



**Little Acorns Nursery  
at High Halden**

Church Hill, High Halden  
Kent TN26 3JB  
Telephone 01233 850113

## **Whistle Blowing Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Little Acorns Nursery is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of care and the highest possible ethical standards in public life and all of its practices. To achieve these ends, it encourages freedom of speech. It also encourages staff to use an internal mechanism of reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions by its employees or ex-employees.

Little Acorns Nursery has a range of policies and procedures, which deal with standards of behaviour at work; they cover Discipline and Grievance, Harassment and Recruitment and Selection. Employees are encouraged to use the provisions of these procedures when appropriate.

There may be times, however, when a matter is not about personal employment position and needs to be handled in a different way. Examples may be:

- Malpractice or ill treatment of a child by a member of staff.
- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.
- Suspected Fraud.
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to health and safety at work.
- The environment has been, or is likely to be, damaged.
- Breach of standing financial instructions.
- Showing undue favour over a contractual matter or to a job applicant.

- A breach of a code of conduct.
- Information on any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be concealed.

This list is not exhaustive.

Little Acorns Nursery will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including formal pressures), and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary & Grievance Policy.

### **Role of Trade Unions**

Little Acorns Nursery recognises employees may wish to seek advice and be represented by their trade union officer when using the provisions of the policy, and acknowledges and endorses the role trade union officers play in this area.

### **Designated Officers**

The following person has been nominated and agreed by Little Acorns Nursery to be the designated officer for concerns under the procedure.

Trustee Chairman: Chris Winter.

### **Role of designated officer**

Where concerns are raised with him, he will arrange an initial interview, which will if requested be confidential, to ascertain the area of concern. At this stage, the Whistleblower will be asked whether he/she wishes her identity to be disclosed and will be reassured about protection from possible reprisals or victimisation. She will also be asked whether or not she wishes to make a written or verbal statement. In either case the designated officer will write a brief summary of the interview, which will be agreed by both parties.

### **Role of the most senior person in the organisation**

The designated officer will report to the Chair of the Trustee Committee, who will be responsible for the commission of any further investigation.

## **Complaints about the Manager**

If, exceptionally, the concern is about the Manager, this should be made to the Chair of the Trustee Committee, who will decide on how the investigation will proceed. This may include an external investigation.

## **The investigation**

The investigation may need to be carried out under the terms of strict confidentiality i.e by not informing the subject of the complaint until (if) it becomes necessary to do so. This may be appropriate in cases of suspected fraud. In certain cases, however, such as allegations of ill treatment of children, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. Protection of children is paramount in all cases.

The designated officer will offer to keep the whistleblower informed about the investigation and its outcome.

If the result of the investigation is that there is a case to be answered by any individual, the Disciplinary Procedures will be used. Where there is no case to answer, but the employee held a genuine concern and was not acting maliciously, the designated officer should ensure that the employee suffers no reprisals. Only where false allegations are made maliciously, will it be considered appropriate to act against the whistleblower under the terms of Disciplinary Procedures.

## **Following the investigation**

The Chair of the Trustee Committee will brief the Manager as to the outcome of the investigation. The Chair of the Trustee Committee will then arrange a meeting with the whistleblower to give feedback on any action taken. (This will not include details of any disciplinary action, which will remain confidential to the individual concerned). The feedback will be provided with the time limits (to be specified).

## **The Law**

This policy and procedure has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern, where those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions. The Act is incorporated into the Employment Rights Act 1996, which also already protects employees who take action over, or raise concerns about, health and safety at work.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Little Acorns Nursery**

**Date to be reviewed.....**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee.....**

**Name of signatory.....**

**Role of signatory (e.g. chair/ owner).....**