

1.7 Whistleblowing

Policy Statement

At Mulberry Pre-School we expect our staff to be professional and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their primary objective. Mulberry Pre-school is committed to honesty and integrity and we expect our staff to maintain these standards.

Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible. This whistleblowing policy protects staff who report colleagues that they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties. This policy covers the process for raising, investigating and resolving wrongdoing within Mulberry Pre-School.

What is whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Wrong-doing includes:

- Any activity you suspect puts health and safety at risk.
- Any activity you suspect may damage the environment.
- Any activity that is a criminal offence.
- Any activity that involves not obeying the law.
- Covering up wrongdoing.
- Any failure to meet professional requirements.
- Any activity misusing public funds; (and in schools).
- **Actions that negatively affect the welfare of children.**

You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that has happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen soon.

To make a disclosure under this policy:

- You must reasonably believe it to be substantially true.
- You must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- You must not seek any personal gain.

It is not necessary for the employee to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed; a reasonable belief is sufficient.

Disclosure procedure

- If this disclosure relates to child protection/safeguarding then this must be reported to your safeguarding lead and our policy "1.2 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults" policy will be followed.
- **Where you reasonably believe one or more of the above circumstances listed above has occurred, you should raise your concern with your line manager, safeguarding lead or pre-school manager. If it is inappropriate to make a disclosure to your line manager, safeguarding lead or pre-school manager then you should go directly to Mulberry Pre-School's Chairperson, Georgina Stevens.**
- **If none of the above options are appropriate, then you must make an external disclosure. (see below)**
- A meeting with you will be arranged as soon as possible to discuss your concerns. You may bring a union representative or colleague for support as long as they respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any investigation that may follow.
- Your disclosure or concern will be treated seriously and will be dealt with in a confidential manner and thoroughly investigated.
- We may decide to involve relevant external specialists to help us conduct a thorough, fair, and responsible investigation.
- The relevant personnel involved in this investigation will keep you informed about the progress of the investigation as far as they are able.
- Failure to report serious matters can also be investigated and potentially lead to disciplinary action which may result in dismissal.
- Any management employee who fails to act about a whistleblowing issue appropriately and in a timely manner may be deemed to have engaged in gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

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Confidentiality

- Staff are encouraged to raise concerns openly, and we discourage anonymous whistleblowing because they are not always easy to manage and to investigate.
- If you prefer to keep your identity anonymous we will do all that we can to ensure that you retain your anonymity, and the confidentiality of your concerns, as far as possible. If we need to disclose your identity to others as part of the investigation, we will always discuss with you beforehand both our desire and our reasons for wishing to identify you.

External Disclosures

- The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating, and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- However, the law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator.
- The numbers of our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (for allegations against staff/people of trust), our Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), Ofsted and the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (if you feel that our organisation or our local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child) are displayed on our noticeboard in the hall, in our toilet and in the office and at the end of this policy should you require to report your concern to an external body.**

Protection and support for whistle-blowers

- We aim to encourage openness and we will support whistle-blowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- We protect whistle-blowers from others, so where a whistle-blower reports to us that they have been treated inappropriately by others (including having received threats as a result of raising their concerns), we will take disciplinary action against those individuals. The consequences of us taking this action could include dismissal of such individual(s) for gross misconduct.
- However if we conclude that a whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistle-blower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Important information and contact details for whistle-blowing:

Our designated member of staff who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is:	Gillian Parkin
Our designated officer who oversees this work is our chair:	Georgina Stevens
LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Allegations against staff / people of trust	Mark Blackwell Tel: 01962-876364
Ofsted	Tel: 0300-123-1231
Our Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership and local authority for children's Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership	0300-555-1384/ 0300-555-1377 0300-555-1373 (a/h)
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (free and anonymous) – if staff feel that their organisation or the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child.	0800-028-0285

This policy was adopted by:	Mulberry Pre-School
On (date):	September 2020
Date to be reviewed:	June 2021
Signed on behalf of the provider:	George
Name of signatory:	Georgina Stevens
Role of signatory:	Chair