



## 11.8 Whistle-Blowing Policy

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their setting. However, they may not express their growing concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be just suspicion of malpractice and wrongdoing at work.

Faringdon Pre-School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person linked with the setting and/or others (e.g. Parents/Carers) to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy document makes it clear that employees, Parents/Carers and others can do so without fear or reprisals. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns **within** Faringdon Pre-School rather than overlooking the problem.

The procedure allows employees, Parents/Carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the Management/Staff of Faringdon Pre-School.

### AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response;
- Reassure you that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith. There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staff's own employment, Parent/Carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies. This Whistle blowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

That concern may be about something that:

- Is against the policies and procedures of Faringdon Pre-School;
- Falls below established standards of practice;
- Amounts to improper conduct;
- Is a Health and Safety risk, including risks to the public as well as children, other colleagues, Parents/Carers and others;
- Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of Faringdon Pre-School.

The procedure will be communicated to all employees as well as Parents/Carers, Students and others.

## **HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION**

Faringdon Pre-School recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal. Faringdon Pre-School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. However, should you feel that you have suffered harassment, either directly or indirectly as a result of raising a concern, you should refer to the Employees Handbook, or Complaints Policy.

This does not mean that if you are already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, that those procedures will be halted as a result of your whistleblowing. This applies to Parents/Carers of the setting who then decide to seek alternative childcare.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Faringdon Pre-School will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern. However, it must be appreciated that, in the interests of natural justice, any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.

## **ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS**

You are strongly encouraged to put your name to any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of Faringdon Pre-School and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate.

In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account when considering how to deal with any allegations:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the allegation;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

## **MALICIOUS OR VEXATIOUS ALLEGATIONS - STAFF**

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against you in accordance with the Faringdon Pre-School Procedures.

## **HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN (for employees)**

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate Manager, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you think may be involved in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that your Manager is involved, you should approach the Management Committee.

With specific regard to Safeguarding issues, that may involve a member of staff, you should initially consult with the manager of Faringdon Pre-School. If you suspect they may be related to the issue you should contact relevant childcare officer attached to the setting. You can also contact the LADO - **Alison Beasley 01865 810603** for advice and assistance.

Concerns are better raised in writing. You are advised to set out background and history of your concerns, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reason why you are particularly

concerned about the situation.

The earlier you express your concern, the easier it is for Faringdon Pre-School, LADO or the relevant Childcare Officer attached to the setting to take action.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for initial enquiries to be made.

### HOW Faringdon Pre-School WILL RESPOND.

The action taken by Faringdon Pre-School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- Be investigated internally;
- Be referred to the Police; Allegations referred directly to the Childcare Officer or will be dealt LADO (as above) with in accordance with their policies and procedures. Any person who is the subject of an allegation should, at the appropriate times be given details of the allegation in order to respond. In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. Safeguarding or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation.

The following process will be followed in the event of complaints:

- Faringdon Pre-School will ensure that a letter is sent to confirm the receipt of the complaint.
- The complaint will then be fully investigated and within 5 days of when the complaint was first received. Faringdon Pre-School endeavour to investigate all complaints in a non-discriminatory manner.
- A letter will be sent detailing how Faringdon Pre-School has dealt with the complaint.

### HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

If the complaint has not been dealt with in a manner which is satisfactory to the employee, Parent/Carer or others involved, then they can contact OFSTED directly at the following address.

**Early Years OFSTED National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD**      **TEL: 0300 123 1231 Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)**

By registering a formal complaint with OFSTED an Officer in most cases will be sent to the Nursery to carry out a further investigation. If applicable, a report would then be sent with action points.

This policy was adopted by	Faringdon Pre-School	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	25 <sup>th</sup> may 2018	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	25 <sup>th</sup> may 2019	<i>(date)</i>

Signed on behalf of the provider	<i>Laura Murray</i>
Name of signatory	Laura Murray
Role of signatory (e.g. chairman, director or owner)	Chairperson