Inclusive Learning Support (ILS)

Whistleblowing Policy

Version: 1.0

Organisation: Inclusive Learning Support (ILS)
Registered Office: Aylesham, Kent
Email: Info@ils-kent.co.uk

Approved By: Director
Effective Date: September 2026
Review: Annually
Review Date: September 2027
Status: Approved / Current

Mission Statement

Inclusive Learning Support (ILS) exists to provide reliable, compassionate, and high-quality SEND and outreach support for children and young people across Kent and coastal communities. Our mission is to help every learner feel safe, understood, and able to succeed by delivering personalised support tailored to individual educational, emotional, and social needs.

1. Purpose

Inclusive Learning Support (ILS) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, safeguarding, accountability and professionalism. We encourage all employees, volunteers, agency workers and contractors to raise concerns where they believe that wrongdoing, unsafe practice or illegal activity has occurred or may occur.

The purpose of this policy is to:

Promote a culture of openness and accountability.

Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Encourage staff to report concerns without fear of retaliation.

Ensure concerns are investigated fairly, promptly and confidentially.

Comply with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Directors
- Managers
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy DSL
- Employees
- Tutors
- Teaching Assistants
- Outreach Workers
- Volunteers
- Agency Staff
- Contractors
- Students on Placement

3. Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR

4. What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice or risks to others that are in the public interest.

This is different from raising a personal employment grievance, which should be dealt with under the Grievance Policy.

5. Concerns That Should Be Reported

Staff should report concerns about:

- Abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable person.
- Safeguarding failures.
- Criminal offences.
- Fraud or financial irregularities.
- Theft.
- Corruption or bribery.
- Health and safety risks.
- Breaches of legislation.
- Serious misconduct.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Discrimination.
- Misuse of confidential information.
- Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing.
- Any behaviour that could damage the reputation or integrity of ILS.

6. Safeguarding Concerns

Where a concern relates to the safety or welfare of a child or young person, it must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If the concern involves the DSL, it should be reported directly to the Director or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where appropriate.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact the emergency services by calling 999 and inform the DSL as soon as possible.

7. Principles

ILS will ensure that:

- All concerns are taken seriously.
- Concerns are investigated fairly and promptly.
- Confidentiality is respected wherever possible.
- Individuals raising concerns are treated with respect.
- Victimisation or retaliation is not tolerated.
- Appropriate action is taken where concerns are substantiated.

8. Protection for Whistleblowers

Anyone raising a genuine concern in good faith will be protected from:

- Dismissal.
- Harassment.
- Victimisation.

- Discrimination.
- Unfair treatment.
- Any other form of detrimental treatment.

This protection applies even if the concern is not ultimately upheld, provided it was raised honestly and in good faith.

9. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should normally be reported to:

1. Your Line Manager.

2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), where safeguarding is involved.

3. The Director, if the concern involves a manager or the DSL.

Reports should include, where possible:
- A clear description of the concern.
- Relevant dates, times and locations.
- Names of those involved.
- Any supporting evidence.
- Details of any witnesses.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

10. Anonymous Reports

Anonymous reports will be considered. However, anonymous reporting may make it more difficult to investigate fully or provide feedback to the individual raising the concern.

11. Investigation Process

When a concern is received:
- It will be acknowledged promptly.
- A preliminary assessment will be completed.
- An appropriate investigating officer will be appointed.
- Evidence will be gathered.
- Relevant individuals may be interviewed.
- A decision will be made regarding any necessary action.
- Where appropriate, the whistleblower will receive feedback on the outcome.

12. Confidentiality

ILS will make every effort to protect the identity of anyone raising a concern. However, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed if disclosure is required by law or as part of a formal investigation.

13. Malicious or False Allegations

Concerns should always be raised honestly and in good faith.

Knowingly making a false or malicious allegation may result in disciplinary action.

14. Record Keeping

All whistleblowing concerns will be:

- Recorded securely.
- Investigated appropriately.
- Stored confidentially.
- Retained in accordance with data protection requirements.

15. External Reporting

Where appropriate, concerns may also be reported to external agencies, including:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Children's Social Care
- Police
- Ofsted (where applicable)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Charity Commission (if applicable)

Employees are encouraged to use ILS procedures first where appropriate, but they may contact external authorities if they reasonably believe this is necessary.

16. Responsibilities

Directors

The Directors are responsible for:

- Promoting an open reporting culture.
- Ensuring concerns are investigated appropriately.
- Protecting whistleblowers from retaliation.
- Reviewing this policy annually.

Managers

Managers must:

- Listen to concerns objectively.
- Take reports seriously.
- Escalate safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Cooperate with investigations.

Employees

All employees must:

- Report concerns promptly.
- Cooperate with investigations.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Act in good faith.

17. Monitoring and Review

The Director will monitor:

- The number of whistleblowing concerns raised.
- Investigation outcomes.
- Emerging themes and trends.
- Lessons learned.
- Compliance with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or organisational practice changes.

APPROVAL

Approved by: Neo Matsoso-Ndlovu

Position: Director

Signature: NMN

Date: 09/09/2026

Next Review Date: September 2027