

**WEST KIRBY EDUCATIONAL TRUST**

*A charity changing children's lives*

# **West Kirby Educational Trust**

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

## 1. Policy Statement

WKET is committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability. We encourage all staff and members of our school community to report any serious concerns they may have about any aspect of the school's work or the behaviour of individuals within the school.

This policy is intended to support concerns raised in the public interest, in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear procedure for raising concerns.
- Ensure individuals can raise genuine concerns without fear of victimisation or retaliation.
- Encourage a culture of transparency and accountability.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

All school employees (including full-time, part-time, temporary, casual, agency and volunteer staff).

- Governors and trustees.
- Contractors and suppliers working on school premises.

It covers concerns that fall outside of grievance or disciplinary procedures, such as:

- Financial malpractice or fraud.
- Breach of legal or professional obligations.
- Health and safety risks.
- Safeguarding or child protection concerns.
- Environmental damage.
- Attempts to cover up any of the above.
- Concerns related to personal employment matters should be addressed via the school's Grievance Procedure.

## 4. Safeguards and Protection

### Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistleblower if requested. However, disclosure may be required during a formal investigation.

### Protection from Reprisal

WKET will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a concern under this policy. Any individual who retaliates against a whistleblower may face disciplinary action.

## 5. Raising a Concern

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible. You do not need proof of wrongdoing, but concerns should be based on a reasonable belief.

You can raise concerns in writing or verbally to:

Designated Whistleblowing Officer:

Sian Thomas

CEO

Sthomas@wkrs.co.uk

Alternatively, if the concern involves this person or if you feel uncomfortable approaching them, you may contact:

Headteacher/Principal

Chair of Governors/Trustees via schooloffice

Or an external body (see section 7).

## 6. Investigation Process

Once a concern is raised:

- It will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- A preliminary assessment will be made to determine if a formal investigation is warranted.
- If an investigation proceeds, it may be:
  - Internal (by a manager or governor),
  - External (by an independent investigator), or
  - Referred to a regulatory or enforcement body.
- The whistleblower will be kept informed of progress, unless confidentiality or legal restrictions prevent this.

## 7. External Disclosures

If you feel unable to raise your concern internally, you may contact one of the following prescribed bodies:

- Ofsted (for issues related to education or safeguarding)
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (for safeguarding concerns)
- Department for Education (DfE)

- Charity Commission (for charity-related schools)
- Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) – independent whistleblowing charity
- Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk>

#### 8. Untrue Allegations

If a concern is raised in good faith but is not confirmed by investigation, no action will be taken. However, deliberately making false or malicious allegations is a disciplinary offence.

#### 9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body or Proprietor and made available to all staff parents.

