



Rawdah Montessori Primary School Whistleblowing Policy

Version: 1.0

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review Due: October 2026

1. Policy Statement

Rawdah Montessori Primary School is committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability. We expect all staff, volunteers, and governors to act with integrity and to raise any genuine concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing at the earliest opportunity.

This policy provides a framework for staff to raise concerns internally and confidently, knowing that they will be protected from retaliation. It is sometimes referred to as a 'Public Interest Disclosure' or 'Speaking Up' policy.

The school's Islamic ethos emphasises justice, truthfulness, and the protection of the community. This policy reflects those values by encouraging individuals to speak up when they believe something is wrong.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**

- **Disciplinary Policy**
- **Grievance Policy**

2. Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns internally.
- Provide a clear and accessible process for making a disclosure.
- Ensure that concerns are investigated promptly, fairly, and proportionately.
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from victimisation or dismissal for raising a genuine concern in the public interest.
- Promote a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability.

3. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker raises a concern about a risk, wrongdoing, or malpractice that they have witnessed in the workplace. The concern must be in the **public interest**, meaning it affects others (e.g., pupils, colleagues, the school community) rather than being a purely personal grievance.

Examples of concerns that may be raised under this policy include:

Category	Examples
Criminal Activity	Theft, fraud, bribery, or financial malpractice.
Safeguarding Failures	Failure to report a safeguarding concern, inadequate safeguarding arrangements, or a cover-up.
Health and Safety Risks	Dangerous practices, failure to maintain safe premises, or ignoring health and safety regulations.
Environmental Damage	Actions that harm the environment or breach environmental regulations.
Miscarriage of Justice	Unfair treatment of an individual, false accusations, or failure to follow proper procedures.
Discrimination or Harassment	Serious or systemic discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
Cover-Up of Wrongdoing	Deliberately concealing any of the above.

Note: This list is illustrative, not exhaustive. If you are unsure whether your concern qualifies, you should still raise it.

4. What is NOT Whistleblowing?

This policy is not intended to deal with:

- **Personal Grievances:** Issues relating to your own employment contract, terms and conditions, or disputes with colleagues (e.g., bullying, harassment, or discrimination directed at you personally). These should be raised under the **Grievance Policy**.
- **Complaints from Parents or Pupils:** These should be raised under the **Complaints Policy**.
- **Concerns about Pupil Safeguarding:** These must be raised immediately under the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If you are unsure whether your concern is a whistleblowing matter, seek advice from the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

5. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by:

- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)** – Provides legal protection for workers who raise genuine concerns in the public interest.
- **Employment Rights Act 1996** – Protects employees from detriment or dismissal for making a protected disclosure.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)** – Requires schools to have clear whistleblowing procedures.
- **Equality Act 2010** – Protects individuals from discrimination when raising concerns.

6. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Employees (teaching and support staff)
- Volunteers and governors
- Contractors and agency workers working on school premises
- Trainees and work experience students

It covers concerns raised about activities within the school, including those involving staff, governors, or external partners.

7. Key Principles

Principle

Explanation

Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to protect the identity of the whistleblower. However, absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed, especially if the matter proceeds to a legal hearing.

Principle	Explanation
Protection from Retaliation	No staff member will be subjected to any detriment, dismissal, or disciplinary action for raising a genuine concern in good faith.
Good Faith	The concern must be raised honestly, with a reasonable belief that it is true. Malicious or knowingly false allegations may result in disciplinary action.
Timely Response	The school will acknowledge receipt of the concern promptly and investigate it in a timely manner.
Independent Investigation	Where appropriate, an independent person may be appointed to investigate the concern to ensure fairness and objectivity.

8. How to Raise a Concern

Stage 1: Internal Disclosure (Preferred Route)

In the first instance, you should raise your concern internally with one of the following:

Role	Contact
Line Manager	Your immediate line manager (if appropriate and not implicated).
Headteacher	<i>[Name]</i> – The Headteacher has overall responsibility for school operations.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	<i>[Name]</i> – For concerns related to safeguarding.
Chair of Governors	<i>[Name]</i> – For concerns involving the Headteacher or senior leadership.

