

## South West Learning – Whistleblowing and Making a Complaint Policy

### **Introduction and Purpose**

At South West Learning, we are committed to creating a safe, open and supportive environment for everyone we work with – staff, students, families, and our partners.

This policy explains how anyone connected with our organisation can raise a concern if they feel something isn't right. Whether the issue is about safeguarding, professional standards, or the way we are working, we want people to feel confident that their voice will be heard, and that it is always safe to speak up.

By encouraging openness and accountability, this policy helps us to:

- Protect children, young people, and families.
- Support staff and volunteers in raising concerns without fear.
- Resolve issues fairly, quickly, and in a constructive way.

### **Who this Policy is for**

This policy is for:

- Employees, contractors, agency staff, and volunteers.
- Parents, carers, and commissioning partners who work with us.

### **What types of concerns can be raised?**

This policy covers any concern that may affect the welfare of children, young people, staff, or the wider public interest. Examples include:

- Safeguarding concerns or breaches of child protection procedures.
- Unlawful activity such as fraud, theft or malpractice.
- Health and safety risks.
- Financial irregularities or misuse of funds.
- Breaches of professional standards or policies.

## **What is not covered?**

This policy is not usually the right route for personal employment issues that affect one individual only – for example:

- A disagreement about working hours, pay, or leave.
- A clash of personalities with a colleague.
- Feeling unhappy with workload or day-to-day working arrangements.

These kinds of matters are best raised through our staff grievance procedure, where they can be dealt with fairly and directly.

If you are unsure whether your concern counts as whistleblowing or a grievance, we encourage you to raise it anyway – we will help direct it to the right process.

## **How to Raise a Concern**

### **Step 1 – Internal Contacts**

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):  
Emma Barnard (Director) – 07713839691 / [info@southwestlearning.co.uk](mailto:info@southwestlearning.co.uk)
- Deputy DSL:  
Eleanor Hoggett (Director) – 07758483764 / [info@southwestlearning.co.uk](mailto:info@southwestlearning.co.uk)

If your concern involves either of the above, you may go directly to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team or follow our Complaints and Disciplinary Policy.

### **Step 2 – External Options**

If you feel unable to raise your concern internally, you can contact:

- Local Authority Safeguarding Team (Devon): [ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk)
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285
- Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA): [gov.uk/teaching-regulation-agency](https://gov.uk/teaching-regulation-agency)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS): [gov.uk/dbs-referrals](https://gov.uk/dbs-referrals)
- Police, if you believe a criminal offence has occurred.

## **What happens after you raise a concern**

- Your concern will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

- We will decide whether it should be dealt with as a safeguarding matter, a complaint, or a disciplinary issue.
- An investigation will be carried out fairly and confidentially.
- We will keep you updated and let you know the outcome, wherever possible.
- Records will be kept securely and only shared on a need-to-know basis.

### **Possible Outcomes and Disciplinary Action**

If a concern is upheld:

- We may take action to improve or change a practice.
- If a staff member or contractor has acted improperly, disciplinary measures may be taken.
- If necessary, we will make referrals to the LADO, DBS, TRA, Local Authority, or police.

If a concern is found to have been raised maliciously or in bad faith, this may itself be treated as a disciplinary matter.

### **Protection for those raising concerns**

We want everyone to feel safe to speak up.

- If you raise a concern in good faith, you will not face dismissal, victimisation, or any negative treatment.
- Retaliation against someone who has raised a concern will not be tolerated.
- You may choose to remain anonymous, though this can sometimes make it harder to investigate.

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. Information will only be shared when it is absolutely necessary to investigate and resolve the issue.

### **Communicating this Policy**

This policy will be:

- Shared with all staff, tutors, and contractors during induction.
- Available on request to clients, schools, and parents.

- Reviewed annually and updated where legislation or guidance changes.

**Contact Details:**

- South West Learning
- Email: [info@southwestlearning.co.uk](mailto:info@southwestlearning.co.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Emma Radford
- Deputy DSL: Eleanor Hoggett

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory updates require, by the Directors and DSL.

**Date Approved:** September 2025

**Date for Review:** September 2026