

Whistleblowing Policy

Empowering Futures Academy Ltd
(Alternative Provision)

Policy Name	Whistleblowing Policy
Site	Birmingham
Version	1.0
Approved By	Director / DSL
Date Reviewed & Confirmed	18 January 2026
Next Review Due	January 2027

1. Policy Statement

Empowering Futures Academy Ltd (“Empowering Futures”) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and transparency. We encourage all staff and stakeholders to raise concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or unsafe practice in a responsible and confidential manner.

This Whistleblowing Policy provides a clear framework for reporting concerns and ensures that individuals who raise genuine concerns are protected from victimisation or disadvantage.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All employees, tutors, sessional staff, and agency staff
- Volunteers, contractors, and placement staff
- Consultants and partners working on behalf of Empowering Futures

The policy applies across all Empowering Futures delivery sites, including:

- **WEETC – Coventry**
- **Evolve Centre – Birmingham**

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy aligns with and is informed by:

- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)**
- **Employment Rights Act 1996**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
- **Local Authority Alternative Provision commissioning requirements**

Empowering Futures recognises whistleblowing as a key safeguarding
mechanism.

4. What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information that relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- Safeguarding concerns relating to children or young people
- Abuse, neglect, or harm
- Criminal activity or fraud
- Breach of legal obligations
- Health and safety risks

- Serious misconduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

Whistleblowing is different from a personal grievance, which should be addressed through the Grievance Procedure.

5. Safeguarding and Whistleblowing

- Safeguarding concerns must **always** be reported and should not be delayed.
- Concerns involving children or young people must be escalated immediately in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Whistleblowing supports the duty to protect children and young people from harm.

6. How to Raise a Concern

6.1 Internal Reporting

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible with one of the following:

- **Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**
Rhean White – Director
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):**
Rena Sparks

If the concern relates to one of the above individuals, concerns may be raised directly with the Local Authority or relevant external body.

6.2 External Reporting

If a concern cannot be raised internally, or if the whistleblower believes it has not been addressed appropriately, concerns may be raised with:

- The relevant **Local Authority** (Coventry or Birmingham)

- **Ofsted**
- **The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line**
- **The Police**, where a crime may have been committed

7. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- All whistleblowing concerns will be treated sensitively and confidentially.
- The identity of the whistleblower will be protected wherever possible.
- Anonymous disclosures will be considered, although this may limit the ability to investigate fully.

8. Protection for Whistleblowers

- Empowering Futures will not tolerate harassment, victimisation, or retaliation against anyone who raises a genuine concern.
- Individuals raising concerns in good faith are protected under the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**.
- Any retaliatory behaviour will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

9. Investigation and Response

- All concerns are taken seriously and assessed promptly.
- Investigations are conducted fairly and proportionately.
- Where appropriate, actions may include:
 - Internal investigation

- Referral to safeguarding partners
- Referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Referral to external agencies

The whistleblower will be informed, where appropriate, that the concern has been addressed.

10. False or Malicious Allegations

- Allegations made in good faith that are not substantiated will not result in disciplinary action.
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may result in disciplinary action.

11. Record Keeping

- Records of whistleblowing concerns and outcomes are kept securely. ●

Records are retained in line with data protection and record retention policies.

12. Training and Awareness

- Staff are made aware of this policy during induction.
- Whistleblowing forms part of safeguarding and professional conduct training.
- Staff are encouraged to speak up without fear.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Provision Leadership

- Promote a culture of openness and accountability
- Ensure concerns are handled appropriately

Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Rhean White – Director

- Receives and manages whistleblowing concerns
- Leads escalation and external referrals where required

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Rena Sparks

- Supports the DSL
- Acts in the DSL's absence

Staff and Others

- Raise concerns promptly and responsibly
- Cooperate with investigations

14. Monitoring and Review

- This policy is monitored through safeguarding and quality assurance processes.
- The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if:
 - Legislation changes
 - Local Authority requirements are updated
 - A whistleblowing incident highlights the need for review

15. Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Record Keeping Policy