

Young Friends Kindergarten

Disciplinary Policy

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Next Review: August 2026

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Our Values

We believe a values-led culture builds a respectful, professional and safe environment for children and staff. When concerns arise, we respond in a way that is:

- **Sustainable** – We invest in professional growth and restorative practice
- **Respectful** – All voices are heard and treated fairly
- **Authentic** – Conversations are honest, clear, and grounded in fact
- **Supportive** – Leaders guide with consistency and care, not fear
- **Community-focused** – Everyone plays their part in upholding shared expectations

Policy Statement

This policy sets out our approach to managing concerns around conduct or performance. It ensures a fair, transparent and structured process, grounded in respectful dialogue and opportunities for reflection. While we hope to avoid formal procedures, this policy protects the wellbeing of children, the integrity of the setting, and the rights of our staff.

Purpose

- To ensure all disciplinary action is **fair, consistent and proportionate**
- To encourage reflection and improvement before formal measures are taken
- To clarify expectations, including rights of appeal and support
- To comply with ACAS guidance and the EYFS statutory framework

Scope

This policy applies to all Young Friends staff.

Definitions

- **Misconduct** – Breach of rules such as lateness, poor timekeeping, unprofessional conduct
- **Gross Misconduct** – Serious breaches such as theft, safeguarding failures, or behaviour bringing the setting into disrepute
- **Grievance** – A concern raised by a staff member relating to another individual or the setting

Disciplinary Process

1. Investigation

- A timely and thorough enquiry
- Notes and evidence gathered
- Staff member(s) is/are invited to give their version of events
- If concerns are upheld, the next stage is considered

2. Invitation to Disciplinary Hearing

- Clear notice with allegation details
- Right to be accompanied
- Provided in writing in advance

3. Disciplinary Hearing

- Professional, structured and respectful
- Staff have the opportunity to explain and offer context
- No decisions are made during the hearing itself

4. Decision and Confirmation

- Decision made once all evidence is reviewed
- Outcome confirmed verbally in a meeting, and also in writing
- Includes explanation of reasoning, expected improvement, and consequences if not met

5. Appeal

- Staff may appeal within **5 working days**
- Appeal heard by a senior leader not involved in original decision
- Outcome may uphold, reverse, or adjust the original decision

Types of Disciplinary Outcomes

- **Verbal Warning** – For minor concerns
- **First Written Warning** – For misconduct or underperformance
- **Final Written Warning** – For repeated or serious issues
- **Dismissal** – In cases of gross misconduct or failure to improve after previous action

All written warnings:

- Stay on file for **12 months**
- Include support plans where needed
- Trigger **monthly check-ins** with leadership and the staff member's Room Lead

Gross Misconduct (Examples)

- Safeguarding breaches
- Theft, falsification of documents or qualifications
- Aggressive, threatening or discriminatory behaviour
- Serious breaches of health & safety or confidentiality
- Criminal convictions affecting suitability to work with children
- Bringing the nursery into disrepute
- Failure to declare relevant criminal history or cautions

*Dismissal without notice may follow confirmed cases of gross misconduct.
Ofsted will be informed within 14 days where safeguarding is involved.*

Allegations of Child Abuse Against Staff

If an allegation of abuse or harm is made, we will:

- Inform the **LADO** and **Ofsted** within 14 days
 - **Cooperate fully** with external agencies
 - Take detailed records and timelines
 - **Consider suspension** where necessary
 - Follow our internal disciplinary and safeguarding procedures
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Grievance Procedure

If a staff member feels unfairly treated or has a concern:

- Raise it **informally** with the person involved, where appropriate
 - If unresolved, raise it formally with the **Manager or Owner** in writing
 - A grievance hearing will be arranged
 - Staff will never be penalised for raising a genuine concern
 - The process has **two formal stages**, and outcomes will be confirmed in writing
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Policy Integrity

This policy ensures all staff are treated fairly, that standards are maintained, and that children's welfare is never compromised.

Disciplinary processes must always be led by **Managers ensuring the Owner is informed during entire process**, and any dismissal can only be authorised by them.

Linked Policies

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Supervision and Appraisal Policy
- Equalities and Diversity
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use