

**Whistleblowing**

**Policy statement**

Whistle blowing occurs when an employee or worker provides certain types of information, usually to the employer or a regulator, which has come to their attention through work. The whistleblower is usually not directly, personally affected by the danger or illegality, although they may be. Whistle blowing is therefore ‘making a disclosure in the public interest’ and occurs when a worker raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example members of the public.

**Procedures**

It is important to The Learning Zone that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees, or people engaged in the organisation’s business, is reported and properly dealt with. We therefore encourage all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the early years setting or the way in which the early years setting is run.

We recognise that effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with and the organisation’s success ensured.

Whistleblowing relates to all those who work with, or within, the early years setting, who may from time-to-­time think that they need to raise with someone in confidence certain issues relating to the organisation.

Whistleblowing is separate from the grievance procedure. If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances, you should use the normal grievance procedure. If you have a concern about malpractice within the organisation, then you should use the procedure outlined below.

* Report any concerns to your line manager. If this is not possible, then report your concerns to the Managers/Owners, Annette Gasson and/or Janet Merrell
* All employees and those involved with the early years setting should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing within the organisation. You should be watchful for illegal, inappropriate or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that you become aware of.
* Any matter you raise under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation will be reported back to you.
* You will not be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that your continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training will not be prejudiced because you have raised a legitimate concern.
* Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
* If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the early years setting’s disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
* If you make a malicious, vexatious or a false allegation then this will be considered to be a disciplinary offence and disciplinary action will be taken against you.
* An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If you are told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. In this event you should report the matter to the Managers/Owners, Annette Gasson and/or Janet Merrell

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them:

• NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends.

The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.

• Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

• General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

OFSTED whistle Blowing Hotline: **0300 123 3155** (Mon – Fri 8am-6pm)

Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Tracey Dawson, Early Years consultant: **07770 637089**

Email: tracey.dawson@hertscc.gov.uk

Stevenage Police: [**01707 354000**](https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=stevenage+police+contact+number&sca_esv=8d08fdb92d3dc4d4&sca_upv=1&sxsrf=ADLYWIJNku56j-_DzlJqkbwJKovQ8yrfKQ%3A1727169263595&ei=74LyZqD8I9OOxc8Pnriz-Q8&oq=Stevenage+Police+con&gs_lp=Egxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAiFFN0ZXZlbmFnZSBQb2xpY2UgY29uKgIIADIGEAAYFhgeMgYQABgWGB4yBhAAGBYYHjIGEAAYFhgeMggQABiABBiiBDIIEAAYgAQYogQyCBAAGIAEGKIEMggQABiABBiiBEjFEFCsAlijB3ABeAGQAQCYAXGgAfoCqgEDMi4yuAEByAEA-AEBmAIFoAKlA8ICChAAGLADGNYEGEfCAg0QABiABBiwAxhDGIoFwgIOEC4YgAQYxwEYjgUYrwHCAgoQABiABBhDGIoFwgIdEC4YgAQYxwEYjgUYrwEYlwUY3AQY3gQY4ATYAQHCAgUQABiABMICCxAAGIAEGIYDGIoFmAMAiAYBkAYKugYGCAEQARgUkgcDMy4yoAf0Hw&sclient=gws-wiz-serp)

Herts Safeguarding board (HSCB): **0300 123 4043**

Local Authority Designated Officer LADO: **0300 123 4043**

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