



## A2 - Complaints

### (Whistleblowing, Allegations Against Staff and Complaints)

*At Roots for Life, we want everyone to feel confident that their voices and concerns will be heard and acted upon. Our aim is to ensure our setting remains a safe, transparent, and happy place for all.*

We are committed to maintaining an open and honest culture where all staff, parents, and visitors feel able to raise concerns without fear of negative repercussions. This policy outlines how concerns, complaints, or allegations can be raised and how they will be handled fairly, consistently, and in line with statutory guidance.

### **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing refers to reporting concerns or wrongdoing within the workplace. Individuals who raise such concerns ('whistleblowers') are legally protected from unfair treatment or dismissal.

The Government defines a whistleblower as:

- "You're a whistleblower if you're a worker and you report certain types of wrongdoing. This will usually be something you've seen at work – though not always.
- The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, for example the general public.
- As a whistleblower you're protected by law – you should not be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle'.
- You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future."

[Source: www.gov.uk/whistleblowing](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing)

We understand that raising a concern about a colleague or staff member can feel daunting; however, Roots for Life fully supports anyone who wishes to do so and guarantees that all concerns will be taken seriously and handled appropriately.

### **Reasons for Whistleblowing**

There are many reasons why someone may feel concerned, and we want everyone to feel comfortable raising those concerns, no matter how small they may seem.

Our policies outline the standards of staff conduct and our shared commitment to keeping children safe and happy. If you are unsure whether something you have witnessed should be raised as a concern, you are welcome to approach management for advice or refer to our internal policies.

### **How to Raise a Concern**

## Safeguarding and Child Protection

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible with a member of the management team. You are welcome to speak in person, by message, or by phone. In many cases, this will be sufficient to resolve the issue.

Where the concern is of a more serious nature, or if management advises it, you may be asked to put the concern in writing.

### **Once a Concern is Raised**

Management will address the issue promptly and inform the person raising the concern of any action taken.

Where the concern has been put in writing, we will follow the same procedure and keep the complainant informed of progress. In these cases, a written record will be maintained of the concern, the action taken, and the outcome. These records will be shared with Ofsted and the LADO where necessary.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter further. Notes from the meeting will be added to the records already collected.

If an amicable resolution still cannot be reached, a further meeting may be arranged with a mutually agreed third party to mediate.

### **Allegations Against Staff**

At Roots for Life, any complaint about the actions of a staff member—where it is alleged their actions, or failure to act, could or did cause harm to a child's physical or emotional wellbeing—is treated as a serious allegation.

### **Serious Allegations**

If a serious allegation is made against a staff member, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or management will immediately contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

No internal investigation will begin until advice has been sought, and the staff member will be treated fairly throughout the process. A clear written record of the allegation will be kept, and the staff member will be informed of the details of the allegation.

Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to involve other professionals, suspend the staff member, or allocate alternative duties.

*Confidentiality is paramount during this process. Information will only be shared where it is deemed necessary to protect children or assist in the investigation.*

### **Unfounded Allegations**

If an allegation is found to be untrue or malicious, it will be removed from the staff member's file. We view deliberately false allegations seriously. An internal investigation may take place to understand how and why the allegation occurred. If a staff member is found to have deliberately made a false allegation, disciplinary action may follow.

### **If You Do Not Feel Able to Raise a Concern Internally**

If you feel unable to approach management, you can raise your concern directly with:

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) – 01865 810603 /

lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Ofsted Parents Line – 0300 123 1231

Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline – 0300 123 3155 / whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

### **Complaints**

## Safeguarding and Child Protection

No complaint or complainant is ever considered unimportant at Roots for Life. We encourage parents, carers, and visitors to share any concerns, no matter how small, so that we can take appropriate action and continue to improve our provision.

### **How to Make a Complaint**

Concerns should be voiced as soon as possible to a member of the management team. You may speak in person, by message, or by phone. Where the concern is more serious, you may be asked to put it in writing.

Management will address the issue promptly and inform you of any action taken. Written complaints will be recorded, with notes of the actions taken and any outcomes. These records may be shared with Ofsted or the LADO if necessary.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter further. If an amicable resolution cannot be reached, we may arrange a mediation meeting with a mutually agreed third party.

### **Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

All complaints, concerns, and allegations will be handled confidentially and stored securely in line with our Data Protection and Record Keeping Policy. Records will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements and securely destroyed when no longer needed.

### **Relevant Legislation and Guidance**

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)