



Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Staff reviewer:	Scrutinised by link Governor:	Date signed off at Committee:	Date approved at Board:	Next review date:
<i>Henry Cummins</i>	Gemma Noble	<i>Nov 2025</i>		<i>Nov 2028</i>

1. Purpose

Exeter Mathematics School (EMS) seeks to promote an environment in which it is safe for staff at any level to raise any concerns they may have regarding malpractice within School. Individuals are encouraged to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the business or the way in which the business is run.

The Charity "Protect", provides a confidential helpline for workers to seek advice on concerns they may have. Their confidential line is 020 3117 2520 or alternatively advice can be sought via their webform on <https://protect-advice.org.uk/advice>.

2. What is Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting, in the public interest, of any suspected wrongdoing, malpractice or dangers at work. This may include bribery, fraud, corruption or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, danger to health and safety risks, damage to the environment, any breach of legal or professional obligations, inappropriate use of academy assets, decision making for personal gain, abuse of position, conduct likely to damage reputation or financial well-being, unauthorised disclosure of confidential information and safeguarding issues.

Specifically in respect of safeguarding, any low-level concerns must be reported to the DSL or Headteacher, unless the concerns are in regard to the headteacher where they should be reported to the Chair of Governors. On receipt of an allegation, the Headteacher must consider if the following criteria has been met, referred to as the 'harm threshold'.

Has the adult, for whom the allegation has been shared:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a student, or may have harmed a student and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a student and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to students; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

This list could include behaviour that has taken place outside of the school or through a digital means. Where this is, or likely to be the case, the Headteacher must seek support and guidance of the local authority designated officer (LADO).

This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

Legislation pertinent to this policy is listed below:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013
- Data Protection Act 2018

3. Policy

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides that in addition to a worker engaged under contract with Exeter Mathematics School, the following are also classed as workers and able to make a disclosure:

- Agency Workers
- Contractor

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides protection to workers making disclosures in the public interest who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act causing risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation
- concealment of any of the above

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for the worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The employee/worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

EMS supports the right of any employee/worker who makes such a protected disclosure not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because they have made a disclosure.

EMS encourages employees/workers to raise their concerns under this procedure in the first instance. If an employee/worker is not sure whether or not to raise a concern, they should discuss the issue with their line manager or the HR department (see also PROTECT section 1)

4. Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Workers should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.

- Maliciously making a false allegation is a serious offence. Wilful misuse of this procedure may constitute an act of gross misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the worker who raised the issue.
- No worker will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an employee/worker for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered because of any investigation under this procedure the organisation's disciplinary policy/procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, workers should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the School Business Manager or Headteacher or the Chair of Resources Committee if the whistle blowing is about the Headteacher's conduct).
- This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of an employee's own contract of employment. If an employee is concerned that their own contract has been, or is likely to be, broken, they should refer to the EMS Grievance policy and Procedure.

5. Procedure

- 1) The purpose of the procedure is to enable a disclosure to be made to a "designated person" and to indicate the manner with which the matter will be dealt following disclosure. All matters under this procedure will be treated in confidence in a manner appropriate to the nature of the disclosure.
- 2) For this procedure, the designated people are the Headteacher, the School Business Manager or the Chair of Resources Committee; in their absence the designated deputies are the ~~Deputy Headteacher~~ Assistant Headteachers. If the protected disclosure relates directly to one of the above, it should be referred to another of the designated people.

- 3) The designated person on receiving information on a protected disclosure from an employee will acknowledge in writing receipt of such disclosure as soon as reasonably possible.

The designated person will decide in conjunction with the HR department how the investigation is to be conducted. An investigation may involve the employee and other individuals involved, providing a written statement. Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out in section 4. The employee's statement will be taken into account and they will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained.

- 4) On the conclusion of the investigation the appointed investigating manager will summarise their findings to the designated person.
- 5) The designated person will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. If disciplinary action is required, the line manager or Investigating Manager in conjunction with a member of the HR team will start the disciplinary procedure.
- 6) On the conclusion of any investigation, the employee will be told of the outcome of the investigation and what action has been taken or what action will be taken. If no action is to be taken; the reason for this will be explained.

Appeal

If the employee/worker is concerned that following the investigation and subsequent action, they believe that the conduct is continuing or that appropriate action has not been taken, they may raise the matter with the Chair of Governors. Further advice can be obtained by the employee from Protect, the whistleblowing charity.

The Chair of the Governors (or such person designated by the Chair) will review the investigation and subsequent action (either alone or together with another Board member) and advise the employee in writing, as soon as possible of the review. If following receipt of such advice, the employee/worker reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, they should report the matter externally to a prescribed person... ~~The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made.~~ These include:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- Financial Conduct Authority
- Health and Safety Executive
- Environment Agency
- Director of Public Prosecutions
- Competition and Markets Authority
- Serious Fraud Office
- Independent Police Complaints Commission
- Charity Commission
- A legal adviser

- NSPCC
- OFSTED
- ICO
- Their MP

The link below details all prescribed bodies to whom a disclosure in the public interest can be made.

[Whistleblowing: list of prescribed people and bodies](#)

6. Associated Documentation

Grievance Policy and Procedure

Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

7. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy/procedure will be reviewed every three years or in response to changes to legislation or best practice, whichever is the sooner.

It is the overall responsibility of the Schools Governing Board, with support from the School's HR service, for monitoring and reviewing this policy.

Equity Analysis

We need to consider each protected characteristic individually and in combination. The interaction of different layers of characteristics is called intersectionality. This recognises that the barriers for each group are not homogenous, and instead are a combination of layers of identity interacting. For further detail or to support the completion of the following, please see our equality and diversity policy.

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| <p>1. Evidence considered <i>What data or other information have you used to evaluate if this proposal is likely to have a positive or an adverse impact upon protected groups when implemented? Where were information gaps, and what steps can you take to remedy these gaps? Can the RM intelligence Dashboard (student counts) provide any insight into which protected characteristics are likely to be affected by the changes?</i></p> |
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This policy provides equal access and opportunity for all staff to report malpractice.

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| <p>2. Consultation. <i>How have you consulted staff and student communities and representatives including those from protected groups? What were their views? Who else has been consulted in this proposal? Policy to be circulated to staff at each review</i></p> |
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| <p>3. Promoting equality. <i>Does this policy have a positive impact on equality? What evidence is there to support this? Could it do more? Policy implements government rules regarding this award. N/A</i></p> |
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4. Identifying the impact of policies

Identify any issues in the document which could have an adverse impact on any people who are protected by the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or beliefs
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

None

Issue Assessed	Protected Group	Impact and Evidence	Justification	Proposed Action/Timeline	Person responsible for action(s)
<i>E.g. policy section or practice.</i>		<i>What are the possible impacts on people from the protected groups above, and explain how you have made that assessment. Are these impacts positive or negative?</i>	<i>Can the issue be justified for academic or business reasons? Please explain.</i>	<i>If this has a negative impact, what will you do to reduce, minimise or eliminate negative impact? If this has a positive impact, how will you promote, develop or utilise this opportunity?</i>	

5. **Monitoring** *How will you monitor the actual impact that your proposal has had following its implementation? When will you do this?* This policy to be reviewed after any incident of whistleblowing reported.

6. **Summary** *Summarise the outcome of this Equality Assessment, and state any actions you will be taking as a result.* This policy does not impact on the rights of any protected group and further action is not required.