

Whistleblowing Policy

Date: 26/12/2025

Review Date:

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear procedure for staff, volunteers, and students to report concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or breaches of safeguarding in the early years setting. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Child protection or safeguarding concerns
- Health and safety violations
- Financial irregularities or fraud
- Unethical or illegal practices

We are committed to creating a safe and transparent environment where concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (full-time, part-time, temporary, agency)
- Volunteers
- Students or trainees on placement
- Contractors working on-site

It does **not** replace procedures for reporting concerns about personal employment issues, which should be addressed through the grievance procedure.

3. Policy Statement

- Staff have a duty to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice.
- Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.
- Staff raising concerns will be protected from retaliation or victimisation.
- Anonymous reports will be considered, but it may be more difficult to investigate fully.

This policy follows guidance from:

- **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest edition)**
- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**

4. Raising a Concern

4.1 Procedure

1. **Initial report:** Concerns should be raised in writing, if possible, to the designated person immediately who will follow the settings procedure.
2. **Alternative contacts:** If the concern involves the designate person, you should contact the SPA or Ofsted directly.
3. **External reporting:** If the concern cannot be resolved internally, staff may contact:
 - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
 - Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline
 - NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

4.2 Content of Report

Reports should include:

- The nature of the concern
- Dates, times, and locations
- Names of people involved
- Any evidence available

5. Handling a Concern

- All concerns will be acknowledged within **5 working days**.
- Investigations will be conducted promptly, confidentially, and impartially.
- The whistleblower will be updated on the progress of the investigation.
- Records of investigations will be retained securely in line with data protection laws.

6. Confidentiality and Protection

- Whistleblowers' identities will be kept confidential wherever possible.

- Retaliation, harassment, or victimisation of whistleblowers will not be tolerated.
- Any staff found retaliating may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

7. Responsibilities

- **Staff:** Report concerns responsibly and in good faith.
- **Childminder/DSL:** Ensure concerns are taken seriously, investigated fairly, and kept confidential.
- **Provider:** Ensure that the whistleblowing procedure is communicated to all staff and included in induction training.

8. Communication and Training

- This policy will be provided to all staff and displayed on noticeboards.
- Training on whistleblowing and safeguarding will form part of induction and ongoing professional development.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or best practice guidance changes.