
Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Owner: Directors, AdaptEd Tuition Ltd (Designated Safeguarding Leads)

Approved By: AdaptEd Tuition Ltd Directors

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1. Policy Statement

AdaptEd Tuition Ltd is committed to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding, integrity, professionalism and accountability.

We believe that creating a culture of openness and transparency is essential to protecting children, young people, vulnerable adults, tutors, staff and the wider community. Everyone working for or on behalf of AdaptEd Tuition Ltd has a responsibility to raise concerns where they reasonably believe that wrongdoing, unsafe practice or misconduct has occurred or may occur.

Individuals who raise genuine concerns in good faith will be listened to, treated fairly and protected from victimisation or retaliation. A concern is raised in good faith where the individual honestly believes the information disclosed is true or substantially true at the time it is reported, even if the concern is not ultimately substantiated.

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as incorporated into the Employment Rights Act 1996)

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety, Cyber Security, AI and Social Media Policy
- Tutor Code of Conduct
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Self-Employed Tutor Agreement

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote a culture where concerns can be raised without fear;
- protect children and vulnerable adults;
- identify wrongdoing at the earliest opportunity;
- ensure concerns are investigated fairly and proportionately;
- support compliance with safeguarding and legal obligations;
- protect those making protected disclosures.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Directors
- Employees
- Self-employed tutors
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Work experience placements
- Anyone working on behalf of AdaptEd Tuition Ltd

Former staff and contractors may also raise concerns regarding matters that occurred during their engagement with AdaptEd Tuition Ltd.

4. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information about suspected wrongdoing which an individual reasonably believes is in the public interest.

Individuals are **not expected to prove that wrongdoing has occurred**. A genuine and reasonable belief is sufficient to raise a concern.

Whistleblowing differs from a personal grievance, which relates to an individual's own employment or contractual circumstances.

5. What Should Be Reported?

Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

Safeguarding

- abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult;
- failure to report safeguarding concerns;
- grooming;
- inappropriate relationships;
- breaches of professional boundaries;
- unsuitable conduct towards students.

Criminal Activity

- fraud;
- theft;
- bribery;
- financial misconduct;
- deliberate falsification of records.

Health and Safety

- unsafe tutoring environments;
- unsafe lone working arrangements;
- serious breaches of health and safety procedures;
- failure to manage known risks.

Data Protection and Cyber Security

- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- cyber security breaches;
- misuse of personal data;
- failure to comply with GDPR.

Professional Conduct

- bullying or harassment;
- discrimination;
- serious breaches of AdaptEd Tuition Ltd's policies;
- abuse of authority;
- conflicts of interest;
- misuse of social media.

Educational Practice

- falsification of lesson records or reports;
- dishonest reporting to schools or local authorities;
- inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence;
- failure to deliver agreed educational services.

6. Low-Level Concerns

AdaptEd Tuition Ltd recognises that concerns about adults working with children do not always meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral or allegation. Low-level concerns may relate to behaviour that is not illegal or obviously unsafe but nevertheless falls short of the standards expected of adults working with children such as:

An adult working on behalf of AdaptEd Tuition Ltd that:

- is inconsistent with the Tutor Code of Conduct;
- falls below expected professional standards; or
- has the potential to develop into a more serious safeguarding concern if left unaddressed.

Examples include:

- inappropriate language or jokes;
- overly familiar behaviour;
- unnecessary physical contact;
- inappropriate use of personal devices;
- communicating with students outside authorised channels;
- minor breaches of professional boundaries.

All low-level concerns will:

- be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads;
- be recorded confidentially;
- be reviewed proportionately;
- be monitored for patterns of behaviour.

Repeated low-level concerns may indicate a more serious safeguarding issue and may result in further investigation or referral to external agencies.

7. Matters Not Normally Covered

This policy is not intended to deal with:

- routine management decisions;
- payment disputes;
- contractual disagreements;
- requests for flexible working;
- personal grievances.

These should usually be dealt with through the appropriate management process.

8. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should be raised as soon as reasonably possible.

They may be raised verbally but need to be followed up in writing.

Individuals should provide, where possible:

- a description of the concern;
- dates and times;
- locations;
- names of those involved;
- witnesses;
- any supporting evidence.

A Whistleblowing Disclosure Form (Appendix A) is available to submit concerns in writing. Individuals should not attempt to investigate concerns themselves or obtain evidence unlawfully. Concerns should be reported promptly, and any information or evidence already lawfully available should be provided. AdaptEd Tuition Ltd will determine what further enquiries or investigation are required.

9. Reporting Procedure

Concerns should normally be reported to either Director, who also acts as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Where the concern relates to one Director, it should be reported to the other Director so that it can be considered independently.

