

Home-grown in Malvern @ The Wyche Institute Whistleblowing Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Home-Grown in Malvern Preschool setting, we are committed to promoting a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability. All staff, volunteers, students, and other individuals working with us have a responsibility to raise concerns about poor practice, wrongdoing, or risks to the health, safety, or wellbeing of children and colleagues. The welfare of children is our top priority in all that we undertake. Every person working in the preschool must report any concern, however minor, if they believe a child is at risk or care quality may be compromised.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by:

- **The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**
- **The Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
- **EYFS Statutory Framework (2025)**
- **Ofsted whistleblowing guidance**

These documents support the right of individuals to raise concerns in the **public interest**, protect those who speak up from reprisal, and ensure that serious concerns are acted upon swiftly and effectively.

3. This policy applies to:

- All preschool staff (permanent, temporary, part-time)
- Volunteers
- Work experience students
- Contractors and visitors
- External professionals working with the nursery

It complements other internal preschool policies, including:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Complaints Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

4. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. It enables staff and all working in preschool to raise concerns about:

- Risks to child safety or wellbeing
- Poor or unsafe childcare practice
- Staff conduct, including bullying, discrimination, harassment
- Failure to comply with legal obligations
- Criminal offences (e.g. theft, fraud, abuse)
- Miscarriages of justice
- Deliberate attempts to conceal any of the above
- Breach of preschool or safeguarding policies
- Actions which could seriously damage the preschool's reputation

This differs from a grievance, which refers to an individual matter such as concerns about pay, workload, or interpersonal relations. Grievances should be raised through the staff grievance procedure.

5. Our Commitment to Whistleblowers

Preschool is committed to:

- Creating a **safe environment** where concerns can be raised without fear
- **Listening seriously** to concerns, and taking timely, fair and proportionate action
- **Protecting whistleblowers** from reprisals, harassment, victimisation, or disadvantage
- **Keeping disclosures confidential**, where possible and appropriate
- Ensuring staff know **how and where to raise concerns**, both internally and externally

6. When and How to Raise a Concern:

6.1 Internal Reporting Route (Preferred)

We encourage staff to first raise concerns internally so that issues can be addressed quickly and appropriately.

You can speak to:

- **Preschool Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)- Natalie**
- **Deputy Manager- Hazel**
- **The owner of Home-Grown in Malvern Denise Williams.**

You may raise your concern:

- Verbally (in person or by phone)
- In writing (email or confidential letter)
- Anonymously, but this could restrict the scope of investigation.

Your concern will be:

- Taken seriously and recorded in writing

- Investigated promptly, objectively, and confidentially
- Shared only with those who need to know

The manager, or whoever you reported your concerns to will provide feedback on the outcome, where appropriate.

6.2 Escalating Concerns (If Not Resolved or Inappropriate to Raise Internally)

If you feel unable to raise the concern internally, or the concern involves senior managers or owners, you can escalate it to:

Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline:

- Phone: 0300 123 3155
- **Email:** whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- **Online form:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted>

You can also contact:

- The **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** for concerns involving a professional working with children. Details for staff relating to contacting LADO will be shared with all persons working within the preschool setting on their induction.
- The **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:** 0800 028 0285

7. Protection for Whistleblowers

If you raise a genuine concern in the public interest:

- You **will not be penalised** even if the concern turns out to be unfounded
- You are protected by the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**
- The preschool setting will take **appropriate action** against any colleague who harasses, victimises or retaliates against a whistleblower

Malicious, false, or knowingly untrue allegations may result in disciplinary action.

8. Role of Managers and DSLs

All managers and DSLs are responsible for:

- Promoting a culture of **openness and vigilance**
- Encouraging early reporting of concerns
- Ensuring all whistleblowing disclosures are handled sensitively and in line with policy
- Keeping accurate records of concerns, investigations, and outcomes
- Reporting safeguarding-related concerns to the **LADO** or **local safeguarding partners** as required

9. Culture and Training

At preschool we actively promote a culture where:

- **Staff are encouraged to speak up early**
- **Concerns are welcomed and not judged**
- Whistleblowing training and safeguarding induction are part of the recruitment and induction process
- Policies are revisited regularly in team meetings and supervision sessions

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed **annually**, or earlier if legislation or best practice changes
- Shared with all staff during induction and refresher training
- Evaluated based on incidents, staff feedback and safeguarding audits

Related Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Written by: Natalie Luce (Manager)

Date created: 01/09/2025 Date Reviewed:

Signed by all staff: