



Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose

Bay Learning Academy CIC is committed to the highest standards of safeguarding, integrity, and accountability. This policy provides a clear, safe, and trusted route for individuals to raise concerns about wrongdoing, safeguarding failures, or serious risk in the public interest.

Whistleblowing is recognised as a **core safeguarding mechanism** and a key element of the safeguarding culture expected by Ofsted and required under statutory guidance.

This policy is written in line with:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- UK employment law
- Safeguarding legislation
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (latest edition)
- Ofsted expectations regarding safeguarding culture and leadership accountability

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees (permanent, fixed-term, temporary)
- Workers and agency staff
- Contractors and consultants
- Volunteers
- Directors

Former workers may also raise concerns relating to their time at Bay Learning Academy CIC.

3. What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information that a worker reasonably believes shows wrongdoing or risk **in the public interest**.

This includes concerns about:

- Safeguarding failures or risks to children and young people
- Conduct or behaviour that places children at risk
- Criminal activity or suspected criminal behaviour
- Breaches of legal, regulatory, or safeguarding obligations
- Health and safety risks



- Financial malpractice, fraud, or misuse of public funds
- Abuse of power or serious misconduct
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

Concerns may relate to **any individual**, including senior leaders or directors.

4. What This Policy Does Not Cover

This policy does not apply to:

- Personal employment issues (these should be raised under the Grievance Policy)
- Disciplinary matters where no public interest concern exists

If there is uncertainty, advice should be sought before deciding which procedure applies.

5. Safeguarding and Statutory Alignment

In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, Bay Learning Academy CIC:

- Promotes a **culture of vigilance, openness, and professional curiosity**
- Actively encourages staff to raise concerns where safeguarding systems, behaviours, or leadership may place children at risk
- Makes clear that **no concern is too small** and that safeguarding responsibilities override organisational hierarchy

Any whistleblowing concern involving **risk of harm to a child or young person** will be treated immediately as a **safeguarding concern** and managed in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

6. Legal Protection for Whistleblowers

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998:

- Workers are legally protected from dismissal or detriment for raising protected disclosures
- Protection applies where concerns are raised honestly and reasonably
- A whistleblower does not need proof, only a reasonable belief

Bay Learning Academy CIC will not tolerate retaliation, victimisation, or suppression of concerns. Any such behaviour will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

7. Low-Level Concerns About Adults

7.1 Purpose

Bay Learning Academy CIC recognises that **low-level concerns** about adults working with children are essential to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture.



A low-level concern is any concern about an adult's behaviour that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct
- Causes unease or professional concern
- Does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding allegation or whistleblowing

7.2 Examples of Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns may include:

- Inappropriate language or tone
- Over-familiarity with learners
- Poor professional judgement
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures consistently
- Conduct that undermines safeguarding culture

Staff do **not** need proof—only a reasonable concern.

7.3 Reporting Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns should be reported promptly to:

- The Principal
- A Director
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing and can be raised about **any adult**, including senior leaders.

7.4 Recording, Review, and Escalation

In line with KCSIE:

- Low-level concerns are recorded securely
- Records are reviewed to identify patterns, risk, or training needs
- Concerns are escalated where:
 - Patterns emerge
 - Risk increases
 - Safeguarding thresholds are met

Low-level concerns are not disciplinary findings unless thresholds are reached.

8. How to Raise a Whistleblowing Concern

8.1 Internal Reporting

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible to:

admin@baylearning.academy | www.baylearning.academy

Registered company in England and Wales as
Bay Learning Academy CIC
Company Number 14094467 VAT No. 435 8221 00





- The Principal
- A Director
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (where safeguarding is involved)

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Anonymous disclosures will be considered, though anonymity may limit investigation.

8.2 Information to Provide

Where possible, the whistleblower should include:

- The nature of the concern
- Dates, times, and locations
- Individuals involved (if known)
- Any supporting information or evidence

9. Investigation and Response

Bay Learning Academy CIC will:

- Take all concerns seriously
- Assess concerns promptly
- Carry out proportionate investigations
- Refer matters to external agencies where required

The whistleblower will be informed that the concern has been received and, where appropriate, updated on progress, subject to confidentiality and data protection.

10. Confidentiality

All reasonable steps will be taken to protect the whistleblower's identity. Identity will only be disclosed where:

- Legally required, or
- Necessary to investigate or safeguard

Information will be handled in line with data protection law.

11. External Reporting

If internal reporting is not appropriate, or concerns have not been addressed, whistleblowers may raise concerns with external bodies, including:

- Local Authority / LADO
- Ofsted



- Police
- Health and Safety Executive

Staff are encouraged to seek advice before external disclosure but are not prevented from doing so.

12. False or Malicious Allegations

Concerns raised in good faith will never result in disciplinary action.

Deliberately false or malicious allegations may be addressed under the Disciplinary Policy.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Directors and Senior Leaders**
Promote a speak-up culture, ensure concerns are acted upon, and oversee safeguarding systems.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead**
Manage safeguarding-related disclosures and escalation.
- **All Staff and Workers**
Raise concerns where they believe wrongdoing or risk exists.

14. Commissioning Evidence Statement

Bay Learning Academy CIC can demonstrate that:

- Whistleblowing is embedded within safeguarding practice
- Staff understand how to raise:
 - Low-level concerns
 - Safeguarding concerns
 - Whistleblowing disclosures
- Concerns can be raised about **anyone**, including leadership
- Staff are protected from detriment
- Safeguarding culture is proactive, not reactive

This meets Ofsted expectations that safeguarding is effective, transparent, and continuously reviewed.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued compliance with:

- Employment law
- Safeguarding legislation
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- Ofsted frameworks