Wessex Gardens
Primary & Nursery School

Whistleblowing Policy
2026 - 2027

At Wessex Gardens we believe that every child has the right to feel safe and to be protected from any situation or practice that could result in them being harmed. Each child's welfare is of paramount importance and we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care and we expect all staff, governors, placements and volunteers to share this firm commitment.

Growing Together

Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School is a place where we grow kind, confident, resilient and independent lifelong learners in a trusting and honest environment. Here everyone is welcome and valued. We are motivated and supported to reach our full potential as we continue to aspire to excellence.

This policy was ratified by the governing body on 14th July 2026

Review due by:	**July 2027**

INTENT

Wessex Gardens is committed to safeguarding children and maintaining the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and openness. This policy provides a clear framework for staff and other stakeholders to raise genuine concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice without fear of reprisal.

This Policy reflects the requirements of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework
- The Equality Act 2010

1. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All school employees (including supply and agency staff)
- Governors, volunteers, and contractors
- Any individual working on school or LA premises

It covers concerns that fall outside of standard grievance procedures, such as:

- Safeguarding breaches or child protection failures
- Criminal offences (e.g. fraud, theft, bribery)
- Breaches of statutory or professional obligations
- Unsafe practices endangering health, safety, or welfare
- Discrimination or gross misconduct
- Unethical behaviour, abuse of position, or conflicts of interest

2. Safeguarding & KCSIE 2025

Whistleblowing plays a vital role in safeguarding children.
Under **KCSIE 2025**, all staff **must immediately report** any concerns about another adult's behaviour towards a child to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**. Concerns involving the DSL should be reported to the **Headteacher** or **Chair of Governors**.

Refer to the Child protection and safeguarding policy 2025 26.docx for further details.

3. Legal Protection

Under the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, individuals who raise concerns in good faith are legally protected against dismissal, detriment, or victimisation.

However, knowingly false or malicious allegations may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

4. Raising a Concern

Concerns can be raised **verbally or in writing**, preferably with:

- Factual background (what, when, who)
- Any witnesses or supporting evidence
- Whether the concern has been previously reported

You may raise a concern with:

- **The Headteacher**
  - head@wessexgardens.barnet.sch.uk
- **Chair of Governors**:
  - jacquizinkin@googlemail.com (if the concern involves the Headteacher)
- **Local Authority**:

- neil.marlow@barnet.gov.uk
- 020 8359 7728

- **Barnet Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT)**:
  - 020 8359 6123 (whistleblowing hotline)
  - CAFT@barnet.gov.uk

You may also seek support from a:

- Trade union representative
- Colleague
- Legal or professional advisor

5. Confidentiality & Anonymity

All concerns will be handled sensitively and in confidence. While anonymity is respected where possible, investigations may require identity disclosure. Anonymous concerns will be considered, but their impact may be limited by a lack of evidence.

6. How the School Will Respond

Within **10 working days**, the person receiving the concern will:

- Acknowledge receipt
- Indicate how the matter will be handled
- Offer appropriate support
- Confirm whether further investigation will follow

The response may include:

- Internal review or disciplinary investigation
- Referral to the police or local authority
- External audit or inquiry
- Mediation or policy revision

All outcomes will be recorded. Subject to confidentiality, the whistleblower will be informed of the result.

7. Safeguards Against Reprisal

The school will protect individuals who raise concerns in good faith. No one will suffer harassment, victimisation, or detriment for doing so. Support may include:

- Confidential meetings
- Union representation
- Access to counselling or external advice

If concerns are raised **frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain**, this may lead to disciplinary action.

9. Escalation

If you are dissatisfied with how your concern is handled internally, you may escalate to:

- **Chair of Governors** (if not already involved)
- **Chief Executive of Barnet Council**
- **External bodies**, such as:
  - **Ofsted** Whistleblowing Line: 0300 123 3155
  - **Protect** (independent charity): www.protect-advice.org.uk | 020 3117 2520
  - Your **trade union**, **local councillor**, **citizens advice bureau**, or **the police**

Employees must ensure that disclosures outside the school are made responsibly and without violating confidentiality obligations.

10. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Headteacher**: Maintains internal whistleblowing records; reports to Governors as needed.
- **Chair of Governors**: Receives and investigates complaints involving the Headteacher.
- **Chief Executive (Barnet)**: Oversees concerns raised outside of school management.
- **All Staff**: Must raise concerns promptly and cooperate with investigations.

11. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed every year**,** or sooner if required by law or DfE guidance.

Outcomes and themes from whistleblowing reports (not individual identities) will be shared with Governors annually.