



## **Whistleblowing Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Bluebell Nursery has adopted this whistleblowing policy to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, child safeguarding breaches, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations. The policy also provides, if necessary for such concerns to be raised outside the nursery.
- 1.2 This document explains the types of concerns that can be raised under this procedure, the legal protection for whistleblowers and how whistleblowing concerns will be handled.

### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This procedure should be followed for any whistleblowing matters raised by the employees of the school, supply staff or agency workers.

### **3. Aims of the procedure**

- 3.1 The aims of this policy are to demonstrate the nursery's commitment to the highest possible standards of openness and inclusiveness, accountability and integrity.

To achieve this aim we:

- Encourage all those working in the nursery to report suspected wrongdoing promptly in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously.
- To provide clear guidance on how to raise concerns which is accessible to all.
- To reassure staff that they can raise genuine concerns made in the public interest without fear of reprisal, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- Will respect the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively.
- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure, where this is appropriate.

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- Whilst we expect that all concerns will be raised in good faith, we will invoke the nursery's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious, or frivolous allegations.

#### **4. Definition of whistleblowing**

4.1 Whistleblowing is when a worker reports certain types of wrongdoing or misconduct within an organisation. This wrongdoing must be in the public interest which means that it must affect others e.g. pupils and public.

4.2 The wrongdoing must relate to or show one of the following:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a possible miscarriage of justice
- a Health & Safety risk
- damaging the environment
- misuse of public money
- corruption or unethical conduct
- abuse of pupils, students, or other users
- deliberate concealment of any of these matters
- any other substantial and relevant concern.

4.3 Concerns or complaints that employees wish to raise formally, about their own employment, should normally be raised using the school's Grievance Procedure, unless the employee believes the concern is in the public interest. This includes for example, concerns related to working conditions, working relations, employment rights or bullying or harassment.

#### **5. Procedure for raising a whistleblowing concern**

5.1 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your manager. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, you should contact the Whistleblowing Officers (Lisa Green or Rachel Smith). The Head of Senior/Prep is always available to meet regarding any concerns. Where a concern is involving Head of Senior/Prep, it should be raised directly with the Chair of Governors. Please refer to the end of the policy for the contact details.

5.2 One of the whistleblowing officers, the Head of Senior/Prep or Chair of Governors will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

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5.3 Whilst concerns under this policy can be raised anonymously, this can make proper investigation more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible.

5.4 We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

5.5 Whistle-blowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Head of Human Resources or one of the other contact points listed at the end of this policy and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## **6. External Disclosures**

6.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating, and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

6.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## **7. Procedure for Investigating Concerns**

7.1 Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information.

7.2 The information you can expect to receive is:

- an indication of how the concern will be dealt with
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- whether any initial enquiries have been made

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- whether further investigations will take place, and if not why
- information about support available for you.

7.3 In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

7.4 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

7.5 If we conclude that a whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistle-blower will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **8. Unsatisfactory Outcomes**

8.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking; we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.

8.2 If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts at the end of this policy. Alternatively, you may contact the chairman of the board of governors. The chairman's contact details are available on request or raise it with an external independent body. In addition, Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## **9. Protection for Whistleblowers**

9.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

9.2 Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment because of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure. Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

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## 10. Key Contacts

### 10.1 Whistleblowing Officers

- o Lisa Green 01508 520210 EXT 224 or 01603 868206 ext. 127  
[lgreen@langleschool.co.uk](mailto:lgreen@langleschool.co.uk)
- o Rachel Smith 01508 520210 EXT 217 [rsmith@langleschool.co.uk](mailto:rsmith@langleschool.co.uk)
- o Clare Rackham, Head of Prep, 01603 868206 ext. 105, [crackham@langleschool.co.uk](mailto:crackham@langleschool.co.uk)
- o Simon Cooke, Head of Senior, 01508 520210 ext. 225, [scooke@langleschool.co.uk](mailto:scooke@langleschool.co.uk)
- o Malcolm Streatfield, Chair of Governors, [mstreatfield@langleschool.co.uk](mailto:mstreatfield@langleschool.co.uk)
- o Astrid Hazlewood, Head of HR, 01508 520210 ext. 214 or 01603 868206 ext. 126,  
[ahazlewood@langleschool.co.uk](mailto:ahazlewood@langleschool.co.uk)

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them:

- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto: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.
- Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider: Complaints procedure- Ofsted- GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).
- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Whistleblowing for employees. ([Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower- GOV.UK](#))