Where a concern involves a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director, or where an individual reasonably believes that the concern cannot be investigated fairly or impartially

through the internal process, an alternative safeguarding or external reporting route will be used. This may include referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Social Care, the Police, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), or another appropriate regulator or prescribed person, depending on the nature of the concern.

Where a whistleblowing concern relates to both Directors, or where there is no suitably independent person available to consider the concern internally, the individual should refer the matter directly to the appropriate external authority or prescribed person. The relevant authority will determine whether further investigation or action is required.

Individuals may also seek confidential advice from independent organisations such as Protect or ACAS before making a disclosure.

Any safeguarding concern involving a child or vulnerable adult must be reported immediately in accordance with AdaptEd Tuition Ltd's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and must not be delayed while whistleblowing procedures are followed.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, emergency services and Children's Social Care should be contacted without delay.

Allegations or concerns about the behaviour of an adult working with children should be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the threshold for a safeguarding allegation is met.

10. What Happens Next?

AdaptEd Tuition Ltd aims to acknowledge receipt of whistleblowing concerns within **five working days**, unless immediate safeguarding action is required and aims to conclude the investigations as promptly as is reasonably practicable. Where this is not possible, the whistleblower will be kept informed of progress where appropriate.

AdaptEd Tuition Ltd will:

- assess the concern;
- determine whether urgent safeguarding action is required;
- appoint an appropriate investigator;
- gather relevant evidence;
- determine appropriate action.

Investigations will be undertaken as promptly as reasonably practicable.

Where appropriate, the individual raising the concern will receive feedback on the outcome, subject to confidentiality and legal restrictions.

11. Confidentiality

Concerns will be handled as confidentially as possible. Confidential reports identify the whistleblower to AdaptEd Tuition Ltd but their identity is protected as far as possible.

Anonymous reports do not identify the whistleblower. These will still be considered but may be more difficult to investigate.

The identity of the whistleblower will only be disclosed where:

- they give permission;
- disclosure is required by law;
- disclosure is necessary to safeguard a child or vulnerable adult;
- disclosure is necessary for a fair investigation.

Absolute confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

12. Anonymous Concerns

Anonymous concerns will be considered seriously.

However, providing contact details may assist the investigation and enable feedback to be given.

13. Protection for Whistleblowers

AdaptEd Tuition Ltd will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith.

Individuals will not suffer:

- dismissal;
- discrimination;
- victimisation;
- intimidation;
- detrimental treatment.

A protected disclosure is a disclosure of information made in the public interest which meets the legal requirements set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996. Individuals making protected disclosures are entitled to legal protection from detriment or dismissal.

No confidentiality agreement, settlement agreement or contractual clause prevents an individual from making a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

14. Malicious Allegations

Knowingly making false or malicious allegations may result in action under the relevant employment, contractual or professional conduct procedures applicable to the individual's relationship with AdaptEd Tuition Ltd.

This does not apply where a concern was raised honestly but later proved to be unfounded.

15. External Reporting

Where appropriate, concerns may be referred to external agencies including:

- Children's Social Care
- Police
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Individuals also have the right to make protected disclosures to prescribed bodies in accordance with UK legislation. Wherever appropriate, individuals are encouraged to raise concerns internally in the first instance. However, nothing in this policy prevents an individual from making a protected disclosure directly to a prescribed person or regulator where permitted by law.

16. Record Keeping

AdaptEd Tuition Ltd will maintain confidential records of:

- concerns raised;
- investigations undertaken;
- actions taken;
- outcomes;
- referrals to external agencies.

A separate **Low-Level Concern Register** will also be maintained by the Designated Safeguarding Leads to monitor concerns that do not meet the threshold for formal safeguarding referrals.

Records will be stored securely in accordance with AdaptEd Tuition Ltd's Data Protection and Records Retention procedures.

17. Review of Decisions

If an individual believes their concern has not been addressed appropriately, they may request that the matter is reviewed by a Director who was not involved in the original investigation. If no suitably independent Director is available, the individual may seek independent advice or refer the matter to the appropriate external authority or prescribed regulator.

Where appropriate, independent advice may also be sought.

18. Training

All tutors and staff will receive information about this policy during induction and regular safeguarding updates.

Training will include:

- recognising reportable concerns;
- identifying low-level concerns;
- safeguarding reporting procedures;
- confidentiality;
- whistleblower protections.

19. Sources of Independent Advice

Independent advice is available from:

- **Protect** - Whistleblowing advice Service
- **ACAS** - Workplace advice service
- **GOV.UK** - Whistleblowing Guidance

Individuals are encouraged to seek independent advice if they are unsure whether a concern should be raised.

