Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire

Whistleblowing Policy

Date of Review:	**May 2026**
Approved by:	**Governing Body**
Next Review Date:	**May 2027**

Designated Persons appointed for the reporting of concerns as of May 2026

- Graham Thornton, Chair of Governors: thornton_graham@yahoo.co.uk
- Anesta McCullagh, Principal: a.mccullagh@enlutc.co.uk

Any information sent to these email addresses will be treated confidentially in line with the policy.

Concerns may also be raised to staff as outlined in Section 3. Please see this section for guidance on raising a concern.

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1. Policy Summary and Guiding Principles

Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out the principles that enable you to raise concerns about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing that affects others, without fear of adverse consequences such as harassment or victimisation.

1.2 The Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire (ENLUTC) is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees, who have serious and legitimate concerns about any aspect of the college's work, to come forward and voice those concerns through accessible channels rather than overlooking the issues or discussing them externally. Making your disclosure under this policy will enable the college to address any risks as early as possible

1.3 It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy sets out the principles that enable you to raise concerns about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing that affects others, without fear of adverse consequences.

1.4 In addition, the policy provides a means for you to raise a concern under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which provides you with a certain level of legal protection if you wish to raise legitimate concerns in the public interest.

Aims and scope of the Policy

1.5 Aims

- provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- allows you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the college's response and
- reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in the public interest.

1.6 There are existing HR procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment with the college. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures, although the college reserves the right to determine which procedure is appropriate.

What is a concern?

1.7 Concerns to be reported under this policy may relate to something which involves an issue in the public interest and which you have reasonable belief to be true, for example where:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed;
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which that person is subject;
- is against the college's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules or other policies;
- falls below established standards or practice;
- amounts to improper conduct, including serious misuse or abuse of authority;
- a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- the health and safety of any individual had been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
- the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- mismanagement of funds has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur; or
- the information tending to show any of the above is being or is likely to be concealed.

If your concern is regarding;

- The safeguarding of children or young people, please contact the relevant team for your area:

    - North Lincolnshire Single Point of Contact Team 01724 296500 during office hours and the Social Care Emergency Duty team on 01724 296555 out of normal office hours;

Safeguards

Protection from reprisal

1.8 The college recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The college will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern which you have reasonable belief to be true and to be in the public interest. This will include disciplinary action against those that subject an individual to detriment as a result of the whistleblowing. This does not necessarily mean that if you are already the subject of procedures such as disciplinary, improving performance, grievance or managing attendance, those procedures will be halted as a result of your whistleblowing.

1.9 Where feasible, you will be contacted when your concern has been investigated to ascertain whether you have suffered any detriment as a result of your whistleblowing. If at any time, either during or after the investigation, you feel that you have suffered any detriment as a result of your whistleblowing, you should contact HR, the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body or your trade union.

Confidentiality

1.10 The college treats the details of all whistleblowers in confidence and will not intentionally divulge your identity without your consent. However, it must be appreciated that the

investigation process may reveal the source of the information without us revealing your identity directly, and in some circumstances a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.

Anonymous allegations

1.11 Allegations can be made anonymously. However, this policy encourages you to provide your name and contact details when making your allegation, as concerns expressed anonymously are often much more difficult to investigate. For example, we may need to contact you to obtain further information or verify the details you have already given us.

1.12 Anonymous allegations will be considered wherever possible at the discretion of the college. The factors to be taken into account when determining whether an investigation in such a case can proceed would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other, attributable sources

Untrue allegations

1.13 If you make an allegation in the public interest and which you had a reason to believe was true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make malicious or vexatious allegations which you could not have reasonably believed was true, appropriate action may be taken against you including disciplinary action.

2. Main Legislative and National Guidance and other relevant documents

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
Data Protection Act (2018)
Freedom of Information Act (2000)
Employment legislation
Employment policies
The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

3. Procedures

How to raise a concern

3.1 It is important that you feel comfortable raising legitimate concerns in the public interest, as this provides the college with an opportunity to address the associated issues as early as possible. The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action. Over time these details can be forgotten, or remembered incorrectly, which can make a concern more difficult to investigate and so it will help us if you make a note of your concerns at the time and let us know about them as soon as possible.

