

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Applies to	All BEYA nursery schools and Children's Centre provision; employees, governors and others working with BEYA
Policy owner	Executive Headteacher / Governing Body
Status	DRAFT – Autumn 2026
Approval	To be confirmed by Governing Body
Review	Autumn 2027 or earlier following significant changes

1. Purpose and scope

Barnet Early Years Alliance (BEYA) is committed to an open culture in which concerns about wrongdoing can be raised and addressed without fear of retaliation. This policy explains how to report concerns in the public interest and how BEYA will consider them. It applies across our three maintained nursery schools and Children's Centre provision. Employees, agency workers, contractors, governors, students and volunteers may use these reporting routes; statutory whistleblowing protection depends on an individual's legal status and the circumstances of their disclosure.

2. What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing means disclosing information about suspected wrongdoing in the public interest. A worker may be legally protected where they reasonably believe the disclosure is in the public interest, concerns a relevant type of wrongdoing and is made through an appropriate channel. They do not need to investigate or prove the concern before reporting it.

- criminal offences, including fraud or bribery;
- failure to comply with a legal obligation;
- miscarriages of justice;
- risks to health and safety, including risks to children;
- damage to the environment;
- sexual harassment; and
- deliberate concealment of any of these matters.

Concerns about an individual's own employment situation will normally be handled under the grievance procedure, unless the facts also meet the public-interest whistleblowing test. Concerns about professional capability may be handled under other relevant procedures. If unsure, staff should raise the concern and seek advice about the appropriate route.

3. Protection and confidentiality

BEYA will not tolerate victimisation or retaliation against someone who raises a concern. Workers making legally protected disclosures have statutory protection against detriment and, where applicable, dismissal. A concern raised honestly may still be appropriate even if it is not substantiated. Knowingly fabricating an allegation may be considered under the relevant procedures; this must not be used to discourage genuine reporting.

BEYA will take reasonable steps to protect the identity of a person raising a concern, but cannot promise absolute confidentiality, for example where disclosure is necessary for safeguarding, a fair investigation or a legal duty. Anonymous concerns will be considered, although anonymity can make follow-up more difficult. Information will be shared only where necessary and handled securely.

4. How to raise a concern

A concern can be raised verbally or in writing. Explain what happened, when, who may be involved and any information already available. Do not delay reporting because evidence is incomplete. Staff may seek support from their trade union or professional association.

- Normally, raise the concern with the Executive Headteacher, Kelly Brooker.
- If the concern involves the Executive Headteacher, or the person reporting cannot reasonably use that route, contact the Chair of Governors. Egriffiths@beya.org.uk
- If internal reporting is not appropriate, concerns may be raised with a relevant external body as described in section 7. A person does not necessarily have to complete an internal procedure before making a protected disclosure to an appropriate prescribed person.

5. How BEYA will respond

The recipient will consider the concern promptly, record the information and assess whether immediate safeguarding, safety or other protective action is required. BEYA will decide who should consider or investigate the concern, taking account of impartiality and any necessary external referral. Where appropriate, the concern may be considered under safeguarding, disciplinary, fraud or other procedures.

BEYA will aim to acknowledge concerns and keep the person reporting appropriately informed, subject to confidentiality and the rights of others. The level of feedback may be limited; the person raising the concern will not necessarily receive personal or disciplinary details. Records will include the concern, actions, decisions, reasons and outcomes.

6. Safeguarding concerns and allegations about adults

Any concern that a child may be at risk of harm must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Kelly Brooker, or a Deputy DSL, in accordance with BEYA's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. Staff should not wait for the whistleblowing process before acting to protect a child.

Concerns or allegations about adults working with children, including low-level concerns, must be handled under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Where an allegation meets the relevant harm threshold, the case manager will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow the statutory process. Concerns about the Executive Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Governors; if the concern involves the Chair, advice should be sought through an appropriate independent safeguarding or local-authority route.

Safeguarding team: Kelly Brooker (DSL); Janine Medway-Smith and Maia Hasan (Deputy DSLs)

7. External advice and reporting

A worker may make a disclosure to a relevant prescribed person or body, provided the statutory conditions for protection are met. The appropriate body depends on the subject matter. The current official list is available at:

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

For concerns about safeguarding practice where internal routes cannot be used, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is 0800 028 0285. For urgent concerns about a child in Barnet, contact MASH on 020 8359 4066; in an emergency call 999.

Barnet Council's whistleblowing contact details should be verified before this policy is finalised. Independent advice may also be sought from Acas, Protect or a trade union.

Disclosure to the media or public is subject to different and more restrictive legal tests. Staff may wish to obtain independent advice before taking that step. BEYA will not impose a blanket disciplinary penalty simply because a worker has made an external disclosure.

8. Contacts to confirm before approval

- Executive Headteacher / DSL: Kelly Brooker – kbrooker@beya.org.uk – 020 8449 5466.
- Chair of Governors: Elen Griffiths egriffiths@beya.org.uk
- Deputy DSLs: Janine Medway-Smith and Maia Hasan jmedwaysmith@beya.org.uk mhasan@beya.org.uk
- Barnet LADO contact details: lado@barnet.gov.uk

9. Related policies and legislation

Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended); Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; BEYA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Grievance and Disciplinary procedures;

Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers>