



The Pioneers Academy

Whistleblowing Policy

THE PIONEERS ACADEMY

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Academic Year: 2026–2027

Policy Owner: Headteacher

Applies to: All staff, volunteers, governors/proprietors, contractors and agency staff

Date of Policy: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Pioneers Academy is committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, honesty, integrity, accountability and professional conduct.

The school recognises that staff and other individuals working within the school may sometimes become aware of serious concerns relating to:

- safeguarding;
- child protection;
- the conduct of staff or leaders;
- unlawful activity;
- financial malpractice;
- fraud;
- corruption;
- health and safety;
- serious breaches of school policies;
- abuse of authority;
- discrimination;
- serious professional misconduct;
- deliberate concealment of wrongdoing.

The school encourages individuals to raise genuine concerns at the earliest opportunity.

No individual should feel that they will suffer detriment, victimisation or disadvantage because they have raised a genuine concern in good faith.

The Pioneers Academy is committed to ensuring that concerns are listened to, taken seriously, investigated appropriately and acted upon where necessary.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. provide a safe and clear route for raising concerns;
2. ensure staff understand what whistleblowing means;
3. ensure safeguarding concerns are escalated appropriately;
4. protect individuals who raise genuine concerns;
5. prevent concerns from being ignored or concealed;
6. ensure concerns are investigated fairly;
7. provide clear routes where the concern relates to the Headteacher or senior leadership;
8. ensure appropriate external agencies are contacted where necessary;
9. maintain public confidence in the school's governance and safeguarding arrangements.

3. WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?

Whistleblowing occurs when an individual raises a concern about serious wrongdoing, malpractice or risk within the workplace.

Whistleblowing is different from raising a personal grievance.

Examples of whistleblowing concerns may include:

- serious safeguarding failures;
- failure to act on child protection concerns;
- inappropriate conduct towards pupils;
- abuse of power or authority;
- fraud or financial irregularity;
- deliberate falsification of records;
- serious health and safety breaches;
- criminal activity;
- serious breaches of legal requirements;
- serious failures to comply with statutory safeguarding requirements;
- deliberate concealment of wrongdoing.

A concern does not need to be proven before it is raised.

The individual raising the concern does not need to investigate the matter themselves.

4. SAFEGUARDING WHISTLEBLOWING

The Pioneers Academy recognises that whistleblowing is particularly important where concerns relate to safeguarding.

Any member of staff who believes that:

- a child may be at risk of harm;
- a safeguarding concern has not been appropriately dealt with;
- safeguarding procedures are not being followed;
- a safeguarding concern is being deliberately ignored;
- a member of staff may pose a risk to children;
- safeguarding records are being deliberately altered or concealed;
- leadership is failing to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns;

must raise the concern immediately.

Staff should normally report safeguarding concerns to:

Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mr Saif Ahmad

or

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Shabnam Parveen

However, staff must not feel restricted to these routes if their concern relates to the DSL, Deputy DSL or another person within the school's leadership structure.

5. IF THE CONCERN INVOLVES THE DSL

Where a safeguarding concern relates to the:

Lead DSL – Mr Saif Ahmad

the concern should be reported to:

Deputy DSL – Mrs Shabnam Parveen

Where the concern relates to the Deputy DSL, the concern should be reported to the Headteacher or an appropriate alternative safeguarding route.

Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, staff should use an alternative route and should not be required to report the concern to the person who is the subject of the concern.

6. IF THE CONCERN INVOLVES THE HEADTEACHER

Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, the individual should raise the matter with the appropriate proprietor, governor or other person with responsibility for receiving concerns about the Headteacher.

The person raising the concern should not report the matter directly to the individual who is the subject of the concern.

Where the concern involves safeguarding, the appropriate external safeguarding route should also be considered.

7. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

Concerns should normally be raised promptly.

