Whistleblowing Policy August 2026

For the purposes of this policy, references to “staff” or “members of staff” include all employees, apprentices, students and volunteers working within the Nursery, whether paid or unpaid. The duties, procedures and protections set out in this policy apply equally to these individuals where relevant.

This Policy will detail the procedures to be followed where an alleged matter of serious concern perpetrated by a member of staff has been observed and reported. This is known as "whistle-blowing".

It is the policy of the Nursery to encourage the reporting all matters of serious concern involving a member of staff to the appropriate Designated Person, and for persons to feel that they can do so freely and without fear of reprisals or intimidation. Matters of serious concern will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Professional malpractice.
- Abuse of a child.
- Criminal activities (theft/embezzlement/assault, etc)

Persons reporting such incidents can include the following:

- Fellow staff members (peers).
- Volunteers.
- Students and apprentices.
- Children.
- Parents / Carers.

In most instances it is in everyone's interests for concerns about a colleague to be addressed instantly at the time it is witnessed. The nursery encourages a culture where staff are able to discuss and reflect on each other's practice in a safe and open exchange of opinions. In this way constructive criticism can be made without blame attached.

However, concerns about colleagues can be made verbally or in any chosen written form to a Designated Safeguarding Lead if a member of staff:

- Is uncomfortable about raising a concern directly with a colleague.
- Has given feedback about a concern which has been disregarded.
- Feels the concern is serious and children are at risk of harm.

All staff, including volunteers and apprentices, are encouraged to speak directly with a Designated Person if they have any concerns involving a member of staff and are unsure as to the correct action to take. All discussions will be in confidence. In the event of a Designated Person not being available, contact is to be made by phone with a Designated Person.

Where an incident of serious concern is alleged, the person making the allegation must report it directly and specifically to a Designated Person. The ‘whistle-blower’ will be assured that appropriate enquiries will be made to establish the nature and facts of the incident, and that such enquiry will be carried out discreetly and in confidence. Wherever possible, the identity of the person reporting the incident will be kept anonymous. In order to encourage staff to report concerns the nursery’s incident register app allows staff to report any concern including regarding colleagues anonymously.

All staff, volunteers and apprentices have a legal responsibility to report concerns about professional conduct of colleagues whose behaviour might harm a child, and to enable any allegation against a member of staff to be given full consideration in a consistent and fair way,

All allegations against staff members should be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

If a concern is related to safeguarding and has been referred to LADO, their instructions and guidance as to how the matter should be progressed will be sought and followed.

The current list of DSLs includes:

- Laura Dimmock (overall Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Serena Whaley
- Lauren King
- Paige Fane

An allegation is information or a concern which suggests that an adult working with children and young people has:
- *behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;*
- *possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;*
- *behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children.*

If an allegation meets the LADO threshold for referral, the LADO Referral form will be completed in full. The Nursery will follow guidance provided by the LADO team regarding how to proceed and will not carry out any kind of investigation that could jeopardise future investigations by social services or the Police while it awaits guidance from the LADO team. If the LADO team deem the allegation as meeting their threshold Ofsted will be informed with 14 days.

A Designated Person will complete a LADO referral form for all allegations of children being harmed, where this does not meet the LADO threshold for referral, the form will not be forwarded to the LADO team and only part 1 will be completed and retained. Such cases will be investigated by the Designated Person with a clear view that this could be escalated to a full LADO referral if more information comes to light.

If the concern does not pass the LADO threshold for referral or related to non-safeguarding matters and is to be handled internally then the Designated Person will respond as follows:

- Follow any LADO guidance provided.
- Carry out a full investigation. All parties concerned in the allegation will be interviewed. This may include other staff and a child's parents /carers as appropriate.
- Record and retain findings from any investigation.
- Apply the nursery's performance management and/or disciplinary processes as appropriate.

Where the allegation has proven to be a malicious action on the part of the accusing party, then the accuser may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action per the Disciplinary Procedure.

Useful numbers

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – **01992 555420**
Ofsted Whistle blowing hotline - **0300 123 315**5 or www.whistleblower@ofsted.gov.uk
If a member of staff has a concern about a member of the Senior Management Team and wishes to seek advice or guidance.

***** If you have any concerns that a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm please contact the Emergency Services on 999 *****

Other Relevant Documentation

WHISTLEBLOWING, Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice, MARCH 2015
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf