

Westminster Tutors



Whistleblowing Policy

2026-2027

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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 Westminster Tutors encourages open communication. You must report conduct you believe is inconsistent with our policies and unethical, unlawful or unsafe situations. Reporting suspected wrongdoing is often called whistleblowing. This policy explains how to raise a concern and how the college will respond.
- 1.2 You may be the first to realise that something could be wrong in the college. You may hesitate because you feel that speaking up would be disloyal to colleagues, or because you fear harassment or victimisation. These concerns should not prevent you from reporting suspected malpractice.
- 1.3 Westminster Tutors is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect staff, teachers and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of the college or workplace to come forward and voice those concerns.
- 1.4 This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff and teachers to raise serious concerns within the college. It does not restrict the right to make a protected disclosure outside the college through an appropriate legal route.

2. Applicability

- 2.1 The policy applies to all employees and independent teachers, including casual and temporary staff, volunteers and those undertaking work experience. It also covers contractors working for the college or on college premises, suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the college on our premises. Concerns about teaching coordinated through the college's disclosed-agency arrangements may be raised under this policy.
- 2.2 The college's reporting arrangements are wider than statutory whistleblowing protection. Legal protection depends on your employment status, the concern and how it is disclosed. Volunteers and genuinely self-employed people are not usually protected by whistleblowing law, although they can raise concerns under this policy.
- 2.3 Access to this policy does not confer employee or worker status. Whether an independent teacher or contractor qualifies for statutory protection depends on the actual working arrangements and the legal tests, not simply the contractual label. The college's commitment to receiving concerns and preventing retaliation applies to everyone covered by this policy.
- 2.4 Existing procedures enable you to raise a grievance regarding your employment or engagement. A purely personal grievance will normally be addressed through the Grievance Procedure or relevant engagement procedure. A concern can be both a grievance and a whistleblowing disclosure where the legal tests are met; the college will consider the appropriate procedures together.
- 2.5 You should use this policy when you suspect wrongdoing within the college or workplace. Examples include the following; this is not an exhaustive list:
 - actions which endanger anyone's health or safety;
 - bribery, corruption, fraud or other financial irregularities;
 - criminal activity;
 - damage to the environment;
 - miscarriages of justice;
 - failure to comply with legal or professional obligations or regulatory requirements;
 - sexual harassment;
 - improper conduct or unethical behaviour;

- misuse of sensitive information;
 - safeguarding failures or unsafe practice affecting students; and
 - attempts to conceal wrongdoing.
- 2.6 Serious concerns about service provision or the conduct of staff, teachers or others acting on behalf of Westminster Tutors can be reported under this policy. This may include conduct that:
- makes you uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards to which Westminster Tutors and the Principal subscribe;
 - is against the college's existing policies;
 - falls below established standards of practice; or
 - amounts to improper conduct.
- 2.7 Not every breach of college policy is a protected disclosure in law. Statutory protection applies where a worker reasonably believes the information disclosed is in the public interest and tends to show a criminal offence, breach of a legal obligation, miscarriage of justice, danger to health or safety, sexual harassment, environmental damage or deliberate concealment of any of these. The disclosure must also be made through a legally protected route. The wrongdoing may be past, current or likely to occur.

3. Your Protection

- 3.1 If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, the college will not subject you to detriment. You do not need to prove the wrongdoing before reporting it. A concern based on reasonable belief does not lose protection merely because an investigation does not substantiate it.
- 3.2 The Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and subsequent legislation, protects workers who make protected disclosures from detriment. Employees are also protected from dismissal for making a protected disclosure. Good faith is not a separate condition for statutory protection.
- 3.3 Westminster Tutors and the Principal are committed to good practice and high standards and want to support staff and teachers. We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be difficult.
- 3.4 The college will not tolerate harassment, victimisation or other retaliation, including informal pressure, because a concern has been raised. Employees who retaliate may face disciplinary action, including for gross misconduct. Concerns about independent teachers, contractors and other non-employees will be addressed fairly under the applicable engagement or contractual arrangements.
- 3.5 If you believe you have suffered retaliation, report it promptly through the routes in section 4. You may also seek independent advice through the sources in section 8.
- 3.6 An unrelated disciplinary, capability, contractual or redundancy process does not automatically stop because someone raises a concern. Any such process will be handled fairly and independently, with any allegation that it amounts to retaliation considered separately. These procedures must not be used to penalise a person for making a protected disclosure.

