



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS

Lancaster University

School of Mathematics

Whistleblowing Policy

Title	Whistleblowing Policy
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The Rigby Education Trust was set-up to operate and oversee the Lancaster University School of Mathematics.

The Rigby Education Trust is an academy trust and a charity. The Lancaster University School of Mathematics is the charitable activity of the academy trust. Therefore, in this document references to the Maths School apply to the Rigby Education Trust.

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1.0. Purpose

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern 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.

Staff are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the school or the Rigby Education Trust. .

This policy makes it clear that people can raise concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, or disadvantage.

The Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, it is expected that any suspected wrongdoing will be reported as soon as possible.

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, governors, casual workers and agency workers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Trust in their own premises.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time following consultation with recognised trade unions.

2.0. Aims and scope of this policy

This policy aims to:

- provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases people should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. However, the law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for people to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage anyone with concerns to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.
- encourage people to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.

- ensure that those raising concerns receive a response and, where appropriate, feedback on any action taken
- reassure those with concerns that they will be supported if they have genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken

This policy is not to be used for pursuing individual grievances or private disputes since these are covered by existing procedures/policies. This policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. For example:

- conduct which is a criminal offence or breach of law
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirement, health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other members of staff and/or students
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of public funds
- possible fraud and corruption
- abuse of students

the deliberate covering up of wrongdoing in the above categories,

Thus, any serious concerns that people have about any suspected wrongdoing can be reported under this policy.

3.0. Safeguards

3.1. Protection

The Trust is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive to all.

The Trust recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make.

The Trust will not tolerate any detrimental treatment towards a 'whistleblower' as a result of them raising a genuine concern. If anyone is involved in any such conduct towards a whistleblower, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

If someone believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the person dealing with the concern immediately. If the matter is not remedied, the complainant should raise it formally using the Grievance Procedure.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that might already affect the person raising the concern.

3.2. Confidentiality

It is hoped that individuals will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If someone wants to raise a concern confidentially, the Trust will consider the extent to which this can be accommodated in the circumstances and will discuss the various options with them in taking the concern forward, ensuring confidentiality so far as is practicable and reasonable.

3.3. Untrue Allegations

If someone makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigations, no action will be taken against them. If, however, someone makes an untrue allegation maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

4.0. How to raise a concern

As a first step, the individual should normally raise concerns with their immediate line manager or key contact at the school. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. If a line manager is not appropriate for any reason, the person should raise their concerns with any member of School's Senior Leadership Team or a member of the HR team.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Individuals who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates)
- the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation

The earlier that concerns are expressed, the easier it is to take action.

Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained from HR Services.

The individual raising concerns may invite their trade union representative or a colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns that have been raised.

5.0. How the school will respond

Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the complainant, where possible and appropriate, the individual complained of must be given details of the allegations so that they can respond, unless this is deemed inappropriate e.g. potential issues of safeguarding, fraud or corruption.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken into account before any investigation is conducted.

Within 14 days of a concern being raised, the responsible person will write to the individual who raised the concerns with the following:

- acknowledgment that the concern has been received
- an indication of how the school proposes to deal with the matter
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- confirmation of whether any initial enquiries have been made
- information on staff support mechanisms

If necessary, the school may invite the individual to a meeting to seek further information and/or seek clarification of their concerns. In some cases the Trust may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter.

The Trust will aim to keep the individual who raised the concerns informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may

prevent the Trust giving them specific details of the investigation, an outcome or any disciplinary action taken as a result. All information about the investigation should be treated as confidential.

6.0. The responsible person

The Executive Principal has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. They will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes and will report as necessary to the Board of Trustees.

7.0. Contacts

This policy is intended to provide an avenue within the school and the Trust to raise concerns. The Trust hopes all persons will be satisfied with any action taken. If they are not, individuals may raise it, in confidence, with the Chair of the Board of Trustees or the Governance Professional.

The following are possible contact points:

- **The Local Authority Designated Officer (Safeguarding)**
Tim Booth
LADO.Admin@lancashire.gov.uk
01772 536 694 or 07826 902522
- **The Trust's External Auditor**
Murray Smith
Darland House
44 Winnington Hill
Northwich
Cheshire
CW8 1AU
Tel: 01606 79411

- **The Trust's Internal Auditor**

TIAA
Artillery House
Fort Fareham
Newgate Lane
Fareham
PO14 1AH
Tel: 0845 300 3333

- **Trade Unions**

- **The Police**

- **The ESFA:**

Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

Please see link below for guidance on how ESFA handles whistleblowing disclosures and how to report a disclosure in the public interest to the ESFA:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-esfa-handles-whistleblowing-disclosures#how-to-make-a-disclosure-to-esfa>

- **The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy** (see link for list of prescribed persons) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

8.0. Further information

Further information is available from:

- The charity Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) at <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

9.0. Review

This policy shall be reviewed regularly. The review process will involve the recognised trade union representatives. Full records should be kept, and sufficient detail disclosed during the review process (excluding names and/or other identifying features).