



Nurturing **Ambition
Through a Living Faith**

Whistleblowing Policy

School Ethos & Vision

Mission Statement: Nurturing ambition through a living faith.

Vision Statement: Our academy delivers a purposeful curriculum through its living Christian faith. We nurture ambition in all of our learners in order for them to become positive citizens of tomorrow.

Bible Verse: *"Let us not love with words or speech alone but with actions and truth."* — 1 John 3:18

Policy Statement & Core Aims

The Local Governing Committee (LGC) and Cidari Multi Academy Trust are committed to achieving the highest standards of openness, integrity, accountability, and ethical conduct. We expect all employees, volunteers, contractors, and stakeholders to maintain high standards and speak out without fear of reprisal if they suspect serious wrongdoing, malpractice, or illegal activity within the school.

Objectives of this Policy

- **Culture of Integrity:** Promote transparency, ethical practice, and public confidence.
- **Protection & Reassurance:** Ensure workers raising genuine concerns in the public interest are fully protected from victimisation, harassment, or detrimental treatment.
- **Early Detection:** Provide clear internal reporting avenues to catch and rectify wrongdoing before harm occurs.
- **Deterrence:** Help curb corruption, fraud, financial mismanagement, and safeguarding breaches.

1. Statutory Framework & Scope

This policy operates in accordance with relevant statutory frameworks and legal protections, including:

- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)** (incorporated into the **Employment Rights Act 1996**)
- **Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013** (Public interest test and protection from co-worker detriment)
- **DfE Statutory Guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** (including low-level concerns and whistleblowing on safeguarding practices)
- **Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR**

Who is Covered?

This policy applies to all staff employed at the academy, including permanent, fixed-term, temporary, agency, supply, and casual staff, as well as volunteers, governors, contractors, and consultants working on behalf of the school or Trust.

What Concerns are Covered?

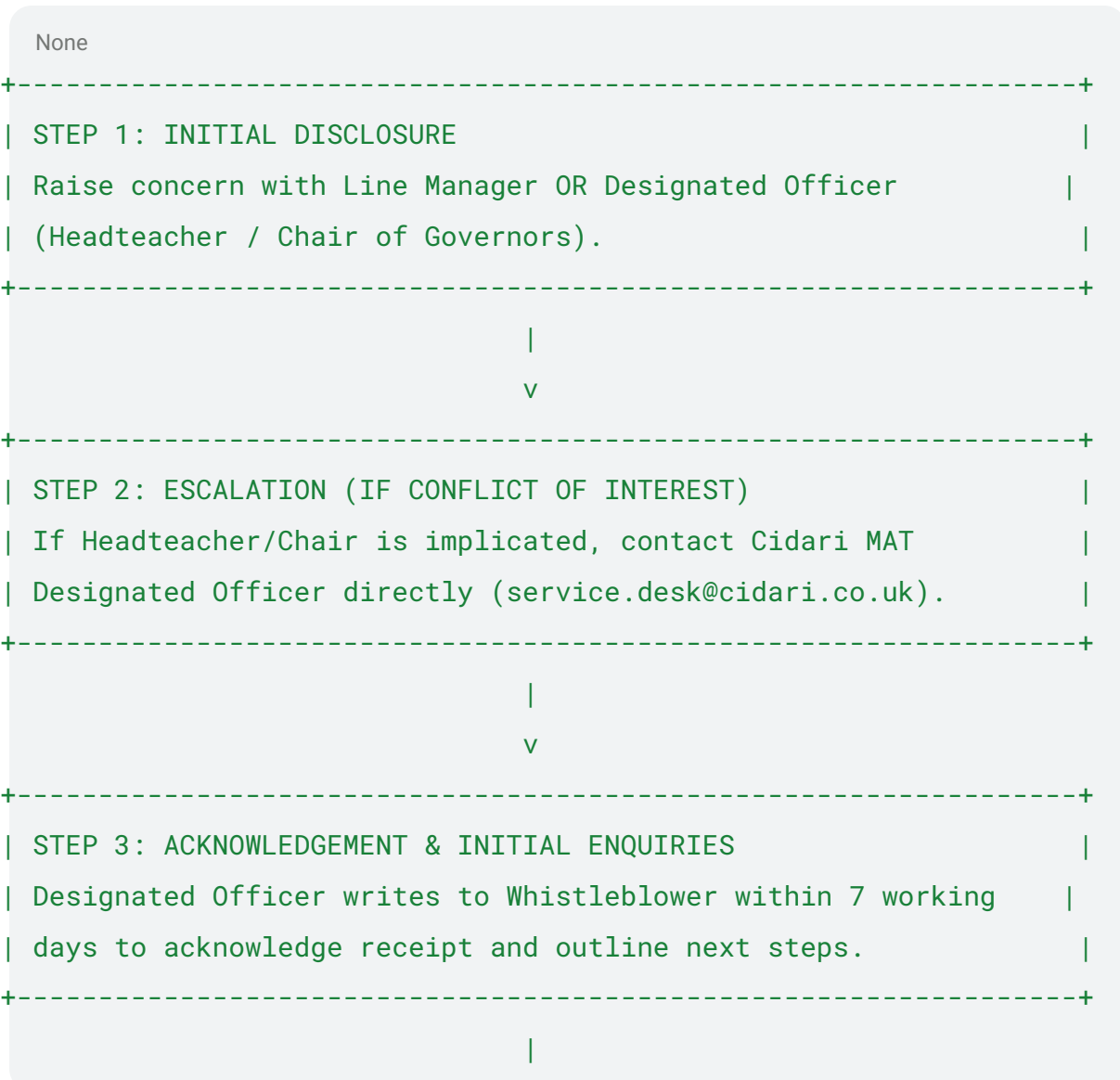
Whistleblowing refers to disclosures made in the public interest regarding suspected malpractice or illegal activity. Qualifying disclosures include:

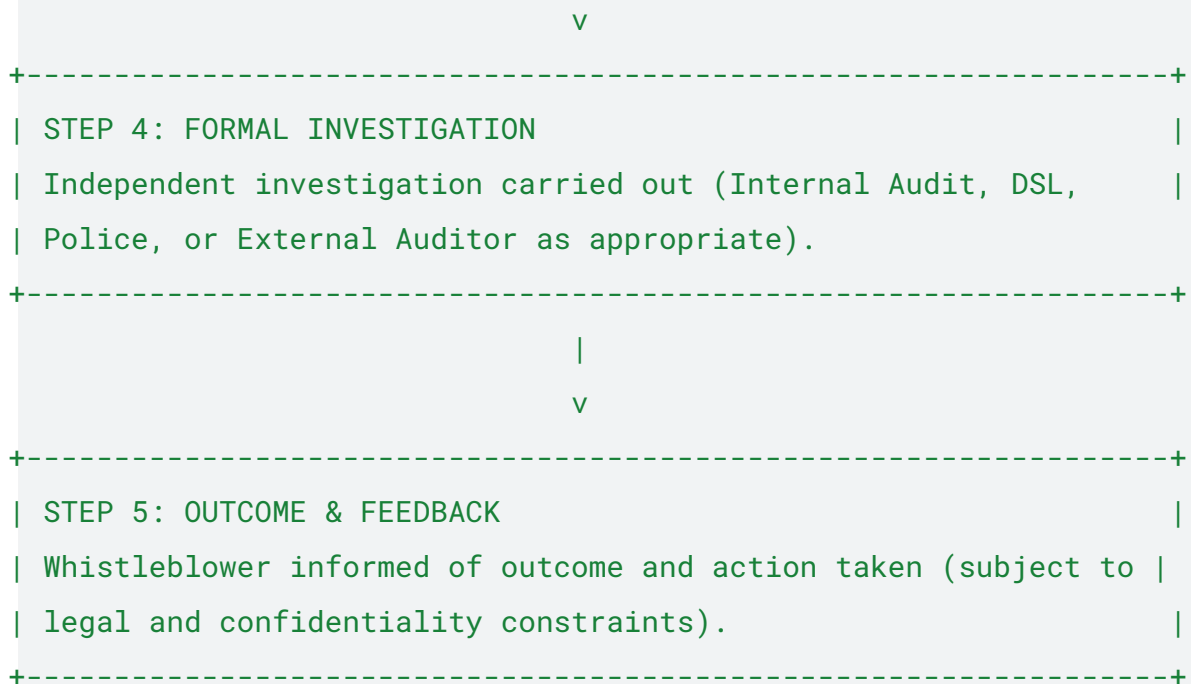
- Criminal offences or breaches of the law.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks threatening employees, pupils, or the public.
- Environmental damage.
- Unauthorised use or misuse of public funds, fraud, bribery, or corruption.
- Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of pupils or staff, or severe safeguarding failures.
- Failure to comply with professional standards or statutory codes of practice.
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

