



Whistle Blowing Policy

Created: January 2026

To be reviewed: January 2027

Introduction

The staff and directors of Little Learners Nursery Group seek to run all aspects of nursery business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity.

In the event that any member of the nursery community becomes aware of activities that give cause for concern, this whistleblowing policy provides a confidential framework for raising concerns and ensures a thorough investigation to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

This policy applies to suspected fraud, impropriety, or safeguarding concerns and not general grievances, which are handled under the grievance procedures.

The term whistleblower refers to the person raising the concern. It is consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies (May 1996).

The Directors are committed to tackling fraud and malpractice seriously and have developed a system that allows concerns to be raised confidentially, either internally or externally if necessary.

When the Whistleblowing Policy Applies

This policy applies to, but is not limited to, concerns regarding:

- Manipulation of accounting records or finances
- Fraud, corruption, or dishonesty
- Actions likely to cause physical danger or significant property damage
- Loss of income to the nursery
- Unlawful acts (criminal or civil)
- Breaches of Financial Regulations or Standing Orders
- Inappropriate use of nursery assets or funds
- Decision-making for personal gain
- Abuse of power or authority
- Breach of statutory codes of practice or professional standards

- Serious breaches of nursery procedures (e.g., tampering with tender documents)
- Allegations against staff relating to safeguarding
- Inappropriate behavior from staff
- Data protection breaches (Data Protection Bill 2017)
- Any other matter that cannot be raised under another procedure

Procedure for Raising Concerns

Step One

The whistleblower should contact the Nursery Manager or Board of Directors.

Concerns may be raised:

- In person
- By telephone: St Margaret's tel: 020 8594 4003
- In writing (marked private and confidential)

All matters will be treated in strict confidence, and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Step Two

If the matter is too serious or sensitive to raise internally, it should be directed to the Barking and Dagenham Whistleblowing Line – 020 8227 2277.

The Local Authority will handle such concerns confidentially.

How the Matter Will Be Progressed

- Investigating officer(s) will carry out a preliminary investigation to establish the facts and assess whether the concern can be resolved internally.

- Third parties may be involved if necessary (e.g., nursery staff, legal or personnel advisors, police, Department for Education).

Respecting Confidentiality

- The Directors will protect the whistleblower's confidentiality and anonymity wherever possible.
- No reprisals will be tolerated.
- Any attempts to prevent concerns being raised or to victimize the whistleblower will be treated seriously.

Raising Unfounded or Malicious Concerns

- Individuals are encouraged to raise genuine concerns in good faith.
- Malicious or unfounded concerns may be considered a disciplinary offense.

Further Information

- Initial guidance can be sought from OFSTED, an Early Years Consultant/Advisor, college, or Citizens Advice.
- Public Concern at Work provides free confidential advice:
 - Address: Suite 306, 16 Baldwins Gardens, London, EC1N 7RJ
 - Telephone: 020 7404 6609
 - Website: <http://www.pcaw.co.uk>
 - Email: whistle@pcaw.demon.co.uk

Taking the Matter Further

- If unsatisfied with internal handling, concerns may be raised with the Information Commissioner:
 - Address: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF
 - Tel: 0303 123 1113
 - Email: casework@ico.org.uk
 - Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Important: Do not disclose confidential information that breaches the nursery's Data Protection Policy. The nursery will cooperate fully with any ICO investigation.

Conclusion

Existing good practice within the nursery in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the nursery operates will ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the nursery. This document is a public commitment by Directors that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.