



Managing Allegations and Concerns Policy

Allegations against staff and complaints

These procedures are in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023) (Part 4) and should be read alongside The Life Nursery's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. All staff have regard to the following two sections of KCSIE (2023) – "Section one for allegations that may meet the threshold and Section Two for allegations/concerns that do not meet the threshold i.e. low level concerns".

These procedures relate to any allegations regarding individuals working in or volunteering at The Life Nursery. This procedure is about managing allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including volunteers) in The Life Nursery provides care and education for children who have:

- a. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- b. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- c. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed (Allegations Management Process (Staff and Volunteers) Flow Chart – Safer Bradford). It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can and do happen. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to children and we must act on every allegation.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the Nursery Manager.

Allegations against the Nursery Manager should be reported to the Chair Person of OUR BD4 CIC, Board of Directors. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)'. Further information is contained in the Nursery's disciplinary procedures.

- The Life Nursery ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the nursery, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We ensure that all staff, volunteers and anyone else working in The Life Nursery knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct of behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
- We differentiate between allegations and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints.
- The Life Nursery respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteers or any other person working in the nursery which includes:
 - Inappropriate sexual comments;
 - Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images
- We will recognise and respond to allegations that a member of the team has:
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to the children
- We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse of a staff member or volunteer within The Life Nursery, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the OUR BD4 Board of Directors and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate:-
The Designated Officer (LADO) for Working Together to Safeguard Children – The Bradford Partnership can be contacted via the Duty Officer, on **01274 435600** or LADO@bradford.gov.uk

Responding to an allegation against staff, volunteers:-

- Listen to and record the allegation.
- Refer to your allegation management policy & procedure.
- Contact the Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately for advice and guidance. Calls will still go via this number **01274 435600** - ask to speak to the Duty LADO. Or you can send an email to LADO@bradford.gov.uk with your name, role, name of the setting and a contact number to ask for a call back from the Duty LADO. If you do ring and the Duty LADO is not available, you will be asked to send an email to the LADO mailbox giving details as above.
- The Duty LADO may instruct you to make a formal referral within one day, completing the 'LADO referral form' which can be found on the Safer Bradford website:-
<https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/other-pages/search-results/?searchStr=lado>

- Inform Ofsted, asap or within 14 days using the serious childcare incident report online which can be found:- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident>

Low Level Concerns

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 state:- *The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:*

- *is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and*
- *does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.*

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- *being over friendly with children*
- *having favourites*
- *taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy*
- *engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or*
- *humiliating children.*

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 state:- *It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately.*

Staff - Procedure for managing a Low Level Concern at The Life Nursery

- If a low level concern is raised then the Manager/Deputy or alternatively the Board of Directors should be informed and they must gather as much evidence as they can by speaking with the person to whom raised the concern, the individual who the concern is relating to and any witnesses
- If the concern was raised anonymously, speak to the individual and any witnesses
- Manager and Board of Directors or alternatively the Board of Directors to discuss and decide what action (if any) will be taken
- All low level concerns MUST be recorded, together with any action taken and a justification for this decision and action taken
- Any low level concern MUST be reviewed periodically to determine any patterns occurring. If a pattern is identified, the nursery will refer to their disciplinary procedures or if the concern moves from a low level concern to meeting the ‘harm’ threshold, a referral to LADO will be made
- All low level concerns and outcomes MUST remain confidential
- Any low level information will be retained along with staff’s personnel file for six years

Recording of a Low Level Concern

- All concerns will be logged in writing and will include:-
 - Date
 - Name of person sharing concern
 - Name of individual to whom concern is relating to

- Details of the concern
- Context in which the concern arose
- Action taken

Expectations of everyone.....

- Respect the ethos of The Life Nursery
- Mutual respect for each other
- To work in partnership with parents/carers and each other in the interests of the children
- Act as a positive role model to the children, encouraging positive behaviour whilst on the nursery premises.

Policy reviewed by Louise Gray, Nursery Manager and Kirsty Beck, Deputy Manager – September 2024

This policy was read and agreed by:-

Name	Signed	Dated

Legislation:

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

Keeping Children Safe In Education (2023)

Safer Bradford (2023)