SANDWELL ACADEMY

Whistleblowing Policy

July 2026

Introduction

Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust ("TTMAT") is a single corporate entity which currently takes primary responsibility for Madeley Academy, Redhill Primary Academy, Sandwell Academy, Walsall Academy and Thomas Telford UTC ("affiliated Academies"). It is a company limited by guarantee and Trustees are appointed as directors of the company. As such, the Trustees are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage staff and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our affiliated Academies and to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

Each of our affiliated Academies publish this policy as part of the Staff Handbook information they provide to employees working in their individual organisations. Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Senior Management Team in their organisation and/or relevant agencies. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within the Academy environment, rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside. It applies to all staff, and those contractors working on the premises. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract.

It is recognised that whistleblowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the behaviour that is causing concern, continuing.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

Other Complaints Procedures

This procedure is separate from the Complaints Procedures adopted by our affiliated Academies and other statutory reporting procedures. Safeguarding and Child Protection issues should always be reported to the relevant Safeguarding Lead or the Headteacher according to the specific guidelines laid out in the individual Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

Behaviour that should cause concern:-

- conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur, the result of which any our affiliated Academies failing to comply with a legal obligation. For example unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud and corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- past, current or likely damage to the environment

Reasons for whistleblowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistleblowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern (see also Appendices 1 & 2)

- Staff are encouraged to voice concerns, suspicions or uneasiness at the earliest as soon with their line manager. The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier and sooner action can be taken
- Staff should try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning them and why
- Staff concerned about their immediate line manager should approach a Senior Deputy Head or the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, there is access to Chair of the Trust Board (a Trustee), or Mrs Michelle Davies, the Clerk to the Trust Board and an employee of the Trust's sponsor. The Chair can be contacted via Mrs Davies.
- Staff are encouraged to ensure they receive a satisfactory response and not to let matters rest
- Ideally, concerns should be put in writing, outlining the background and history, providing names, dates and places, where possible
- The Whistleblower is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern

What happens next

- Information on the nature and progress of any enquiries will be given as appropriate
- Sandwell Academy has a responsibility to protect members of staff from harassment or victimisation
- Malicious allegations may, however, be considered as a disciplinary offence

Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of informant, if this is their wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if they are required to come forward as a witness. Concerns raised in good faith and which proved to be unwarranted will have no consequences for any party.

Anonymous Allegations

Whenever possible staff should put their name to their allegation, as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual.

However, anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at each individual Academy's discretion. In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence.

Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with the Headteacher so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice, support and contact details

It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from the Headteachers or members of the Senior Management Team.

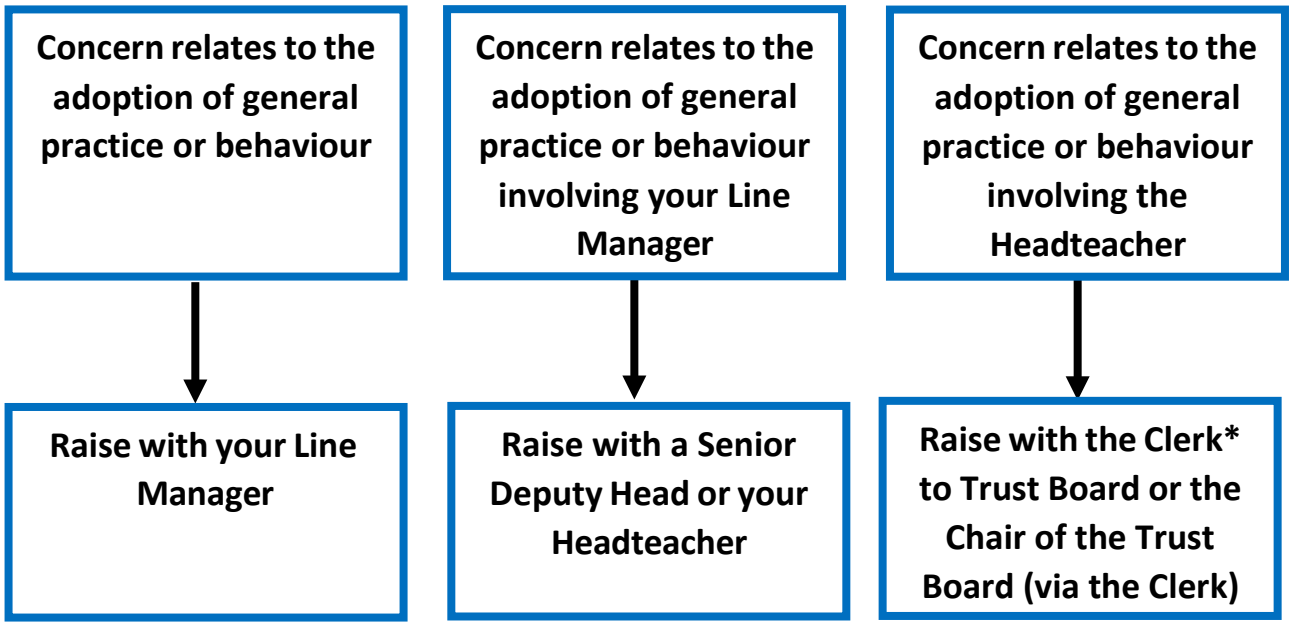
Concerns about Sandwell Academy

The same policy arrangements apply in terms of why a concern should be voiced and the procedures to be followed to pinpoint the issue which needs investigating. Concerns, suspicions or uneasiness about any of our work should be raised with the Clerk to the Trust Board, Mrs Michelle Davies, in the first instance. Mrs Davies will undertake a preliminary investigation to determine the best course of action to address the matter being raised. This could involve referring the matter to an individual Trustee or contacting other organisations or relevant agencies.

Appendix 1

How to raise a concern

The chart below shows how staff may voice concerns, suspicions or uneasiness, as set out on page 3 of this document.



***Contact details**
Mrs Diane Cook
Clerk to the Trust Board
C/O Thomas Telford School
Old Park
Telford
TF3 4NW
Telephone: 01952 200000
Email DCook@ttsonline.net

Appendix 2

This form is provided to assist staff to document any concern

Your name: **Your employment address:**
Details of your concern, including background and history, names, dates and places, where possible: ***Please continue on a separate sheet if required.***
Are you attaching any evidence to support your concern? If so, please give details.
Signature: **Date:**