Complaints procedure for parents/carers and service users

Parents/carers

- If a parent/carer is unhappy about any aspect of their child's care or how they have been treated, this should be discussed with the child's key person. The key person will listen to the parent/carer and acknowledge what they are unhappy about. The key person will offer an explanation and an apology if appropriate. The issue and how it was resolved is recorded in the child's file and Complaint Investigation Record. The recording will also make clear whether the issue being raised relates to a concern about quality of the service or practice, or a complaint. For allegations relating to serious harm to a child caused by a member of staff or volunteer procedure 6.2 Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff will be followed.

- If the parent/carer is not happy with the key person's response or wishes to complain about the key person or any other member of staff, they will be directed to Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager,. Some parents/carers will want to make a written complaint; others will prefer to make it verbally; in which case the Nursery Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, writes down the key issues of the complaint using the Complaint Investigation Record and keeps it in the child's file.

- Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, will investigate the complaint and provide time to feedback to the parent/carer within 28 days. A confidential written report of the investigation is kept in the child's file if the complaint relates directly to a child.

- If the parent/carer is still not satisfied, or if the complaint is about the Nursery Manager Sharon Avery, The complaint is forwarded verbally or in writing to their line manager Denise Barron, Managing Director

- If the parent/carer is still not satisfied, then they are entitled to appeal the outcome verbally or in writing to Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, or the line manager of Sharon Avery, Managing Director/Owner, Denise Barron for further investigation and will respond to the parent/carer within a further 14 days.

- If the complainant believes that the matter has not been resolved and there has been a breach of the EYFS requirements, they are entitled to make a complaint to Ofsted or the childminder agency. The Nursery Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, will assist in any complaint investigation as well as in producing documentation that records the steps that were taken in response to the original complaint.

- The Nursery Manager, Sharon Avery, ensures that parents/carers know they can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at any time as follows:

  Applications
  Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD or telephone: 0300 123 1231

Other services

- If an individual from another service wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager.
- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
- Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
- If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager,'s line Denise Barron, Managing Director/Owner, who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.

Ofsted complaints record

- Legislation requires settings to keep a record of complaints and disclose these to Ofsted, or the childminder agency at inspection, or if requested by Ofsted, or the childminder agency at any other time.
- The record of complaints is a summative record only.
- A record of complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.
- In all cases where a complaint is upheld a review will be undertaken by the owners/directors/trustees to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

This procedure is displayed on Millwood House Day Nursery Ltd Website.
Further guidance
Complaint Investigation Record (Alliance Publication)

This policy was reviewed	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
June 2026		May 2027

Concerns and allegations of serious harm or abuse against staff, volunteers or agency staff

What is a low-level concern?

The NSPCC defines a low-level concern as *'any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:*

- *is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work*
- *doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough…to refer to the local authority.*

Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:

- *inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour*
- *behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances.*
- *behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.*

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- *being over friendly with children*
- *having favourites*
- *adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.*
- *engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door*
- *using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language'*

(NSPCC Responding to low-level concerns about adults working in education)

Responding to low-level concerns

Any concerns about the conduct of staff, students or volunteers must be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) – Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, and Tina Evans, Deputy, Nursery Manager,, and recorded. The DSL should be informed of all concerns, including those that may initially be considered 'low level' and make the final decision on how to respond. Where appropriate this can be done in consultation with their line Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager,.

Reporting concerns about the conduct of a colleague, student or volunteer contributes towards a safeguarding culture of openness and trust. It ensures that adults consistently model the setting's values and helps keep children safe. It protects adults from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

If it is not clear that a concern meets the local authority threshold, the DSL should contact the LADO for clarification.

In most instances, low-level concerns about staff conduct can be addressed through supervision, training, or disciplinary processes where an internal investigation may take place.

Identifying concerns about serious harm, or abuse

An allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or agency staff constitutes serious harm or abuse if they:

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

Informing

- All staff report allegations to the DSL.

- The DSL alerts the Designated Officer for their setting. If the Designated Officer is unavailable the designated person contacts their equivalent until they get a response- which should be within 3-4 hours of the event. Together they should form a view about what immediate actions are taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff in the Nursery, and what is acceptable in terms of fact-finding.

- It is essential that no investigation occurs until and unless the LADO has expressly given consent for this to occur, however, the person responding to the allegation does need to understand what explicitly is being alleged.
- The DSL must take steps to ensure the immediate safety of children, parents, and staff on that day within the setting.

- The LADO is contacted as soon as possible and within one working day. If the LADO is on leave or cannot be contacted the LADO team Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, is contacted and/or advice sought from the point of entry safeguarding team/mash/point of contact, according to local arrangements.

- A child protection referral is made if required. The LADO, line Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager,s and local safeguarding children's services can advise on whether a child protection referral is required.
- The DSL asks for clarification from the LADO on the following areas:
  - what actions the DSL must take next and when and how the parents/carers of the child are informed of the allegation
  - whether or not the LADO thinks a criminal offence may have occurred and whether the police should be informed and if so, who will inform them
  - whether the LADO is happy for the provider to pursue an internal investigation without input from the LADO, or how the LADO wants to proceed
  - whether the LADO thinks the person concerned should be suspended, and whether they have any other suggestions about the actions the designated person has taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff attending the Nursery

- The DSL records details of discussions and liaison with the LADO including dates, type of contact, advice given, actions agreed and updates on the child's case file.

- Parents/carers are not normally informed until discussion with the LADO has taken place, however in some circumstances the DSL may need to advise parents/carers of an incident involving their child straight away, for example if the child has been injured and requires medical treatment.

- Staff do not investigate the matter unless the LADO has specifically advised them to investigate internally. Guidance should also be sought from the LADO regarding whether suspension should be considered. The person dealing with the allegation must take steps to ensure that the immediate safety of children, parents/carers and staff is assured. It may be that in the short-term measures other than suspension, such as requiring a staff member to be office based for a day, or ensuring they do not work unsupervised, can be employed until contact is made with the LADO and advice given.

- The DSL ensures staff fill in 06.1b Safeguarding incident reporting form.

- If after discussion with the DSL, the LADO decides that the allegation is not obviously false, and there is cause to suspect that the child/ren is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, then the LADO will normally refer the allegation to children's social care.

- Notification to Ofsted is required for any allegations made against a member of staff, therefore the DSL will inform Ofsted as soon as possible, but no later than 14 days after the event has occurred. The DSL will liaise with the designated officer/line Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, about notifying Ofsted.

- Ofsted must be updated of the actions taken by the setting, even if the LADO decides the allegation does not meet their threshold for investigation. The DSL ensures that the Confidential safeguarding incident report form is completed and sent to the designated officer/line Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager,. If the designated officer is unavailable their equivalent must be contacted, for providers registered with a childminding agency, this may be the named person within the agency.

- Avenues such as performance management or coaching and supervision of staff will also be used instead of disciplinary procedures where these are appropriate and proportionate. If an allegation is ultimately upheld the LADO may also offer a view about what would be a proportionate response in relation to the accused person.

- The DSL must consider revising or writing a new risk assessment where appropriate, for example if the incident related to an instance where a member of staff has physically intervened to ensure a child's safety, or if an incident relates to a difficulty with the environment such as where parents/carers and staff are coming and going, and doors are left open.

- All allegations are investigated even if the person involved resigns or ceases to be a volunteer.

Allegations against agency staff

Any allegations against agency staff must be responded to as detailed in this procedure. In addition, the DSL must contact the agency following advice from the LADO.

Allegations against the designated safeguarding lead.

- If a member of staff has concerns that the DSL has behaved in a way that indicates they are not suitable to work with children as listed above, this is reported to the designated officer following the setting's whistleblowing process, who will investigate further.

- During the investigation, the designated officer/line Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager, will identify another suitably experienced person to take on the role of DSL.

- If an allegation is made against the designated officer/line Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager,, then the owners/directors/trustees are informed.

Recording

- A record is made of an allegation/concern and is entered on the file of the child.

- If the allegation refers to more than one child, this is recorded in each child's file

- If relevant, a child protection referral is made, with details held on the child's file.

Disclosure and Barring Service

- If a member of staff is dismissed because of a proven or strong likelihood of child abuse, inappropriate behaviour towards a child**,** or other behaviour that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children such as drug or alcohol abuse, or other concerns raised during supervision when the staff suitability checks are done, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service is made.

Escalating and whistleblowing concerns

- If a member of staff Millwood House Day Nursery Ltd believes at any time that children may be in danger due to the actions or otherwise of a member of staff or volunteer, they must discuss their concerns immediately with the DSL.

- If, after discussions with the DSL, they still believe that appropriate action to protect children has not been taken they must speak to the designated officer/line Sharon Avery, Nursery Manager,.

This policy was reviewed	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
June 2026		May 2027