

# Whistleblowing Policy



## Policy Statement

The whistleblowing policy aims to help and protect both staff and children. By following the procedure, practitioners act to:

- prevent a problem getting worse,
- safeguard children and young people, and
- reduce the potential risks to others.

The earlier a concern is raised, the easier and sooner it is possible for the setting to take action.

## Introduction

Horsham Montessori is committed to the highest possible standards and recognises that its staff, students and volunteers are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the setting. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or they may fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, the company actively encourages its practitioners with serious concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice or any adult's, volunteer or student's conduct to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the setting rather than overlooking a problem.

## Objective

The aim of this policy and associated procedures is to establish an internal procedure that will encourage and enable staff, students and volunteers to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice, (which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint or grievance), in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the setting continues to work within best practice and safeguard children and young people.

## Scope

Concerns that should be raised via the Whistleblowing Policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other staff, students or volunteers, or about something that is perceived as:

- unlawful
- failing to comply with the setting's policy and procedures
- poor practice
- improper conduct.

## Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- All staff, students and volunteers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all staff, students and volunteers.
- The setting will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect workers when they raise a concern in good faith.
- The setting will do its best to protect a whistleblower's identity when he/she raises a concern and does not want his/her name to be disclosed. However, if the concern raised needs to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedure, the practitioner may be required to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence.
- In some circumstances the setting may have to disclose the identity of the practitioner without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the practitioner first.
- Appropriate advice and support will be made available to staff, students and volunteers who raise concerns.
- Those who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.
- The setting will not tolerate malicious allegations, which may be considered a disciplinary offence.

## **Procedures**

Procedures for reporting and investigating 'whistleblowing' concerns have been developed to ensure that:

- Staff or volunteers can raise concerns (no matter how small they may appear) internally as a matter of course, and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and appropriately.
- Staff and volunteers are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.
- Staff and volunteers can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the setting response and seek external advice and guidance.
- Issues raised are addressed via other procedures and policies as appropriate, e.g. safeguarding policy, allegations against an adult working in a setting, grievance, disciplinary, health and safety.
- Appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.

Staff should raise concerns with the setting manager. Concerns should be raised in writing and include:

- reference to the fact that it is a whistleblowing disclosure
- the background and history of the concerns
- names, dates and places (where possible)
- the reasons why the practitioner is concerned about the situation.

Staff who feel unable to put concerns in writing, can telephone or meet the manager or the owner.

## **Who should you contact?**

You should contact one of the following people in confidence:

- Setting Manager and Designated Person for Child Protection: Jacky Brown
- Designated Persons: Fatiha Ali-Rahman or Maddie Ewins
- Owner: Jason Chen - 01403 270895
- Citation 24 hour helpline - 0845 8444848
- IPEH – 07525 211177

## **Investigation**

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. All matters raised (with the exception of allegations of abuse against a staff member / volunteer, or criminal or unlawful activity) will be investigated internally.

The appropriate person/s will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days.

The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and whom to contact should the worker be unhappy with the response and wish to raise the matter.

If the investigation cannot be completed within the timescale above, the worker should receive a response that indicates:

- progress to date
- how the matter is being dealt with
- how long it will take to provide a final response.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries (usually involving a meeting with the individual raising the concern), will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that raise issues that fall within the scope of other policies/procedures will be addressed under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved at this initial stage simply, by agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for further investigation.

If you do not feel that the complaint has been dealt with effectively or you still have concerns, you have a right to refer your concerns to Ofsted.

## **Allegations of abuse against adults who work or volunteer in the setting**

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, the following action will be taken:

- The setting will ensure the immediate safety of the children;
- The setting will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours;
- The LADO will decide if it could be a child protection case;

- If the LADO decides the matter is a child protection case, external/internal agencies (e.g. police) will be informed by the LADO and the setting will act upon the advice given to ensure that any investigation is not jeopardised;
- It may be necessary for the employer to suspend the alleged perpetrator. Suspension is a neutral act to allow a thorough and fair investigation;
- The setting will notify Ofsted of a significant incident within 14 days;
- If it is agreed that the matter is not a child protection case, the setting will investigate the matter and feedback the outcome of the investigation to Ofsted.

## Useful contacts

### 1) Ofsted

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting and safeguarding issues in Early Years settings.

They have a whistleblowing hotline that can be contacted in one of three ways:

By telephone: 0300 123 3155 (Mon - Fri 8am to 6pm)

By email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

In writing: WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The general Ofsted helpline number is: 0300 123 1231

### 2) West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership

Third Floor, East Wing, County Hall

West Street, Chichester

West Sussex PO19 1RQ

Tel: 0330 222 7799

Email: [wsscp@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:wsscp@westsussex.gov.uk)

Website: [www.westsussexscp.gov.uk](http://www.westsussexscp.gov.uk)

### 3) Police

If you think a child is at immediate risk: dial 999 and ask for the police.

### 4) MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

In all other cases, contact MASH via one on the following:

- By telephone: 01403 229 900
- By email: [MASH@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk)

- By asking for a 'Request for Support Form' from <http://www.sussex.procedures.org.uk>

#### 5) Public Concern at Work

This organisation can give free confidential advice on how to raise a concern about malpractice at work.

Tel: 020 7404 6609.

Email: [whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk).

Website: [www.pcaw.org.uk](http://www.pcaw.org.uk).

#### 6) NSPCC

The NSPCC has a whistle-blowing helpline for employees from any sector to raise concerns about child protection failures in the workplace, to advise them and help protect them from any resulting discrimination.

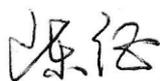
Tel: 0800 028 0285

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

NSPCC 24 hour helpline number: 0800 800 5000

Any concerns raised will be passed on to relevant authorities to investigate.

**Signature:**



**Date: 04/07/2019**

**Date to be reviewed: 04/07/2020**