



# Whistleblowing Policy

## B15

**Dolphin School Trust**  
**inc. Noah's Ark Nurseries**

Reviewed by:	Lucy Price (Headteacher)
Last reviewed:	September 2025
Next review:	September 2026

## **1. Introduction**

Dolphin School and Noah's Ark Nurseries expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees and will treat seriously any concern that an employee may have about illegal, improper, or unsafe practice.

This policy provides a clear procedure for raising genuine concerns, in good faith, without fear of detriment or reprisal.

This procedure covers concerns about:

- illegal or improper conduct;
- breaches of school policies or procedures;
- safeguarding practice failures that may put children at risk;
- health and safety risks;
- financial malpractice;
- conduct that damages the reputation of the Trust.

This policy is separate from the Grievance Procedure (which concerns an individual's employment rights) and should not be used to pursue personal grievances.

## **2. Purpose of the Policy**

- To encourage all staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns.
- To provide clear procedures for reporting concerns, including safeguarding matters.
- To ensure that concerns are dealt with properly, fairly, and promptly.
- To protect whistleblowers from victimisation, discrimination, or disadvantage.

## **3. When to Use This Policy**

Where an employee has a reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing or safeguarding concern, even if it may not meet formal thresholds.

Where concerns may relate to:

- criminal offences;
  - breaches of legal obligations;
  - financial irregularities, fraud, or corruption;
  - unsafe working practices;
  - danger to health and safety;
  - abuse or neglect of children;
- failure to comply with statutory safeguarding requirements (KCSIE 2025).

Staff do not need to be certain; reporting reasonable suspicions in good faith is sufficient.

#### 4. Safeguarding and Child Protection

All employees have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils.

Concerns may include (but are not limited to):

- physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a pupil;
- neglect of a pupil;
- an improper or inappropriate relationship between an adult and a pupil;
- concerns about the culture or practices of the school that may place children at risk;
- low-level concerns about staff behaviour.

Concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.

- Where the concern involves the DSL or Headteacher, staff should report directly to the Chair of Governors. ([petronella.vandervliet@dolphinschool.london](mailto:petronella.vandervliet@dolphinschool.london))

If staff feel unable to raise a safeguarding concern internally, or believe concerns are not being addressed, they may contact:

- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 / [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- Wandsworth Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0208 871 5188 / [lado@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:lado@wandsworth.gov.uk)
- Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI): 0207 600 0100 / [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

#### 5. How to Raise a Concern

In the first instance, concerns should normally be raised with the Headteacher or, for Noah's Ark West Side, the Nursery Site Head ([Rachael.strachan@dolphinschool.london](mailto:Rachael.strachan@dolphinschool.london)).

If the concern relates to the Headteacher/Nursery Head, or if a concern has been raised but no appropriate action taken, the concern should be reported to the Chair of Governors ([petronella.vandervliet@dolphinschool.london](mailto:petronella.vandervliet@dolphinschool.london)).

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Written reports should include relevant details (dates, names, facts).

Staff may be accompanied by a colleague, union representative, or trusted person (independent of the issue) at any meeting.

Staff may request anonymity. While every effort will be made to respect this, it cannot always be guaranteed if the matter proceeds to formal investigation.

#### 6. Investigation and Outcome

All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

The scope and method of investigation will depend on the nature of the concern, but will usually involve:

- a preliminary fact-finding review;
- interviews with relevant staff;
- liaison with safeguarding partners where appropriate.

Where safeguarding issues are involved, the DSL will follow procedures set out in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Sept 2025) and statutory guidance (*KCSIE 2025*).

The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome as far as is legally possible, while respecting confidentiality.

## **7. Protection for Whistleblowers**

No employee who raises a concern in good faith will suffer harassment, victimisation, or disadvantage.

The Trust will take disciplinary action against any member of staff who subjects a whistleblower to harassment or retaliation.

Malicious allegations that are knowingly false may, however, be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures.

## **8. Links to Other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Sept 2025)
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-Level Concerns Procedure
- Managing Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy

## **9. Review**

This policy is reviewed annually (or sooner if statutory guidance changes) to ensure compliance with:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014)
- Local safeguarding partnership requirements