

May Blossom Farm CIC

Alternative Provision

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Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by:	Gill Press
Last reviewed on:	01/09/2025
Next review due by:	31/08/2026
Head of Alternative Provision	Gill Press
Deputy Head of Alternative Provision	Hannah Priest
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Gill Press
Deputy DSL (DDSL)	Hannah Priest
Designated Safeguarding Trustee	Russel Breyer

This policy was ratified in Sept 2025 and will be reviewed in September 2026

1. Introduction

MBF is committed to operating with honesty, transparency and integrity. We want to create an environment where concerns can be raised without fear and where staff, volunteers and others feel safe to speak up.

Whistleblowing means raising a concern about suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work in the public interest. This policy is designed to ensure that concerns are taken seriously, handled fairly, and that individuals are protected when raising them in good faith.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All MBF staff, contractors, volunteers, agency workers and placement students.
- Concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing or risk, including:
 - Criminal activity or fraud
 - Safeguarding failures or unsafe practices
 - Breach of legal or regulatory duties
 - Health and safety risks
 - Environmental damage
 - Bribery or corruption
 - Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing

This policy is not for personal grievances (e.g. about your own employment). These should be raised under MBF's Grievance Policy.

3. Principles

- All concerns raised will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.
- Individuals will not suffer detriment, victimisation or dismissal for raising genuine concerns in good faith, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible, although anonymity cannot always be guaranteed.
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be treated as misconduct.

4. How to Report a Concern

- Stage 1: Report your concern to the Head of Provision.
- Stage 2: If the concern involves them, or if you feel unable to raise it at that level, report directly to the Deputy Head of Provision.
- Stage 3: If still unresolved, you may report to the MBF Board via the Chair of Trustees

Safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL (DDSL)

Staff may also seek confidential advice from:

- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk

5. How MBF Will Respond

- Concerns will be acknowledged within 7 working days.
- An initial review will take place to decide how to investigate.
- Where investigation is required, you will be kept informed of progress where possible.
- The outcome will be explained once the matter is concluded, within the limits of confidentiality.

6. Protection and Support

MBF will:

- Protect whistleblowers from retaliation, victimisation or unfair treatment.
- Provide appropriate support to anyone raising a concern in good faith.
- Take disciplinary action against anyone who tries to deter or victimise a whistleblower.

7. Confidentiality

- Concerns may be raised confidentially. Every effort will be made to protect your identity.
- Anonymous reports will be considered, but they may be harder to investigate.

8. External Reporting

While MBF encourages concerns to be raised internally, in exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to report to an external body, such as:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The Police
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
- The Department for Education

Staff are strongly encouraged to seek advice before going outside MBF.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by law or best practice updates.

Related Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Positive Relationships Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Grievance Policy