



## **Whistleblowing Policy**

**Prepared by:** The Central Team

**Date:** October 2026

**Review date:** September 2027

**Version:** V1.1

### **1. Introduction**

Life Skills Enterprise is owned and operated by Cavendish Education. This policy is part of the school policy framework and must be read alongside safeguarding, child protection, health and safety, complaints, disciplinary and staff grievance policies. It applies to employees, agency workers, volunteers, contractors and other workers as appropriate. The school's CALM values are Curriculum Value, Aspirations, Life Skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing.

## **2. Aims**

- Enable staff to report suspected wrongdoing promptly, safely and in the public interest.
- Explain whom staff should contact, how concerns will be assessed and investigated, and how escalation operates.
- Reassure workers that qualifying protected disclosures are protected by law from detriment and dismissal.
- Distinguish individual grievances from public-interest disclosures, and ensure safeguarding and legal concerns are never ignored.

## **3. Legislation**

This policy reflects Part IVA of the Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, current prescribed-persons arrangements and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Confidentiality clauses or non-disclosure agreements cannot prevent legally protected disclosures in the public interest.

## **4. Links with other policies**

- Staff grievance and complaints policies
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Attendance, Online Safety and Children Missing procedures

## **5. Definition of whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing concerns wrongdoing in the public interest. Examples include criminal offences, danger to the health and safety of pupils or staff, failure to comply with legal obligations, financial malpractice, sexual harassment, harm to the environment and deliberate concealment. A personal employment dispute will not normally qualify unless it also raises a wider public-interest concern.

Where a concern includes both personal grievance and wider pupil safety issues, the staff member may speak with Paul Barrett (Headteacher) about the appropriate process. Staff may also seek confidential independent guidance from Protect.

### **5.1 Failure to share safeguarding and welfare information (NEW)**

A serious failure to meet the duty imposed by section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 may be a whistleblowing matter if it meets the public-interest and other legal tests. Ordinary reporting to Craig Kelly / Kerry Lowther (DSL) , secure sharing with appropriate organisations and emergency referrals must take place without waiting for the outcome of a whistleblowing investigation. The duty extends to early welfare and emerging need, not only suspected significant harm.

## **6. Procedure for raising concerns**

Staff should normally make a disclosure to Paul Barrett, Headteacher. Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, or independence is otherwise required, report to the Chair of Governors/Proprietor or the appropriate Cavendish Education Director. Central team staff should follow Cavendish director and proprietary-body escalation routes; the Chair of the Proprietary Body is Aatif Hassan.

Concerns should normally be provided in writing, setting out what happened, when, where and who was involved, with relevant evidence and any personal interest. Anonymous reports will be assessed, though lack of contact details may limit investigations. If workers fear reprisals, confidential handling should be discussed with the

appropriate recipient. A concern about a child must also be reported immediately to Craig Kelly, Kerry Lowther or a Deputy DSL (Kim Ochs, Rob Walker or Paul Barrett) and referred to police/social care where required.

## **7. Responding to disclosures**

- The recipient will arrange an initial meeting within a reasonable time, record the concern and explain protections and next steps.
- The recipient will assess whether the issue is a whistleblowing concern, a safeguarding referral, a grievance, or requires concurrent action.
- An impartial investigation will be commissioned where required, with appropriate external professional input or reporting to statutory bodies.
- Where a concern is escalated to the chair, acknowledgement and an indicative timetable should be given within seven working days, excluding school closures, consistent with Cavendish procedure.
- Staff and persons named in the disclosure will be treated fairly, with appropriate confidential support and wellbeing checks.
- The decision, evidence, outcome and any corrective actions will be recorded; feedback will be provided to the reporter subject to confidentiality and legal restrictions.

## **8. Malicious or vexatious allegations**

A staff member who raises a concern in good faith will not be subject to disciplinary action simply because it is not substantiated. Deliberately fabricated or malicious allegations may be dealt with under disciplinary procedures, on an evidence-based and fair basis.

## **9. Escalating outside Cavendish Education**

Staff may contact an appropriate prescribed person or regulator where the legal conditions for a protected disclosure apply. External safeguarding routes (including the local authority and police) and the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line remain available. Protect provides confidential specialist advice. Staff should never delay a necessary safeguarding referral pending an internal investigation.

## **10. LSE contacts**

Headteacher: Paul Barrett; Lead DSL: Craig Kelly; Kerry Lowther; Deputy DSLs: Kim Ochs, Rob Walker and Paul Barrett; HR: Clare Dicks. Telephone: 01843 260315; [office@lifeskillsenterprise.co.uk](mailto:office@lifeskillsenterprise.co.uk).  
Chair/Proprietor routes: via Cavendish Education, 58 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AJ.

## **11. Approval and policy review**

The proprietor/Board of Directors will consider and record approval. Reviewed at least annually or following material legislative or safeguarding changes. The current approved version is held in the secure school policy folder and published on the LSE website.

## **12. Revision history**

V1: July 2025 central template. V1.1: July 2026 Cavendish update and LSE localisation (website version).  
V1.2: October 2026 proposed section 16LA update and revised LSE contacts - pending approval.

### Information-sharing legal references

- Children Act 2004, section 16LA (in force 30 September 2026)
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, section 4
- Department for Education, Information sharing to safeguard children and young people: statutory guidance, updated 10 September 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures and local authority Children Missing Education arrangements

## **1. Contact Information**

For any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact the Headteacher, Paul Barrett at [office@lifeskillsenterprise.co.uk](mailto:office@lifeskillsenterprise.co.uk) / 01843 260315.

## 2. Approval & Policy Review

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by:

|                           |                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Policy Approver(s)</b> | Cavendish Education Board of Directors/Senior Leadership Team of the school                 |
| <b>Storage Location</b>   | School website, secure online policy library and hard copy available from the school office |
| <b>Effective Date</b>     | October 2026                                                                                |
| <b>Next Review Date</b>   | September 2027                                                                              |

## 3. Revision History

| Version | Change                          | Author                 | Date of Change |
|---------|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1       | First published                 | Cavendish Central Team | July 2025      |
| 1.1     | Updates to sections 2, 5, 6 & 7 | Cavendish Central Team | July 2026      |
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