

2.6 Whistleblowing Policy

Reviewed: June 2026
Next Review Date: September 2027

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2.6 Whistleblowing Policy

2.6.1. Statement of Intent

Miss B's Nursery is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards of care, safeguarding, and professional integrity. We recognise that creating a safe, transparent, and accountable culture is essential in protecting children, supporting staff, and maintaining trust with families.

Whistleblowing plays a crucial role in safeguarding and in ensuring that poor practice, misconduct, or unsafe behaviour is identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity. We actively encourage all staff, students, and volunteers to raise concerns without fear, knowing that they will be taken seriously and handled with sensitivity and professionalism.

This policy is guided by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). It reflects our duty to act in the best interests of children at all times.

2.6.2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and supportive framework for raising concerns about wrongdoing within Miss B's Nursery. It applies to all employees, agency staff, students, and volunteers and covers concerns that arise in connection with the nursery's activities.

Whistleblowing relates specifically to concerns that are in the public interest, particularly where there is a risk to children, breaches of legal obligations, or behaviour that falls below professional standards. It is distinct from personal grievances, which should be addressed through the nursery's grievance procedures.

2.6.3. What Constitutes a Whistleblowing Concern

A whistleblowing concern may arise when an individual becomes aware of practices or behaviours that are unsafe, unethical, or unlawful. This includes, but is not limited to,

situations where children may be at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures are not being followed, or staff conduct falls below expected standards.

Concerns may also relate to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation within the workplace, as well as serious breaches of nursery policies, financial misconduct, or attempts to conceal wrongdoing. In all cases, the key factor is that the concern has wider implications beyond an individual issue and may impact the safety, wellbeing, or rights of others.

2.6.4. Creating a Culture of Openness

At Miss B's Nursery, we aim to foster a culture where staff feel confident and empowered to speak up. We recognise that raising concerns can feel difficult, particularly if they involve colleagues or senior staff. For this reason, we are committed to ensuring that all concerns are treated respectfully and without judgement.

Staff are encouraged to view whistleblowing as a professional responsibility and a key part of safeguarding. By raising concerns, staff contribute to maintaining high standards and protecting children from harm.

Leaders within the nursery have a responsibility to model openness, actively listen to concerns, and respond in a way that builds trust and confidence.

2.6.5. Procedures for Raising a Concern

In most circumstances, **concerns should initially be raised with the Nursery Manager**, who has responsibility for ensuring that appropriate action is taken. Concerns can be raised **verbally or in writing** and should include **as much detail** as possible to support a thorough investigation.

Where a staff member believes that a concern has not been taken seriously, or where there is an immediate risk to children, they must not delay in contacting external agencies.

2.6.6. Reporting to External Agencies

Miss B's Nursery recognises that there may be circumstances where concerns need to be raised outside of the organisation. Staff have the right, and in some cases a duty, to report concerns directly to relevant authorities.

For safeguarding concerns relating to children, staff should contact the **Integrated Front Door** on **01403 229 900** or email WSChildrenServices@westsussex.gov.uk (Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm). Or the Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours) for urgent safeguarding concerns outside office hours, telephone **0330 222 6664** (Hours: Weekdays 5:00pm–9:00am, weekends and bank holidays)

Where concerns relate specifically to the conduct of an adult working with children, staff must contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for West Sussex** on 0330 222 6450 or via LADO@westsussex.gov.uk.

Staff may also contact **Ofsted** directly on 0300 123 1231 or via whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk if they believe that regulatory standards are not being met. In addition, the **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline** (0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk) is available for confidential advice and support.

Staff should feel confident that they can contact these agencies at any time, particularly where children may be at immediate risk or internal processes have failed.

2.6.7. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Whistleblowing is an integral part of safeguarding practice within Miss B's Nursery. All staff have a duty to act if they witness or suspect poor practice, abuse, or neglect.

Concerns must be reported immediately, and staff must not assume that someone else will take action. The welfare of the child is always the paramount consideration, and any delay in reporting concerns could place a child at further risk.

