

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

At The Little Magpies Nursery, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. Our Whistleblowing Policy creates a safe framework that empowers staff and volunteers to report any instances of wrongdoing or malpractice without fear of reprisal. This policy is fully aligned with guidance from Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE), and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

### **Purpose**

This policy is designed to:

- **Encourage Open Communication:** Cultivate an environment where staff and volunteers feel secure in raising concerns.
- **Ensure Prompt and Fair Action:** Guarantee that all concerns are taken seriously and investigated promptly through a transparent process.
- **Protect the Reporter:** Safeguard individuals who report concerns in good faith by protecting them from victimisation, disciplinary action, or other reprisals.
- **Promote a Culture of Transparency:** Reinforce the nursery's commitment to continuous improvement, ethical conduct, and safeguarding best practices.

### **Scope of Reportable Concerns**

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to report genuine concerns regarding any wrongdoing, including but not limited to:

- **Safeguarding and Child Welfare:** Any failures in safeguarding procedures or incidents that may compromise a child's welfare.
- **Suspected Abuse or Neglect:** Concerns regarding abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behavior by colleagues or visitors.
- **Criminal Activity or Misconduct:** Any criminal actions, fraud, or misconduct that may impact the nursery's operations or reputation.
- **Health and Safety Issues:** Risks or hazards that could jeopardise the wellbeing of staff, children, or visitors.
- **Confidentiality and Data Protection:** Breaches related to personal data or the mishandling of confidential information.
- **Financial Irregularities:** Any evidence of financial wrongdoing, including falsification of records.
- **Reputation Damage:** Any actions or behaviors that could harm the reputation or operational effectiveness of the nursery.

## **Procedure for Raising a Concern**

### **1. Initial Reporting:**

- Concerns should first be reported directly to the Nursery Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), currently Kayleigh Scott.
- If your concern involves either the Nursery Manager or the DSL, please report your concern to the Deputy Manager or directly to the nursery owner.
- Reports can be made verbally or in writing, and you have the option to report anonymously. Note that anonymous reports might limit the depth of any subsequent investigation.

### **2. Investigation Process:**

- Every reported concern will be treated with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality.
- The relevant individual (e.g., Nursery Manager, DSL, or Deputy Manager) will ensure a timely and appropriate investigation is initiated.
- A clear record will be maintained of all concerns raised and actions taken, ensuring accountability throughout the process.

## **Reporting to Ofsted**

If you believe that a concern is not being addressed properly within the nursery, or if the concern relates specifically to a safeguarding failure, you are entitled to report directly to Ofsted using the following contact details:

- **Ofsted – Whistleblowing Hotline:**
  - Phone: 0300 123 3155
  - Email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)
  - Address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

## **Confidentiality and Handling of Concerns**

- **Confidentiality:**
  - All concerns raised will be treated with strict confidentiality.
  - Your identity will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed if you provide explicit consent or where legally mandated.
- **Handling False Allegations:**
  - Deliberate false allegations will be met with serious disciplinary measures.
  - Staff raising concerns in good faith, even if the concerns are not substantiated, will not suffer any penal consequences.

## **Monitoring, Review, and Training**

- **Ongoing Monitoring and Record-Keeping:**
  - All whistleblowing incidents are logged and reviewed periodically to inform practice and ensure continuous improvement.
- **Regular Policy Review:**
  - This policy is reviewed annually or in response to any changes in relevant statutory guidance or legislation.
  - Staff will be updated on any policy changes during regular training sessions and inductions.
- **Training and Awareness:**
  - Comprehensive training on this policy will be provided to all new and existing staff.
  - Regular refresher sessions ensure that everyone remains aware of the procedures and their legal and ethical obligations.

By fostering a culture of openness and accountability, The Little Magpies Nursery reinforces its commitment to a safe, ethical, and respectful working environment for staff, volunteers, children, and their families.