Note: Personal employment grievances (e.g., contractual disputes, bullying, or individual working conditions) are not covered by whistleblowing and must be raised under the school's Grievance or Dignity at Work procedures.

2. Whistleblowing Reporting Pathway

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns internally as early as possible. Disclosures should ideally be submitted in writing, outlining the background, key dates, names, reasons for concern, and potential risks.





Designated Officers Contact Hierarchy

Role / Contact Level	Designated Contact	Application Context
School Level (Primary)	Headteacher	Routine internal disclosures where the line manager is implicated or unavailable.
School Level (Governance)	Chair of Governors	Used when the disclosure directly involves or implicates the Headteacher.
Trust Level (Escalation)	Cidari MAT Designated Officer / COO	Used when local leadership/governors are implicated, or for independent MAT review.
Safeguarding / Diocesan	Diocesan Education Officer / LADO	Used for complex religious/diocesan matters or severe safeguarding escalations.

3. Protections & Support for Whistleblowers

3.1. Protection Against Detriment & Victimisation

- Workers who make a qualifying disclosure in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest will not suffer any professional detriment, harassment, dismissal, or victimisation as a result.
- Any co-worker or manager who subjects a whistleblower to victimisation or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.
- If victimisation occurs, the whistleblower may seek legal remedy through an Employment Tribunal under PIDA statutory protections.

3.2. Confidentiality & Anonymity

- All disclosures are treated with strict confidentiality. The Designated Officer will make every effort not to reveal the whistleblower's identity without consent unless required by law.
- While anonymous disclosures are accepted and considered at the discretion of the Designated Officer (taking into account seriousness and verifiability), staff are encouraged to provide their name to facilitate a thorough investigation and receive direct protection.

3.3. Representation

Whistleblowers have the right to be accompanied by a Recognized Trade Union representative or work colleague during any formal meetings connected to their disclosure.

4. Unfounded or Malicious Allegations

- **Genuine Concerns:** If an allegation is made in good faith and in the reasonable belief that it is true, but is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against the whistleblower.
- **Malicious / Frivolous Claims:** If an employee makes a disclosure maliciously, knowingly false, or for personal financial gain, disciplinary or legal action may be taken.

5. External Disclosures (Prescribed Bodies)

The Trust strongly encourages workers to exhaust internal reporting channels first. However, if an employee feels unable to raise a concern internally, or remains unsatisfied following investigation, they may contact an approved external prescribed body:

- **Ofsted:** enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk / 0300 123 3155
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:** help@nspcc.org.uk / 0800 028 0285
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE):** For workplace safety risks.
- **Environment Agency:** For environmental damage concerns.
- **External Auditors / Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA):** For financial mismanagement or fraud.
- **Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work):** Independent advice helpline on 020 3117 2520 (protect-advice.org.uk).

Note: Disclosures made externally must not breach data protection laws or disclose confidential information unnecessarily. Workers should seek advice from Protect or their Trade Union before making external disclosures.

6. Record Keeping & Governance

6.1. **Retention:** Records of whistleblowing concerns, investigation notes, and outcomes are retained confidentially for 36 months following resolution, after which they are securely destroyed in line with UK GDPR rules.

6.2. **Reporting:** The Designated Officer maintains a confidential log of disclosures and outcomes and reports anonymized summary data to the Local Governing Committee and Cidari Board as part of annual governance reviews.