



# Equilore Whistleblowing Policy

## 1. Introduction

Equilore is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and accountability. This policy provides a mechanism for staff, volunteers, and contractors to raise concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or safeguarding failures in a safe and confidential way.

Whistleblowing concerns must always be raised in the **public interest**. They are distinct from personal grievances about employment conditions, which should be addressed via the organisation's grievance procedures.

This policy is part of Equilore's broader **Safeguarding and Child Protection framework** ( [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#) ) and supports our statutory obligations under **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)**.

## 2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by:

- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)** – protects staff who raise qualifying disclosures in good faith from dismissal or detriment.
- **Employment Rights Act 1996** – provides additional protections for whistleblowers.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)** – requires organisations working with children to have safe reporting procedures.
- **DBS and Safeguarding Legislation** – ensures protection of vulnerable children and adults.

## 3. What is Whistleblowing?

The term whistleblowing can be defined as raising a concern about wrongdoing within an organisation. Whistleblowing is the raising of a concern about:

- Conduct that is illegal, fraudulent, or unethical.
- Health and safety risks.
- Safeguarding or child protection failures.

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- Environmental damage or regulatory breaches.
- Any other wrongdoing that may put the public, staff, or service users at risk.

It includes concerns about the behaviour of:

- Staff, volunteers, or contractors.
- Trustees or management.
- Organisational policies or procedures.

## 4. Safeguarding Considerations

- Child Protection: All staff must continue to follow the [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#).
- Raising Concerns about Staff: Concerns regarding another staff member or trustee should be reported to the CEO or, if the CEO is implicated, directly to the Board of Trustees or external safeguarding authorities.
- Immediate Risk: If there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, staff should contact Children's Social Care or the Police (call 999) immediately.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Loes Koorenhof – 07787 402236 / [info@equilore.co.uk](mailto:info@equilore.co.uk)

Deputy DSL: Dee Wilkinson [Dee@equilore.co.uk](mailto:Dee@equilore.co.uk)

DSL Board Contact (if complaint involves Proprietor): [Board@equilore.co.uk](mailto:Board@equilore.co.uk)

## 5. Confidentiality

- Whistleblowers are entitled to **confidential treatment** wherever possible.
- Disclosure of identity will be discussed with the staff member in advance.
- Staff are encouraged to report in writing to ensure accurate records.
- Anonymous reports are allowed but may limit the organisation's ability to investigate fully.

## 6. Procedure

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## Stage 1 – Internal Reporting

- Report concerns to the CEO and DSL ([info@equilore.co.uk](mailto:info@equilore.co.uk)).
- If the CEO is implicated, report your concerns to the trustees ([board@equilore.co.uk](mailto:board@equilore.co.uk)) or Deputy DSL ([Dee@equilore.co.uk](mailto:Dee@equilore.co.uk)).
- The organisation will acknowledge the concern within **7 working days** and provide updates on the investigation process.
- Possible outcomes: internal investigation, referral to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**, Police, or an independent inquiry.

## Stage 2 – External Reporting

- If unresolved internally or if there is a conflict of interest, staff may escalate to:
  - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
  - Your Local Authority Multi Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
  - [NSPCC whistleblowing](#) Helpline call 0800 028 0285
  - Environment Agency
  - Department for Education [customer.complaints@education.gov.uk](mailto:customer.complaints@education.gov.uk)
  - Police (call 999)

**Note:** Staff should seek advice from **Public Concern at Work**, NSPCC, or a professional body before reporting externally.

**Important:** Do **not** disclose information to media or commercial bodies. Malicious or personal-gain disclosures are not protected and may result in disciplinary action.

## 7. Protection from Reprisal

- Whistleblowers acting in good faith are protected from **detriment, harassment, or unfair dismissal**.
- Protection is lost if disclosures are **malicious or knowingly false**.
- Concerns about retaliation should be reported immediately.

## 8. Guidance and Support

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Staff can access support from:

- **CEO or Safeguarding Lead**
- **Trade unions or professional bodies**
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:** 0800 028 0285, [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- **Public Concern at Work:** operates a confidential helpline; call 020 7404 6609

## 9. Review of Policy

This policy will be **reviewed annually** or sooner if there are changes to legislation or statutory guidance.