

Education Development Trust

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Maintenance

Policy owner	Director of People
Review	Annually
Next review	December 2024

Version Control

Version Number	Date
Version 6	December 2023

If you have questions about how to interpret this policy, please ask the Policy Owner – hr@edt.org.



1. SCOPE

We want all employees and stakeholders to feel safe raising concerns about unacceptable practice and misconduct: this policy helps you do so. We recognise this can take courage and confidence: we are committed to supporting you throughout the process.

The policy applies to everyone associated with the Trust, including employees, Trustees, consultants, contractors and employees or representatives of partner organisations. It reflects the UK *Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 (the Act)*, which protects workers from dismissal or 'detrimental treatment' if they make a protected *Qualifying Disclosure* (see Appendix 1).

The Policy is not designed for questioning business decisions, for employment grievances, or other aspects of the working relationship, all of which are dealt with under separate policies.

2. POLICY

If you discover information which you believe to show malpractice or wrongdoing in the Trust, you should disclose it as soon as possible via the most appropriate of the following channels: -

- » Your line manager;
- » A trusted senior person of your choice (potentially a senior manager or director);
- » Your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if the concern relates to safeguarding; or
- » The confidential email confidentialconcerns@educationdevelopmenttrust.com

A Disclosure Form is provided in Appendix 2 to help you report your concern.

This Whistleblowing Policy will be posted on the organisation's website and is available in multiple languages via the Recite Me accessibility tool.

If you believe what you are saying is true you should have no concerns in disclosing because you are doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service. Senior management will support you throughout the process. If you suffer any harassment or victimisation, you should tell your line manager or the person with whom you raised the initial concern. The organisation strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee for making a protected disclosure. Any reprisal, threats, or harassment will result in disciplinary action up to termination of employment. Whistleblowers have legal protections from retaliation. An investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that may already affect an employee.

You are encouraged to put your name to your concern wherever possible. Anonymous concerns will still be considered, taking into account factors such as seriousness, credibility and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other attributable sources.

Disclosures will by default be handled in confidence. Where an allegation is particularly serious it may be necessary to take protective action and / or refer the matter to the



police. If there is a legal requirement to disclose your identify with appropriate authorities, you will be consulted first.

Education Development Trust will aim to resolve whistleblower concerns as quickly as reasonably possible depending on the complexity of the investigation. Whistleblowers will be provided with status updates on their disclosure and notified when the matter is closed.

If you raise a concern in good faith that is then not confirmed by investigation, the case will be closed and remain confidential.

If you need to report a safeguarding concern involving a child or adult please refer to the Global Safeguarding Policy. All safeguarding concerns must be promptly reported to your local DSL – or your line manager if the concern relates to the DSL. More information, including a list of DSLs, can be found on the [Safeguarding SharePoint Pages](#).

If you believe a disclosure is not being handled effectively, please contact the Chair of Audit and Finance Committee [@Bob Humphreys](#). If after that you still believe the Trust has not dealt with a concern properly, in the UK only you should contact one of the prescribed bodies under the Act (see Appendix 1).

3. ROLES

All staff and anyone disclosing is responsible for reading this policy, making disclosures in good faith and attending related meetings where necessary.

Line Managers are responsible for accepting disclosures in confidence; providing support to the Discloser; escalating the concern as appropriate to senior management, the Director of People or the Chair of Audit and Finance Committee.

Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring that Disclosers and witnesses receive appropriate support; concerns are escalated as appropriate; and for participating in investigations as required.

The Director of People is responsible for convening a team to assess and investigate a disclosure; providing advice on a disclosure; deciding on the involvement of outside agencies (including the police); sourcing legal advice as required; escalating to Leadership Team and / or the Chair of Audit and Finance Committee where appropriate.

The Chair of Audit and Finance Committee [@Bob Humphreys](#) is responsible for acting as final internal point of escalation and arbiter of the disclosure.

Audit and Finance Committee is responsible for reviewing the Whistleblowing Policy and environment annually, and reporting to Trustees.

Education Development Trust will develop and provide periodically training and awareness programs to educate employees about their rights and the process for making disclosures. New hires will be provided by HR with a copy of the policy and it will be discussed as part of their orientation.



4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Regulatory

- » Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998

Policies

- » Global Safeguarding Policy (re: reporting / handling all safeguarding concerns)
- » Inclusion and Diversity Policy (re: discrimination related to a protected characteristic)
- » Dignity at Work Policy (re: harassment / bullying in the workplace)
- » Grievance Policy (re: internal mediation for workplace issues)
- » Health and Safety Policy (re: high HSE failure including corporate manslaughter)
- » Use of Social Media Policy (re: unacceptable sites and information sharing)
- » IT Acceptable Usage Policy (including access to / dissemination of information)
- » Data Protection Policy (including data subject requests)
- » Disciplinary Policy
- » Conflict of Interests Policy
- » Code of Conduct (including overview of policies)



Appendix 1: Qualifying Disclosure

Under the Act, a Qualifying Disclosure is a disclosure that you reasonably believe one of the following matters is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future. The Act provides protection for workers who raise a Qualifying Disclosures. Examples include: –

- » a criminal offence;
- » the breach of a legal obligation;
- » a miscarriage of justice;
- » a danger to the health and safety of any individual, including a safeguarding matter;
- » damage to the environment;
- » a conflict of interest;
- » deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above matters:
- » gross mismanagement:
- » gross waste of funds:
- » abuse of authority.

A Qualifying Disclosure will be ‘protected’ provided you:

- » make the disclosure in good faith; and
- » reasonably believe that the information disclosed, and any allegation is substantially true.

Where a Qualifying Disclosure is not dealt with properly by the Trust, the Act identifies the following prescribed bodies that can be contacted as appropriate:

- » HM Revenue & Customs
- » the Financial Conduct Authority
- » the Competition and Markets Authority
- » the Health and Safety Executive
- » the Environment Agency
- » the Independent Office for Police Conduct or
- » the Serious Fraud Office



Appendix 2: Whistleblowing – Disclosure Form

Whistleblowing - Formal public interest disclosure			
Mail to: confidentialconcerns@educationdevelopmenttrust.com			
Use this form to report wrongdoing. First read the Whistleblowing Policy to see if your concern qualifies as whistleblowing. You can report a concern without filling the form – the form shows what sort of information is needed. If you are unsure what to do contact Sarah Farquhar, Director of People .			
Your name		Your email	
Date of disclosure		Does this disclosure relate to your line manager?	Yes / No
Summary of Disclosure			
Describe your concern. Give examples, including where possible dates / times, locations.			
Individuals involved			
Give names and contact details of people involved in your concerns, including witnesses.			
Outcome requested			
How you would like to see the issue dealt with / how you believe this will resolve the issue.			
Declaration:			
I confirm the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if I knowingly make false allegations the Trust may take disciplinary action against me.			
Signature		Date:	