



Whistle Blowing Policy

Apple Blossom Nursery understands that whistleblowing is a critical part of safeguarding practice. All staff, volunteers, and students must feel confident and supported in raising genuine concerns about poor or unsafe behaviour or practices, including breaches of the Code of Conduct or concerns about colleagues who may be pushing boundaries beyond accepted limits.

Legal Protections and Expectations

Whistleblowing is supported by the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, which protects workers who report concerns they reasonably believe show evidence of:

- A criminal offence;
- A breach of legal obligations;
- A miscarriage of justice;
- A danger to the health and safety of an individual;
- Damage to the environment;
- The deliberate covering up of any of the above.

No whistleblower will suffer harassment, victimisation, or any disadvantage for raising concerns in good faith.

Policy and Procedure

All settings must have a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy and procedure in place. This includes:

When and How to Report Concerns

- Concerns can be raised **verbally or in writing** with the **Nursery Manager** or **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue.
- If the concern involves leadership or the whistleblower feels unable to report internally, they may escalate to:
 - **Wiltshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**
 - **Ofsted**
 - **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline**

When raising a concern, whistleblowers should provide:

- A clear explanation of the concern;
- Relevant background and history (including dates, places, and names if possible);
- Reasons for the disclosure and why the concern is genuine.

A whistleblower must show they have an **honest and reasonable suspicion** that malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.

How Concerns Will Be Handled

- The Manager, DSL, or external agency will conduct an **initial enquiry** to determine whether an investigation is required.
- Where the issue meets safeguarding or legal thresholds, it will be referred appropriately.
- Concerns may be resolved by agreed actions without a formal investigation.
- If urgent action is needed, it will be taken immediately.
- Investigations (where required) will begin promptly and **aim to be concluded within 10 working days** of the concern being raised.

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Confidentiality and Support

- All concerns will be treated **confidentially**, and the identity of the whistleblower will be protected wherever possible.
- In some cases, it may become necessary to reveal the origin of a concern to the person(s) involved for a fair investigation.
- Requests for anonymity will be respected wherever possible, but must be justified by a **real risk of personal harm** or similar substantial reason.

If the concern is raised in **good faith**, no action will be taken against the whistleblower, even if it is not upheld. However, **false, malicious, or self-serving allegations** may result in disciplinary action.

External Whistleblowing Contacts

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

📞 **0800 028 0285** (Mon–Fri 08:00–20:00, Weekends 09:00–18:00)

✉️ help@nspcc.org.uk

📍 **Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH**

Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline

📞 **0300 123 3155**

✉️ whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

📍 **WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD**

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

For non-emergency concerns, call the police on 101 or contact local children's social care.

Staff Awareness

- All staff are informed of the whistleblowing procedures at induction.
- Ongoing reminders are given to ensure staff feel confident that any concerns raised will be taken seriously and acted upon by the **Senior Leadership Team**.