



# **Woodland Pathways**

## **Whistleblowing & Public Interest Disclosure Policy**

**Date created or revised: 0925**

**Date of next review: 0926**

## **1. Policy Statement**

Woodland Pathways is committed to maintaining the highest standards of:

- Integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Safeguarding practice

We actively encourage all staff, practitioners, and partners to raise concerns about wrongdoing or unsafe practice.

Concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation, discrimination, or disadvantage

This policy supports a culture where:

- Concerns are taken seriously
- Issues are addressed promptly
- Learners are protected

## **2. Legal and Regulatory Framework**

This policy aligns with:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Norfolk & Suffolk Safeguarding Procedures
- DBS and LADO reporting requirements

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Freelance practitioners
- Volunteers
- Contractors and partner agencies

It covers concerns relating to:

- Safeguarding failures or risks
- Criminal activity

- Fraud or financial misconduct
- Health and safety risks
- Abuse of position or power
- Breaches of policies or professional standards
- Actions intended to conceal wrongdoing

#### **4. Key Principles**

Woodland Pathways will ensure:

- All concerns are taken seriously and investigated
- Individuals raising concerns in good faith are protected
- Confidentiality is maintained wherever possible
- No retaliation or victimisation occurs
- Safeguarding concerns are prioritised above all

#### **5. Raising a Concern**

Concerns can be raised:

- Verbally (in person or by phone)
- In writing (email or letter)
- Anonymously (although this may limit feedback)

You should include:

- The nature of the concern
- Relevant details and context
- Any evidence available

#### **Internal Reporting**

Concerns should normally be raised with:

- A Director or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

If the concern involves a Director:

- It must be reported externally (see Section 10)

## **6. Investigation Process**

All concerns will be handled fairly and promptly:

### **Stage 1 – Initial Assessment**

- Concern reviewed by Director/DSL
- Safeguarding threshold considered

### **Stage 2 – Investigation**

- Evidence gathered
- Interviews conducted where appropriate
- Safeguarding referrals made if required

### **Stage 3 – Outcome**

- Appropriate action taken (disciplinary, safeguarding, training, referral)
- Feedback provided where possible

Where a concern involves safeguarding:

The Safeguarding Policy takes precedence

## **7. Safeguarding and Allegations Management**

Any concern involving harm or risk to a child will:

- Be treated as a safeguarding referral
- Be reported immediately to the DSL
- Be escalated to external agencies where required

### **LADO Reporting**

Where an allegation meets the threshold:

- It will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day

### **DBS Referrals**

Where required:

- A referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

## 8. Protection for Whistleblowers

Woodland Pathways guarantees:

- No victimisation or retaliation
- Confidential handling of concerns
- Support throughout the process

Victimisation of a whistleblower will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

## 9. Anonymous Allegations

Anonymous concerns:

- Will be considered
- May be harder to investigate

Decisions will be based on:

- Seriousness of the issue
- Credibility of the concern
- Availability of supporting evidence

## 10. External Reporting

If an individual feels unable to raise concerns internally, or is dissatisfied with the response, they may contact:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line**  
☎ 0800 028 0285  
✉ [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**  
(Norfolk / Suffolk as appropriate)
- **Ofsted**  
☎ 0300 123 1231
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**
- **Police**
- **Department for Education (DfE)**

## **11. Untrue or Malicious Allegations**

If a concern is raised in good faith but not upheld:

- No action will be taken

However, if a concern is:

- Malicious
- Knowingly false
- Made for personal gain

- Disciplinary action may be taken

## **12. Confidentiality and Information Handling**

- All concerns will be handled sensitively
- Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy applies

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

Woodland Pathways will:

- Maintain a confidential whistleblowing log
- Monitor patterns and themes
- Review this policy annually

## **14. Related Policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints & Grievance Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- GDPR/Data Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy

## **15. Contact Details**

### **Woodland Pathways**

Company Number: 17132521

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