3.2 As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your line manager or the Principal. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved, you should contact the Chair of the Governing Body or HR.

3.3 HR can provide advice and guidance on how matters of concern can be pursued.

3.4 You may invite your trade union or professional association to raise a matter on your behalf.

3.5 Concerns may be raised in writing and/or by email to the following. All referrals made will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

- Your line manager
- Principal
- Chair of the Governing Body
- HR

3.6 Although you are not expected to prove an allegation, you will need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern. It would be useful to provide relevant information including, where possible, such as:

- The background and history to the case;
- The reason why you are particularly concerned
- Any specific details available including names, dates, times and places;
- Details of any particular conversations that support the concerns;
- Details any personal interest that you may have in the matter; and
- How you think that things may be put right, if possible.

If you are concerned about reporting an issue within the college you may wish to seek advice from the bodies listed in 3.17 of this policy.

3.7 If a concern is discussed with someone directly involved, then it creates an opportunity for evidence to be tampered with or removed. Concerns should not be discussed with others who are not involved in an appropriately structured investigation. Doing so may leave you open to accusations of making slanderous or libelous comments should your concerns be unfounded, as these could damage the reputation of individuals and the college even if there is no evidence of any wrongdoing.

3.8 There are special rules surrounding the gathering of evidence. Any attempt to gather evidence by people who are unfamiliar with these rules may adversely affect the outcome of the case as evidence has to be collected in accordance with current legislation. This is of particular importance in regard to surveillance. If you are at all unsure about the gathering of evidence, advice is available from HR

<u>How the college will respond</u>

3.9 The action taken by the college will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- be investigated internally, (this is the most likely option)
- be referred to the police
- be referred to the external auditor
- form the subject of an independent inquiry
- or any combination of the above

3.10 In order to protect individuals and the college, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

3.11 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

3.12 Within ten working days of a concern being received, where appropriate, the college will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter (including potential timescales)
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made; and
- telling you whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

3.13 The amount of contact between the person(s) considering the issues and you, will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from you.

3.14 When any meeting is arranged, you have the right, if you wish, to be accompanied by a union or professional association representative or a colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

3.15 The college will take steps to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the college will advise you about the procedure.

3.16 The college acknowledges the need to provide you with assurance that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, you will receive appropriate information about the extent and outcomes of any investigations.

<u>How the matter can be taken further</u>

3.17 This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue to raise concerns within the organisation. The college hopes you will be satisfied. If you are not, and if you feel it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points.

- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- Your union
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- The Information Commissioner
- Your local Council Member as follows:
- North Lincolnshire Council Members details are available from Members Service on 01724 297000 or on the internet at northlincs.gov.uk
- The Citizens Advice Bureau
- Your solicitor
- The police
- Your Member of Parliament
- Protect 020 3117 2520 https://protect-advice.org.uk/

(independent charity that provides free advice for employees who wish to express concerns about fraud or other serious malpractice)
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (www.gov.uk)
- The Local Authority Designated Officer
- North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) on 08081 689667 or at www.northlincs.gov.uk. Or visit their offices at church Square House, Scunthorpe
- Ofsted
- The Department for Education
- Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC)

3.18 If you do take the matter outside the college, you will need to ensure that you do not disclose confidential information or that disclosure would be privileged. If you have any queries as to what constitutes confidential information, please check with HR about this.

Support for whistleblowers

3.19 Everything possible will be done to manage employment relationships following a genuine and reasonable concern being raised.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:
- maintaining and operating the policy;
- review of the policy;
- annual report on the effectiveness of the policy;
- approving amendments to the policy;
- promoting the policy periodically;
- maintaining a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form that does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to HR.

Managers/Leaders
To undertake investigations without undue delay.
To maintain confidentiality.

Employees
To raise issues of concern responsibly.

Others
As an employee of a contractor of the college or a partner organisation, it is recognised that in some cases, you may have concerns which you may want to bring to our attention. The college is committed to encouraging all individuals, including non-college employees to raise serious concerns with the organisation. Whilst we would seek always to protect the anonymity of individuals raising concerns in good faith, the Whistleblowing Policy does not protect employees of external organisations in the same way as college employees.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

The equality impact assessment of this policy is wholly positive as the policy supports the opportunity to address equality and diversity issues.