Whistleblowing

1. Introduction

The official name for whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest'. If employees or volunteers believe there is malpractice at Home from Home Nursery, they should report this by following the correct procedures. Their employment rights are protected and they cannot be victimised by the employer.

Whistleblowers are protected for public interest, to encourage people to speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation or workplace.

Malpractice could be improper, illegal or negligent behaviour by anyone who works with or within the nursery.

This policy applies to all employees, students, volunteers and visitors. All adults are actively encouraged to raise any concerns they have regarding a peer's conduct and practice.

2. Contents

The following sections are included in this policy document:

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3. Aim:

At Home from Home nursery, we aim to:

1. Create an environment in which staff to feel comfortable and confident to raise questions in any area of concern in supervisions, group meetings or by direct approach to a member of management or directly to an outside agency, without fear of it damaging their position within the setting.
2. Give staff the opportunity to make an anonymous witness account using the Whistleblowing hotline/e-mail (See below).

4. What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is a term that is used when someone who works in or for an organisation and wishes to raise reasonable belief that malpractice has occurred in the setting. Examples of malpractice is as follows:

- Committing a criminal offence

- Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- possible fraud or corruption
- breaches of procedures
- Employee under the influence of Alcohol or Illegal substances
- Bullying, humiliation, discrimination towards others
- Poor or/and unsafe practice
- Abuse or/and neglect towards others
- Danger to health & safety towards others and/or in the environment
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above.

Each of the examples could have a negative impact on the children in our care, directly or indirectly. As adults we have a duty of care to all of the children in our care. We have a duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

5. Employees duty

It is all of our duty to express any concerns or issues that we maybe have with another individual as soon as we notice anything that feels inappropriate or/ and wrong.

- Raising a concern/issue in the public interest is essential for keeping children safe in our setting and to ensure that we are providing a good level of practice across Home from Home Nursery.
- The whistleblower has the right to expect fair and reasonable treatment from their employer and colleagues. A person, acting in good faith, who wishes to raise a concern should report the matter to their manager, who will advise the employee of the action they will take in response to the concerns expressed.
- Employees at Home from Home Nursery are committed to achieving high standards of care to the children at all times. This policy provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation or punishment where they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the nursery

6. How to whistleblow

If an employee feels there is a concern regarding another employee within Home from Home Nursery, we ask that this is communicated to the Nursery Manager/s- **Sophie Eade or Sonia Green** in the first instance. If the concern is to do with Safeguarding this must be reported to **Nicky Leah** the Designated Safeguarding lead. However, this may not always be appropriate in which case concerns should be raised with the Nursery Directors- **Julia Pattenden or Nicola Law**

Concerns are best raised in writing, including the background and history of the concern, names of individuals involved, the time, date & place and where possible the reason why

you are concerned. ***The earlier the concern is raised to the appropriate persons the easier it is to take appropriate action.***

If you do not wish to put allegations in writing then the person with whom you make the concern to will make a written record of the concern and will ask you to sign to confirm you agree with the written statements.

Employees are not expected to prove the truth of the allegations; however, you will be required to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern and that they have been made in good faith.

Employees should not:

- Investigate the matter yourself
- Alert those suspected of being involved
- Approach or accuse an individual
- Tell anyone other than the person you are informing of your concern (i.e., Manager/Director)

Once an issue has been raised it is the responsibility of the Manager to seek the next steps.

Home from Home Nursery understands that deciding to report a concern can be very difficult and uncomfortable & may worry that the information they give is incorrect or disbelieved. You must never let these feelings prevent you from reporting your concerns for the following reasons:

- The sooner the concern is raised the sooner necessary action can be taken, reducing the negative impact for children.
- The safety and welfare of every child is central to our nursery
- The law protects whistle blowers from being treated unfairly, where a concern in good faith has been made.
- As a nursery we want to identify and rectify any issues the children and yourselves maybe experiencing as soon as possible.

Any employee who makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against him/her.
If, however, an employee makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

Don't think "what if I'm wrong? Think "what if I'm right?!"

7. Next steps:

- Confidentiality will be respected.
- The whistleblower will be thought of as a witness, not a complainant.
- The manager will consider that there are two sides to each story.

- Where possible the manager will work on a prevention approach.
- The manager will keep a written protocol of all accounts.
- The manager will decide if necessary to contact LADO and/or Ofsted.

8. Who to contact:

Dependent on the nature of the allegation, the following persons should be contacted:

Safeguarding – **LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) –**

Miriam Williams and Donna Thomlinson (LADO-Allegations and concerns regarding staff)
Sally Arbuckle(Asst. LADO)

Call: 0330 2226450
Email: LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk

Malpractice- Family Information service CEYC – 01243 777 807

Once discussed with the above, where necessary the correct steps should then be taken to inform Ofsted of the allegation, investigation or findings.

Ofsted Whistleblower hotline: 0300 123 3155
E-mail: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

9. Review

This document will be reviewed annually or in line with any statutory changes or changes in procedures.

10. Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Comments	By
1	April 2015	Issued		Nicola Law
2	October 2018	Reviewed		Polly Manners
3	January 2022	Reviewed		Cassie Jones
4	September 2023	Reviewed		Sonia Green
5	January 2024	Reviewed	Added version control	Sophie Eade
6	May 2025	Reviewed	New version, with more thorough information	Sophie Eade

			about how to report concerns	