

Whistleblowing Policy

Examinations Centre

Centre	Excel Tutors (Centre 10488)
Address	161-163 Commercial Road, London, E1 2DA
Policy owner	Head of Centre
Operational lead	Exams Officer
Last reviewed	July 2026
Review cycle	Annually, on publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance

This policy is aligned with:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2025-2026

Reviewed annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance (General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for Conducting Examinations, and related documents).

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1. Introduction

Excel Tutors is committed to promoting transparency, accountability, and integrity in all aspects of its operation as an approved examinations centre for GCSE, A Levels, International A Levels, iGCSE, and Functional Skills. This Whistleblowing Policy provides a secure process for staff, invigilators, contractors, and others involved in the delivery or administration of examinations to raise concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or unethical behaviour without fear of reprisal.

This policy complies with the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 and aligns with the statutory guidance outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE, 2025). It complements other policies, including the Malpractice & Maladministration Policy, Data Protection Policy, and Safeguarding Policy.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage individuals to report concerns about misconduct, malpractice, or breaches of regulations within the examinations process.
- Provide clear procedures for raising such concerns.
- Protect whistleblowers from victimisation or detriment when reporting in good faith.
- Ensure all reports are investigated thoroughly, fairly, and confidentially.

This policy applies to:

- Exams Officers and Assistants
- Invigilators and Assessors
- Tutors and staff involved in candidate preparation
- Contractors and volunteers engaged in exam operations
- External verifiers, moderators, or visitors observing exam processes

3. Examples of Whistleblowing Concerns

Examples of matters to be reported under this policy include:

- Examination malpractice or maladministration (e.g., paper leaks, cheating, falsification of records)
- Breaches of data protection or misuse of candidate information
- Fraud, theft, or misuse of public funds
- Safeguarding or child protection failures
- Health and safety risks or illegal activity within exam delivery
- Attempts to conceal or cover up wrongdoing
- Abuse of authority, discrimination, or unethical behaviour impacting exam integrity

4. Protection for Whistleblowers

In accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, individuals who raise genuine concerns in the public interest will be protected from dismissal, victimisation, or any detrimental treatment as a result of their disclosure. Excel Tutors will take disciplinary action against anyone who subjects a whistleblower to harassment or retaliation.

However, making deliberately false or malicious allegations may lead to disciplinary action.

5. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Excel Tutors will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the whistleblower's identity. Anonymous disclosures will be considered where sufficient information is provided to enable investigation, although anonymous reports may limit the ability to obtain evidence or provide feedback. All records and communications will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

6. Raising a Concern

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible. Staff are encouraged to raise issues in writing to ensure a clear record is maintained. Whistleblowing concerns should be directed to one of the following in confidence:

- The Head of Centre (Lead Officer for Examinations)
- The Exams Officer or Deputy Head of Centre

If the concern involves the Head of Centre, the disclosure should be made to a Director or Proprietor of Excel Tutors.

Concerns relating to safeguarding or child protection may also be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police, or external agencies as appropriate under statutory guidance.

7. Investigation Procedure

- The Head of Centre (or designated investigator) will acknowledge the concern within 10 working days.
- A preliminary assessment will determine whether the concern falls within this policy and if further investigation is required.
- Where applicable, relevant awarding organisations (e.g., JCQ, Pearson, AQA, OCR, CCEA) will be notified.
- Investigations will be conducted promptly, objectively, and confidentially, maintaining accurate written records.
- The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, subject to legal and confidentiality restrictions.

8. External Reporting

If an individual believes their concern has not been properly addressed internally, they may raise it externally with:

- Awarding organisations (e.g., JCQ, CCEA, AQA, Pearson, OCR)
- Ofqual
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
- The Department for Education
- The Whistleblowing Charity, Protect (protect-advice.org.uk)
- ACAS (www.acas.org.uk)

9. Recording and Monitoring

A central register of whistleblowing reports will be maintained by the Exams Officer. This register records the date, nature of concern, action taken, and outcome. Periodic reviews of cases will be conducted to identify trends and improve control measures across the exams centre.

10. Training and Awareness

All exams staff, invigilators, and administrators receive induction and annual refresher training which includes whistleblowing awareness, safeguarding duties, and reporting channels.

11. Review and Approval

This policy is reviewed annually or following any significant regulatory, structural, or legislative changes. It is approved by the Head of Centre and forms part of the Excel Tutors Examinations Policy Pack.