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***'Supporting Children to Flourish, Respecting and Nurturing their Individuality and Developing Strengths in Preparations for their Unique Learning Journey.***

# Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose and Ethos

We want everyone who works with or within Oughtrington Pre‑School to feel safe to speak up. If something doesn’t feel right, we want to hear it early so we can protect children, staff and our community. This policy explains how to raise concerns about wrongdoing, how we respond, and the protections available to you. It supports the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) and our culture of honesty, kindness and learning.

Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to employees, apprentices, students, volunteers, agency/bank staff and committee members. Parents/visitors can also raise concerns using this process.

• Whistleblowing: raising a concern in the public interest about wrongdoing (e.g., safeguarding failures, criminal activity, fraud, serious health and safety risks, breaches of law/policy, data protection breaches, or attempts to cover these up).• Grievance: a concern about your own employment or working conditions – use the Grievance Procedure.• Safeguarding concern: worry about a child’s safety or staff/volunteer conduct towards children – follow the Safeguarding Policy immediately (DSL/LADO).

What You Can Raise (examples – not exhaustive)

• A child may be at risk and the response feels inadequate or delayed.• Criminal offence, fraud, theft or misuse of charity funds/resources.• Serious health & safety risks or deliberate breach of regulations.• Abuse of position, discrimination, harassment or bullying impacting children’s welfare.• Persistent breaches of statutory frameworks (EYFS) or data protection/confidentiality.• Attempts to conceal wrongdoing.

How to Raise a Concern (step-by-step)

1) Raise internally (preferred, where safe): speak to the Supervisor/DSL (Mollie Linley) or Deputy DSL (Jemma Walsh). If this is not appropriate, contact the Committee Chair.2) If your concern relates to the conduct of a staff member or volunteer towards a child, inform the DSL immediately. We will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay.3) If you feel unable to raise internally or the response is not satisfactory, you may contact an external body (see Contacts). You may raise concerns anonymously, but it may be harder to investigate and to keep you updated.

Our Response and Timescales

• We acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.• We assess risk promptly and decide the investigation route (management investigation, safeguarding process, referral to LADO/other agencies).• A proportionate, fair investigation will be completed and a written outcome provided within 28 days where possible (complex cases may take longer; we will keep you updated).

Protection for People Who Speak Up

• You will not be victimised or suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern in good faith. Victimisation of a whistleblower is a disciplinary offence.• We will protect your identity as far as we can. In some cases we may need to share limited information to investigate properly or to keep children safe.• Malicious or knowingly false allegations may result in disciplinary action.

Investigations – What to Expect

• A named investigator will gather facts, speak with relevant people, and review documents/records.• Where allegations involve children, we follow the Safeguarding and Allegations procedures and consult LADO/Children’s Social Care or the police as appropriate.• Findings and actions are recorded in a Whistleblowing Log and shared with the Committee (confidentially) where appropriate.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Records are kept securely in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information is shared only on a need‑to‑know basis, or where required to protect children or comply with law/enforcement.

How We Do This (practical arrangements)

• Staff induction covers whistleblowing, low‑level concerns and safeguarding escalation (DSL/LADO/Ofsted).• Posters with key contacts are displayed in staff areas; numbers are kept by the office phone.• Concerns are logged with dates/times; acknowledgement is sent within 5 working days; outcomes within 28 days where possible.• Outcomes may include learning actions, policy changes, supervision/training, disciplinary action, or referrals to external agencies.

Key Contacts (internal and external)

Internal:• Supervisor / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mollie Linley• Deputy DSL: Jemma Walsh• Committee Chair: (insert name/contact)External:• Warrington Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01925 442079 • LADO@warrington.gov.uk• Warrington Children’s Social Care (MASH): 01925 443322 (press 1 – ‘MASH’) • Out of Hours: 01925 444400• Ofsted (concerns about childcare providers): 0300 123 1231 • Online form via gov.uk (‘report a serious concern about a childcare provider’)• NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (re child protection concerns about an organisation): 0800 028 0285 • help@nspcc.org.uk• Police: 999 (immediate risk) • 101 (non‑emergency)

Links to Other Policies

Safeguarding & Child Protection • Allegations Against Staff • Complaints • Disciplinary/Grievance • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion • Data Protection/Confidentiality

Review Statement

Updated September 2025. Reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or local procedures change.