

Full name of policy:	<b>Whistleblowing Policy (Reporting Wrongdoing)</b>		
Name and post of person responsible:	Jan Balon (Headteacher)		
Frequency of review:	Every two years		
Dates of previous reviews:	July 2021		
Date of next formal review:	February 2026		
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Total number of pages: (Including appendices and front sheet)	7		
Comments:	New members of staff should read this policy in conjunction with the suite of policies and procedures relating to safeguarding		
	<b>Name (role):</b>	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Written:	Lisa Cardinali (HR Manager)	L. Cardinali	10/06/21
Ratified:	Adam Pettit (Acting Chair of Governors)	A Petit	17/09/21
Reviewed:	Paul Martin (Business Director)	P. Martin	19/02/2024
Ratified:	Full Governing Board (FGB)		15/03/2024

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## **1 Introduction**

London Academy of Excellence Tottenham (hereafter LAE Tottenham) is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability, and a culture of safety, of raising concerns and of reflective practice. In line with this commitment, LAE Tottenham encourages those with serious or particular concerns about the school's work to voice those concerns. This includes concerns about the activities of staff, Governors and external organisations in their dealings with the school.

### **1.1 Scope of the policy**

The Whistleblowing Policy and associated procedures apply to:

- all LAE Tottenham employees whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, regardless of length of service;
- individuals such as agency staff, self-employed contractors, consultants, volunteers or others who may not be directly employed by LAE Tottenham but work at the school;
- job applicants;
- any member of staff seconded to LAE Tottenham from another school.

This policy:

- provides the basis on which individuals can raise any such concerns they may have over incidents that happened in the past, are happening now or that they believe will happen in the near future;
- indicates how individuals will receive feedback on any action taken;
- sets out how individuals may take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the school's response; and
- gives assurance of protection from reprisals or victimisation for 'whistleblowing' in good faith;

Specific examples of issues which would generally be taken to be "in the public interest" and could be raised through the Whistleblowing Policy would be:

- poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime;
- unlawful practices;
- concerns against the school's policies;
- improper conduct;
- poor or unsafe practice;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- a criminal offence;
- practices which seem likely to harm somebody or the environment;
- concerns linked to institutionalised discrimination;
- suspicions of fraud, bribery or other malpractice; or

- a cover-up or deliberate concealment of these sorts of issues.

## **1.2 Other policies**

Where a concern relates to Safeguarding, this policy should be read in conjunction with LAE Tottenham's policies relating to Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment.

LAE Tottenham's Grievance Procedures are likely to be a more appropriate course of action where a concern relates to an individual's own employment, contractual terms and conditions or working relationships. A copy of the Grievance Policy is available in the Information for Staff shared area.

## **2 Protecting individuals who report wrongdoing**

### **2.1 Protection from harassment or victimisation**

LAE Tottenham recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one for an individual to make, not least because of fear of possible reprisals from those alleged to be responsible for the malpractice. The school will not tolerate harassment, unfair/detrimental treatment or victimisation and will take all necessary steps to protect individuals who raise concerns in good faith.

### **2.2 Confidentiality**

LAE Tottenham will protect the identity of individuals who raise concerns and do not want their names to be disclosed. It must be appreciated, however, that an investigation may reveal the source of any given information and statements made by the individuals who raised the issue may be required as part of the evidence. Likewise, disclosure of a name may be required by law.

The school encourages individuals to put their name to any allegations made. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but nonetheless they will be considered at the discretion of the school. In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern;
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

## **3 Untrue allegations**

If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the individual and all necessary steps will be taken to

protect them from any possible reprisals. However, if individuals make allegations that are found to be malicious, vexatious or made with false knowledge, disciplinary action against them will be considered.

#### **4 How to raise a concern**

The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action, if that is warranted.

As a first step an individual should normally raise concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice.

Concerns are best raised in writing. This should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why the individual is concerned about the situation. An individual, however, who does not feel able to put their concerns in writing can telephone or meet the appropriate officer, be they the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. It is likely that following such conversations the individual will be asked to provide their concerns in writing to aid any subsequent investigation.

Individuals may invite a colleague or their trade union or professional association to raise a matter in conjunction with them.

#### **5 How will LAE Tottenham respond?**

Within two weeks of a concern having been notified, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will write to the person who raised the issue:

- acknowledging that the concern has been raised;
- indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
- where possible, giving an estimate of how long it will be likely to take to provide a final response; and
- advising whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

In order to protect individuals and the school, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for a formal investigation. The format of formal action taken by LAE Tottenham will depend on the nature of the concern and may, for example:

- be investigated internally by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or nominated deputy;
- be referred to the Police.

The amount of contact between the investigators considering the issue and the individual who has raised the issue will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought.

When any meeting is arranged with an individual, they may be accompanied by a representative or colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

LAE Tottenham accepts that individuals need to be assured that any matter has been properly addressed. Therefore, subject to legal or contractual constraints, individuals who raise concerns that are then investigated will receive information about the outcomes of any investigations.

## **6 Taking the matter further**

This policy is intended to provide individuals with an avenue to raise relevant concerns within the school. It is hoped that individuals will be satisfied with the action taken as a result. If an individual is not satisfied with how the matter was dealt with, and wishes to pursue a matter outside the school, the following are possible contact points, some or all of which may be appropriate:

- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations, e.g. the Secretary State for Education;
- The Local Authority;
- the Police;
- the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS);
- the charity Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work).

If an employee does take the matter outside the School, they must ensure that confidential information is not disclosed. Any breaches of confidentiality, either internal or external, will be taken seriously and disciplinary action may be invoked.

It should be noted that if an individual reports the concern to the media, protections under Whistleblowing legislation may be lost.

## **7 Responsibilities**

The Governors have overall responsibility for this policy. Maintenance and operation of this policy is delegated to the Headteacher. A record of concerns raised and outcomes will be maintained and will be reported to the Chair as the Governor

responsible for keeping this policy under review.

## **8 Further guidance**

For general information - [www.gov.uk/whistleblowing](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing)

Free and confidential whistleblowing advice from the charity Protect - [www.protect-advice.org.uk](http://www.protect-advice.org.uk) or telephone 020 3117 2520

For guidance on whether the issue is in the public interest or is more of a personal concern - [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

The relevant regulatory organisation or prescribed body for education (as referred to under Section 6 above) is the Secretary of State for Education - [www.gov.uk/contact-dfe](http://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe)