

**Whistleblowing
Policy**

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(2025–2026)**

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Policy Statement

Paradise Early Years Nursery is committed to transparency, accountability and safeguarding the well-being of all children and staff. This policy encourages staff to report concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing or breaches of policy without fear of retaliation. It aligns with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) and the statutory safeguarding guidance KCSIE 2025 which takes effect 1 September 2025.

2. Aims

- To provide a clear and accessible process for raising concerns in the organisation.
- To protect whistle-blowers from victimisation, detriment or unfair treatment.
- To promote an open and safe culture where concerns are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- To ensure the nursery meets its legal and regulatory obligations in relation to whistle-blowing and safeguarding, including the expanded digital / online risks referenced in KCSIE 2025.

3. Who Does This Policy Apply To?

This policy applies to all employees (full-time, part-time, casual), volunteers, agency/contract staff, contractors and stakeholders involved with the nursery.

4. Types of Concerns Covered

Whistle-blowing under this policy covers concerns which are in the public interest and may include (but are not limited to):

- Safeguarding concerns involving children (including those arising from digital/online activity) in line with KCSIE 2025.
- Criminal activity, including illegal practices or those which breach statutory obligations.
- Health & safety risks which may affect children, staff or visitors.
- Financial fraud, mis-management or misuse of funds.
- Breaches of the nursery's policies, ethical misconduct or professional standards.
- Cover-up or deliberate concealment of any of the above.
- Digital / online risks, including those highlighted in KCSIE 2025: e.g., misinformation/disinformation, conspiracy theories, or risks linked to emerging technologies (AI) in the safeguarding context.

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5. Reporting Concerns

- Staff should normally report in the first instance to the designated Whistle-blowing Officer (WO) — the Manager of the nursery.
- If the concern involves the WO, or you feel unable to raise it with them, the report should be made to the CEO, Yasir Patel, or directly to an external authority (for example, Ofsted at 0300 123 1231, or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for safeguarding).
- Whenever possible, reports should be made **in writing** (email/letter) and include: what the concern is; how it arose; who is involved; when it occurred; any supporting evidence or context.
- Verbal reports are accepted where writing is not possible; in such cases the WO/CEO will document the concern in writing as soon as practicable.
- The nursery encourages early reporting of concerns — identifying risks early is aligned with safeguarding best practice in KCSIE 2025.

6. Confidentiality & Protection

- All reports will be handled sensitively and confidentiality will be preserved wherever possible.
- The identity of the whistle-blower will be protected unless disclosure is required by law, the investigation process or absolutely necessary for safeguarding.
- No staff member will suffer victimisation, discrimination, harassment or any detriment for raising a concern in good faith. (PIDA provides protection for qualifying disclosures.)
- The nursery will also ensure that the subject(s) of the concern and other involved parties are treated fairly and that investigations are conducted in accordance with natural justice and safeguarding principles.

7. Investigation Process

- The WO (or CEO if relevant) will **acknowledge receipt** of the concern within **5 working days** of receiving the written report.
- The investigation will be conducted proportionately, which may involve: gathering information, interviewing relevant individuals, reviewing documents/records, obtaining external advice (legal, safeguarding).
- The whistle-blower may be asked for further information, and will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation where appropriate and possible (while respecting confidentiality).

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- The outcome of the investigation (or a summary of it) will be communicated to the whistle-blower unless doing so would be inappropriate (for example safeguarding, legal or privacy reasons).
- Where required, corrective actions will be taken: these may include disciplinary measures, policy/procedure review, training, or process improvements.

8. False or Malicious Allegations

- If a concern is raised in good faith, with reasonable belief and in the public interest, the whistle-blower is protected even if the investigation finds the concern unsubstantiated.
- However, if someone raises a concern maliciously, knowing it to be false or with the intention of personal gain, the nursery may take disciplinary action — up to and including dismissal.

9. Links to Other Policies & Legal Framework

- This policy complements our safeguarding policy and procedures (aligned with KCSIE 2025) which highlight the broader duty of care (including online and digital risks).
- The legal basis for whistle-blowing is the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, and employment rights legislation.
- Staff should also refer to guidance from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) on whistle-blowing.
- KCSIE 2025 adds clarity on digital/online risks (including misinformation/disinformation, conspiracy theories, use of generative AI) and expects leaders to ensure effective filtering/monitoring systems. [fastvue.co+1](https://www.fastvue.co.uk/1)

10. Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed **at least annually**, and also whenever there is a change in legislation, statutory guidance (such as a new edition of KCSIE) or significant organisational change.
- The latest full review is dated **September 2025** — next scheduled review: **September 2026**, unless sooner required.
- All updates will be communicated to staff, and the revised policy will be published on the staff notice board/online portal.