A2 Allegations Against Staff Policy

Grass Roots Nursery Group – Updated October 2026

1. Policy Statement

Grass Roots Nursery Group is committed to maintaining a safe, transparent, and child-centred culture where all concerns relating to the behaviour or conduct of staff, students, volunteers, or agency workers are managed promptly and fairly. We recognise that allegations can be distressing for everyone involved, and we are committed to responding with professionalism, neutrality, and integrity.

Our approach prioritises the welfare of children, protects staff from unfounded accusations, and ensures that all concerns — including low-level boundary issues — are recorded, reviewed, and acted upon in line with statutory safeguarding procedures. We work closely with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to ensure that all allegations are managed lawfully and consistently.

2. Purpose & Scope

This policy outlines how Grass Roots Nursery Group responds to allegations, concerns, and low-level boundary issues involving individuals who work or volunteer with children. It ensures that concerns are reported immediately, handled objectively, and recorded securely.

This policy applies to:

- employees
- apprentices and students
- volunteers
- agency staff
- contractors
- regular visitors

All adults have a duty to report concerns immediately and uphold the principles within this policy.

3. Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (2026)
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 & 2016
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010
- Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures
- West Yorkshire Consortium Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures
- LADO statutory guidance
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

These frameworks guide our decision-making, record-keeping, and multi-agency responsibilities.

4. Key Principles

Our approach to managing allegations is grounded in fairness, transparency, and child-centred decision-making. All concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure swift and appropriate action.

We do not investigate allegations internally. Staff must not interview children or colleagues, gather statements, or attempt to establish facts. All concerns are managed in consultation with the LADO to maintain objectivity and procedural integrity.

Neutrality is essential. Suspension or duty adjustment may be used as a protective measure, but it is not a disciplinary action and must only be implemented following LADO advice.

Low-level concerns are recorded and reviewed regularly to identify patterns, emerging risks, or training needs. Confidentiality is maintained throughout, and information is shared only on a need-to-know basis. Children, families, and staff involved in an allegation receive appropriate support, communication, and guidance.

5. Understanding Reporting Thresholds

Allegations Meeting the LADO Threshold

A referral to the LADO must be made if an individual working with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
- behaved in a way that suggests they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour outside the workplace or online

These concerns require immediate reporting to the DSL and must be referred to the LADO within one working day.

Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any behaviour that does not meet the LADO threshold but is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct or professional boundaries. Examples include:

- over-friendliness
- favouritism
- minor breaches of safety protocols
- loose or unclear boundaries

Low-level concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL or Room Leader. They are logged confidentially and reviewed periodically to identify patterns or emerging risks.

6. Responding to an Allegation

When an allegation is received, the adult hearing it must record the details factually, including the date, time, context, and exact words used. Assumptions, opinions, and leading questions must be avoided.
If a child is in immediate danger or a crime is occurring, staff must contact the police or Children's Social Care without delay.
The individual involved must not be informed until the LADO advises this is appropriate. Staff must not attempt to investigate or gather evidence.
The DSL will document the concern and contact the Calderdale LADO within one working day. Decisions regarding suspension or duty adjustment will be made in consultation with the LADO and implemented neutrally.
The DSL will maintain a clear chronology of all actions taken.

7. Statutory Notifications

Grass Roots Nursery Group has a legal duty to notify Ofsted of any allegation of harm or abuse involving anyone living, working, or looking after children on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days, even if the allegation is later withdrawn or found to be unsubstantiated.
If a staff member, student, or volunteer is dismissed — or resigns before the conclusion of an investigation — due to harming a child or placing a child at risk of harm, we must make an immediate referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

8. Support & Record Keeping

Children and families involved in an allegation will receive regular updates and support, including referrals to external services where appropriate.
Staff members subject to an allegation will be offered wellbeing support and a named contact who is not involved in the investigation.

Records relating to allegations that meet the LADO threshold will be retained on the individual's confidential personnel file until they reach normal retirement age or for at least 10 years, whichever is longer. Records of allegations that are unsubstantiated, unfounded, or malicious will be retained for the same period but clearly marked and not referred to in future employment references.
Records of low-level concerns will be retained for the duration of employment and reviewed regularly.

9. Key External Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Emma Ford
Calderdale LADO: 01422 392897 | ladoadmin@calderdale.gov.uk
Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership: safeguarding.calderdale.gov.uk
Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

10. Monitoring & Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, local procedures, or organisational needs change. The DSL team oversees implementation across all settings.

11. Linked Policies

Safeguarding & Welfare (Category A)

A1 Safeguarding & Child Protection
A3 Whistleblowing
A4 Behaviour & Positive Relationships
A5 Physical Contact & Physical Intervention
A6 Prevent Duty & British Values
A7 Children's Wellbeing & Emotional Development
A8 Complaints
A9 Equality, Inclusion & SEND
A10 Parents as Partners & Family Support

Staff Policies (Category H)

H1 Staff Code of Conduct
H2 Safer Recruitment & Induction
H7 Parent Conflict, Aggression & Home Visit Procedures

Digital Safety (Category F)

F1 Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Use
F2 Safer Internet & Technology Use

Safeguarding Handbook

Detailed procedures for specific safeguarding issues.