20. Monitoring and Review

The Directors will review:

- the number and nature of concerns raised;
- themes and trends;
- investigation outcomes;
- lessons learned;
- changes in legislation and statutory guidance.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, safeguarding guidance or AdaptEd Tuition Ltd's operations.

21. Whistleblower Disclosure Form

Please use Appendix A to report suspected misconduct, unethical behaviour, policy violations, fraud, corruption, safeguarding concerns, or other wrongdoing in good faith.

Whistleblower Disclosure Report

This form is for anyone wishing to report suspected wrongdoing, safeguarding concerns, misconduct, or other matters covered by the AdaptEd Tuition Ltd Whistleblowing Policy.

You do **not** need proof that wrongdoing has occurred. A genuine and reasonable belief is sufficient. Please provide as much factual information as possible.

How to Submit This Form:

- **If your concern relates to a tutor:** submit the form to both Directors.
- **If your concern relates to one Director:** submit the form to the other Director.
- **If your concern relates to both Directors:** submit the form directly to the appropriate external authority or prescribed regulator, as set out in the Whistleblowing Policy.

Section 1 – Your Details (Optional)

You may submit this form anonymously. However, providing your contact details may assist with any investigation and enable feedback to be provided.

Name:

Role/Relationship to AdaptEd Tuition Ltd:

- ☐ Employee
- ☐ Self-Employed Tutor
- ☐ Director
- ☐ Contractor
- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ Parent/Carer
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other:

Telephone:

Email:

Would you like your identity to remain confidential where possible?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section 2 – Details of the Person(s) Concerned

Name(s) (if known):

Job Title/Role:

Relationship to AdaptEd Tuition Ltd:

Section 3 – Nature of Your Concern

Please tick all that apply:

Safeguarding

- ☐ Abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult
- ☐ Failure to report safeguarding concerns
- ☐ Grooming
- ☐ Inappropriate relationship with a student
- ☐ Breach of professional boundaries
- ☐ Low-level concern regarding an adult working with children

Criminal Activity

- ☐ Fraud
- ☐ Theft
- ☐ Bribery or corruption
- ☐ Financial misconduct
- ☐ Falsification of records

Health & Safety

- ☐ Unsafe tutoring environment
- ☐ Unsafe lone working
- ☐ Serious health and safety breach

Data Protection & Cyber Security

- ☐ Confidentiality breach

- ☐ GDPR breach
- ☐ Cyber security incident
- ☐ Misuse of personal information

Professional Conduct

- ☐ Bullying
- ☐ Harassment
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Abuse of authority
- ☐ Conflict of interest
- ☐ Misuse of social media
- ☐ Serious breach of company policy

Educational Practice

- ☐ False lesson records
- ☐ Dishonest reporting
- ☐ Inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence
- ☐ Failure to provide agreed educational services

Other

- ☐ Other (please specify)

Section 4 – Details of Your Concern

Please describe exactly what happened in the space below and continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Include:

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?

- How did you become aware of it?
- Why do you believe this is a concern?

Section 5 – Date(s), Time(s) and Location(s)

Date(s):

Time(s):

Location(s):

Section 6 – Witnesses

Were there any witnesses?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide details (if known):

Section 7 – Supporting Evidence

Have you attached any supporting evidence?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please tick any enclosed:

- ☐ Emails
- ☐ Messages
- ☐ Documents
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Screenshots
- ☐ Lesson records
- ☐ Other:

Section 8 – Previous Reporting

Have you raised this concern before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes:

Who did you report it to?

Date:

What action was taken (if any)?

Section 9 – Immediate Risk

Do you believe anyone is currently at immediate risk of harm?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please explain:

Section 10 – Desired Outcome (Optional)

What outcome are you hoping for?

- ☐ Investigation
- ☐ Safeguarding action
- ☐ Advice only
- ☐ Policy review
- ☐ Other:

Section 11 – Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this disclosure is true and accurate. I understand that this report will be handled in accordance with the AdaptEd Tuition Ltd Whistleblowing Policy.

I understand that knowingly making false or malicious allegations may result in appropriate action. This does not apply where a concern has been raised honestly but is not subsequently substantiated.

Name (if not anonymous):

Signature:

Date:

Office Use Only

Reference Number:

Date Received:

Received By:

Acknowledgement Sent: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Risk Assessment Completed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Safeguarding Referral Required: ☐ Yes ☐ No

LADO Referral Required: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Police Referral: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Investigator Assigned:

Investigation Outcome:

Date Closed:

Investigating Officer's Name:

Investigating Officer's Signature: