

## **Community Pre-Schools Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure**

Community Pre-Schools are committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and accountability. This Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure provides a clear process for staff, volunteers, and related parties to raise concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace without fear of victimisation or reprisal. It is our intention to foster an environment where everyone feels empowered to report matters of concern in the public interest.

### **What is Whistleblowing?**

Whistleblowing is when an employee, volunteer, or other representative knows, or suspects, that wrongdoing is occurring within the pre-school environment and alerts the Management or the relevant authority accordingly. Such concerns may relate to the behaviour of employees, volunteers, contractors, or others associated with the pre-school.

### **Legal Framework**

This policy aligns with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), which offers protection to individuals who make certain disclosures of information in the public interest. Under PIDA, disclosures are protected where the whistleblower has a reasonable belief that their report tends to show one or more of the following:

- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed
- Breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of an individual
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberately covering up information showing any of the above

This policy applies to all Managers, staff, volunteers, trainees, and any other individuals working at or with Community Pre-Schools.

### **Types of Concerns Covered**

The policy is intended to cover serious concerns that fall within the scope of the points listed above, including but not limited to:

- Fraud or financial irregularity
- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of children or adults
- Neglect of children or unsafe practices
- Unlawful discrimination or harassment
- Environmental risks or deliberate damage to the environment

## **Raising a Concern**

If you have a concern about a possible wrongdoing, you are encouraged to report it as soon as possible. Concerns should be raised with:

- Community Pre-school Managers
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

If the concern relates to a member of Management or you feel unable to report internally, you may contact external authorities such as:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ofsted
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

## **Procedure**

1. **Disclosure:** Raise your concern verbally or in writing, providing as much detail as possible.
2. **Assessment:** The person receiving the disclosure will record the details and assess the concern's urgency and seriousness.
3. **Investigation:** The concern will be investigated promptly, and confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible.
4. **Outcome:** You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation, where appropriate.
5. **Escalation:** If you are not satisfied with the response, you may refer the concern to an external authority.

## **Confidentiality**

All concerns raised under this policy will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect the identity of the whistleblower, unless disclosure is required by law.

## **Protection for Whistleblowers**

No whistleblower will suffer harassment, victimisation, or any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. This assurance does not extend to those who maliciously raise false concerns.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the managers and staff of Community Pre-Schools to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Amendments will be made as necessary in line with statutory requirements and best practice.

## Contact Details

For further advice or to raise a concern, please contact:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: **[07935 263988]**
- Managers of Community Pre-schools **[077940905974/ 07935263988]**
- Ofsted: **0300 123 1231**
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: **0800 028 0285**
- Leicestershire County Council LADO **0116 305 4141**
- LADO email for Referrals and New Enquiries: **CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk**
- **Lado-allegations-referrals@leicester.gov.uk** Telephone: **0116 305 4141**