

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy Statement

EDG Nursery is committed to a culture where staff feel safe and confident to speak up when they believe something is wrong.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. No member of staff should ignore unsafe, inappropriate, unlawful or unethical practice because they are worried about:

- upsetting a colleague;
- challenging a manager;
- damaging working relationships; or
- possible repercussions.

A genuine concern raised in good faith will be taken seriously.

This policy applies to employees, agency staff, bank staff, apprentices, students and volunteers as appropriate.

Purpose

Whistleblowing means raising a concern about wrongdoing or unsafe practice that affects others or the wider public interest.

This may include concerns about:

- children's safety or welfare;
- safeguarding procedures not being followed;
- abuse or inappropriate treatment of a child;
- unsafe working practices;
- failure to report safeguarding concerns;
- management failing to act on concerns;
- covering up safeguarding incidents;
- falsification of records;

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- serious breaches of nursery policies;
- fraud or financial wrongdoing;
- criminal activity;
- serious health and safety risks;
- discriminatory practice;
- breaches of legal or regulatory requirements; or
- attempts to conceal wrongdoing.

Whistleblowing is **not normally used for an individual's personal employment grievance**, such as disagreement about their own pay or working arrangements. These should normally be addressed through the appropriate grievance procedure.

EDG's Expectation

Staff must speak up where they genuinely believe children, staff or the nursery may be at risk.

No employee should assume:

"Someone else will report it."

Where a concern relates to a child's immediate safety, **staff must act immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.**

Completing paperwork must never delay action required to protect a child.

How to Raise a Concern

Staff should raise concerns **as soon as possible.**

Where appropriate, concerns should initially be reported to:

Nursery Manager / DSL
Shazel McFarlane

or:

Deputy DSL
Guzal Juraeva

Staff should explain:

- what happened;
- when and where it happened;
- who was involved;
- whether children were involved;
- whether there were witnesses;
- why they are concerned; and
- any immediate action already taken.

Staff are **not expected to investigate or prove the concern themselves.**

Their responsibility is to report it.

Whistleblowing Form

EDG Nursery has a designated **Whistleblowing Form available in nursery reception.**

Where a whistleblowing concern is identified, staff should complete this form as soon as reasonably possible.

The completed form must be handed directly to the Nursery Manager/DSL or appropriate senior person.

Do not leave completed forms unattended in reception or another communal area.

Where a concern is urgent, report it verbally first and complete the form afterwards.

Paperwork must never delay safeguarding action.

If the Concern Is About the Nursery Manager / DSL

Where the concern relates to:

Shazel McFarlane – Nursery Manager / DSL

staff should report directly to:

Nick Ng - Nursery Director / Safeguarding Oversight

The concern must not be referred back to the person who raised it to determine whether action is required.

If the Concern Is About Senior Management or a Director

Where:

- the concern relates to a Director;
- the normal reporting route is inappropriate;
- staff reasonably believe management may be involved;
- management has failed to respond appropriately; or
- the member of staff believes children remain at risk,

the concern should be escalated externally where appropriate.

Staff do not need management permission to seek external safeguarding advice or report a genuine concern to an appropriate authority.

What Management Will Do

The person receiving the concern will:

1. listen and take the concern seriously;
2. make/secure an appropriate written record;
3. consider whether any child requires immediate protection;
4. determine the appropriate procedure;
5. preserve relevant evidence;
6. maintain confidentiality as far as reasonably possible;
7. seek external safeguarding advice where required; and
8. ensure appropriate action is taken.

Depending on the concern, this may include referral or consultation with:

- Southwark LADO;
- children's social care;
- police;
- Ofsted;
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); or
- another appropriate authority.

Current inspection guidance expects early-years referrals to agencies including the LADO and DBS where required.

