



Whistleblowing Policy

September 2025 (to be reviewed annually)

1. Introduction

Reach for Inclusion is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. As an Alternative Provision (AP) provider working with vulnerable young people, we recognise that staff are often the first to notice if something is not right. This policy enables employees, volunteers, contractors, and others associated with Reach for Inclusion to raise genuine concerns about wrongdoing without fear of reprisal.

This policy meets the requirements of:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Shropshire Council expectations for alternative providers

This whistleblowing procedure supplements, but does not replace, other internal procedures such as the Safeguarding Policy, Complaints Procedure, or Grievance Procedure. The Directors of Reach for Inclusion monitor disclosures made under this policy and ensure annual review and reporting as required.

2. Aims and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear avenues for raising concerns and receiving feedback
- Ensure concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately
- Protect staff from detriment, victimisation, or harassment when reporting in good faith
- Promote a culture of transparency and safeguarding

A whistleblowing concern must be raised in the public interest and may relate to, for example:

- Fraud, bribery, or corruption
- Discrimination or unlawful treatment
- Abuse, neglect, or safeguarding concerns
- Breaches of health and safety
- Environmental damage
- Failure to follow statutory or legal obligations
- Mismanagement, misconduct, or unethical behaviour
- Breaches of data protection or information security

This policy is not for:

- Staff grievances (see Grievance Procedure)
- Parental complaints (see Complaints Procedure)
- Safeguarding concerns (see Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy)

3. What is a Serious Concern?

A serious concern is something that:

- Is unlawful
- Breaches organisational policies, financial controls, or statutory duties
- Contradicts established professional standards



- Amounts to improper or unsafe practice
- Places children, young people, staff, or the organisation at risk

Examples relevant to education settings include:

- Ignoring safeguarding procedures or failing to act on a concern
- Inappropriate physical contact or behaviour towards children
- Deliberate neglect of a child's welfare, care, or medical needs
- Inappropriate restraint or physical intervention
- Misuse of a young person's possessions or funds
- Breaches of confidentiality or improper data handling
- Actions that compromise Prevent Duty requirements

Where concerns relate to alleged child abuse by staff, they must also be referred immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Named Safeguarding Leads at Reach for Inclusion:

- Siobhan Williams (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Jo Garner (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

4. Safeguards

4.1 Protection from Harassment or Victimisation

Reach for Inclusion will not tolerate harassment, detriment, or victimisation of any individual raising a concern in good faith. Any such behaviour will be treated as a disciplinary matter. Employees are protected under PIDA when making a protected disclosure.

4.2 Confidentiality

Wherever possible, Reach for Inclusion will protect the identity of individuals raising concerns. However, investigations may require the whistleblower's identity to be disclosed or for them to provide a statement.

4.3 Anonymous Allegations

Anonymous disclosures will be considered, but they are less likely to lead to effective investigation. Factors considered will include:

- The seriousness of the issue
- Whether the concern appears credible
- Whether it can be confirmed through other sources

4.4 Untrue Allegations

If a concern is raised in good faith but is not upheld, no action will be taken against the whistleblower.

Deliberate, malicious, or vexatious allegations may lead to disciplinary action.

4.5 Support to Employees

Employees raising concerns will be treated with respect, supported throughout the process, and provided with appropriate guidance. Staff may seek external support via their trade union or professional body.

5. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should normally be raised with:

- Your immediate line manager, or
- The Directors of Reach for Inclusion

If the concern involves management, or you feel unable to raise it internally, you may contact:



Internal Contacts

- Directors – Reach for Inclusion (marked “Strictly Private & Confidential”)
- Designated Safeguarding Leads – for safeguarding-related concerns

External Contacts

- Shropshire Council Whistleblowing Hotline: 01743 252627
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0345 678 9021
- Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline: 0300 123 3155
 - Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Independent Advice

- Protect (UK Whistleblowing Charity)
 - Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk
 - Advice Line: 020 3117 2520

Concerns should ideally be put in writing, outlining:

- The background and nature of the concern
- Relevant dates, locations, and witnesses where possible
- Why the situation is causing concern

Documents should be marked:

“Strictly Private and Confidential – To be opened by the addressee only.”

6. How Reach for Inclusion Will Respond

The response to a concern will depend on its nature. It may result in:

- An internal investigation
- A referral to Shropshire Council
- A referral to the Police
- Referral to an external auditor
- An independent inquiry
- Immediate safeguarding action

Initial enquiries will determine whether formal investigation is required and the appropriate process to follow.

Within ten working days, the employee will receive written confirmation:

- Acknowledging the concern
- Explaining next steps
- Estimating the timeframe for a full response
- Confirming any initial actions taken
- Stating whether a formal investigation will proceed

The whistleblower may be asked for further information. They may be accompanied to any meetings by a union representative, professional association, or a workplace colleague not involved in the matter.

Subject to legal constraints, employees will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and of any actions taken.

7. Taking the Matter Further

If the individual is dissatisfied with the outcome or believes the concern has not been properly addressed, they may raise it with:

- Shropshire Council
- Ofsted



- The Police
- Professional regulatory bodies
- A legal adviser
- Protect (UK Whistleblowing Charity)

Employees must take care not to disclose confidential information unlawfully and should seek advice before contacting external bodies.

8. Standards of Conduct

All employees are required to follow:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Working With Children
- Professional standards of their regulatory body (where applicable)
- Reach for Inclusion policies and procedures

All employees must familiarise themselves with these expectations during induction and throughout employment.

9. Following Proper Procedures

Robust procedures help prevent corruption, misconduct, and poor practice. Staff must follow all organisational and statutory procedures including:

1. Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
2. Staff Standards and Expectations Policy
3. Safer Recruitment Policy
4. Complaints Policy
5. Data Protection & Information Security Policy
6. Prevent Duty Policy

Breaches must be reported immediately through this Whistleblowing Policy.

10. Monitoring and Review

The Directors of Reach for Inclusion will monitor all whistleblowing disclosures and outcomes. This policy will be reviewed **annually** (or sooner if legislative or guidance changes occur), considering:

- Updates to KCSIE
- Learning from disclosures
- Staff feedback
- Changes to statutory or local authority expectations

Policy	Whistleblowing Policy
Date created	September 2023
Date Reviewed	September 2025
Date of Next Review	September 2026
Signed:	
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