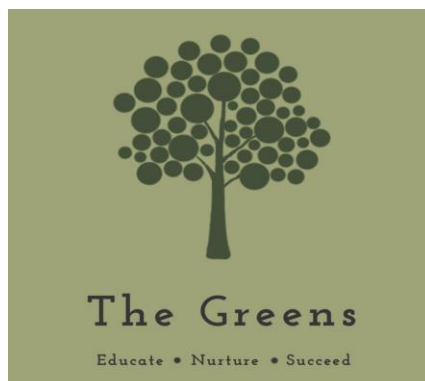


Whistleblowing Policy



VERSION	DATE OF ISSUE	DATE OF LAST REVIEW	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW
1	March 2021	April 2022 ME March 2023 ME July 2023 ME March 2024 ME Feb 2025 ME Jan 2026 ME June 2026 LW	April 2023 March 2024 July 2024 March 2025 Feb 2026
			Jan 2027 July 2027

The Greens ENS takes a very serious view of any fraudulent behaviour, serious malpractice and general abuse occurring in the workplace. The Greens ENS encourages all employees to raise concerns. These will be treated seriously and addressed appropriately. Policies will be reviewed annually or after new legislation is released by Leanne Wood (Head of school) or Melanie Entwistle (Executive Head)

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

Encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and that their confidentiality will be respected

- Let all staff in the trust know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the trust.
- Set clear procedures for how the trust will respond to such concerns, ensuring that staff know that concerns raised by whistle-blowers will be responded to properly and fairly .
- Let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern .
- Assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue – see section 6 below)

- Ensure staff know that they are protected by law and that a non-disclosure agreement, confidentiality clause or 'gagging clause' in a settlement agreement or employment contract cannot stop them from making a protected disclosure in the public interest .

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. This policy applies to all employees, officers and trustees. Other workers, including consultants, contractors, agency staff and those on work placements, are also encouraged to use it.

2. Legislation

The requirement to have clear whistle-blowing procedures in place is set out in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#). This policy has been written in line with the above document, as well as [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). We have also taken into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

3. Definition of whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is "in the public interest". Examples of whistle-blowing include (but are not limited to):

- Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption
- Pupils' or staff health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Breaches of financial management procedures
- Sexual harassment (in effect from 6 April 2026)
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- Damage to the environment
- A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above. These concerns should be reported under this policy.
- Not all concerns about the trust, or individual schools in the trust, count as whistle-blowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

If a complaint involves personal circumstances alongside wider concerns (e.g. pupil health and safety), the staff member must consult with DSL Zena Bruder or Head of School Leanne Wood to decide the most appropriate reporting procedure.

When staff have a concern, they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance or complaints procedures.

4. Procedure for staff to raise a whistle-blowing concern

Concerns raised which do not fulfil the criteria listed in section 3 are not whistleblowing disclosures. However it is important that any concerns are raised appropriately.

In the first instance and where appropriate, concerns should be raised informally with the individuals involved. For example, giving feedback to a colleague where poor practice is witnessed.

On occasion the worker may not feel able to challenge a colleague or believe their concern warrants escalation to a manager. Employees can report these concerns to either their line manager Leanne Wood (Headteacher) Kerry Smith (Assistant Head) or another more senior manager Melanie Entwistle (Executive Head) Workers who are not employees may not have a line manager. These individuals should initially raise concerns to Leanne Wood the Head of School.

4.1 When to raise a concern

Staff should consider the examples in section 3 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or trust procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

4.2 Who to report to

School-based staff should report their concern to the headteacher Leanne Wood. If the concern is about the [Head teacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to Melanie Entwistle The Executive Headteacher or Louise Hodson Chair of Governors.

4.3 How to raise the concern

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include the names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

Staff are encouraged to give their name when reporting an allegation, to help the trust take the investigation further. However, a complainant's right to anonymity will be respected.

A proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if further information cannot be obtained from the staff member. This will also make it more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible.

Staff who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should consult with the contacts listed in section 4.2, and appropriate measures can be taken to protect confidentiality where possible.

5. Investigating the concern

When a concern is received – the recipient will:

Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative. Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting and record the information. If it becomes apparent that the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure. Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken.

Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:

The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the Headteacher/Executive Head/Chair of Governors if appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police.

The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps.

Within 5 working days – excluding periods of school closure. They will write to the complainant to:

- Acknowledge that the concern has been received
- Indicate how the matter is to be dealt with
- Give an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response, informing the complainant as to whether any initial enquiries have been made

Tell the staff member whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

Throughout any investigation, the trust will provide wellbeing check-ins for both the complainant and the subject(s) of a concern. Where appropriate, support and signposting to manage expectations, protect emotional wellbeing and maintain professional confidence will be offered.

5.1 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any

recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority (LA) or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, All staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

While we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

If a staff member is not satisfied with the way in which their concern has been handled, they can raise their concerns with 1 of the other contact points listed above.

6. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Action will be taken to protect workers who blow the whistle from any detriment, recriminations or victimisation as a result of blowing the whistle. Any harassment or vexatious conduct by an employee towards an individual who has blown the whistle constitutes gross misconduct and will be investigated in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

7. Protecting Whistleblowers

In line with the legal protection afforded by The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988 and the Employment Rights Act 1996, workers will not suffer detriment as a result of whistleblowing. Additionally, using the protection of the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998), whistleblowers can raise a concern formally and it will be investigated without their identity being disclosed.