## **Whistle Blowing &** Allegations **against staff**.

**Definition:**

Whistle blowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation.

**Statement of intent**

South Milford Preschool is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment we encourage employees and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the settings work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

**Aim**

Employees are often the first to see or suspect something that may be seriously wrong within the Preschool. However they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. Staff are responsible for the safety and well being of all children attending the setting and this is a priority over loyalty towards colleagues.

This policy is therefore intended to;

• To encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns, to question and act upon their concerns about practice.

• To provide them with a method of raising concerns.

• To ensure employees receive a response to their concerns and they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.

• To reassure employees that the will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have reasonable belief that they have made any disclosure in good faith.

In addition to the whistle blowing policy, the setting has other policies and procedures covering discipline, complaints and supervision. This policy is intended to complement these, and to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

A manager will investigate promptly and thoroughly, all concerns raised in accordance with this policy, and will take appropriate action. If the serious concern is regarding the manager, all staff will follow the guidelines set out in this policy.

**Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal employees’ identities if that is their wish. However, this cannot be guaranteed, if the matter is considered by an external body, outside of the setting’s control, e.g. legal proceedings.

**How to raise a concern:**

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. When making the complaint verbally, the employee should write down any relevant information and date it. In both instances the employee should give the background and history of the concern and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation. The earlier concerns are expressed the easier it is to take action. Who an employee should raise concerns with, depends upon the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of the malpractice.

As a first step, an employee should normally raise concerns with a manager. However if their concern is about the management then they should contact their LADO (contact details below).

Although employees are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for their concern.

Additionally, if an issue cannot be resolved and the member of staff believes a child remains at risk because the setting or the local authority have not responded appropriately, the NSPCC have introduced a whistle-blowing helpline 0800 028 0285 for professionals who believe that:

* their own or another employer will cover up the concern
* they will be treated unfairly by their own employer for complaining
* if they have already told their own employer and they have not responded

# **Employees should not:**

* Investigate the matter themselves
* Alert those suspected of being involved
* Approach or accuse individuals
* Tell anyone other than the designated persons

**Responding to concerns raised:**

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what format should take. The overriding principle the preschool will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations, which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection 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.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the manager hearing the concern will write to the employee, and:

* Acknowledge the concern has been received
* Indicate how the matter will be dealt with and who will be involved
* Where possible, give an estimate of how long it will take to provide a response
* Tell the employee whether any initial enquiries have been made
* Check whether he or she needs any personal support
* Tell the employee whether further investigations will take place and if not why not.

**Untrue allegations:**

If employees make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation no action will be taken against them. If however, they make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases the Disciplinary Procedure will apply.

**How matters can be taken further:**

This policy is intended to provide employees with a way to raise concerns within the Pre-

School. If they are not satisfied and they feel it is right to take the matter outside the Pre-

School, the employee may also raise the matter with our Early Years Advisor, Helen Smith (01609 797712) or OFSTED for advice on what steps to follow.

**Allegations against staff/volunteers who work with children:**

In the event of an allegation being made against a person who works with children that they have:

* Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm to children
* You should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): *01609 533080*

***Ofsted*** *should be informed of: any significant event which is likely to affect suitability to care for children; any allegation of serious harm or abuse by a person looking after children, whether that be on the premises or elsewhere.*

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