



The
Rise
Partnership
Trust
Love • Learn • Laugh

Whistleblowing Policy

OCTOBER 2025

Approved by:	Board of Trustees	Date: October 2025
Last reviewed on:	October 2025	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

With Reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Rise Partnership Trust (RPT) is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and ethical standards and this policy will enable you to raise your concerns of serious wrongdoing without fear of reprisal.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all individuals working for RPT Schools at all levels and grades, whether they are employees, contractors or agency staff.
- 1.3. Whistleblowing is distinct from the Workplace Resolution Policy or Dignity at Work Policy which should be used if you have a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. **Concerns about wrongdoing within RPT Schools such as fraud, malpractice, mismanagement, breach of health and safety law or any other illegal or unethical act either on the part of leadership/management, the Trust Board and/or Local Governing Board or by fellow employees should be raised using this procedure.**
- 1.4. This policy has been introduced in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (which you can consult at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998>) to enable workers to raise issues of concern in an appropriate manner.

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and that their confidentiality will be respected
- Let all staff in the Trust know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the Trust
- Set clear procedures for how the Trust will respond to such concerns
- Let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern
- Assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue)

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The policy applies to all employees or other workers who provide services to the Trust in any capacity, including self-employed consultants or contractors who provide services on a personal basis and agency workers.

3. Definition of Whistleblowing

- Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is "in the public interest". Examples of whistle-blowing include (but are not limited to):
- Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption
- Pupils' or staff health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Breaches of financial management procedures
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- Damage to the environment

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the Trust, or individual schools in the Trust, count as whistle-blowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance and would be considered under the Work Resolution Policy.

When staff have a concern they should consider whether it would be better to follow our Work Resolution Policy or complaints procedures.

4. Procedure for Staff to raise a whistle-blowing concern

4.1 When to raise a concern:

Staff should consider the examples in section 3 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or Trust procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

4.2 Who to report to:

School-based staff should report their concern to the Headteacher/CEO. If the concern is about the Headteacher/CEO/other member of staff], or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to CEO and in the case of concern about the CEO to report to the chair of the board of Trustees

4.3 Multi-academy Trusts (MATs)

Central team staff should report their concern to the CEO. If the concern is about the CEO/other senior or executive leader, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the central team staff should report the concern to the Chair of Trustees.

4.4 How to raise the concern

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

5. Trust Procedure for Responding to a whistle-blowing concern

5.1 Stage One – notification

- 5.1.1 The staff member (the Representor) raising the concern should do so orally or in writing to their line manager or to the Head teacher (where the employee is based in a school). The representor has the right to have the matter treated confidentially.
- 5.1.2 The Head teacher, CEO if the matter relates to the Head teacher or Chair of Trust if the matter relates to the CEO, will either act as Assessor or will appoint another Assessor who is not implicated.
- 5.1.3 If the representor feels unable to raise their concern with their line manager or in the first instance, they may contact the Assessor directly. If this occurs, the representor will be asked to explain why they feel unable to raise the concern with their line manager

5.2 Stage Two – the meeting

5.2.1 The Assessor will interview the representor within ten working days, in confidence, or earlier if there is an immediate danger to loss of life or serious injury and will:

5.2.1.1 Obtain as much information as possible from the representor about the grounds for the belief of malpractice;

5.2.1.2 Consult with the representor about further steps which could be taken;

5.2.1.3 Inform the representor of appropriate routes if the matter does not fall within the RPT Schools Whistleblowing Procedure;

5.2.1.4 Report all matters raised under this procedure to the CEO or RPT Chair of Trustees

5.2.1.5 At the interview with the Assessor, the representor may be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or a work colleague. The Assessor may be accompanied by a note taker.

5.3 Stage Three – the outcome

5.3.1 Within ten working days of the interview, the Assessor will recommend to the person's line manager:

- The matter be investigated internally by the school
- The matter be investigated by an external person appointed by the school
- The matter be reported to the Department for Education
- The matter be reported to the Police.
- No further action be taken.
- The grounds on which no further action is taken may include:
- The Assessor is satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, there is no evidence that malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- The matter is already (or has been) the subject of proceedings under one of the school's other procedures or policies;
- The matter concerned is already the subject of legal proceedings, or has already been referred to the police, an external investigator, the Department for Education or another public authority.

5.4 Should it be alleged that the Head teacher is involved in the alleged malpractice; the Assessor's recommendation will be made to the CEO.

5.5 The recipient of the recommendation (Head teacher, CEO or Chair of Trustees) will ensure that it is implemented unless there is good reason for not doing so in whole or in part. Such a reason will be reported to the next meeting of the Local Governing Body and to the Assessor.

5.6 The conclusion of any agreed investigation will be reported by the Assessor to the representor in writing within twenty eight days and a copy passed to the CEO if they are not acting as Assessor.

5.7 If the representor has not had a response within the above time limits, he or she may appeal to RPT's Trust Board, but will inform the Assessor before doing so.

5.8 The representor may at any time disclose the matter on a confidential basis to a solicitor or trade union representative for the purpose of taking legal advice.

6. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Trust will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

7. Escalating concerns beyond the Trust

The Trust encourages staff to raise their concerns internally, in line with section 4 of this policy, but recognises that staff may feel the need to report concerns to an external body. A list of prescribed bodies to whom staff can raise concerns with is included [here](#).

The Protect advice line, linked to in section 3 of this policy, can also help staff when deciding whether to raise the concern to an external party.

This policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with RPT's recognised Joint Consultative Committee/trade union representatives.