

1.3 Whistleblowing

Policy statement

The whistle blowing procedure aims to help and protect both staff* and children. By following the procedure, you are acting to:

- prevent a problem getting worse,
- safeguard children and young people
- reduce the potential risks to others.

The earlier you raise a concern, the easier and sooner it is possible for the setting to take action.

* Throughout this policy the term staff includes paid staff, volunteers and students

Policy statement

Duxford Preschool is committed to the highest possible standards and recognises that its staff, students and volunteers are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the setting. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues, or they may fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, the setting actively encourages its workers with concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice or staff member's conduct to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the setting rather than overlooking a problem.

Objective

The aim of this policy and associated procedures is to establish an internal procedure that will encourage and enable staff, students and volunteers to raise concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice, (which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint, grievance or allegation), in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the setting continues to work within best practice and safeguard children and young people.

Scope

Concerns that should be raised via the Whistle Blowing Policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other staff, students or volunteers, or about something that is perceived as:

- unlawful;
- failing to comply with the setting's policy and procedures;
- poor practice;
- improper conduct.

Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- All staff, students and volunteers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all staff.
- The setting will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect workers when they raise a concern in good faith.
- The setting will do its best to protect a whistle blower's identity when he/she raises a concern and does not want his/her name to be disclosed. However, if the concern raised needs to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedure, the worker may be required to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence.
- In some circumstances the setting may have to disclose the identity of the worker without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the worker first.
- Appropriate advice and support will be made available to staff.
- Those who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.
- The setting will not tolerate malicious allegations, this may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Procedures

Procedures for reporting and investigating 'whistle blowing' concerns have been developed to ensure that:

- Staff can raise concerns (no matter how small they may appear) internally as a matter of course and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and appropriately;
- Staff are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith;
- Staff and volunteers can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the setting response and seek external advice and guidance;
- Issues raised are addressed via other procedures and policies as appropriate, e.g. safeguarding policy, allegations against an adult working in a setting, grievance, disciplinary, health and safety;
- Appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.

Raising a Concern

Staff, students, and volunteers should raise concerns with the manager or management committee. Concerns should be raised in writing and include:

- reference to the fact that it is a whistle blowing disclosure;
- the background and history of the concerns;
- names, dates and places (where possible);
- the reasons why the individual is concerned about the situation.

Staff who feel unable to put concerns in writing, can telephone, or meet either the manager or a member of the management committee.

Who should you contact?

You should contact one of the following people in confidence:

Michelle Williams (Manager)

manager@duxfordpreschool.org.uk

Any Trustee

committee@duxfordpreschool.org.uk

Investigation

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. All matters raised, **with the exception of allegations of abuse against a staff member*, or unlawful activity**, will be investigated internally.

The following procedure will be followed:

- The appropriate person/s will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days.
- The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and whom to contact should the staff member be unhappy with the response and wish to raise the matter.
- If the investigation cannot be completed within the timescale above, the staff member should receive a response that indicates:
 - progress to date;
 - how the matter is being dealt with;
 - how long it will take to provide a final response.
- In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries (usually involving a meeting with the individual raising the concern), will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that raise issues that fall within the scope of other policies/procedures, will be addressed under those procedures.
- Some concerns may be resolved at this initial stage simply, by agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for further investigation.
- If you do not feel that the complaint has been dealt with effectively or you still have concerns, you have a right to refer your concerns to Ofsted.

* Allegation against a person who works or volunteers with children

An allegation may relate to a person who works or volunteers with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

If you feel a concern may meet these criteria, please follow the process in the blue and yellow allegation flowchart titled 'Allegation against a person who works or volunteers with children ...what to do' and the accompanying guidance. Do not investigate any allegations until you are certain the above criteria have not been met, advice

should be gained from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where there is uncertainty. All Allegations referred to the LADO must also be referred to Ofsted as a significant event within 14 days via telephone or the online notification form.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01223 727967
Ofsted	0300 123 1231
Senior Adviser Intervention and Safeguarding (Gemma Hope)	01223 714 760

Further Advice and Support

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) whistleblowing helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their setting. Staff can: call 0800 028 0285, the line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or email: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager and your HR provider.

"Absolutely without fail - challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong". Sounding the Alarm - Barnardos

Version	Changes Made	Author	Date	Review Date
1.0	Baseline version	P Eccleston	26 th April 2018	April 2019
1.1	Minor updates from Cambridgeshire County Council	N Hanlon	17 th April 2019	September 2019
1.2	Annual update from Cambridgeshire County Council	N Hanlon	30 th Sept 2019	September 2020
1.3	Updated names of those contactable in confidence	N Hanlon	25 th March 2020	September 2020
1.3	Reviewed following annual update from Cambridgeshire County Council (no changes)	N Hanlon	18 th November 20	September 2021
1.4	Annual update from Cambridgeshire County Council	N Hanlon	3 rd November 2021	September 2022
1.5	Annual update from Cambridgeshire County Council	N Hanlon	14 rd November 22	September 2023
1.5	Annual update from Cambridgeshire County Council	N Hanlon	1 st September 23	September 2024

	No Changes needed from Cambridgeshire County Council update.	K Draper	18 th September 2024	September 2025
	Minor updates from Cambridgeshire County Council	K Orrock	24 th September 2025	September 2026
	Grammar and contents checked	K Marwood	8 th December 2025	December 2026