Where possible, concerns should be put in writing and should include:

- what has happened;
- when it happened;
- who was involved;
- who may have been affected;
- why the individual is concerned;
- any relevant evidence or information;
- whether the concern has previously been raised;
- any immediate safeguarding or safety concerns.

A concern may initially be raised verbally where the circumstances require immediate action.

The school will assist the individual in recording the concern appropriately.

8. STAFF DO NOT NEED TO PROVE THE CONCERN

A member of staff is not expected to establish that wrongdoing has occurred before raising a concern.

Staff should report concerns where they have a reasonable belief that serious wrongdoing may have occurred, may be occurring or may occur.

Staff should provide factual information wherever possible.

The investigation and assessment of evidence is the responsibility of the person or organisation receiving the concern.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

The school will treat whistleblowing concerns sensitively and will maintain confidentiality wherever reasonably possible.

Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know.

However, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed where:

- safeguarding action is required;
- an external agency needs the information;
- legal requirements apply;
- an investigation requires disclosure.

Where possible, the individual raising the concern will be informed about how their information will be handled.

10. ANONYMOUS CONCERNS

The school will accept anonymous concerns.

However, anonymous reporting can make it more difficult to:

- investigate the concern;
- obtain additional information;
- clarify evidence;
- provide feedback;
- protect the person raising the concern.

Where an individual wishes to remain anonymous, the school will nevertheless consider the information provided and determine whether further action is required.

11. PROTECTION FROM DETRIMENT

The Pioneers Academy will not tolerate retaliation against an individual who raises a genuine whistleblowing concern.

Staff must not be subjected to:

- bullying;
- harassment;
- intimidation;
- victimisation;
- unfair treatment;
- discrimination;
- disciplinary action simply because they raised a genuine concern;
- adverse treatment for making a protected disclosure.

The school will take concerns about retaliation seriously.

Any individual who believes that they have experienced retaliation after raising a concern should report this immediately.

12. MALICIOUS OR KNOWINGLY FALSE ALLEGATIONS

Whistleblowing protection does not provide protection for knowingly false or malicious allegations.

Where an individual deliberately makes a false allegation with the intention of harming another person, the school may consider appropriate action.

However, a concern will not be considered malicious simply because it is not substantiated.

The school recognises that genuine concerns may ultimately be found to be unfounded.

13. INVESTIGATION OF CONCERNS

The person receiving the concern will determine the appropriate course of action.

This may include:

- an internal investigation;
- a safeguarding investigation;
- referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- referral to children's social care;
- referral to the police;
- referral to the local authority;

- referral to an external auditor;
- referral to another appropriate regulatory body.

The investigation will be proportionate to the nature of the concern.

Where appropriate, the individual raising the concern will be informed that the matter has been considered and/or investigated.

Specific confidential information about the outcome may not be shared.

14. SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS

Where a whistleblowing concern relates to a child who may be at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures take priority.

The DSL will determine whether a referral should be made to:

- children's social care;
- the police;
- the LADO;
- the local safeguarding partnership;
- other appropriate safeguarding agencies.

The school will not delay a safeguarding referral while conducting an internal investigation.

15. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Where a concern relates to the behaviour or conduct of a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other adult working with children, the school will follow its procedures for allegations against adults.

This includes concerns that an individual:

- may have harmed a child;
- may have committed an offence against a child;
- may pose a risk of harm to children;
- has behaved inappropriately towards a pupil.

The school will consult the appropriate safeguarding authorities where required.

16. LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS

Staff should also feel confident reporting low-level concerns about adult behaviour.

A low-level concern may involve behaviour that:

- is inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct;
- crosses professional boundaries;
- causes discomfort or concern;
- appears inappropriate but does not meet the threshold for an allegation of harm.

Low-level concerns will be recorded and reviewed appropriately.

The school will consider whether a pattern of concerns exists.

Staff should not ignore concerning behaviour simply because it does not appear sufficiently serious to warrant a formal allegation.

17. WHISTLEBLOWING AND SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

The Pioneers Academy is committed to maintaining an environment in which staff feel able to speak up.

