



Whistleblowing Policy

Statement of Commitment

At Snug Nursery Schools we expect all colleagues, both internal and external, to act professionally at all times. The welfare, safety and wellbeing of every child is of the highest importance and underpins all practice.

We are committed to creating a culture of openness, transparency and accountability in which staff feel confident to raise concerns and are assured that these will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and addressed without fear of reprisal.

Whistleblowing is a vital part of safeguarding children, protecting staff, and maintaining high standards of care. This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and will be included in staff inductions.

Shared Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. At Snug Nursery Schools, safeguarding underpins all aspects of practice, including inclusion, behaviour and SEND. All staff have a duty to act in the best interests of the child, to remain professionally curious, to recognise and respond to concerns promptly, to record and escalate concerns appropriately, and to work in partnership with parents and external agencies. Children's welfare, dignity and safety are always our highest priority.

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy provides a clear procedure for staff to disclose concerns where they reasonably believe that poor practice, wrongdoing, unsafe behaviour or unethical conduct may be occurring.

It aims to:

- Encourage staff to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity
 - Ensure concerns are handled consistently, confidentially and fairly
 - Protect staff who raise concerns in the public interest from detriment
 - Ensure concerns relating to safeguarding are acted upon immediately
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2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)
- The Employment Rights Act 1996

The Public Interest Disclosure Act provides protection for employees who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters, known as “qualifying disclosures”.

Changes introduced on 25 June 2013 clarified that disclosures:

- Must be made in the public interest
- Do not need to be made “in good faith”, but this will be considered when assessing the disclosure

3. Qualifying Disclosures

A qualifying disclosure is one made by an employee who has a reasonable belief that one or more of the following has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur:

- A criminal offence
- A miscarriage of justice
- An act creating a risk to health and safety
- An act causing damage to the environment
- A breach of any legal obligation (including EYFS requirements)
- A deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above

For the purpose of this policy, Snug Nursery Schools also include:

- Any other unethical conduct that is being, has been, or is likely to be committed

Staff are not required to provide proof. A reasonable belief is sufficient.

Disclosures must:

- Be believed to be substantially true
- Not be made maliciously or with false intent
- Not be made for personal gain

4. Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

Whistleblowing is an essential safeguarding responsibility. Any concern that may place a child at risk must be treated as a safeguarding matter and acted upon immediately.

Where a concern relates to child protection or safeguarding, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy without delay, with particular reference to:

- Section 17 – Allegations against staff and whistleblowing

Safeguarding concerns must never be delayed due to uncertainty about whistleblowing procedures or fear of repercussions.

5. What Must Be Reported

Staff must use this disclosure procedure if, during the course of their employment, they become aware of information which they reasonably believe indicates that:

- A child or adult is, may be, or is likely to be at risk of harm
 - A criminal offence has been or is likely to be committed
 - A legal obligation has not been met
 - A miscarriage of justice has occurred or may occur
 - Health or safety has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered
 - The environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged
 - Unethical conduct has occurred or may occur
 - Any of the above is being deliberately concealed
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6. Disclosure Procedure

Internal Disclosure

Staff are expected to raise concerns promptly so that action can be taken.

- Concerns should normally be raised with the Nursery Manager
- If the concern relates to the Nursery Manager, staff must contact the Registered Provider

Registered Provider: Mary Brosnan Telephone: 01344 798600/01344 624799

Staff may also seek confidential advice from the Nursery Manager regarding the use of this procedure.

7. Protection for Staff

Any employee who raises a concern in accordance with this policy will not suffer any detriment, victimisation or disadvantage as a result.

All disclosures will:

- Be taken seriously
 - Be handled sensitively and confidentially
 - Be investigated thoroughly and proportionately
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8. Malicious or Poor Practice Responses

Any employee who:

- Victimises a colleague for raising a whistleblowing concern
- Attempts to prevent concerns being raised
- Fails to act appropriately on concerns within their responsibility
- Makes malicious or knowingly false allegations

Will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

Failure to report serious concerns is itself a safeguarding risk and will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Any leadership staff member who fails to act appropriately on a whistleblowing concern (including delay, inaction, poor decision-making or breach of confidentiality) may be deemed to have committed gross misconduct.

