

## Staff Qualifications, Training, Support & Skills



### Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees and committee volunteers to raise serious concerns within the setting rather than over looking a problem or 'blowing the whistle outside'. The setting is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others who we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice their concerns.

By using this policy we aim to:

- Provide avenues for relevant parties to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that they receive a response to their concerns and that if they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- Reassure them that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they made a disclosure in good faith.

The setting recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what is being said is true, there should be nothing to fear because the relevant party will be doing their duty to their employer and those that the setting provides a service for. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not reveal the identity of the whistleblower if they so wish. At the appropriate time, however, they may need to come forward as a witness.

The setting is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees. The setting will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect their staff when they raise a concern. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedure that already affect the staff.

This policy encourages the staff however to put their name to the concern whenever possible.

Please note that:

- Staff/volunteers must disclose the information in good faith
- Staff/volunteers must believe it to be substantially true
- Staff/volunteers must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- Staff/volunteers must not seek any personal gain

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the committee. In exercising this discretion the factors taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concerns
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

If an allegation is made in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person who made the disclosure. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the informant.

The whistleblowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of law
- Disclosures related to a miscarriage of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual or physical abuse of customers or staff
- Other unethical conduct

Thus, any serious concerns that staff have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees of Wroughton Preschool or others acting on behalf of the setting can be reported under the whistle blowing policy. This may be about something that:

- Makes anyone feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe Wroughton Preschool subscribes to, or
- Is against Wroughton Preschool's Policies and Procedures
- Falls below established standards of practice, or
- Amounts to improper conduct

#### How to raise a concern

As a first step the concerns should be raised either verbally or in writing with the group's immediate supervisor/manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of malpractice. For example, if it is believed that management is involved a more senior level of management should be approached if possible or the chairperson of the committee.

Staff/volunteers who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates)
- The reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

If a concern is raised immediately after it has happened the easier it becomes to take action. The whistleblower will not be expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, but will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for

concern. The supervisor/chairperson will follow the summary of process for workers Flowchart and contact the Local Authority Designate Officer (LADO) on 01793 466849 to discuss the allegation within 1 working day.

It is acceptable to invite a professional representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns that have been raised.

This policy does not replace the complaints procedure.

Wroughton Preschool will respond to any concerns using the guidelines within this policy and the complaints policy and procedure. Wroughton Preschool hopes this will satisfy the relevant parties especially with regard to any action taken. If this does not answer the concerns and it is felt that it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

Local Authority Designate Officer (LADO) on 01793 466849

### **Further advice and support**

It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from the supervisor, chair & committee or LADO.

#### **Authorisation & Review**

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Wroughton Preschool
Held on	_____
Date to be reviewed	Yearly at AGM
Signed on behalf of the management committee	_____
Name of signatory	_____
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chairperson