

Whistle Blowing Policy



Statement of intent:

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the work place. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concerns rather than report what may be just a suspicion of malpractice.

It is your duty as an employee to report any concerns about other staff members or the manager.

Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within the Nursery rather than overlooking a problem or “blowing the whistle” outside. It is our intention that staff working at Halstead Nursery feel confident about coming forward and reporting any issues/concerns that they may have regarding the areas documented below, whilst remaining protected from any subsequent discrimination.

Aim:

- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity.
- Provide avenues for staff to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- Reassure the staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosures in good faith.

Any concerns can be reported without this leading to any harassment or victimisation, and every effort will be made to keep both the concern and the member of staff’s identity confidential.

What should be reported:

- The inappropriate treatment or care of a child.
- Any breach in the behaviour of the manager, staff, a student or volunteer.
- Discrimination of any kind.
- Concerns that could impact on the health and safety of the children or adults.
- Conduct which is an offence or breach of the law.
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice.
- Health & Safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
- Damage to the environment.
- The unauthorised use of public funds.
- Possible fraud and corruption.
- Sexual or physical abuse of clients.
- Any other unethical conduct.

Methods:

- A concern can be initially raised by any member of staff to our designated Safeguarding Lead, Tracey McCartney and/or the current Chairperson of our Management committee as appropriate and according to our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Discuss the nature of the concern together with the background, history of the concern and provide the relevant dates of incidents.
- There is no expectation that staff prove beyond doubt the truth of their suspicion; however, they will need to demonstrate that they are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for their concern.
- All employees will be treated fairly.

Concerns will be dealt with in the following way:

- Initial enquiries will be made with a member of the Local Authority Designated Officer team (LADO) (contact details on safeguarding telephone number list on noticeboard by main entrance) to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take.
- The incident will be investigated by the Manager and/or committee chair and/or Ofsted.
- If appropriate it will be referred and put through established safeguarding child procedures and may form the subject of an independent enquiry.
- Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, the member of staff will receive in writing:
 1. Acknowledgement that the concern has been received.
 2. An indication as to how the Manager will proceed to deal with the matter.
 3. Supply the member of staff with information on staff support mechanisms.
 4. Inform the member of staff concerned as to whether any further investigation will take place and if not, why not.

It may be necessary for the Management team to interview staff to ensure that their disclosure is fully understood. Any meeting can be arranged away from the workplace if so wished and a representative or a friend may accompany the involved member of staff for support.

If there are any difficulties experienced as a result of raising a concern, support will be offered.

Staff will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation to ensure that any disclosure has been properly addressed unless legal reasons determine otherwise.

Confidentiality will be maintained and every effort will be made not to reveal a member of staff's identity if they so wish. If however, a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously or for personal gain, appropriate action, that could include disciplinary action, may be taken against them.

The Public Disclosure Act 1988 seeks to protect employees from discrimination as a result of blowing the whistle on their organisation or individuals within it, through amendments to employment law.