Southwark LADO

Where a concern relates to someone working or volunteering with children and indicates that the person may have harmed a child, committed an offence relating to a child, pose a risk of harm, may be unsuitable to work with children, or has behaved discriminatorily towards a child in circumstances meeting the relevant threshold, **Southwark LADO procedures must be followed.**

Where management is uncertain whether the LADO threshold is met, **Southwark LADO should be contacted for advice.**

Southwark LADO

Telephone: **020 7525 0689 / 020 7525 3297**

Email: **Eva.Simcock@southwark.gov.uk / Qau.Safeguarding@southwark.gov.uk**

<https://safeguarding.southwark.gov.uk/p/report-a-concern?>

If EDG Does Not Act

The EYFS whistleblowing requirements are intended to ensure staff understand how concerns can be escalated where they believe poor or unsafe practice is not being addressed appropriately.

A member of staff should escalate their concern where they reasonably believe:

- it has been ignored;
- inadequate action has been taken;
- children remain at risk;
- they cannot safely use the internal procedure; or
- the concern involves those responsible for handling it.

Depending upon the nature of the concern, this may mean contacting Southwark safeguarding services, LADO, Ofsted, police or another appropriate authority.

Ofsted

As of August 2026, the DfE's early-years whistleblowing guidance explains that Ofsted is expected to become a prescribed person for whistleblowing in **2027**.

Until then, where a member of staff believes an early-years setting is failing to meet regulatory requirements, they may raise the matter with Ofsted through its complaints route.

Ofsted childcare concerns:

Telephone: **0300 123 4666**

Email: **enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk**

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure?utm_

Staff should use the current published Ofsted route at the time of making a report because reporting arrangements may change.

Independent Whistleblowing Advice

Staff who are uncertain about raising a child-protection concern can also obtain independent advice from the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

The current government list identifies the NSPCC as a prescribed body for matters concerning **child welfare and protection**.

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: **0800 028 0285**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies-2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies?>

Confidentiality and Anonymous Concerns

Staff are encouraged to identify themselves when raising concerns because this can make investigation and follow-up easier.

However, anonymous concerns will still be considered based on:

- seriousness;

- credibility;
- potential risk to children; and
- information available.

Where a staff member requests confidentiality, EDG will seek to protect their identity as far as reasonably and legally possible.

However, absolute confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed, particularly where disclosure is required to safeguard a child or support a statutory investigation.

Protection for Staff Who Speak Up

EDG Nursery will not tolerate victimisation, intimidation or inappropriate disadvantage against someone for raising a genuine concern.

Workers who make qualifying whistleblowing disclosures may also have legal protection under the Employment Rights Act 1996.

Any member of staff who believes they have been treated unfairly because they raised a genuine concern should report this to the appropriate senior person.

Malicious or Knowingly False Allegations

A concern that is raised genuinely but later proves to be unfounded will **not** result in disciplinary action simply because it was incorrect.

However, deliberately making an allegation that a person knows to be false or malicious may be considered misconduct and addressed under EDG's disciplinary procedures.

This distinction is important: staff should **not be frightened of reporting genuine concerns because they are unsure whether they will ultimately be substantiated.**

Recording and Monitoring

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Whistleblowing concerns will be recorded secure .

Records should include:

- the concern raised;
- date received;
- person receiving it;
- immediate safeguarding action;
- referrals/advice obtained;
- investigation/action taken; and
- outcome where appropriate.

Records will be handled in accordance with EDG's Data Protection, Confidentiality and Record Retention policies.

Management should also consider whether concerns reveal wider issues relating to:

- nursery culture;
- leadership;
- staff supervision;
- training;
- policies;
- safeguarding practice; or
- organisational systems.

Key Points for Staff

If something is wrong - SPEAK UP.

1. REPORT IT

Tell Shazel McFarlane / appropriate safeguarding lead.

2. RECORD IT

Complete the **Whistleblowing Form available in nursery reception.**

3. ESCALATE IT

If management is involved or fails to act, tell **Nick Ng** first.

4. DON'T INVESTIGATE IT

Your job is to report the concern - not prove it.

5. DON'T WAIT FOR PAPERWORK

If a child may be at immediate risk, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.

6. IF YOU ARE UNSURE - ASK

Southwark LADO can provide advice where an allegation threshold is unclear.

7. KEEP SPEAKING UP

If you genuinely believe children remain at risk and your concern has not been appropriately addressed, escalate it.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Allegations Against Staff Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- DSL Responsibilities
- Staff Supervision Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.