

SPARK ACADEMY

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Purpose

Spark Academy Tutoring is committed to the highest standards of integrity, honesty, and accountability in all areas of its work. This Whistleblowing Policy provides a framework for tutors, contractors, and stakeholders to raise concerns about possible wrongdoing, malpractice, or risks to children, young people, or the public interest, without fear of reprisal.

The policy is designed to ensure that all concerns are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately, even though Spark Academy's tutors are self-employed freelancers rather than employees.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All freelance tutors working on behalf of Spark Academy Tutoring
- The Director of Spark Academy Tutoring
- Any individuals or organisations who have contact with Spark Academy through its services, including schools, local authorities, pupils, and parents

Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing concerns may include, but are not limited to, safeguarding concerns or risks to children and young people; suspected criminal activity; failure to comply with a legal or professional obligation; serious health and safety concerns; fraud or financial malpractice; serious professional misconduct or unethical practice; or attempts to conceal any such wrongdoing.

Whistleblowing relates to concerns that are in the public interest or may affect others. Personal complaints or concerns relating solely to an individual's own circumstances should normally be raised through Spark Academy Tutoring's Compliments and Complaints Policy.

Raising a Concern or Complaint

We understand that sometimes things may not go as expected. If you have a concern or complaint, we encourage you to raise it as soon as possible so that we can work together to resolve it fairly and efficiently.

Responsibilities

- The Director of Spark Academy Tutoring is responsible for receiving, investigating, and responding to whistleblowing concerns.
- All freelance tutors and associates have a duty to report any concerns relating to safeguarding, unethical practice, or potential harm to children or vulnerable individuals.
- Where a concern relates to the Director, or an individual feels unable to raise a concern internally, the matter should be raised with the appropriate external body depending on the nature of the concern. For safeguarding concerns or allegations relating to someone working with children, this may include the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Local Safeguarding Partnership. Where a criminal offence is suspected or there is an immediate risk of harm, the police should be contacted. Other appropriate regulatory or prescribed bodies may also be contacted where relevant.

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Concerns may be raised anonymously. However, individuals are encouraged to provide their identity where they feel able to do so, as this may assist Spark Academy or the relevant external body in investigating the concern fully and providing appropriate follow-up. All genuine concerns will be taken seriously, and no tutor or contractor will suffer retaliation or disadvantage for raising a concern where they reasonably believe the information provided is true, even if the concern is subsequently found to be unsubstantiated.

How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should ideally be raised as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken. You may raise a concern by:

- Email: contact@sparkacademytutoring.com
- Phone: 0330 043 2488

When raising a concern, please provide as much detail as possible, including:

- What has happened or is suspected
 - When and where it occurred
- Who was involved or may have knowledge of the matter
 - Whether any evidence exists

If you feel unable to raise a concern internally, you may contact:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if the concern relates to a child protection matter
- The Police, if there is an immediate risk of harm

Safeguarding-Related Concerns

Spark Academy Tutoring operates within a safeguarding framework. If a concern relates to the safety or welfare of a child or young person, it should be treated as a safeguarding disclosure and reported immediately in line with Spark Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. In such cases, the Director will follow statutory safeguarding procedures and inform relevant agencies as required.

Confidentiality and Protection

Spark Academy will handle all whistleblowing concerns confidentially and will make every effort to protect the identity of the individual raising the concern, unless disclosure is required by law. No tutor or contractor will suffer any form of retaliation or disadvantage for raising a concern in good faith, even if it is later found to be unsubstantiated. However, malicious or deliberately false allegations may be treated as a serious matter and could affect future working relationships with Spark Academy.

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Investigation Process

- The Director will acknowledge receipt of a whistleblowing concern within 10 working days.
- An initial assessment will be made to determine the nature and urgency of the issue.
- Where necessary, a full investigation will be undertaken, which may include gathering statements or consulting with external agencies (e.g., safeguarding authorities or law enforcement).
- A written outcome or summary of actions taken will be shared with the whistleblower where appropriate, respecting confidentiality and data protection obligations.

Record Keeping

All whistleblowing reports will be recorded securely and confidentially by the Director. Records will include the nature of the concern, actions taken, and the outcome. These records will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation and may be reviewed as part of ongoing safeguarding audits.

8. Review

Spark Academy Tutoring is committed to fostering an open culture where individuals feel confident to speak up. Feedback from whistleblowing cases will be used to review internal practices and strengthen the safeguarding and governance framework. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or best practice guidance changes.

Policy Approved By: Becky Kowalski, Director & Designated Safeguarding Lead

Last Reviewed: August 2026

Next Review Date: August 2027