

Whistleblowing Policy



Implementation Date	September 2026
Review Date	September 2027
Reviewer	Liam Donovan/Alison Lapihuska

Longwood School & Nursery is dedicated to fostering a culture of openness, honesty, and accountability. It promotes an environment where all team members feel comfortable engaging in open and transparent communication.

The purpose of this policy is to support leaders, team members, and volunteers in confidently raising serious concerns regarding colleagues or the organization, without fear of victimization, discrimination, or any form of disadvantage.

The school/nursery maintains a written whistleblowing procedure and ensures that all staff, volunteers, students, apprentices, agency workers, and contractors understand how to raise concerns regarding poor practice, safeguarding failures, professional misconduct, or behaviour that may place children at risk.

When reporting a concern, it is recommended to do so as promptly as possible. Delays in raising issues may hinder the effectiveness of the investigation. It's worth noting that the outlined steps do not need to be followed sequentially, and you may proceed directly to step 2 if deemed appropriate. If a non-practitioner has a concern about a member of staff's behaviour, they should proceed directly to **Step 2** of the reporting procedure.

Step 1

As a first step, you should report any concerns to the Nursery Manager / Head Teacher.

Contact details
Nursery Manager: Alison Lapihuska alisonlapihuska@longwoodschool.co.uk
Headteacher: Liam Donovan liam.donovan@longwoodschool.co.uk

Ensure your concerns are recorded in writing using the 'Record of Allegation form'.

If you feel hesitant about putting your concerns in writing at this stage, you should speak to the Nursery Manager or Headteacher to whom you wish to make the report and arrange to meet with them. However, you may be asked to put the details in writing at a later stage.

Step 2

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If you feel the matter is serious, sensitive or involves your Nursery Manager or Headteacher or if you feel the matter is extremely serious, sensitive or and you feel you need to escalate to more senior role in the organisation, you may report the matter, in the manner set out in Step 1 above to:

Contact details
Early Years Operations Director: Jess McCarthy jess@tootsnurseryopco.co.uk

Step 3

If you are not confident in approaching any of the named persons in steps one or two then, in order to raise your concern, YOU CAN AT ANY STAGE CONTACT:

Contact details
Local Authority LADO: LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk / 01992 555420
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0808 800 5000 / help@NSPCC.org.uk
Ofsted: 0300 1233155 / whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

We expect all our colleagues, both internal and external, to be professional at all times and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their paramount objective. We recognise that there may be occasions where this may not happen, and we have in place a procedure for staff to disclose any information that suggests children's welfare and safety may be at risk.

We expect all team members to talk through any concerns about staff behaviour to the Nursery Manager / Head Teacher at the earliest opportunity to enable any problems to be resolved as soon as they arise.

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
- Concern of staff practice and conduct
- Failure of a safeguarding procedure or other regulatory requirement
- 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.

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.

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It is not necessary for individuals who raise the concern to prove the wrongdoing that is alleged to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Disclosure of information

During your employment, if you come across information that leads you to reasonably believe a child is, may be, or is likely to be at risk of harm, or if you suspect that any of the following situations might be occurring, it is imperative that you follow the school/nursery's disclosure procedure outlined above.

- That a criminal offence has been committed or is being committed or is likely to be committed
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject (e.g., EYFS, Equalities Act 2010)
- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered
- That the environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged
- That information tending to show any of the above, has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Protecting the Individual Raising the Concern

Longwood School & Nursery is dedicated to promoting an open and transparent environment where staff can raise genuine concerns without fearing retaliation. Those who disclose concerns in good faith will be fully supported, even if subsequent investigations find the concerns to be unsubstantiated.

Staff members who raise concerns must not experience any adverse treatment as a result. If anyone feels they have faced such treatment, they should report the issue to the nursery manager / head teacher immediately. Should the matter remain unresolved, it should be formally addressed through the Investigations, Disciplinary, and Grievance Procedure. Any form of threat or retaliation against whistleblowers is strictly prohibited, and those engaging in such actions may face disciplinary measures.

If a whistleblower requests confidentiality, every effort will be made to protect their identity unless disclosure is necessary for the investigation or legally required. While concerns raised anonymously will be taken into account, staff are encouraged to raise issues openly to ensure a comprehensive and effective investigation, in alignment with our policies.

How concerns are investigated and addressed

We treat all concerns raised by staff, parents, or external organisations with the utmost seriousness and follow structured procedures to ensure they are thoroughly reviewed and appropriately addressed. Upon receiving a concern, the manager will quickly evaluate the situation to determine the best course of action. This may involve collecting additional details, consulting with relevant parties, or seeking assistance from external agencies if required. Every concern is meticulously documented, and confidentiality is upheld throughout the entire process.

Legal framework

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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.'

Further guidance

- NSPCC Website <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Linked Policies

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Safeguarding Code of Conduct Policy
Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
Safer Recruitment Policy
Online Safety Policy
Complaints Policy
Investigations, Grievance & Disciplinary Policy