



## Safeguarding children

### 1.2.3 Whistleblowing policy

#### **Definition**

Whistleblowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation.

#### **Policy statement**

Any serious concerns that a member of staff has about any aspect of their employment can be reported under this policy. These concerns might include;

- Conduct which a member of staff may consider to be a criminal offence.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other staff.
- Possible fraud or corruption.
- Breaches of procedures.
- Failure to comply with legal obligations.
- Sexual, physical or verbal abuse of children, parents, staff or any other behaviour which a member of staff genuinely finds unacceptable or inappropriate.
- Other unethical conduct.
- The deliberate concealing of information relating to any of the above matters.

These procedures are in addition to any other statutory reporting procedures that may be applicable.

#### **Protection**

This policy makes it clear that staff can speak up without fear of harassment, victimisation (including informal pressure), discrimination or disadvantage. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or other procedures that already affect the member of staff. There will be no 'come back' if a member of staff reasonably believes that they have made a disclosure in good faith.

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

School House Nurseries accepts that the decision to report a concern can be very difficult and uncomfortable. School House Nurseries is committed to supporting individuals through the process and



protecting them from any 'come back', victimisation or harassment. Concerns reported to Lindy Baldwin or any member of the management team will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. Staff who genuinely believe that people they work with are behaving in a way that seems wrong, or who have a serious concern about an aspect of the service we offer children and parents, will be doing their duty and acting in the public interest by speaking out.

### **How to raise a concern**

The procedure seeks to encourage and enable individuals to disclose information through appropriate channels first, rather than going directly to an outside person or body. As a first step, concerns should normally be raised with Lindy Baldwin.

However, the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of any wrongdoing, may impact your decision on who to approach. If a member of staff does not want to report their concerns to Lindy Baldwin they may take them direct to the appropriate organisation or body. For example, staff can raise concerns with East Sussex's Single Point of Advice (SPOA) 01323 4642220 or by email at 19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk. (If it's out of hours call emergency Duty Services on 01273 335906 or 01273 335905).

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.

### **Procedure**

School House Nurseries will respond to any concerns raised. In order to protect a member of staff who raises a concern and those accused of wrongdoing, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, conduct or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted. Staff will be told how School House Nurseries proposes to deal with a concern within ten working days of the concern being brought to the nursery's attention.

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated with confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal a staff member's identity, if they so wish. However, while making all reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the matter as a whole, at a certain stage in the investigation it will be necessary to make the origin of the complaint known to the person or persons the allegations concern. All concerns raised within the remit of this procedure will be assessed to determine if the confidentiality extends to withholding the name of the complainant. There shall be a substantial reason for doing so, such as a real risk of personal harm. Complainants should be aware however, that their identity may be revealed by inference.

## Untrue allegations

School House Nurseries accepts that deciding to report a concern can be very difficult and uncomfortable. If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against him/her. If, however, a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

### This policy was updated and reviewed in:

Reviewed date	Name	Signature
September 2015	Stuart Watt	
May 2016	Stuart Watt	
August 2016	Stuart Watt	
September 2016	Stuart Watt	
April 2017	Stuart Watt	
April 2018	Lindy Baldwin	
August 2018	Lindy Baldwin	
April 2019	Lindy Baldwin	
May 2019	Stuart Watt	
January 2020	Stuart Watt	
January 2021	Stuart Watt	
January 2022	Stuart Watt	
March 2023	Stuart Watt	<b>Lindy Baldwin 6.4.23</b>