Organisational Whistle Blowing Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children Adopted By The Children First Learning Partnership

March 2026 (V6)

The Organisational Whistle Blowing Policy in respect of the Children First Learning Partnership has been discussed and adopted by the Directors Board	
Chair of Board:	*Mrs N. Chell*
Responsible Officer:	*CEO – Mrs A Rourke*
Agreed and ratified by the Directors	*March 2026*
To be reviewed:	*March 2027*

Introduction

Improving the way in which people and organisations safeguard and promote the welfare of children is crucial to improving outcomes for children and young people and key local organisations named under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, have a duty to demonstrate that they have effective arrangements in place within their organisation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Governing Bodies of Maintained schools have a similar duty under section 175 of the 2002 Education Act, and Independent Schools, Academies and the Further Education Sector under Section 157 of the same Act. These key bodies have to demonstrate that they have an effective whistle blowing process in place and that their workforce is aware of this process. This document therefore aims to offer a standard policy template for adoption by organisations that:

- Have a whistle blowing policy in place but it makes little or no specific reference to the safeguarding of children and young people;
- Do not have an existing whistle-blowing policy in place within their organisation and are required under section 11 processes to have one; and
- Organisations where there is not a section 11 requirement, but who wish to promote good practice within their organisations.

Policy Statement

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) and Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership (SOTSCP) expect **all staff and employees including adults working with children and young people, temporary staff, volunteers, students, contractors or external partner agencies**, to express any concerns that they may have with regards to the conduct of any individual(s). The term 'staff' will hereafter include all of the wider workforce, as stated above.

In line with the expectations of the Board of Directors the schools of the Children First Learning Partnership are committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability. All persons working for, or with this organisation, must feel safe and supported in order to express their concerns.

This policy document is intended to encourage and enable our staff to raise their concerns and to do so without fear of victimisation or discrimination. It does not replace the Complaints Procedure or the Safeguarding Policy or the organisation's standard procedures for reporting allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers. It is supplementary to the organisation's Whistle Blowing Policy in regards to other forms of malpractice covered under the 'Public Interest Disclosure Act' (Found on the staff notice board)

The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) protects the public interest by providing a remedy for individuals who suffer workplace reprisal for raising a genuine concern, whether it is a concern about child safeguarding and welfare systems, financial malpractice, danger, illegality, or other wrongdoing. The concern may relate to something that is happening or has happened in the past. The PIDA covers all workers, including temporary agency staff. It does not cover the self-employed or volunteers. The Act also provides protection should individuals have difficulty gaining a reference from an employer because they have raised a concern. It makes it clear that any clause in a contract that purports to gag an individual from raising a concern that would be protected under the Act is void.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy (Incorporating Child Protection)
- Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children Procedure
- Child on Child Abuse Policy (Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children)

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Encourage adults working for or within the organisation to feel confident in raising concerns;
- Provide a process by which concerns can be raised and dealt with;
- Receive feedback on the process (where appropriate); and
- Provide a means by which staff can receive support where concerns have been raised.

What does the safeguarding whistleblowing policy cover?

This policy is designed to cover concerns that staff have about the conduct of individuals in a position of trust within the organisation which could be detrimental to the safety or wellbeing of young people and where staff, for whatever reason, ***feel unable*** to raise them under the organisation's standard child protection procedures around dealing with such allegations. It would include issues about:

- Unprofessional behaviour
- Bullying by staff
- Any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect)
- Name calling
- Personal contact with children and young people which is contrary to the organisations policies and codes of conduct
- Any form of racial abuse
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Knowledge about an individual's personal circumstances which may indicate they could be a risk to children or unsuitable to work with children

Please be mindful that these are examples of concerns, and are not exhaustive.

Safeguarding against harassment or victimisation

The Children First Learning Partnership is committed to professional standards and to supporting staff who work across its schools. It is recognised that the decision to report a concern is a difficult one to make. Harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated and the schools within the Children First Learning Partnership will take appropriate action in order to protect the person raising the concern when they are acting in good faith.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence, however, there may be a need for the whistle blower to give evidence e.g. if they have witnessed a crime or in regard to disciplinary procedures if this is the outcome.

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages staff to raise concerns to be identified in doing so as part of their professional role/responsibility. However, anonymous allegations will be investigated as thoroughly as possible.

