



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Last Reviewed:
Sept 2024

Next Review Date:
Sept 2025

What concerns are covered?

Harpsden Woodland Pre-School expects employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of their work to voice their concerns internally, either with the Manager or Chair of Committee, within the organisation rather than overlooking the problem.

We also wish to encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns and malpractice.

This policy was written to supplement, rather than replace, the existing Complaints Policy Procedure. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures, e.g. Child Protection, will normally be referred under its own procedures.

This Policy is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside other procedures and may relate to something which:

- Is against Financial Regulations and policies.
- Falls below established standards of practice.
- Amounts to improper conduct, including something that is believed to be:
 - Against the law.
 - A Health & Safety risk.
 - Damaging to the environment.
 - A misuse of money.
 - Corruption or unethical conduct.
 - Abuse of clients or service users.

Who can an employee raise a concern with?

The employee should firstly raise their concerns with their Manager. However if they do not feel that this is possible, they should approach the current Chair of Committee.

How does an employee raise a concern?

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are advised to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reasons for making the disclosure. This will make the investigation easier to complete.

Although a member of staff is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, they will need to demonstrate that they have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.

How will the concern be dealt with?

Harpsden Woodland Pre-School will respond to any concerns raised. In order to protect a member of staff who raises a concern and those accused of wrong-doing, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Such initial enquiries have to be dealt with promptly, thoroughly, impartially



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and confidentially, in accordance with the Procedure.

The management team (Chair and Manager) or if the complaint relates to the Manager (Chair and Co Chair), will acknowledge the concern immediately and then in writing within two weeks, giving an indication of how the concern will/or has been dealt with. If it has not been dealt with, the letter will include an indication of how long the procedure will take.

Initial Enquiries

As part of the initial enquiry, the member of the management team may meet with the employee to gather information or clarify certain details. Employees must co-operate fully with the investigation and disclose all relevant information. The member of the management team will record, in written format, all meetings.

If other employees are able / willing to substantiate the concern, they should also meet with the member of the management team dealing with the concern.

If the management team believe other employees are aware, but do not feel able to come forward, then the management team should approach them, reassuring them that their concerns will be treated confidentially.

Possible outcome of initial enquiries

Depending on the nature of the concern, and the evidence found, possible outcomes include:

- Unable to investigate due to anonymous report and not enough information to proceed.
- If the concern was shared but was inaccurate, no further investigation would be carried out.
- Where there is believed to be grounds for concern then further investigation will be carried out.

Further investigations

Dependant on the nature of the concern e.g. suspected fraud, theft, serious malpractice etc., the management team may investigate further. Care needs to be taken when carrying out the investigation to:

- Protect the employee(s) concerned.
- Avoid alerting anyone about whom a concern has been raised (where appropriate).
- Avoid alerting other employees who may then warn the subject of the concern.
- Record the information as the record may be used in a formal hearing, if it is a serious complaint.
- Keep all records secure and confidential.

Untrue allegations

If an employee raises a concern in good faith, but it is subsequently confirmed by the investigation to be untrue, no action will be taken against the employee. However, if the allegation is found to have been made maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action



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may be taken against the employee.

APPENDIX 1

Adults who work or volunteer with children in the community are in a position of trust. If an adult who is in a position of trust has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

then allegations procedures must be followed and reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will oversee the allegations management procedure to ensure that the allegation is investigated thoroughly. The LADO will inform the police and/or children's social care if required.

If you need to report an allegation you can contact the LADO on: 01865 810603

- Lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0345 050 7666
LCSS.South@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- By filling in a referral form for the LADO (please note this must be emailed securely. Full guidance is on the form)
- Ofsted - Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or call 0300 123 1231. If a child is has been harmed or is at risk of harm you must follow the guidance in the 'Report a concern' section

Signed By Chair of Harpsden Woodland Pre-School:

Dated:

21st September 2024

Manager of Harpsden Woodland Pre-School:

Dated:

21st September 2025