

Beetley and District Preschool

Registered Charity: 1181636

SAFEGUARDING

Whistleblowing

Definition

Whistleblowing is the act of raising a concern about malpractice, wrongdoing, or risk within an organisation.

It applies where the interests of others, including children, staff, or the organisation itself, may be at risk.

Whistleblowing is distinct from making a personal complaint — it concerns matters of **public interest**, not individual grievances.

Policy Statement

Beetley & District Preschool is committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability.

In line with this commitment, the Preschool encourages all employees, volunteers, and stakeholders who have serious concerns about any aspect of our practice to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of reprisal. We recognise that in some cases, whistleblowing will need to proceed on a confidential basis, and this policy ensures that anyone raising a genuine concern is protected from victimisation or retaliation.

All staff have both the right and responsibility to raise concerns about poor practice or misconduct that could place others, particularly children, at risk. The safety and well-being of children is our highest priority and takes precedence over personal loyalty to colleagues.

Aims of This Policy

- To encourage and enable individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns.
- To support staff in taking an active role in preventing and eliminating poor practice.
- To ensure that all concerns are investigated promptly and appropriately.
- To protect whistleblowers from any form of victimisation, discrimination, or disadvantage.

Relationship with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy

- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure

It is designed for concerns that fall outside the scope of those procedures. The Chair of the Management Committee (or designated member not implicated in the concern) will ensure all whistleblowing concerns are investigated promptly, fairly, and thoroughly, with appropriate follow-up action.

Confidentiality

- The Chair of the Management Committee (or designated member not implicated in the concern) will make every effort to protect the identity of the person raising a concern.
- In some cases, disclosure of identity may be necessary (e.g., where evidence is required in legal or disciplinary proceedings).
- If disclosure is required, the individual will be informed beforehand and told why it is necessary.
- Once a concern has been raised, individuals should avoid discussing it further within or outside the preschool, except with those responsible for handling the concern.
- All information will be handled sensitively and stored securely in line with the Preschool's **Data Protection Policy** and **UK GDPR** requirements.

Anonymous Complaints

All anonymous concerns will be reviewed to the extent possible, and action taken if evidence supports the concerns. Where an individual chooses to remain anonymous, the Preschool will evaluate the seriousness of the issue and the likelihood of confirming the facts. However, anonymity may limit our ability to investigate or provide feedback.

Untrue or Malicious Allegations

- Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2998, staff who make a 'protected disclosure' in good faith are legally protected from dismissal or detriment as a result of raising their concern.
- However, if an allegation is found to be malicious or made for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken.

How to Raise a Concern

1. **In the first instance**, concerns should be raised with **Hollie Durrant – Preschool Manager**.
 - If it is not appropriate to raise the concern with the Manager, it should be raised with the **Chair of the Management Committee**.
2. **Raising in Writing:**
 - Concerns should preferably be submitted in writing, detailing background, names, dates, places, and reasons for concern.

- The earlier concerns are raised, the easier it is to take effective action.
- 3. **If you prefer not to write:**
 - A written record of your verbal disclosure will be made by the person you speak to, and you will be asked to sign it for accuracy.
- 4. **Evidence:**
 - You are not expected to prove your allegations, but you must show that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

You should NOT:

- Investigate the matter yourself.
- Alert those suspected of involvement.
- Approach or accuse individuals directly.
- Discuss the matter with anyone other than the designated persons.

Response and Timescales

- Within **one week** of receiving your concern, you will receive a **written acknowledgment** and a copy of your statement (if applicable).
- The Management Committee will investigate and, within **two weeks**, inform you of the **initial action** being taken.
- Complex cases may take longer, but you will be kept informed throughout and notified of the **outcome** once the investigation concludes.

If You Are Not Satisfied

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, or you feel unable to raise your concern within the Preschool, you may escalate it to the appropriate external authority.

Ofsted Contact Details:

- **Telephone:** 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday, 8am–6pm)
- **Email:** whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- **Online form:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted>

Other Contacts:

- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** – for concerns involving professionals working with children.
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:** 0800 028 0285

Guidance and Legal Framework

- *Reporting Concerns and Whistleblowing about Children's Social Care Services* (DfE, 2021)
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998*
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/ukpga_19980023_en_1
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, updated 2023)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2025)

Monitoring and Review

This policy and all related sub-policies will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or following a safeguarding incident.

- **Policy reviewed on:** 3rd September 2025
- **Next review due:** 3rd September 2026
- **Reviewed by:** Hollie Durrant and Julie East

Date:	Review Date:
Signed:	Signed:
Print Name: (Chairperson)	Print Name: (Manager)