False allegations

If staff raise a concern in good faith which is not confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken. However, if a concern is raised maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken.

How to raise a concern

Staff should normally raise their concerns with a Designated Safeguarding Lead under the organisations standard procedures for dealing with allegations about a person in a position of trust. This is the Headteacher. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of concern the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Local Advisory Board, if this is not possible, the Whistle Blowing Policy can be implemented. Under standard procedures, if there are concerns that an adult working with children may have abused a child, or be unsuitable to work with children and young people, concerns will be passed to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) by the manager.

For further information about the Staffordshire LADO process (Section 4A), please use the following link: Allegations of Abuse – Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

In certain circumstances, staff may feel they are unable to follow the organisation's standard procedures e.g. because they feel their position in the organisation would be in jeopardy, they would be subject to intimidation, or that the person of concern is the designated manager to whom they should report such matters and there is no one senior to refer to. They should then follow the Whistle Blowing Policy by contacting a nominated person (Designated Safeguard Lead) within the organisation or an umbrella organisation to which the organisation is affiliated. The policy may also be used in circumstances when the matter has been raised under appropriate organisation procedures for referring child protection concerns, but the referrer considers that the manager has not taken the concerns seriously or acted appropriately with relation to them. In such circumstances, referrers are encouraged to contact the named responsible person for 'whistle blowing' for the organisation or a LADO directly for discussion and advice. The LADO contact details are listed at the end of the policy.

When following the Whistle-blowing Policy, concerns may be shared verbally, but should also be recorded in writing (Safeguarding Whistle Blowing report form – Appendix A).

Staff may wish to invite their trade union representative to be present during any subsequent interviews.

How the Children First Learning Partnership will respond:

Any concern regarding child protection will be referred to external agencies for investigation (children's services, police, LADO).

If the concern is not of this nature there will be:

- Investigation by management

- Disciplinary process if appropriate
- Consideration of policies, processes and procedures if such issues arise from the investigation.

Within 10 working days of a concern being raised the referrer will receive a written response from the responsible person which will:

- Acknowledge that the concern has been received;
- Supply information on relevant support mechanisms
- Advise whether further investigations will take place; or
- Advise that no further action has taken place and why.

Who to contact:

Headteacher (DSL) – Mrs C Hodson
DDSLs –Miss E Mohring, Mrs C Nesbitt, Mrs A Cheetham
Chair of Local Advisory Board-Mr C Clulow

If it is felt that it would be unsafe for any reason to share concerns with the named person from your organisation the following are appropriate contacts with whom to discuss your concerns:

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership:

-Local Authority Designated Officer – Ring Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door (SFIFD): 0300 111 8007 (ask for LADO if your concerns are that a member of staff could be harming children).

-Emergency Duty Team: 0345 604 2886 (out of office hours) or email:

- eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk

- Referrals to LADO in Staffordshire are made via the LADO Referral form

Other support

Recognised trade unions or professional associations can provide support and assistance or independent, external advice this can be obtained from the charity, **Public Concern at Work** (**PCaW**).

Regulatory bodies such as Ofsted also have 'whistle blowing' hotlines. Ofsted's whistle blowing hotline is: 0300 123 3155. The website address is whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Public Concern at Work

Helpline: 020 3117 2520
E-mail: helpline@pcaw.co.uk

Version	Review Date	Changes Made
V2	10.02.22	p.3 Reference made to other polices that must be read in conjunction with this policy.
V2	10.02.22	p.5 Updated contact details.
V3	03.02.23	p.3Peer on peer policy reference changed to child on child in line with KCSIE 2022
V4	02.01.24	Hyperlinks update LADO Contact details update
V5	14.02.25	Hyperlinks update LADO contact details update References to SSCB changed to SSCP (Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership) Removed Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Board contacts
V6	30.01.26	Hyperlinks update LADO contact details update Public Concern at Work details updated Ofsted Whistleblowing contact updated

Appendix A

Whistle Blowing Report Form

Name: _____

Date: _____

Location/department: _____

Please give a brief outline of your concern? (Please give relevant names, dates, locations etc)

Were there any other witnesses? If so, please give their full contact details.

Did you take any action at the time? – if so, please outline what action you took

if you did not take action at the time, please give details as to why you took no action

Signed: ……

Date……

Designation……