



Grass Roots Forest School Whistleblowing Policy 2025

Purpose

This policy aims to encourage a culture of openness and accountability, ensuring that any concerns about misconduct, poor practice, or safeguarding risks in a Forest School setting are reported and appropriately addressed. It provides guidance for staff and volunteers to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and anyone involved in the Forest School environment. It covers concerns related to:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Health and safety breaches
- Professional misconduct
- Criminal offences
- Fraud or financial mismanagement
- Environmental damage

Legal Framework

This policy aligns with key UK legislation, including:

- The Children Act 1989 & 2004 – Places a duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 – Establishes the framework for vetting and barring individuals from working with children.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 – Provides statutory guidance on inter-agency working to protect children.
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) – Protects whistleblowers from unfair treatment or dismissal.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 – Offers guidance for those working with children, including whistleblowing responsibilities.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – Ensures safe working environments.

Reporting Concerns

If a staff member or volunteer has a concern, they should follow these steps:

1. **Raise the concern with their immediate supervisor or designated safeguarding lead (DSL).**
2. **If the concern involves the supervisor or DSL, report directly to LADO**



3. If the concern is serious or remains unresolved, report it to an external authority such as:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ofsted
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (0800 028 0285)
- Police (in cases of immediate danger)

Protection for Whistleblowers

- Concerns raised in good faith will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- Whistleblowers will not suffer discrimination, victimisation, or retaliation for reporting concerns.
- Confidentiality will be maintained where possible, though disclosures may be required for investigations.

False Allegations

If an allegation is made maliciously or knowingly false, disciplinary action may be taken. However, genuine concerns raised in good faith, even if unproven, will not result in action against the whistleblower.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any relevant legislative updates. Staff and volunteers will receive training and guidance on whistleblowing procedures to ensure awareness and compliance.

Contact Information

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Vicky Faulkner 07930 459580
grassrootsforestschool@gmail.com
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** William Blake 07834 402358
treesparrowseducation@gmail.com
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:** 0800 028 0285
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** 07774332675
LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk
- **Kingston and Richmond SPA:** 0208 5475008
- **Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline:** 0300 123 3155

This policy is integral to the Grass Roots Forest School safeguarding and Child protection Policy 2025 and young adults within the Forest School environment and must be adhered to by all stakeholders.

Revised: Feb 2025

To be reviewed: Feb 2026

Signed by: V.Faulkner