

# Whistleblowing Policy



Nurture and Grow Childcare

## 1. Rationale:

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the nursery. However, they may hesitate to express their concerns due to feelings of disloyalty to colleagues, the company, or other agencies, or fear of harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may seem easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

Nurture and Grow Childcare is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, approachability, and accountability. We expect employees and others we deal with who have serious concerns about any aspect of the nursery to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This Whistleblowing Policy encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within the nursery rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

## Aims:

- Encourage confidence in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- Provide avenues to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure responses to concerns and provide information on how to pursue them if dissatisfied.
- Reassure protection from reprisals or victimisation for disclosures made in the public interest.

The policy applies to all employees and those designated as casual, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers, Directors, contractors, and anyone working on the premises.

These procedures are in addition to the company's complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures.

## Whistleblowing definition:

Whistleblowing is the term used when **a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing.**

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## 2. Legal framework

**2.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, commonly referred to as the ‘**Whistleblowing Act**’, amended the **Employment Rights Act 1996** to provide protection for employees who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called ‘**qualifying disclosures**.’

**2.2 A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest** by an employee who has a reasonable belief that any of the following is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed:

- A criminal offence
- A miscarriage of justice
- An act creating risk to health and safety
- An act causing damage to the environment
- A breach of any other legal obligation or concealment of any of the above
- Any other unethical conduct
- An act that may be deemed as radicalised or a threat to national security.

**2.3 Disclosures do not have to be made ‘in good faith’** but they must be made in the **public interest**. This is essential when assessing a disclosure made by an individual.

**The Public Interest Disclosure Act** has the following rules for making a protected disclosure:

- You must believe it to be substantially true
- You must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- You must not seek any personal gain.

It is **not necessary for the employee to have proof** that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed; a reasonable belief is sufficient.

## 3. Safeguards

### 3.1 Harassment or Victimisation

Management is committed to good practice and high standards, supporting employees raising concerns. Harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated.

### 3.2 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated confidentially. Your identity will only be revealed if necessary and with your consent.

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## 3.3 Anonymous Allegations

Anonymous allegations will be considered based on seriousness, credibility, and the possibility of confirming the allegation from other sources.

## 3.4 Untrue Allegations

Good faith allegations not confirmed by investigation will not result in action. Frivolous or malicious allegations could lead to disciplinary actions.

## 4. How to Raise a Concern

**4.1** Initially, **raise concerns with your immediate manager**. Depending on severity or involvement of senior management, approach higher-level managers or Directors.

**4.2** Concerns may be raised **verbally or in writing**, outlining the background, history, and reasons for the concern. The **earlier concerns are expressed, the easier action can be taken**.

**4.3** You may discuss your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns or you may invite a representative to meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

## 5. How the Company will Respond

**5.1 Management will acknowledge receipt within ten working days**, indicating action planned, timescale, initial enquiries, and staff support mechanisms.

**5.2 Investigations** will be conducted internally or through external auditors if necessary. Urgent action will be taken if required prior to a full investigation.

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## 6. How the Matter can be Taken Further

This policy provides an avenue within Nurture and Grow Childcare to raise concerns internally. If dissatisfied, external avenues include:

We give all of our staff the **telephone numbers of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**, the local authority **children's social care team** and **Ofsted** so all staff may contact them if they cannot talk to anyone internally about the issues or concerns observed.

- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) (available 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday)
- Protect Advice Line: 020 3117 2520 or [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk) (available 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday to Friday)
- The police.

Ensure confidentiality is maintained when approaching external bodies.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>April 2025</i>	Tracey Doidge	<i>April 2026</i>