Whistleblowing Policy

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Version	v1.0
Effective from	1 September 2026
Applies to	All team members across all Pinc organisations
Policy owner	Chief Operating Officer (maintained by the People Team)
Next review	Summer 2027

About this policy

Pinc brings together Pinc Creative College, Pinc Woodlands, Pinc Futures and Pinc Exams. Together we provide specialist education for neurodivergent young people aged 16 to 24, and this policy applies across all four organisations. Where it refers to "Pinc", that means the organisation within the group that employs you. Where anything applies to only one organisation, we say so.

Everything we do is grounded in our values.

We are Individual — we celebrate everyone.

We are Inclusive — we value and support everyone.

We are Innovative — we believe in the power to change.

We work in a way that is Respectful, Responsible, Safe and Kind. The Pinc Methodology holds the individual, their wellbeing and their particular needs at the centre of our approach.

Purpose. To encourage anyone who becomes aware of wrongdoing, danger or illegality connected with Pinc to report it, and to make clear how they are protected when they do.

Who it applies to. All Pinc team members. Everyone who works for Pinc is employed by us, and throughout this policy "team member" means an employee of one of the Pinc organisations.

Status. This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended from time to time.

Getting help. If anything here is unclear, speak to your line manager or contact the People Team.

Who to go to

Wherever this policy refers to raising, escalating or referring something, the route is the same:

First	Your line manager	The person you report to day to day. Most things are resolved here.
Second	Head of College or Head of Organisation	Where your line manager cannot resolve it, is unavailable, or is the subject of the matter.
Third	Executive Team	Where the matter concerns a Head of College or Head of Organisation, or where it cannot be resolved at the second stage.

We aim to maintain high standards in everything we do. Any organisation can be affected by conduct that is dangerous, unlawful, or in breach of professional or ethical standards — and the people most likely to notice are those who work there.

If you have a concern of that kind, we want you to raise it. We will take it seriously, investigate it properly, and protect you for having spoken up. Whistleblowers are protected from dismissal and from any other detriment by the Employment Rights Act 1996.

In a setting like ours, this matters most of all where a young person may be at risk. If you believe a student is being harmed or is at risk of harm, do not wait — contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and follow our Safeguarding Policy.

What counts

A qualifying disclosure is information you reasonably believe is in the public interest and tends to show one of the following, whether it has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen:

- A criminal offence
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health or safety of any person
- Damage to the environment
- Sexual harassment — whether it has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above

It also covers failures to meet professional or regulatory requirements connected with our work.

A disclosure about sexual harassment is a qualifying disclosure. Anyone reporting sexual harassment — whether experienced or witnessed — has the protection of this policy in addition to the protection of the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

This policy is not for concerns about your own employment, such as how you have been managed or your terms and conditions. Those go through the Grievance Policy. If you are not sure which applies, raise it and we will help you work it out — you will not be penalised for using the wrong route. Where a concern is better dealt with as a grievance, we will tell you and explain why. That assessment is made by the People Team, not by the person receiving your report.

How to raise a concern

Raise your concern with your line manager, in person or in writing, making clear that you are raising it under this policy. Where the concern involves your line manager, raise it with the Head of College or Head of Organisation. Where it involves them, raise it with the Executive Team. Where it involves a member of the Executive Team, raise it with the Chair of Governors.

Set out what your concern is, with the key facts, dates and the names of anyone involved.

You will be invited to a meeting to discuss it and may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. The meeting is recorded confidentially on DataBridge.

The concern is then investigated, which may involve people with specialist knowledge. We will keep you informed in general terms about how the investigation is going and how long it is likely to take. There will be things we cannot tell you, to protect confidentiality and comply with our legal obligations — we know that is frustrating, and we will explain why where we can.

We cannot guarantee the outcome you are hoping for. If you are not satisfied with how the investigation has been handled, raise that at the next level of the escalation route.

Confidentiality and anonymity

There is a difference between wanting your identity kept confidential and reporting anonymously.

If you ask us to keep your identity confidential, we will do everything we reasonably can, and we will always talk to you before disclosing it.

You may also report anonymously. We would rather you did that than not report at all. You should know that an anonymous report is harder to investigate — we cannot come back to you for detail, cannot clarify,

and cannot keep you informed — and that may limit what we are able to establish. But we will take it seriously and investigate as far as we can.

Your protection

No team member will be dismissed, disadvantaged, or treated badly for raising a genuine concern under this policy. That protection applies whether or not the concern turns out to be well founded — what matters is that you reasonably believed it.

If you believe you have been treated badly because you raised a concern, tell us straight away.

Bullying, harassment or any other detriment towards someone who has raised a concern will be dealt with under the Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and may amount to gross misconduct.

Where there is clear evidence that a report was made maliciously — untrue and made in bad faith — that may be a conduct matter. A concern that is not upheld is not, on its own, a malicious one.

Raising a concern outside Pinc

We would like the chance to put things right ourselves, and internal reporting is usually the quickest way to get something dealt with. But this policy does not restrict your right to go elsewhere, and the law protects disclosures to certain bodies known as prescribed persons.

Body	For concerns about
Ofsted	The welfare of students, and the way an education provider is run
NSPCC whistleblowing helpline — 0800 028 0285	Child protection concerns, where you feel unable to raise them internally
Local Authority Designated Officer	Allegations that an adult working with young people has harmed or may pose a risk to a young person
Health and Safety Executive	Health and safety risks
Information Commissioner's Office	Data protection
Department for Education	Concerns about education funding and provision
Police	Criminal conduct

A full list of prescribed persons is published on GOV.UK. You may take independent advice at any point — from a trade union, a solicitor, or the charity Protect at protect-advice.org.uk.

Disclosures to the media

The law does protect wider disclosures, including to the media, in defined circumstances — broadly, where the disclosure is reasonable in all the circumstances, is not made for personal gain, and where you reasonably believed you would be victimised if you raised it internally, or that evidence would be concealed or destroyed, or where you had already raised it and nothing was done. Where the matter is exceptionally serious, the conditions are different again.

These are legal tests and they are not straightforward. We would strongly encourage you to raise your concern internally or with a prescribed person first, and to take independent advice before approaching the media. But we will not treat a protected disclosure as a disciplinary matter, whoever it is made to.