



Speak Out Policy

LLSE

Effective from January 2025

Next Review January 2026

Version Control		
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August 2021	Joy Fourie	Policy adopted
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INTRODUCTION

LLSE works with clusters of schools and strategic partners committed to growing and developing the next generation of school leaders equipped with the skills, determination and passion necessary to lead outstanding schools.

LLSE values its staff, partners and participants and is committed to supporting their wellbeing and development in every interaction, promoting an ethos of caring for each other.

Our Vision - that every child and young person's learning is able to flourish in schools where outstanding leadership creates environments full of rich opportunities to learn.

Our Values¹ - we are committed to promoting and modelling the following values: Integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership and selflessness.

This policy applies to all staff (including temporary staff and consultants) and Board members and we are committed to ensuring that all our staff, consultants, Board members and partners understand and actively support the *Speak Out* Policy in the context of their work with LLSE.

COMMITMENT

We are committed to high standards of individual and organisational behaviour guided by our core values which include openness and honesty. This policy sets out our commitment to:

- *Speak Out* about any behaviours or decisions that cause serious concern, also known as whistleblowing;
- listen supportively to those who raise serious concerns; and
- respond in a timely way and in line with our corporate policies and national guidance.

Serious concerns could include safeguarding concerns, potential violation of the law or our values, policies, financial or any individual or organisational behaviours which may be unethical.

PURPOSE & INTENTIONS

The purpose of the policy is:

- To ensure any behaviour, decision or action causing serious concern is highlighted and dealt with including safeguarding concerns.
- To empower any member of staff, Board member or partner to raise serious concerns without fear of harassment or victimisation.
- To ensuring all staff know how to raise serious concerns including the use of national whistleblowing helplines.
- To support a culture of openness, honesty and trust.

This policy describes how any member of staff can raise serious concerns. It may be that issues raised via this policy will be addressed using other procedures, e.g. anti-fraud and corruption, grievance, disciplinary and safeguarding procedures.

¹ Based on the Nolan Committee's seven principles of public life

CONTEXT

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 and related Working Together guidance
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1999
- Local safeguarding arrangements as specified by the Local Safeguarding Boards for children and adults
- Government guidance on whistleblowing www.gov.uk/whistleblowing

SUPPORTING THOSE WHO *SPEAK OUT*

No Harassment or Victimisation

We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. We will not accept harassment or victimisation of any kind and we will take action to protect any individual who raises a concern in good faith.

We will promote and foster a workplace culture that supports openness where individuals are encouraged to speak out without fear of reprisal.

Confidentiality and Anonymous Allegations

We will endeavour to protect an individual's identity if confidentiality is requested. However, it must be understood that should the concern raised need to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. safeguarding concerns or disciplinary procedures, the individual may be asked to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence, thus revealing identity. This will be discussed with the individual and support will be provided to allay any fears.

Individuals are encouraged to put their name to an allegation. Allegations expressed anonymously are much less powerful and more difficult to address, but they will be considered at the discretion of senior managers. In exercising this discretion, senior managers will consider:

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

Advice and Support

We recognise that raising concerns can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support will be made available, as appropriate to both the individual (s) raising the concerns and those subject to any investigation. Individuals may also seek support from outside agencies for example a Union, the Education Support Partnership, or other similar organisations.

Untrue and Unfounded Allegations

Where there is clear evidence that an individual has made malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

Where an allegation is confirmed as unfounded. This outcome will be notified to the individual who raised the concern, and the matter will be concluded unless new evidence becomes available.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Leadership

The Board has overall accountability for organisational culture, behaviour, policies and procedures. They will ensure that:

- there is an annual review of the Speak Out policy including a review of its effectiveness in practice.
- any investigations which highlight organisational failures are used to improve practice.

The Co CEOs will ensure that:

- there is adherence to the policy
- procedures are in place for all staff and partners to be familiar with the policy and have the confidence and knowledge to implement it.

The Co CEOs are Kate Wilson kate.wilson@llse.org.uk and Nicola Taylor nicola.taylor@llse.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that:

Any serious concerns and allegations made regarding safeguarding are acted upon in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and local safeguarding arrangements.

The Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at LLSE is Kate Wilson, kate.wilson@llse.org.uk

The Deputy DSL's are: Gregg Skinsley-Stephens gregg.skinsley@llse.org.uk and Viv Turner vivian.turner@llse.org.uk

Members of Staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- Be committed to the values and related behaviours.
- Understand LLSE's policies and systems.
- Undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
- Be aware of the process of raising a safeguarding concern.

Working with partners

Due diligence will take place with all contracted partners to ensure they have their own adequate policies and procedures in place when working under an LLSE contract or agreement.

Facilitators, coaches and any other cluster staff who may deliver training and have face to face or online interaction with training participants will be expected to adhere to their organisations' whistleblowing policy and procedures and to report any contract related incidents to LLSE.

RAISING A SERIOUS CONCERN

Individuals can raise concern under this policy by:

- Contacting their line manager
- Contacting another senior manager within the organisation

- Contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding concerns

When a serious concern is raised, individuals should provide as much detailed information as possible and take responsibility for keeping their own record of the concern made, to whom and the date. Individuals are asked to carefully consider what information is factual and what is assumption or hearsay. If the concern presents an immediate threat to life or property individuals should contact the relevant emergency service without delay.

If the serious concern has safeguarding implications these should be reported to the DSL within 24 hours. The DSL will work with the LADO service to investigate any allegations about staff and take appropriate action.

Individuals can also raise safeguarding concerns independently using the **NSPCC whistleblowing advice line**.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

RELATED POLICIES

Policies which sit alongside the *Speak Out* policy include:

- Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Financial Policies

RECORD KEEPING

All serious concerns and related investigations and decisions should be recorded in writing and held securely.

Safeguarding records that are kept for members of staff will be maintained separately from all other records relating to that member of staff. Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL.

Complaints

LLSE has a Complaints Procedure available to learners, partners, members of staff and visitors who wish to complain. This can be found on our website [LLSE Complaints policy](#).

Safeguarding concerns

All members of staff are made aware of LLSE's Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy and are provided with regular safeguarding updates and training including how to raise a safeguarding concern. **It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place an adult or child at risk of serious harm.**

LLSE has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of several listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in

regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the people.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is available to support staff with safeguarding concerns.

KEY LLSE CONTACTS

Kate Wilson, Co-CEO and DSL, kate.wilson@llse.org.uk

Nicola Taylor, Co-CEO nicola.taylor@llse.org.uk

Gregg Skinsley-Stephens, Deputy DSL, gregg.skinsley@llse.org.uk

Viv Turner, Deputy DSL vivian.turner@llse.org.uk

Date of next review: January 2026