

## **Cold Ash Pre-school: Whistleblowing Policy**

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment**

Staff, volunteers and trustees must be aware of how to report any instances of improper, negligent or illegal behaviour.

#### *Policy statement:*

Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest'. If staff, trustees or volunteers believe there is malpractice in the Pre-school they should report this by following the correct procedures. Their employment rights are protected and they cannot be victimised by the employer. Whistleblower's are protected for public interest, to encourage people to speak out if they find improper, illegal or negligent behaviour by anyone who works with or within the Pre-school.

- To be protected as a whistleblower, a worker needs to make a 'qualifying disclosure' about malpractice. This could be a disclosure about:
  - Threats/risks to the welfare, health or safety of a child or adult.
  - Criminal offences.
  - Failure to comply with a legal obligation.
  - Miscarriages of justice.
  - Damage to the environment.
  - A deliberate attempt to cover up any of the above.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to report any improper, illegal or negligent behaviour in or connected with the Pre-school. All staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues, and are regularly reminded of this.
- The Preschool's Safeguarding Policy must be followed where a disclosure is made relating to the safeguarding of a child.
- Whistleblowing concerns about the Leader should be raised with the Chair of Trustees.
- Concerns can be reported verbally or in writing, and should include information about the malpractice and reasons for concern.

- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the Leader or the Chair of the Trustees, or feel their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them as noted below.
- In the event of allegations being made against a Trustee, allegations should be reported directly to the Designated Officer at the local authority via CAAS. TELEPHONE 01635 503090 or EMAIL [child@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:child@westberks.gov.uk). Staff should consider discussing any concerns with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and make any referrals via them.
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – The helpline is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).
- The Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline is for reporting concerns about practices and procedures for the safeguarding of children and young people in local authority services. The hotline can be contacted on 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm). Please see the Ofsted website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) for further advice.

*Action to be taken by the Preschool:*

- The pre-school must investigate any matter raised under this procedure thoroughly, promptly and confidentially.
- The Trustee Committee must decide whether the matter falls within the scope of the setting's other policies and procedures.
- The Trustee Committee will investigate the matter and take action as appropriate.
- If the whistleblower or anyone else connected with the setting is asked or instructed to cover up malpractice, this is itself a disciplinary offence.
- If malpractice is revealed as a result of any investigation under this procedure, the setting's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome.