Harvey Bears Nursery and Preschool
Managing Allegations

Date of last review	September 2026
Signature of registered provider	*C. Hall* Committee Chair

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sue Jones
Police (West Mercia)	Call **999** in an emergency, e.g. when a crime is in progress, when there is danger to life or when violence is being used or threatened. For less urgent issues call local police on **101**.
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Worcestershire)	**01905 846221** (or via the FFD make an online referral to LADO)
Family Front Door (Children's Social Care in Worcestershire)	**01905 822666** Weekdays 9.00 to 5.00pm (4.30 Fridays) **01905 768020** (evenings and weekends)

This policy is in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026, pt. 4).

Harvey Bears takes accusations raised against staff and volunteers seriously and will act promptly in line with legal procedures. Complaints can be made by anybody, including family members of children in our care, other practitioners (referring to our Whistleblowing policy) or the children themselves. There can be several reasons for accusations, including misconduct, misinterpretations or falsified accounts, but it is imperative that we treat all accusations with the same level of seriousness to determine the underlying facts.

The procedure as follows is specifically for when an accusation towards a partitioner suggests that they;

- may have acted in a way that either physically or emotionally harms a child
- failed to attend to a child's needs
- acted out of line with the job role
- may have even committed a criminal offense.

We advise all families of children in our care to report concerns directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) when they have concerns or have witnessed practice by a member of staff at Harvey Bears that they believe is not acceptable and may either pose a risk to their own children, or any other child in our care, or suggest that they are breaching staff code of conduct. Any scenarios that cause concern should be reported as soon as possible.

If an allegation towards a member of staff is brought to the attention of another staff member, said employee will take immediate appropriate action. The employee will remain calm and listen to every detail of the accusation being raised. They will seek the DSL without delay to inform them of the accusation raised, and a detailed and factual account will be made. If the employee witnesses another staff member's practice they believe is not acceptable, they will follow the exact same procedure regarding consulting the DSL and recording a detailed account of what happened (please refer to our Whistleblowing policy).

In line with legal proceedings, we do not initiate an investigation right away. The DSL is obligated to make a referral to the Worcestershire Local Duty Authority Safeguarding Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of the accusation being brought to their attention (by a parent of child, or a staff member whistleblowing), and following communication with the LADO, the advice they provide will be strictly adhered to. This may allow us to initiate an internal investigation, or else they will arrange a Position of Trust meeting, with involvement from external agencies including the LADO, Ofsted and, if a criminal offence is accused, our local police force (West Mercia Police). Suspension of the staff member accused is not automatic or mandatory, but it may sometimes be deemed necessary, following communication with the LADO, while the investigation into the case remains ongoing. It is important to note this does not mean the allegation is true and suspension is not a disciplinary procedure; it is a precaution to ensure the safety of all involved while investigation of the allegation remains ongoing. The staff members accused have the right to have the case dealt with quickly and efficiently and to be kept in the loop, and confidentiality is maintained consistently. Ofsted are also contacted AFTER contacting the LADO to be informed of the circumstances – typically within 14 days of the allegation being raised. As a committee run setting, the committee are also kept in the loop of the procedure that is being followed.

Should the employee feel that the DSL and management at Harvey Bears failed to act accordingly, objectively and professionally, namely by not giving the accusation the seriousness it needs and following procedure, then the employee who whistle blew or had the accusation brought to their attention is obligated to initiate the procedure by contacting LADO themselves to make a referral. If we do not follow strict procedure, this can be seen as a criminal offence as it could impede the ever-ongoing process of safeguarding children.

If an allegation raised against a staff member by another employee is proven to be 'false and malicious', meaning that there is incontrovertible evidence to suggest that the accusation made against a staff member was a deliberate attempt to harm or cause deformation to them, this will be considered gross misconduct and will result in instant dismissal.

Dealing with low level concerns

An accusation may not meet the threshold for a formal investigation including external agencies, but this does not mean it is insignificant. All staff must record and report to the DSL should they have any concerns that suggest the employee is breaching their code of conduct. We advise all parents to do the same. This level of concern would include:

- Showing evident favoritism towards children
- Humiliating children
- Forming inappropriate relationships with children and families; engaging in meetings outside of work
- Making inappropriate comments regarding children in our care, their families or the setting management or employees.

Indeed, regular occurrences of the above could constitute a larger scale concern which would initiate the procedure followed because of higher-level concerns, stressing the importance of keeping these concerns documented. Records are kept on file in chronological order and are treated with strict confidentiality.

Any written account of any safeguarding concern will be detailed with the following

- The date and time of the scenario
- The place in which the cause for concern occurred
- The name of the person being accused
- The name of the person recording the accusation
- The people present (potential witnesses)

For further information on Low Level Concerns, please refer to our Safeguarding and Low-Level Concerns policies.

Policy Review

These policies and procedures are a working document and can be added to and changed as and when necessary.
This policy will be reviewed annually or when an incident occurs or there are new local or national policies and procedures. The review process will be led by the registered provider and the DSL and include all those working in the setting.