

# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

## 2025/26

Approved by: Karen Pickles  
Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Date: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

### POLICY REVISION RECORD (annual reviews)

| Date     | Section                 | Revision                                    | Updated by    |
|----------|-------------------------|---|---------------|
| 09/06/20 | update KCSIE 2020       | updating all references to KCSIE            | Karen Pickles |
| 06/06/21 | update KCSIE 2021       | updating all references to KCSIE            | Karen Pickles |
| 10/06/22 | update KCSIE 2022       | updating all references to KCSIE            | Karen Pickles |
| 10/02/23 | Re-written policy       | Re-styled to include all above as required  | Karen Pickles |
| 19/08/23 | Updated                 | Updated                                     | Karen Pickles |
| 23/05/24 | Updated link to Protect | Website Protect link changed to new version | Karen Pickles |
| 01/09/24 |                         | Reviewed                                    | Karen Pickles |
| 01/09/25 | Updated sections        | Reviewed and edited                         | Karen Pickles |



# 1. Introduction

Berkeley Guardians is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and safeguarding. All staff and homestays are expected to uphold the law and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Whistleblowing plays a vital role in safeguarding by enabling individuals to raise concerns about poor practice, misconduct, or risk without fear of reprisal.

We actively support and protect those who raise concerns in good faith, and we remind all staff that early reporting is essential to prevent harm and uphold our duty of care.

# 2. Responsibilities

All Berkeley Guardians staff and homestays have a duty to:

- Raise concerns about unacceptable, unsafe, or unlawful behaviour
- Prevent risks to children, colleagues, or the wider community
- Avoid becoming complicit through silence or inaction

Whistleblowing is encouraged in the following circumstances:

- Actions that endanger the welfare of children (including non-Berkeley Guardians pupils)
- Criminal offences or breaches of law
- Health and safety risks
- Environmental damage
- Concealment of wrongdoing
- Breaches of Berkeley Guardians policies, standards, or Code of Conduct
- Behaviour that may constitute grooming, abuse, or exploitation

# 3. Barriers to Whistleblowing

We recognise that individuals may hesitate to report concerns due to:

- Fear of disloyalty or damaging relationships
- Worry about being wrong or misunderstood
- Anxiety about career impact or retaliation
- Concern about triggering a complex investigation
- Fear of harassment or not being believed

Berkeley Guardians is committed to addressing these barriers through training, support, and a transparent reporting process.

# 4. Reporting Procedure

## Internal Reporting

Staff should report concerns internally in the first instance. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the primary contact:

- **DSL:** Karen Pickles, Director
- **Emergency Phone (24/7):** 07565 493818
- **Email:** karen@berkeleyguardians.com

Concerns may also be raised with the Deputy DSL or another senior leader if appropriate.

## External Reporting

If a staff member believes the concern will be covered up, ignored, or has previously been raised without resolution, they may report to an external prescribed body:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:** 0800 028 0285
- **Email:** help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Protect (Independent Advice):** 020 3117 2520
- **Website:** www.protect-advice.org.uk

## 5. Making a Disclosure

Concerns should ideally be submitted in writing and include:

- A statement that the concern is raised under the Whistleblowing Policy
- Background, history, and context of the concern
- Names, dates, and locations (where known)
- Reasons for concern and potential impact
- Staff member's name and role (anonymous reports are accepted but may limit follow-up)

If written submission is not possible, a phone call or meeting with the DSL is acceptable.

## 6. Investigation Process

The DSL will:

- Conduct a prompt, proportionate, and impartial investigation
- Meet with the staff member to clarify the concern
- Determine whether the issue can be resolved informally, requires internal investigation, or should be referred to external agencies (e.g. LADO, Police, Local Authority)

Concerns may also be addressed under other Berkeley Guardians policies (e.g. Disciplinary, Grievance).

Within ten working days, the DSL will provide a written response outlining:

- Acknowledgement of the concern
- Proposed investigation route
- Estimated timeline for resolution
- Any initial findings or decisions
- Next steps or reasons for not proceeding

## 7. Protection and Support

Berkeley Guardians will:

- Support staff who raise concerns in good faith
- Provide training on whistleblowing and safeguarding procedures
- Protect whistleblowers from harassment, victimisation, or unfair treatment
- Offer mediation or dispute resolution if needed
- Maintain confidentiality where possible (unless disclosure is legally required)
- Not take disciplinary action against staff who raise unfounded concerns in good faith
- Take disciplinary action if a malicious or knowingly false allegation is made

## 8. Relevant Guidance and Statutory Documents

This policy is informed by:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*
- *EYFS Safeguarding Reforms 2025*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998*
- *Children Act 1989*
- *Education Act 2002*
- *Whistleblowing Guidance – GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>
- *NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice* <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>
- *Protect – Whistleblowing Charity* <https://www.protect-advice.org.uk>