4. How to Raise Your Concern

- 4.1 The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action.
- 4.2 If you are concerned about wrongdoing, raise it in the first instance with the Principal, Sean Doherty, either orally or in writing (sean@westminstertutors.co.uk). State the facts as clearly as you can, including relevant dates and why you are concerned. If you have a direct or personal interest in the matter, tell us at this stage.

- 4.3 Concerns about the Principal must go directly to Penny Johnson, Chair of the Governance Advisory Board (penny@westminstertutors.co.uk), without informing the Principal. You may also use this route if you feel unable to raise a concern with the Principal. If Penny is unavailable or has a conflict of interest, contact the Proprietor, David Game (dgame@davidgame-group.com). Nobody who is the subject of a concern will handle its investigation or review. If internal routes are unavailable or conflicted, seek independent advice or use an appropriate external route; urgent safeguarding action must not wait.
- 4.4 Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately under the Safeguarding Policy. Sean Doherty, Principal, is the DSL; Monika Loewy, Pastoral Coordinator, is the Deputy DSL. The safeguarding email is dsl@westminstertutors.co.uk; Monika may also be contacted at monika@westminstertutors.co.uk. Allegations about adults working with children follow the staff-allegation procedure. All concerns about the Principal, including low-level concerns, go directly to Penny Johnson, with David Game as the unavailability or conflict fallback above. Do not wait for this policy's response timescale or investigate the allegation yourself.
- 4.5 Follow the Safeguarding Policy's external referral routes where needed, including direct LADO advice where internal routes are unavailable or conflicted. Anyone may refer to children's social care where a child needs protection; the absence of the DSL or Deputy DSL must not delay urgent action. Call 999 in an emergency. Concerns about adult students follow the adult-student safeguarding route. The college retains its safeguarding responsibilities for independent teachers and external personnel and will cooperate with relevant agencies; contractual or disclosed-agency arrangements do not remove those responsibilities.
- 4.6 When you raise a concern, the college will determine whether it falls within this policy. If another procedure is appropriate, you will be advised how best to address it, for example through the Grievance Procedure. This assessment does not determine whether you have statutory whistleblowing protection.
- 4.7 The person to whom you report the concern, or a suitable authorised person, will initially assess what action should be taken. You will be told who is handling the matter, how to contact them and whether further assistance may be needed. The college may not be able to discuss all details with you, but will endeavour to keep you informed of progress.
- 4.8 The college cannot guarantee that every matter will be resolved as you would like, but will make every reasonable effort to handle it fairly and appropriately. If you are unhappy with the handling or outcome, request a review through the unconflicted Chair or Proprietor. They will arrange an appropriately experienced reviewer who has not previously handled the matter. The independent advice and external routes in sections 8 and 9 remain available.
- 4.9 The college will inform the appropriate external bodies where required. Urgent safeguarding, criminal or other required referrals will not be delayed until an internal investigation has concluded.

5. Anonymous Allegations

- 5.1 This policy encourages you to put your name to your concern whenever possible, so that we can seek further information and give you feedback.
- 5.2 Anonymous concerns will be considered, taking account of:
- the seriousness of the issues raised;
 - the credibility of the concern; and
 - the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

- 5.3 If you request confidentiality, the college will make every effort to protect your identity. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, for example where disclosure is necessary for a fair investigation or required by law. The available options and any need to disclose your identity will be discussed with you where possible.
- 5.4 We can consider a concern even if you prefer to remain anonymous, but it may be more difficult to investigate it or provide feedback.
- 5.5 Information will be shared only where necessary and lawful. Records will be factual, proportionate and kept securely, with access restricted to those who need the information. Retention and disposal will follow the college's data protection and retention arrangements.

6. Untrue Allegations

- 6.1 If you raise a genuine concern, no action will be taken against you merely because an investigation does not confirm it. An unsubstantiated concern is not, by itself, evidence that it was malicious or knowingly false.
- 6.2 Deliberately fabricating information or knowingly making a false allegation may lead to appropriate action following a fair process. Employee disciplinary procedures apply to employees; independent teachers and other non-employees are dealt with under the relevant engagement or contractual arrangements. An unsuccessful investigation or mixed motives do not in themselves establish deliberate fabrication. No action will be taken for making a protected disclosure.

7. How the College Will Respond

- 7.1 The college will respond to your concerns. Testing a concern is not the same as accepting or rejecting it. College management will designate a person to coordinate the response and liaise with you. Concerns will be assessed whether raised orally or in writing. You do not have to name this policy or label your concern as whistleblowing for it to be considered appropriately.
- 7.2 Where appropriate, the matters raised may:
- be investigated by college management, internal audit or through the disciplinary process; or
 - form the subject of an independent enquiry.
- 7.3 Initial enquiries will establish whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The college will consider the public interest, its legal duties and the need for fair treatment of everyone involved. Concerns within a specific procedure, such as safeguarding, will be dealt with under that procedure and referred to the relevant authorities where required.
- 7.4 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without an investigation. If urgent action is required, it will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- 7.5 For non-urgent concerns, the responsible person will normally write within ten working days of receipt, where contact details are available:
- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
 - indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
 - giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
 - telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made;
 - providing information on staff and teacher support mechanisms, where appropriate; and
 - telling you whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

- 7.6 The amount of contact will depend on the nature of the concern, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. Further information will be sought from you if necessary. If the normal response target cannot be met, the college will explain the delay and give a revised estimate. Updates will be agreed with the reporting person; urgent protective action is not subject to this target.
- 7.7 You may be accompanied at a meeting by a trade union representative, colleague or other suitable support person. The college will consider reasonable adjustments and accessible ways to report or participate. Anyone accompanying you must respect the confidentiality of the process.
- 7.8 The college and the Principal will take steps to minimise difficulties you may experience because you have raised a concern. If you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, arrangements will be made for you to receive advice about the procedure.
- 7.9 Subject to legal and confidentiality constraints, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation so that you can be assured the matter has been addressed. It may not be possible to share details about other people or disciplinary action.

8. External Reporting and Independent Advice

- 8.1 You may make a disclosure directly to an appropriate prescribed person or body without first using the internal procedure. Statutory protection depends on meeting the relevant legal conditions, including reasonably believing that the matter falls within that body's remit and that the information and any allegations are substantially true. GOV.UK maintains the [current list of prescribed people and bodies](#).
- 8.2 Check the recipient's current remit rather than assuming that one education body can consider every concern about a private college. Advice organisations such as Protect and Acas do not investigate the underlying wrongdoing or replace the relevant regulator or safeguarding agency.
- 8.3 You can also make a disclosure to a legal adviser in the course of obtaining legal advice. Independent, confidential advice is available from Protect, formerly Public Concern at Work, on 020 3117 2520 or through protect-advice.org.uk. Acas also provides information about whistleblowing and employment rights at acas.org.uk/whistleblowing-at-work.
- 8.4 For concerns about child protection failures, including where you do not feel able to report internally or are concerned about how a matter is being handled, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available on 0800 028 0285 or at help@nspcc.org.uk. The NSPCC is a prescribed body for child welfare and protection.
- 8.5 Confidentiality obligations and non-disclosure agreements cannot prevent a protected disclosure. This does not give a general right to take or disclose unrelated confidential records or to commit an offence. Seek independent advice if you are unsure what information can lawfully be shared.

9. Wider Disclosures

- 9.1 If you reasonably fear retaliation or a cover-up, or believe an earlier disclosure has not been addressed, you can seek advice about the appropriate external route. You do not need the college's permission to make a protected disclosure.
- 9.2 Wider disclosures, including to the media or on social media, are subject to stricter legal conditions. These include a reasonable belief that the information and allegations are substantially true, no personal gain, and that the disclosure is reasonable in the circumstances. Additional statutory requirements apply, involving matters such as fear of detriment, risk of evidence being concealed where there is no relevant prescribed person, a previous disclosure, or a failure of an exceptionally serious nature. Seek independent legal advice before making a wider disclosure.

- 9.3 Where conduct separate from a protected disclosure requires action, it will be assessed fairly under the applicable employee disciplinary or non-employee engagement arrangements. No action will be taken because a person has made a protected disclosure.

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Document author (name)	Sean Doherty, Principal

Audience	
Audience	Employees, independent teachers, volunteers, contractors and others working with the college

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