



## **EDLounge Ltd Whistleblowing Policy**

## **Overview**

EDLounge Limited expects the highest standards of conduct from all learners, staff, partners, associates and volunteers. EDLounge will treat seriously any concern that is raised about illegal or improper conduct. All its learners, employees, partners, associates and volunteers are expected to share concerns about any serious impropriety, or breach of procedure with the Senior Management Team without fear of recrimination.

### **Definition of Whistleblowing -**

Whistleblowing has been defined as:

'The disclosure by an employee or professional of confidential information which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the work place, be it of the employee or his/her fellow employees'. (Public Concern at Work Guidelines 1997).

This policy aims to:

- Give members of staff the confidence to raise concerns about conduct or practice which is potentially illegal, corrupt, improper, unsafe or unethical, or which amounts to malpractice, or is inconsistent with group standards and policies so that s/he is encouraged to act on those concerns.
- Provide members of staff, learners, partners, associates and volunteers with avenues to raise concerns.
- Ensure that members of staff, learners, partners, associates and volunteers receive a response to the concerns they have raised and feedback on any action taken
- Offer assurance that members of staff, learners, partners, associates and volunteers are protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing action undertaken in good faith

Examples of illegal and/ or improper conduct

- Unlawful conduct
- Miscarriages of justice in the conduct of statutory or other processes
- Failure to comply with a statutory or legal obligation
- Potential maladministration, misconduct or malpractice
- Health and safety issues including risks to the public as well as risks to pupils and members of staff
- Action that has caused or is likely to cause danger to the environment
- Abuse of authority
- Unauthorised use of public or other funds
- Fraud or corruption
- Breaches of financial regulations or policies
- Mistreatment of any person
- Action that has caused, or is likely to cause physical danger to any person or risk serious damage to property
- Unfair discrimination or favouritism
- Racist incidents or acts, or racial harassment
- Any attempt to prevent disclosure of any of the issues listed.

**Child protection concerns** - All employees and volunteers are expected to report any safeguarding and child protection concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Milly Wildish EDLounge Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead [milly@mawsafeguarding.co.uk](mailto:milly@mawsafeguarding.co.uk). or Bill Fitzpatrick Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. [bill@edlounge.com](mailto:bill@edlounge.com).

Such concerns may relate to:

- The physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of a child
- An inappropriate or improper relationship between an adult and a pupil.

Anonymous allegations - Allegations can be made anonymously. However, this policy encourages you to put your name to 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. Anonymous allegations will be considered wherever possible at the discretion of EDLounge Ltd. 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
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from other, attributable sources

**Harassment or victimisation** – EDLounge Limited recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal. We will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. If you feel that you have suffered harassment, either directly or indirectly as a result of raising a concern, you should refer to the EDLounge bullying and harassment and policy and code of practice/conduct.

**Confidentiality** - All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of a whistle blower. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality, if a whistle blower is required to come forward as a witness.

**Unsubstantiated allegations** - If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action is likely to be taken.

**Procedure for Whistleblowing** -As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager, their line manager or a member of the Senior Management Team in writing or verbally. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. If you feel you cannot express your concerns within the group, it is open to you to raise your concern with someone outside of EDLounge Ltd such as:

- Rebecca Warnes - 07812158688
- Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) if the matter is about child protection or safeguarding issues – 01709 823 914
- Police
- Health & Safety Executive
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- Department for Education
- OfSTED

**What happens next** - The appointed person dealing with your concern will:

- Provide a written response acknowledging receipt of the concern and notifying what will happen next (unless it was an anonymous allegation)
- Look into the allegation - seeking evidence and interviewing witnesses as necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality wherever possible but be mindful that there is no guarantee that the whistle blower can remain anonymous.
- If appropriate, for concerns of criminal behaviour refer the matter to the Police.
- If appropriate, for concerns of child protection, refer the matter to the Local Authority officer designated to lead on child protection/local authority social services designated manager for child protection. The whistleblowing process will be halted until the statutory authorities have completed their investigations and confirmed that it is appropriate to continue with the whistleblowing process.

If the person investigating the allegation needs to talk to you, you are permitted to be accompanied by a trade union or professional association representative or a fellow member of staff not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

The target is to complete the inquiry within 5 working days from the date of the initial written response and write to all relevant parties to keep them informed of what is happening (if appropriate).

Version No	Purpose / Change	Lead	Inception/ Review Date	Next Review Date
1	Document Inception	Cara Radford EDLounge Manager	May 2016	May 2017
2	Document review update	Cara Radford EDLounge Manager	May 2017	May 2018
3	Document review update	Cara Radford EDLounge Manager	May 2018	May 2019
4	Document review update	Cara Radford EDLounge Manager	May 2109	May 2020
5	Document review update	Cara Radford EDLounge Manager	May 2020	May 2021