Whistleblowing Policy

Policy owner	Chief People Officer
Current version	V0.4
Document Status	Approved
Date Last approved	July 2025
Date of next review	July 2028
Review frequency	3 Years
Policy type (cross-trust or school specific)	Trust
Approval route	Audit and Risk Committee
Statutory Y/N	No
Appendices	No
Distribution (Trust website, School website, SharePoint etc)	Trust Website
Communication with staff (Method and date	Leadership bulletin –8th June 2026
Training requirements for staff	None

Version control			
Version	Date	Author	Changes
V0.1	September 2018	HR	New Policy
V0.2	September 2021	HR	Amendments to terminology and update following feedback and legal guidance
V0.3	September 2021	HR	Updates following feedback from the Trade Unions and consultation with MELT
V0.4	July 2025	Hr /COO	Streamlined and updated
V0.5	May 2026	NH/SW	Updated in line with ERA

Whistleblowing Policy

Contents

1. Introduction 2
2. Scope and Purpose 3
3. What is Whistleblowing 3
4. Confidentiality and Data Protection 4
5. External Disclosures 5
6. Investigation and Outcome 5
7. If you are not satisfied 6
8. Protection and Support for Whistleblowers 6
9. Review 6

1. Introduction

1.1 Futura Learning Partnership (the trust) is committed to the highest standards of honesty, integrity and accountability in line with the Trust's values of Respect, Opportunity, Collaboration and Aspiration. We expect all colleagues to maintain these standards in accordance with our Code of Conduct. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.

1.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

1.3 The Audit and Risk Committee has delegated responsibility from the Trust Board for keeping this policy under review and for ensuring that suitable processes are in place whereby concerns raised under this policy are managed in accordance with the policy. The Committee will also be made aware of any concerns raised under this policy to an external body.

2. Scope and Purpose

2.1 The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage colleagues to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.

- To provide colleagues with guidance on how to raise concerns.

- To reassure colleagues that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

2.2 This policy applies to all employees, trustees, governors, consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as "colleagues" in this policy).

3. What is Whistleblowing

3.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters or "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that there are wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- criminal activity
- miscarriages of justice
- sexual harassment *
- danger to health and safety
- damage to the environment
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
- bribery

- financial fraud or mismanagement
- negligence
- breach of our internal policies and procedures including our Code of Conduct
- conduct likely to damage our reputation or financial wellbeing
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- unethical behaviour
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters

**This policy applies to disclosures concerning sexual harassment or sexual misconduct, including conduct that may amount to a breach of legal obligations or pose a risk to individuals, where the worker reasonably believes the disclosure is made in the public interest under the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended). Raising such concerns supports the organisation in meeting its duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment.*

3.2 A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

3.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Dignity at work or Grievance Policy.

3.4 If a complaint relates to your own personal circumstances but you also have wider concerns regarding one of the areas set out at 3.1 (for example, a breach of our internal policies), you should discuss with a member of the School/Trust's leadership team which route is the most appropriate.

If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy, you should seek advice from a member of the school / Trust's leadership team.

3.5 If your concern is in relation to safeguarding and the welfare of pupils, you should consider whether the matter is better raised under the child protection policy and in accordance with the arrangements for reporting such concerns, i.e. via the designated safeguarding lead, although the principles set out in the is policy may still apply.

4. Confidentiality and Data Protection

4.1 We hope that colleagues will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

4.2 We do not encourage colleagues to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to one of the other contact points listed in paragraph 3.5 and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are given at the end of this policy.

4.3 Where we receive anonymous complaints, we will investigate the complaints as far as is reasonable taking into account:

- the seriousness of the issue raised
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources

4.4 As part of the application of this policy, the Trust may collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018) in the collecting, holding and sharing of information in relation to our workforce. Records will be kept in accordance with our Workforce Privacy Notice, our Retention Schedule and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation.

5. External Disclosures

5.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace.

5.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as the DfE. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. No-one should disclose to an external source without first going through the internal procedure without compelling reasons.

5.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our colleagues, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a contractor, supplier or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise a concern with the third party directly where you reasonably believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager or one of the other individuals set out in paragraph 3.5 for guidance.

5.4 If the concerned person does take their concerns outside the trust, they should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information. Concerned persons should not take concerns directly to the media. If the trust believes that its reputation has been damaged by unfounded allegations in the public domain, it reserves the right to take action. Deliberately false or malicious accusations made by a concerned person will be dealt with under the trust's disciplinary procedure.

6. Investigation and Outcome

6.1 Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation.

6.2. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information.

6.3. In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including colleagues with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. We may in some circumstances, appoint an external person or body to investigate the concern. The investigator(s) will collate findings on the matter and may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing. This will be sent to the Headteacher / Director and/ Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees for actioning.

6.4. We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation, and outcome or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

6.5. If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

7. If you are not satisfied

7.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.

7.2. If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts in paragraph 3.5. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

8. Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

8.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support colleagues who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

8.2 Colleagues must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform one of the contact people in paragraph 3.5 immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Policy.

8.3 Colleagues must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, the whistleblower may have a right to sue an individual personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

9. Review

9.1 The trust will share this policy with all colleagues and review this policy regularly and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

External Contacts

Trust's external auditors: Bishop Fleming	Telephone: 0117 9100250 Website: www.bishopfleming.co.uk
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 3117 2520 Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk
The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline	Helpline: 0800 028 0285 E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk
EAP - Healthshield	Helpline: 0800 030 5182
Individuals may choose to consult with their trade union	
Department for Education	Telephone: 0370 000 2288 Website: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departmentfor https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-educationeducation
Ofqual	Telephone: 0300 303 3344 Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual