June 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust (the Trust) is committed to doing things right with the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. In line with that commitment, it encourages employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the Trust or schools within the Trust to voice those concerns.
- 1.2 This policy is introduced in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to protect those who report irregularities or wrongdoing in the work place. The policy set out in this document applies those statutory provisions to the Trust.
- 1.3 Seeking advice from, and being represented by, your trade union may be the best course of action to raise any issue under this policy. The Trust recognises and endorses the role which trade unions and their officers play in this process.

2.0 Aims and Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy aims to provide:
- an opportunity for employees to raise concerns without fear of reprisal or victimisation
 - a fair and impartial investigation process
 - mechanisms for employees to receive updates and feedback on the outcome of the investigation and action taken
- 2.2 This policy is not an alternative to well-established disciplinary or grievance procedures. It may, however, overlap with other policies for dealing with complaints. Concerns raised under the Whistleblowing Policy should be about something that is in the public interest and is or may be:
- unlawful or a criminal offence;
 - a breach of legal obligation (but not a personal contractual breach unless such breach involves a matter of public interest);
 - a miscarriage of justice;
 - mistreatment or abuse of a pupil/student or a member of the public for whom the school has a responsibility;
 - in disregard of legislation governing health and safety at work;
 - seeking undue favour over a contractual matter or a job application; or against the Trust's Financial Regulations;
 - has led to or could lead to a damage to the environment;
 - deliberately covers up information tending to show any of the above.

3.0 Safeguards

- 3.1 Harassment or Victimisation
The Trust will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. It will not tolerate any resulting harassment or victimisation (including informal

or indirect pressures) and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the appropriate procedures.

Any investigation into an allegation of malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures which already affect you. If allegations of malpractice arise during a disciplinary those allegations will be investigated at the same time as the disciplinary procedure.

3.2 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and the Trust will do its best to protect your identity if requested to do so. If investigation of a concern discloses a situation which is sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action or police involvement, then your evidence may be important. Your name will not however be released as a possible witness until the reasons for its disclosure at this stage have been fully discussed with you.

3.3 Anonymous Allegations

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they will be considered at the discretion of the Trust.

3.4 Untrue Allegations

Malicious or vexatious allegations may result in disciplinary action taken against you.

PROCEDURE

4.0 How to Raise a Concern

4.1 Concerns may be raised with the Headteacher of your school, a member of the Trust Executive Leadership Team (the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Education and Performance, Director of Finance, Director of Business and Operations) or the Trustee appointed as the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee. If you are a member of a Trade Union or Professional Association you may consider it useful to contact them for advice.

The individual receiving the concern will be referred to as the 'lead officer' throughout the remainder of the policy. The lead officer will ensure that the concern is properly investigated.

4.2 In extreme cases you may report your concerns externally to one of the bodies listed on the 'List of prescribed persons and bodies'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431221/bis-15-289-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person-list-of-prescribed-persons-and-bodies-2.pdf

4.3 Where the concern relates to a child protection matter and you do not wish to raise it via the Trust, you may inform the Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding (via email at childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk or on 01392 384964). The following training link may be helpful to understand how to respond to allegations and the role of the LADO <https://devon.safeguarding.network/elearning/>

4.5 When reporting a concern you should set out the background and history of the concern (giving names, dates and places where possible) and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of your allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

4.6 You may wish to seek advice from your trade union representative on how best to raise your concern. Where you wish to raise your concern anonymously this may be done through your trade union.

5.0 How the Trust will respond

5.1 The action taken by the Trust will depend on the nature of the concern. After initial enquiries to assess the seriousness, the matters raised may;

- be investigated by the school/Trust leadership, a nominated governor or Trustee or through the disciplinary process
- be referred to the Police
- be referred to external auditors
- need to be the subject of another external referral e.g. to the National College for Teaching and Leadership
- form the subject of an independent enquiry

5.2 If urgent action is required in response to a concern this may be taken before a full investigation is conducted.

5.3 Some concerns may be resolved by action agreed with you without the need for investigation or it may be that an investigation can be completed without the person(s) under investigation being aware of the process.

5.4 The Trust will contact you within 10 days or as soon as is reasonably practical to:

- indicate how it proposes to deal with the matter
- give an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- tell you whether any initial enquiries have been made, and
- tell you whether further investigation will take place, and if not, why not

5.5 If appropriate the Trust will appoint a Support Officer who will keep you informed about the progress of the investigation and if required take appropriate steps to support you in the workplace.

5.6 You may be accompanied by a trade union or professional association representative or a friend (who need not be associated with the school) at any meeting with the lead officer.

6.0 How the matter can be taken further

6.1 This policy is intended to provide you with a way to raise concerns within the Trust. The Trust hopes you will be satisfied by its response. If you are not you may wish to raise the matter with one of the following possible contact points;

- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- your trade union or professional association
- your solicitor or legal adviser
- the Police
- the Health and Safety Executive
- Charity Commission ('Public Concern at Work')
- Ofsted
- DfE
- Information Commissioner

7.0 Policy Circulation

This policy is provided following consultation with trade unions/professional associations and will apply to all employees. Should the Trust wish to make changes to this Policy, the required consultation must be undertaken with the recognised trade unions/professional associations.

Adoption of the Policy

This Policy has been adopted by the Trustees of the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust.

Signed



(Chair of Trust)

Date: 23.06.21

Policy History

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Version/Implementation Date	Review Date
June 2019	Updated and consulted with unions Link to financial regulations (contacts)	Alison Layton Hill	Sept 19	June 2021
June 2021	Added Deputy Chief Executive to the list of Trust Executive Leadership Team to who a concern can raised. (4.1)	Charlotte Davies	June 2021	June 2023