



Managing Allegations Against Adults Working with Children

Clare House Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We recognise that, although uncommon, allegations or concerns may be raised about adults who work with children. Every allegation or concern will be taken seriously and managed fairly, consistently, quickly and in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

This procedure applies to all adults working on behalf of Clare House Nursery, including employees, volunteers, students, apprentices, agency staff, contractors and committee members.

An allegation or concern may relate to behaviour that has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that has occurred outside of work.

Concerns may also include inappropriate professional conduct, such as:

- inappropriate physical contact;
- excessive one-to-one attention beyond professional responsibilities;
- inappropriate communication with children or families, including online or via social media;
- sharing inappropriate images or information;
- breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct;
- behaviour that undermines the safeguarding culture of the nursery.

We recognise that children may disclose concerns for many different reasons. It is important that every disclosure or allegation is listened to carefully, recorded accurately and investigated appropriately. Children must always be taken seriously, even where misunderstandings or misinterpretations may later be identified.

Responding to an Allegation

Any allegation or concern about an adult working with children must be reported immediately.

- Allegations concerning a member of staff should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Nursery Manager.
- Allegations concerning the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Nursery Manager must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Management Committee.
- Allegations concerning the Chair of the Management Committee should be referred directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The person receiving the allegation will:

- ensure the child is safe and any immediate safeguarding action is taken;
- make a factual written record as soon as possible;
- avoid asking leading questions or investigating the allegation themselves;
- maintain confidentiality and share information only with those who need to know;
- contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day for advice;
- follow all advice provided by the LADO before speaking with the member of staff concerned, unless there is an immediate safeguarding risk.

The nursery will also seek advice from its HR provider to ensure that employment procedures are followed appropriately alongside safeguarding procedures.

During an Investigation

The welfare of the child will always remain the paramount consideration.

The nursery will:

- work closely with Children's Social Care, the Police, the LADO and other relevant agencies;
- ensure that any investigation is conducted fairly and in accordance with statutory guidance;
- consider alternatives to suspension wherever appropriate, recognising that suspension is not an automatic response;
- support both the child and the adult involved throughout the process;
- appoint a named contact for any member of staff who is subject to an allegation;
- maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation.

Parents will only be informed following advice from the Police, Children's Social Care or the LADO where appropriate.

Notification Requirements

Where required by legislation, the nursery will notify:

- Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and within the required statutory timescales where a significant event affects the suitability of a person caring for children or the safe and lawful running of the provision.
- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where a person has been removed from regulated activity, resigned before dismissal, or would have been dismissed because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child.
- Relevant professional bodies where appropriate.

Low-Level Concerns

Clare House Nursery actively promotes a culture of openness and transparency.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct but does not meet the harm threshold.

Examples may include:

- being over-friendly with children;
- using inappropriate language;
- failing to maintain professional boundaries;
- inappropriate use of mobile phones or social media;
- behaviour that could be misinterpreted by others.

All low-level concerns must be shared with the Nursery Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

Low-level concerns will:

- be recorded appropriately;
- be reviewed to identify patterns or emerging risks;
- be managed proportionately;
- contribute to creating a strong safeguarding culture.

Whistleblowing

Every member of staff has a professional duty to report concerns about the conduct of colleagues.

Staff should never assume that someone else will report a concern.

If any member of staff believes that another adult:

- has behaved inappropriately towards a child;
- may have harmed a child;
- poses a safeguarding risk;
- has breached the Staff Code of Conduct;
- has failed to follow safeguarding procedures; or
- has created an unsafe culture,

they must report the concern immediately.

Concerns should normally be reported to:

- **Jayne Windsor – Designated Safeguarding Lead / Nursery Manager**
- **Karen Robotham – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**

If the concern relates to either of these individuals, staff should contact:

Marie Baker – Chair of the Management Committee

If staff believe that appropriate action has not been taken, or feel unable to raise concerns internally, they may contact:

- Somerset Children's Social Care
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ofsted
- The Police, if a child is at immediate risk of harm.

Staff who raise genuine concerns in good faith will be supported and protected. No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising a safeguarding concern honestly and appropriately.

Confidentiality

All allegations and safeguarding concerns will be handled confidentially.

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis in accordance with data protection legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance.

Staff, parents and committee members must not discuss allegations publicly or on social media, as identifying individuals involved in safeguarding investigations may be unlawful and could compromise investigations.

Historical Allegations

Allegations relating to adults who no longer work at Clare House Nursery, or allegations relating to historical incidents, will still be referred to the Police and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who will determine the appropriate course of action.