Staff should never feel that raising a safeguarding concern is disloyal to the school.

Protecting children takes priority over protecting the reputation of individuals or the organisation.

Where staff believe that safeguarding arrangements are not working effectively, they have a professional responsibility to raise their concerns.

18. IF INTERNAL PROCEDURES DO NOT RESOLVE THE CONCERN

If an individual believes that their concern has not been appropriately addressed, they should escalate the matter.

Depending on the nature of the concern, this may include contacting:

- the proprietor/governance body;
- the Local Authority Designated Officer;
- children's social care;
- the police;
- Ofsted;
- the Education and Skills Funding Agency where applicable;
- another appropriate regulatory or professional body.

The appropriate external route will depend on the nature of the concern.

Staff should not be discouraged from contacting an appropriate external authority where internal procedures have failed to address a serious concern.

19. WHISTLEBLOWING ABOUT SAFEGUARDING

Where an individual believes that a child is at risk and internal safeguarding arrangements have failed, they should not wait indefinitely for the school to act.

The concern should be escalated through the appropriate safeguarding route.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, the police or emergency services should be contacted.

Emergency: 999

20. RECORD KEEPING

All whistleblowing concerns will be recorded securely.

Records should include:

- date of concern;
- person raising concern, where known;
- nature of concern;
- person(s) involved;
- action taken;
- referrals made;
- investigation undertaken;
- decisions;
- outcome where appropriate.

Whistleblowing records will be treated confidentially.

Safeguarding-related whistleblowing records will be maintained in accordance with the school's safeguarding record-keeping procedures.

21. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff are expected to:

- maintain professional standards;
 - act honestly;
 - raise serious concerns;
 - report safeguarding concerns immediately;
 - cooperate with investigations;
 - maintain confidentiality;
 - avoid spreading allegations or rumours;
 - provide factual information;
 - avoid conducting their own investigation;
 - follow the school's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures.
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22. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

School leaders are responsible for:

- creating an environment where concerns can be raised;
 - taking concerns seriously;
 - responding promptly;
 - ensuring appropriate investigations take place;
 - protecting individuals from victimisation;
 - escalating safeguarding concerns;
 - maintaining appropriate records;
 - ensuring staff understand this policy.
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23. NO DETRIMENT FOR RAISING A CONCERN

The Pioneers Academy recognises that staff may sometimes be worried about the consequences of speaking up.

Staff should be reassured that raising a genuine concern will not, in itself, negatively affect their employment.

The school will not tolerate any attempt to intimidate, silence or punish an individual for raising a genuine safeguarding or whistleblowing concern.

24. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

The school will ensure that staff are made aware of:

- this policy;
- safeguarding procedures;
- the identity of the DSL and Deputy DSL;
- allegations procedures;
- low-level concerns procedures;
- whistleblowing routes;
- external reporting routes where appropriate.

25. Safeguarding training will reinforce that staff have a responsibility to report concerns

26. KEY SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Saif Ahmad

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Shabnam Parveen

Mental Health Lead

Mrs Asma Pandor

Attendance Officer

Mrs Fariyah Chowdhury

ICT / Online Safety Lead

Mr Aburahman Maniam

All staff must know how to contact the DSL or Deputy DSL and must understand that safeguarding concerns must be raised without delay.

27. KEY MESSAGE TO STAFF

The Pioneers Academy wants every member of staff to understand:

You will not be penalised for raising a genuine safeguarding concern.

You do not need to prove the concern before reporting it.

You should not investigate the concern yourself.

You should not assume someone else will report it.

If you believe something is wrong, speak up.

If a child may be at risk, safeguarding takes priority.

28. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school procedures.

The policy will be reviewed alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- relevant whistleblowing legislation and guidance;
- local safeguarding partnership procedures;
- the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

APPROVED BY: The Headteacher

Date: 2nd September 2026

Signed: S. Parveen