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**Session times only**

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## 7. Whistleblowing Policy

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Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within their setting. However, they may not express their growing concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or they may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be just suspicion of malpractice and wrongdoing at work.

Our Nursery is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person linked with the setting and/or others (e.g. parents/carers) to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy document makes it clear that employees, parents/carers and others can do so without fear or reprisals. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns within the Nursery rather than overlooking the problem. It also allows employees, parents/carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the Management and Staff of the Nursery.

This policy aims to provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken and allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response. Our nursery is reassuring you that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

<sup>[SEP]</sup> There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staff's own employment, Parent/Carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies. This Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. That concern may be about something that is against the policies and procedures of the nursery (i.e. below established standards of practice; improper conduct; Health and Safety risks for both children and adults).

Our nursery will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern. However, it must be appreciated that, in the interests of natural justice, any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.



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You are strongly encouraged to put your name to any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. The following factors will be taken into account when considering how to deal with any allegations:

1. The seriousness of the issues raised;
2. The credibility of the allegation;
3. The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### **7.1 Whistleblowing Policy: How to raise a concern (for employees)**

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your Management. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you think may be involved in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that your Senior Management Team may be involved, you should approach the Nursery's owner. If you suspect the owner may be related to the issue you should contact relevant Childcare Officer attached to the setting. You can also contact the Social Services Referrals Department for advice and assistance.

Concerns are better raised in writing. You are advised to set out background and history of your concerns, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for initial enquiries to be made.

### **7.2 Whistleblowing Policy: How the Nursery will Respond**

The action taken by the nursery will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may: Be investigated internally; Be referred to the Police or Allegations referred directly to the Childcare Officer or Social Services will be dealt with in accordance with their policies and procedures.

Any person who is the subject of an allegation should, at the appropriate times be given details of the allegation, in order to respond. In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. Safeguarding or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation.