



Introduction

British Guardianship is committed to fostering a culture of trust, openness, and accountability among its staff. We encourage honest and appropriate feedback on all aspects of our operations to ensure the highest standards of conduct. This policy outlines the procedures for reporting concerns and protecting whistleblowers.

Whistleblowing refers to raising concerns about suspected wrongdoing or dangers in connection with our organisation. Under certain circumstances, employees are legally protected from suffering any detriment or dismissal if they make disclosures about the organisation.

This policy is designed to comply with the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)** and aligns with safeguarding obligations under **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** and related legislation. This policy supports compliance with the AEGIS Guardianship Organisation Quality Standards (2025) and must be read alongside the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (2026), with which it is fully aligned.

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Provide a safe and confidential process for staff to raise concerns about suspected wrongdoing or dangers.
- Ensure all concerns, particularly those relating to safeguarding, are addressed effectively.
- Protect whistleblowers from retaliation or victimisation.
- Promote compliance with UK legislation and safeguarding standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors of British Guardianship and host families who provide care for children under the company's guardianship. It covers concerns that are:

- In the public interest.
- Likely to result in one or more of the following "qualifying disclosures":
 - A criminal offence.
 - A failure to comply with a legal obligation.
 - A miscarriage of justice.
 - Endangering the health and safety of an individual.
 - Environmental damage.
 - Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

Concerns relating to safeguarding children or young people are always treated as a priority.

Reporting procedure for employees, volunteers and contractors

1. Internal Reporting (Non-Safeguarding Matters)

If you have a concern relating to employment, conduct, finance, HR or other non-safeguarding matters, you are encouraged to report it in writing to: **Almu Vilchez, Finance and HR Director**, almu@britishguardianship.com

We encourage openness and all such concerns will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Safeguarding concerns, allegations, or low-level concerns relating to the welfare of a child must be reported directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2. External Reporting

If internal reporting is inappropriate or unsatisfactory, you may contact:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285** or help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Protect** for independent advice: **020 3117 2520** or www.protect-advice.org.uk.
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**: Contact details can be provided by British Guardianship or the local authority safeguarding team.

3. Alternative Formal Representation (External Oversight)

If you feel unable to raise a matter internally, or you believe your concern has not been addressed appropriately after following the procedures above, you may make a formal representation to:

• **AEGIS – The Association for the Education & Guardianship of International Students**

Email: info@aegisuk.net

Tel: **+44 (0)1453 821293**

Address: The Wheelhouse, Bond's Mill Estate, Bristol Road, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 3RF

• **Boarding Schools' Association (BSA)**, c/o International & Membership Director Email: bsa@boarding.org.uk

4. Anonymous Reporting

You may report concerns anonymously. While anonymity may limit our ability to investigate, we will assess the concern based on its seriousness and credibility.

Reporting procedure for host families

Host families who have concerns about:

- The safety or welfare of a child in their care.
- The conduct of British Guardianship staff, volunteers, or other host families.
- Any suspected wrongdoing (e.g., breaches of safeguarding practices, health and safety concerns, or illegal activities).

Should report their concerns promptly through one of the following channels:

1. Internal Reporting (Non-Safeguarding Matters)

Concerns relating to employment, finance, HR, contractual or other non-safeguarding matters may be reported in writing to:

Almu Vilchez, Finance and HR Director, almu@britishguardianship.com

All such concerns will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Safeguarding concerns, child protection matters, allegations or low-level concerns relating to the welfare of a child must be reported directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2. External Reporting

If the concern relates to child protection or safeguarding and you feel internal reporting is not appropriate, you may contact:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285** or help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Protect** for independent advice: **020 3117 2520** or www.protect-advice.org.uk
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**: Contact details can be provided by British Guardianship or the local authority safeguarding team.

3. Emergencies

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, contact the **Police** (999) or **Children's Social Services** directly.

Whistleblowing and safeguarding child protection

Safeguarding is central to our organisation's purpose. Any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child must be reported immediately. This includes:

- Concerns about a colleague's behaviour toward children.
- Low-level concerns, where behaviour does not meet the safeguarding threshold but is still inappropriate.

Safeguarding disclosures must be handled in line with our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**. Where an immediate risk of harm is identified, the DSL or Deputy DSL will contact the Police or Children's Social Care without delay, in line with our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. Where necessary, concerns will be referred to:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Social services.
- The Police.

Safeguarding concerns from host families

Host families are an integral part of safeguarding and should report:

- Concerns about a child's welfare (e.g., neglect, abuse, or emotional distress).
- Concerns about inappropriate conduct by British Guardianship staff, other host families, or other parties involved with the child.

All safeguarding concerns will be handled in line with the company's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and referred to the appropriate authorities when necessary.

Low-level concerns

Low-level concerns involve behaviour that is inappropriate but does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral. Examples include:

- Minor breaches of the organisation's Code of Conduct.
- Unintentional contraventions of safeguarding practices.

Low-level concerns should be reported to the **Guardianship Director & Client Relations, Tannaz Fatoorehchi (tannaz@britishguardianship.com)** who will review the evidence, address the concern with the individual involved, and determine appropriate actions (e.g., training, monitoring). Repeated or escalated concerns will lead to formal action.

Protection and support for whistleblowers

British Guardianship is committed to protecting whistleblowers. Any staff member raising a genuine concern will not suffer harassment, victimisation, or detrimental treatment as a result. This protection applies even if the concern is unfounded, provided it was raised in good faith.

- **Detrimental Treatment:** Bullying, harassment, or dismissal of whistleblowers is prohibited. Anyone engaging in such behaviour will face disciplinary action.
- **Malicious Allegations:** Deliberately false or malicious allegations will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Protection and support for host families

Host families will receive:

- **Training and Information:** British Guardianship will provide whistleblowing and safeguarding training to all host families during their induction and at regular intervals.
- **Assurance of Confidentiality:** Any concerns raised will be treated in confidence, and the identity of the whistleblower will be protected wherever possible.
- **Protection Against Repercussions:** Host families will be protected from harassment or victimisation for raising concerns in good faith.

Confidentiality

All disclosures will be treated in confidence, and every effort will be made to protect the identity of whistleblowers. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if legal obligations require disclosure (e.g., court proceedings).

Training and awareness

To ensure staff understand their rights and responsibilities:

- Whistleblowing procedures will be included in staff induction training.
- Regular refresher training and awareness campaigns will be conducted.
- The policy will be accessible to all staff, including alternative formats for those with additional needs.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with changes in legislation and best practices. Staff feedback on the policy is encouraged and will be considered during the review process.

The company will ensure this policy and its whistleblowing procedures are accessible and regularly communicated to all host families.

Contact information at a glance

Contact	Role	Contact Details
Almu Vilchez	Finance and HR Director	almu@britishguardianship.com
Tannaz Fatoorehchi	Guardianship Director and Client Relations	tannaz@britishguardianship.com
Poliane Costa	Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead	polly@britishguardianship.com
David Walker	Executive Director, BSA	bsa@boarding.org.uk
AEGIS	The Association for the Education & Guardianship of International Students	+44(0)1453 821293 info@aegisuk.net
NSPCC Whistleblowing Line	External Child Protection Support	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Protect	Independent Advice	020 3117 2520 www.protect-advice.org.uk