9. Low-Level Concerns and Ongoing Monitoring

Low-level concerns:

- Relate to behaviour that does not meet the threshold for immediate safeguarding action but may indicate emerging risks, boundary issues or suitability concerns
- Are not insignificant and must be shared, recorded and reviewed to prevent harm
- Are monitored through supervision, appraisal and leadership oversight

Examples may include:

- Unprofessional or inconsistent behaviour
- Inappropriate language, tone or conduct
- Over-familiarity with children or families
- Poor professional boundaries
- Conduct outside work that may raise concerns about suitability

All low-level concerns must be:

- Shared promptly with the **Nursery Manager** or **DSL**
- Recorded factually and objectively
- Reviewed to identify patterns or escalation
- Documented on the Single Central Record

Where concerns escalate or patterns emerge, action will be taken in line with safeguarding and allegations procedures, including referral to the LADO where appropriate.

Raising low-level concerns is a professional responsibility and an essential part of safeguarding children.

10. External Disclosure and Escalation

Where staff feel unable to raise concerns internally, or believe concerns have not been addressed appropriately, they may contact external agencies.

All staff are provided with contact details for relevant safeguarding and regulatory bodies.

11. Key Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Contacts

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs** identified on safeguarding posters displayed throughout the nursery.
 - **Single Point of Access (SPA)** 01628 683150 mash@achievingforchildren.org.uk (8.45am–5.15pm Mon–Thurs / 8.45am–4.45pm Fri)
 - **Out of Hours Team** 01344 786543
 - **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** 07774 332675
 - **Children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Team** 01628 685878
 - **Thames Valley Police (non-emergency)** 0845 8505 505
 - **Emergency Services** 999
 - **NSPCC** 0800 800 5000
 - **Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)** 01628 683234 lscb@rbwm.gov.uk
 - **Ofsted** 0300 123 1231 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
 - **NHS & Social Care Whistleblowing Helpline** 08000 724 725 (advice on whistleblowing processes)
 - **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line** 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
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12. Immediate Risk

If a child or adult is believed to be in immediate danger, staff must contact the emergency services immediately by calling 999.

Policy date: March 2026

Next review: March 2027

Appendix 1

Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

Intent – Implementation – Impact Summary

Intent (*Why*)

At Snug Nursery Schools, our intent is to create a strong safeguarding culture rooted in openness, accountability and professional integrity, where the welfare and safety of children is paramount.

Through our Whistleblowing Policy, we intend to:

- embed a strong safeguarding culture where children’s welfare is paramount.
 - ensure all staff feel confident, protected and empowered to raise concerns.
 - identify and address poor practice or safeguarding risks early and transparently.
 - meet statutory safeguarding duties and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
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Implementation (*How*)

The Whistleblowing Policy is implemented through clear procedures, staff training, leadership accountability and regular monitoring ensuring that:

- clear whistleblowing procedures are shared through induction, training and policy.
 - There are defined reporting routes to the Nursery Manager or Registered Provider.
 - safeguarding concerns are acted on immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.
 - staff are protected from victimisation; concerns handled confidentially and fairly.
 - low-level concerns are recorded and monitored through supervision and appraisal.
 - external escalation routes are clearly signposted where internal reporting is not appropriate.
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Impact (*What difference it makes*)

As a result of this approach:

- Staff demonstrate confidence and professional curiosity, knowing concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.
- Safeguarding risks are identified earlier, reducing the likelihood of harm and strengthening child protection.
- Leaders maintain strong oversight of practice, with transparent decision-making and accountability.
- A consistent culture of vigilance ensures that poor practice is challenged, not normalised.
- Children benefit from a safe, stable and well-led environment, where safeguarding is effective and embedded in daily practice.