YMCA DERBYSHIRE

YMCA Stepping Stones/YKidz Whistleblowing Policy

Department: YSS/YKidz

Owner: Head of Early Years and Childcare Development

Approval Route: YSS/YKidz Board

Frequency of Revision: Annually

This policy will be reviewed sooner if there is a change to legislation or guidance which may affect it. Any changes will be communicated to all stakeholders.

Version	Date Approved	Reason for Update
1	05.01.2026	
2	12.10.2026	Minor updates following EYFS 2026

Policy Statement

YMCA Stepping Stones (YSS) and YKidz are committed to a culture of openness, trust and transparency.

All practitioners, including apprentices, students and volunteers, must feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in the setting's/provision's safeguarding arrangements and know those concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon. This policy applies to everyone working in or on behalf of YSS nursery/YKidz provision in any capacity: trustees, employees, apprentices, students, agency/supply staff, contractors and volunteers.

Legal and Statutory Framework

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework – Group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (current version)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) and subsequent amendments
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (as amended)

This policy is aligned to the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 and KCSIE 2025 and should be read alongside the YSS and YKidz Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, YMCA Code of Conduct, YMCA Safer Recruitment Policy, and the YMCA IT, Data Retention, Data Security & Data Protection Policy.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing helps us identify and address problems early and keep children safe.

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information about wrongdoing in the public interest. A 'qualifying disclosure' may include reasonable concerns that someone has:

- committed a criminal offence;
- failed to comply with a legal obligation;
- created a risk to health and safety;
- caused damage to the environment;
- concealed information about any of the above; or
- behaved in a way that harms or may harm a child, or otherwise indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children.

Culture and Responsibilities

- All staff, including students, volunteers and agency workers, must understand that they have a professional duty to raise concerns where they believe a child may be at risk of harm, regardless of the seniority of the individual concerned.
- Leaders foster an open and trusting culture where concerns are welcomed and escalated appropriately.
- All staff must immediately report safeguarding concerns and allegations about adults (including supply, contractors and volunteers).
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ensures concerns are recorded, acted upon and, where appropriate, referred to the LADO/children's social care/police and Ofsted.
- The Nursery/YKidz Managers and the Head of Early Years and Childcare Development oversee implementation and ensure staff are trained and confident to raise concerns.

How to Raise a Concern (Reporting Lines)

Report without delay using the most appropriate route below. If you believe a child is at immediate risk, call 999.

- Concerns about a member of staff/volunteer/contractor/etc: report to the Nursery/YKidz Manager.
- Concerns about the Nursery/YKidz Manager: report to the Head of Early Years and Childcare Development.
- Concerns about the Head of Early Years and Childcare Development: report to the Director of Lifelong Learning.
- Conflict of interest or you feel unable to report internally: report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Record the concern in writing as soon as possible and in as much detail as possible. Include the date, time, place, people present, what was witnessed/said, and sign and date your written record.

Concerns About Adults: Two Levels

We distinguish between concerns that may meet the harm threshold ('allegations') and those that do not ('low-level concerns').

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold (refer to LADO)

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child/children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside work – 'transferable risk').

The Case Manager conducts a basic enquiry (without jeopardising any police investigation) and consults the LADO without delay. Where advised, they will inform Ofsted and the police/children's social care. They will also consider suspension/management arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

Low-level concerns (do not meet harm threshold)

Low-level concerns are any concern, no matter how small, that an adult's behaviour may be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct. Staff should report their concerns to the DSL/Manager. Staff can also self-refer - this is encouraged. Low-level concerns are recorded in the same way as above, reviewed for patterns and addressed proportionately.

External Routes and Key Contacts

If you feel unable to raise a concern internally, or if you believe your concern has not been addressed, you may contact the following prescribed or regulatory bodies:

Organisation	Contact	When to contact
Derby City LADO	Tel: 01332 642376 | Email: cpmduty@derby.gov.uk	Allegations/concerns meeting the harm threshold; advice
Derbyshire LADO	Email: professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk	Allegations/concerns meeting the harm threshold; advice
Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline	Tel: 0300 123 3155 | Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk	Unsafe practice/breaches of EYFS; concerns not addressed internally
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	Tel: 0800 028 0285 | Email: help@nspcc.org.uk	Advice/support if worried about how child protection issues are handled
Police	999 (emergency) | 101 (non-emergency)	Child at immediate risk; suspected crime

Confidentiality and Protection for Whistleblowers

- Concerns will be handled sensitively with information shared only on a 'need to know' basis.
- Under Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), workers are protected from detriment or dismissal because they made a protected disclosure in the public interest.
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Support for Children, Reporters and Staff Subject to Concerns

- Children: safeguarded in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; parents are informed where appropriate.
- Reporter: access to support; can seek confidential advice from the NSPCC; protection from victimisation.
- Staff subject to concerns: welfare support, named contact, fair process, and timely updates as appropriate.

Training and Communication

Whistleblowing procedures are covered at induction, revisited in annual safeguarding updates and supervision, and made visible to all staff, students and volunteers.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and earlier following any changes to statutory guidance or lessons learned from cases. Next scheduled review: September 2027.

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YSS & YKidz
Allegation Against an Adult Recording Template

1. Details of Person Reporting Concern
Name:
Role:
Date/Time Completed:
Contact Details:

2. Details of the Adult the Allegation Relates To
Name:
Role/Relationship to Setting:
Employment Status:
Any Previous Concerns Known:

3. Details of Child(ren) Involved
Names:
Ages:
Key Person:
Additional Needs:

4. Immediate Action Taken by the Reporter (Child safeguarded if needed, informed DSL/ Manager/Police/Social Care/LADO)

5. Date, Time and Location of Alleged Incident
Date:
Time:
Location:

6. Nature of Concern / Allegation - Tick all that apply:
- **Physical harm**
- **Emotional harm**
- **Neglect**
- **Inappropriate sexualised behaviour**
- **Boundary breach**
- **Criminal offence**
- **Transferable risk**

7. Factual Account written by the Reporter (Exact Words Where Possible)

8. LADO Threshold Consideration (To be completed by Manager / DSL / Head of Early Years & Childcare Development)
Does the concern meet Derby/Derbyshire LADO criteria? Yes/No
Rationale:

9. Actions Taken Following LADO Advice

10. Child & Family Support
Parents informed? Yes/No (Only following LADO/police direction)

11. Staff Support
Staff member informed? Yes/No (Only when agreed)

12. Outcome (when concluded)
Substantiated / Unsubstantiated / Unfounded / False / Malicious

Date concluded _____

Signed _____ (Case Manager)