



## St. Mary's Playgroup

### Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure

This policy applies to all employees and applies equally to those designated as temporary or work experience students.

As childcare provider's it is our individual responsibility to maintain the welfare of both the children and staff.

It is our duty to express any concerns or issues to the setting manager as soon as we notice anything that could raise concern.

#### **What is whistleblowing?**

Whistleblowing is a term used when someone who works in or for an organisation wishes to raise concerns about malpractice in the organisation. Whistleblowing encourages and enables staff to raise serious concerns within Playgroup, rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

St. Mary's Playgroup is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability.

Making a disclosure in the public interest (whistleblowing) is essential for keeping children safe in the setting and to ensure good quality practice across the setting.

This policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace, to promote good governance and accountability in the public interest. The act covers behaviour that amounts to:

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to health and safety of an individual and/or environment
- Bullying, humiliation, discrimination, poor practice, unsafe practice, abuse, or neglect
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above

#### **Aim of the policy**

- To encourage you to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns and practise
- To provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken
- To reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.
- To ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.



St. Mary's Playgroup recognises that the decision to report a concern can sometimes be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, then you should have nothing to be worried about as you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service.

Fear of getting information incorrect or being disbelieved may lead to concerns being ignored and an issue not raised.

Any employee or volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such concern should normally report the matter to the Manager Lorraine Mold immediately.

Concerns will be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible. If an employee or volunteer feels that the matter cannot be discussed with the Manager or their concern is about the Manager, then they can contact the Chair of the Committee.

If you believe that a member of the setting staff is harming a child (an allegation) and this has been reported to the manager and no / insufficient action has been taken, or the member of staff you have concerns about is the manager, then you are able to contact the Designated Officers team (LADO) on 01865 810603 or email [lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

If you feel unable to speak to the Chair of the Committee you can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing line on 0800 028 0285 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk), or contact Oxfordshire County Council. Alternatively, Ofsted can be contacted by email- [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk) or by phone on **0300 123 1231**

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

St. Mary's Playgroup will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith, that you will not suffer any personal detriment because of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice within the setting.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct, The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Complaints Procedure.

Approved date: October 2023

Review date: October 2024