This approach aligns with EYFS safeguarding requirements and reinforces the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

2.6.8. Protection for Individuals Raising Concerns

Miss B's Nursery is committed to ensuring that any individual who raises a concern in good faith is protected from unfair treatment. No member of staff will be dismissed, disadvantaged, or subjected to victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern.

All concerns will be treated seriously, and appropriate support will be provided to the individual throughout the process. This protection is supported by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

However, if a concern is found to have been raised maliciously or with the intent to mislead, disciplinary action may result.

2.6.9. Confidentiality

All whistleblowing concerns will be handled with strict confidentiality. The identity of the individual raising the concern will not be disclosed without their consent, unless required by law or necessary for safeguarding.

While anonymous concerns can be raised, staff are encouraged to provide their identity where possible, as this can support a more effective investigation and allow for appropriate follow-up.

2.6.10. Responding to Concerns

All concerns raised will be recorded accurately and investigated in a timely and proportionate manner. The nature of the response will depend on the seriousness of the concern and may involve internal investigation, referral to external agencies, or both.

The nursery will ensure that appropriate action is taken to address any identified issues and to prevent recurrence. Where possible, feedback will be provided to the individual who raised the concern, while maintaining confidentiality.

2.6.11. Roles and Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager holds overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively, that concerns are handled appropriately, and that external agencies are contacted where necessary.

2: Suitable People

All staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment and must act promptly when concerns arise. This includes understanding the procedures outlined in this policy and applying them in practice.

Leadership within the nursery is responsible for promoting a culture of openness, ensuring staff feel supported, and embedding safeguarding at the heart of all practice.

2.6.12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and in line with current legislation and local safeguarding procedures. It will also be reviewed following any significant incident or change in guidance.

Staff will receive regular training and updates to ensure they understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising concerns.

Flow Chart step-by-step guide

1. Do you have a concern about poor practice, unsafe behaviour, misconduct, safeguarding failure, or wrongdoing?

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Yes

↓

2. Consider whether a child is at immediate risk of harm.

- If **yes**, act immediately and report without delay to 999.
 - If **no**, report the concern as soon as possible.

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3. Raise your concern with the Nursery Manager.

- This can be done verbally or in writing.
- Include facts, dates, times, names, and what you have seen, heard, or been told.

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4. Is your concern about the Nursery Manager, or do you feel unable to report to them?

- If **no**, the Nursery Manager will record and respond to the concern.
 - If **yes**, go straight to the LADO or IDF.

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5. The concern is recorded, considered, and appropriate action is taken.

This may include:

2: Suitable People

- internal investigation
- safeguarding referral
- seeking advice from external agencies
- referral to Ofsted or the Local Authority

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6. Has the concern been taken seriously and dealt with appropriately?

- If **yes**, the process continues internally and outcomes are followed up.
- If **no**, or if you still believe children are at risk, escalate externally.

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7. Contact the appropriate external agency.

For safeguarding concerns about a child, report to the Integrated Front Door.

Telephone: **01403 229 900**

Email: **WSChildrenServices@westsussex.gov.uk**

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm

Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)

For urgent safeguarding concerns outside office hours

Telephone: **0330 222 6664**

Hours: Weekdays 5:00pm–9:00am, weekends and bank holidays

For concerns about an adult working with children:

West Sussex LADO

0330 222 6450

LADO@westsussex.gov.uk

For concerns about childcare standards or registration:

2: Suitable People

Ofsted

0300 123 1231

whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

For confidential independent advice:

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

0800 028 0285

help@nspcc.org.uk



8. Keep a factual written record.

Record:

- What was the concern?
- who it was reported to
- the date and time
- any action taken



9. Continue to act in the best interests of the child at all times.

Do not ignore concerns, delay reporting, or investigate the matter yourself.

Quick Reminder for Staff

If in doubt, speak out.

If a child may be at risk, report immediately.

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Do not wait for proof.

Do not assume someone else has reported it.

Summary Version

Concern identified



Is a child at risk?



Yes or unsure → Report immediately



Report to Nursery Manager



If concern is about Manager → Report to LADO



Not addressed / still concerned?



Contact West Sussex IDF / LADO / Ofsted / NSPCC



Record concern factually



Always act in the child's best interests