A3 Whistleblowing Policy

Grass Roots Nursery Group – Updated October 2026

1. Policy Statement

Grass Roots Nursery Group is committed to maintaining an open, transparent culture where all staff, students, volunteers, and contractors feel safe and supported to raise concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practice, or breaches of professional conduct. Whistleblowing is a vital part of safeguarding children and ensuring high-quality practice.

We encourage individuals to speak up at the earliest opportunity, and we guarantee that no one will suffer detriment for raising a concern in good faith, even if it is not substantiated. Concerns will always be taken seriously, handled sensitively, and managed in accordance with statutory guidance.

2. Purpose & Scope

This policy explains how individuals can report concerns about unsafe practice, misconduct, or safeguarding breaches that may place children at risk. It ensures concerns are handled promptly, fairly, and lawfully.

Whistleblowing refers to disclosures made in the public interest. These may include concerns about:

- unsafe or harmful practice affecting children's safety, health, emotional wellbeing, or safer eating
- boundary erosion or low-level concerns inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct
- digital, AI, or device misuse, including unauthorised access to CPOMS/Famly or inappropriate phone use
- improper conduct, unethical behaviour, or abuse of authority
- neglect, cover-ups, or failure to follow safeguarding procedures

This policy applies to all employees, apprentices, students, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, and any adult working within Grass Roots Nursery Group.

General employment grievances (e.g., pay disputes or rota disagreements) are managed separately under the HR Grievance Policy via Croner.

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)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 & 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010
- Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures
- West Yorkshire Consortium Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

These frameworks guide our responsibilities, reporting routes, and protections for whistleblowers.

4. Internal Reporting Procedure

We encourage staff to raise concerns as early as possible. Individuals do not need proof — only a reasonable belief that the concern is genuine and made in good faith.
Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. They should include factual details such as dates, times, individuals involved, and the nature of the concern.

Primary Contact

Concerns should be reported to the Nursery Manager (Caitlin).

Escalation to DSL Team

If the concern involves the Nursery Manager, or if the response is unsatisfactory, concerns should be reported directly to:

- **Primary DSL:** Emma Ford
- **Supervising DSL:** Lucy Pottinger

External Escalation

If the concern involves senior leadership or DSLs, or internal reporting is inappropriate, staff may proceed directly to external bodies listed in Section 6.

5. Handling Disclosures & Multi-Agency Action

The recipient of a disclosure will listen carefully, record the concern factually on CPOMS, and ask the whistleblower to confirm accuracy. A written acknowledgment will be provided within 48 hours outlining next steps.
Concerns meeting the LADO threshold will be referred to the Calderdale LADO within one working day, in line with **A2 Allegations Against Staff**.
Low-level concerns will be logged on CPOMS and reviewed regularly to identify patterns or training needs.
Non-safeguarding concerns (e.g., fraud, health and safety breaches) will trigger a formal internal investigation led by management or an external advisor (Croner).

6. External Reporting Routes

Staff have a legal right to report concerns directly to prescribed bodies if internal escalation is inappropriate or unresolved.

Calderdale LADO
For allegations against adults working with children
01422 392897 / 07596 888147
ladoadmin@calderdale.gov.uk

Calderdale MAST
For immediate safeguarding concerns
01422 393336

Ofsted Whistleblowing Line
0300 123 3155 / 0300 123 1231
whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line
0800 028 0285 / 0808 800 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk

West Yorkshire Police
Call 999 if a child is in immediate danger or a serious criminal offence has occurred.

7. Protection, Confidentiality & Victimisation

Concerns will be treated confidentially to the fullest extent permitted by child protection law. Whistleblowers acting in good faith are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998). No action will be taken against an individual whose concern is unproven.
Grass Roots Nursery Group operates a zero-tolerance approach to victimisation. Any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation of a whistleblower will result in immediate disciplinary action. Knowingly false or malicious allegations will be treated as gross misconduct.

8. 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.

9. Linked Policies

Safeguarding & Welfare (Category A)

A1 Safeguarding & Child Protection
A2 Allegations Against Staff
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.