

## Adopted May 2024 – policy review May 2025

### WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

#### Statement of intent:

It is our intention that staff working at Huntington Under 5's Preschool feel confident about coming forward and reporting any issues/concerns that they may have regarding the areas documented below, whilst remaining protected from any subsequent discrimination.

#### Aim

- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity
- Provide avenues for staff to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosures in good faith.

Any concerns can be reported without this leading to any harassment or victimisation, and every effort will be made to keep both the concern and the member of staff's identity confidential.

#### What should be reported?

- The inappropriate treatment or care of a child
- Any breach in the behaviour of manager, staff, student or volunteer
- Discrimination of any kind
- Concerns that could impact on the health and safety of the children or adults

#### Methods

- A concern can be initially raised by any staff member to their Manager and/or an Officer of the Management Committee.
- Discuss the nature of the concern together with the background, history of the concern and provide the relevant dates of incidents.
- There is no expectation that staff prove beyond doubt the truth of their suspicion; however they will need to demonstrate that they are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for their concern.
- All employees will be treated fairly.

#### Concerns will be dealt with in the following way:

- Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take.
- The incident will be investigated by the Manager and/or Committee member, Ofsted and LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer – email [safeguardinglado@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardinglado@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk))
- The staff member may be suspended on full pay.
- If appropriate it will be referred and put through established Safeguarding children procedures and may form the subject of an independent inquiry
- Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the member of staff will receive in writing:
  - Acknowledgment that the concern has been received
  - An indication as to how the Pre-school will proceed to deal with the matter
  - Supply the member of staff with information on staff support mechanisms

- Inform the member of staff concerned as to whether any further investigation will take place and if not, why not.

If there are any difficulties experienced as a result of raising a concern, support will be offered.

Staff will be kept informed, of the progress and outcome of any investigation to assure that any disclosure has been properly addressed unless legal reasons determine otherwise.

Confidentiality – will be maintained and every effort will be made not to reveal a member of staff's identity if they so wish. If however, a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action, that could include disciplinary action, may be taken.

Ultimately, 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 whistleblowing 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

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 seeks to protect employees from discrimination as a result of 'blowing the whistle' on their organisation, or individuals within it, through amendments to employment law.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Huntington Under 5's Preschool**