You may raise the concern verbally or in writing. If possible, please provide:

- The background and nature of the concern.
- The names of individuals involved (if known).
- Any evidence or supporting information.
- Whether you have raised the matter elsewhere.

Stage 2: Raising with the Governing Body

If you feel unable to raise the concern with the Headteacher (e.g., because the concern involves them), or if you are not satisfied with the response, you may raise it directly with the **Chair of Governors**:

- **Chair of Governors:** *[Name]*

- **Contact Details:** *[Email/Phone]*

Stage 3: External Disclosure

If you have exhausted internal routes, or if the matter is exceptionally serious, you may raise your concern with an external body. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, you are protected if you raise a concern with a "prescribed person" or regulator.

Relevant external bodies include:

Body	When to Contact
Ofsted	Concerns about safeguarding, standards, or leadership.
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Safeguarding concerns involving staff.
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	Serious health and safety breaches.
Police	Criminal activity.
Charity Commission	Concerns about governance or financial misconduct (if the school is a charity).
Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)	Regulatory breaches in independent schools.

Note: Before making an external disclosure, you are encouraged to seek independent legal advice or contact **Protect** (the independent whistleblowing charity) for guidance: www.protect-advice.org.uk | 020 3117 2520.

9. How Concerns Will Be Handled

Step	Action
1. Acknowledgment	The school will acknowledge receipt of your concern within 5 working days .
2. Assessment	The Headteacher or Governor will assess the concern to determine whether it falls within the scope of this policy and how it should be investigated.
3. Investigation	An appropriate investigation will be conducted. This may be internal or, in complex cases, by an independent investigator. The investigation will be impartial, thorough, and timely.
4. Feedback	You will be kept informed of progress and, where possible, notified of the outcome. Confidentiality may limit the detail that can be shared.
5. Outcome	If the concern is upheld, appropriate action will be taken (e.g., disciplinary action, policy changes, referral to external agencies).

10. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- The school will treat all whistleblowing disclosures confidentially. Information will only be shared on a strict need-to-know basis.
- If you wish to raise a concern **anonymously**, you may do so. However, please be aware that anonymous disclosures are more difficult to investigate, and you may not receive feedback on the outcome.
- If you provide your name, the school will make every effort to protect your identity, but cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality if the matter proceeds to a legal hearing or external investigation.

11. Protection from Retaliation

Rawdah Montessori will not tolerate any form of retaliation against a staff member who has raised a genuine concern in good faith.

- **Detriment:** You will not be subjected to any disadvantage, harassment, or unfair treatment as a result of whistleblowing.
- **Dismissal:** Dismissal for making a protected disclosure is automatically unfair.
- **Support:** If you feel you have been subjected to retaliation, you should report it immediately to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

If you are unsure about your rights, you may seek independent advice from **Protect** or ACAS.

12. Malicious or False Allegations

If an investigation reveals that a concern was raised **maliciously, frivolously, or with knowledge of its falsity**, the individual making the allegation may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. This does not apply to concerns raised in good faith that are later found to be unsubstantiated.

13. Record Keeping

- All whistleblowing disclosures will be recorded confidentially.
- Records will include the nature of the concern, the investigation process, outcomes, and any actions taken.
- Records will be retained securely in line with the **Data Protection Policy** and will not be kept longer than necessary.

14. Training and Awareness

- All staff will receive information about this policy as part of their induction and via annual refresher training.
- The Governing Body will ensure that those responsible for handling disclosures are trained to do so sensitively and in line with legal requirements.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Governing Body, or sooner following a significant incident or change in legislation. The review will consider:

- Any disclosures made during the year (anonymised).
- Feedback from staff or governors.
- Changes in statutory guidance or case law.

16. Useful Contacts

Organisation

Contact Details

Protect (Whistleblowing Charity)

www.protect-advice.org.uk

020 3117 2520

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

www.acas.org.uk

0300 123 1100

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

www.nspcc.org.uk

0800 028 0285

Review of Policy Dates

REVIEW DATE	REVIEWED BY	SIGNED OFF (Name & Role)
Oct 2025	Governing Body	Chair: Sohaib Tanvir
Next Review Due:		
Oct 2026	Governing Body	Chair:
	Headteacher	Headteacher: