

# Whistleblowing policy

Blackwell Montessori Nursery Ltd is committed to ensuring an environment of openness and accountability. We realise that employees are often the first to notice that there may be something wrong within the nursery. All employees, students and any other adults associated with Blackwell Montessori Nursery are expected to report any serious concerns to the manager; this should be done without any fear of reprisal.

## Aims:

- To encourage staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns at the earliest opportunity
- To provide avenues for them to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- To ensure that they receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied
- To reassure them that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation

## Scope:

Whistleblowing policy should not be confused with other existing policies such as the grievance policy or the safeguarding policy. It is designed to deal with major issues that fall outside the scope of those policies.

Examples of the types of issues that would fall within the scope of this policy are:

- A criminal offence or breach of the law
- Physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any children, employees, students or volunteers
- Major health and safety risks to either staff or members of public
- Fraud or corruption
- Unauthorised use of nursery property
- Damage to the environment
- Breaches of policies and procedures
- Other unethical conduct of a serious nature

### Procedure:

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible with the manager of the nursery. If this is not appropriate, concerns may be raised with the DSMS.

Minor concerns, that are often mentioned verbally, may be dealt with internally often without need for investigation, these are usually resolved fairly quickly. Serious concerns should be submitted in writing. Written disclosures should provide as much information as possible about the matter, including any names, dates, etc.

The manager (or the DSMS) will respond in writing within 10 working days, they will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the concern
- Indicate how the nursery intends to deal with the issue
- Inform you whether further investigation will take place

The manager has a duty to inform you about the progress and the outcome of any investigation unless there are any legal reasons why this cannot be done.

### Dealing with the allegation:

Any action taken will depend on the concern, it may involve:

- An internal investigation
- Action agreed without need for investigation
- Referral to OFSTED
- Referral to the police
- Referral to children's social services
- Referral to any other external agency
- Disciplinary action
- Suspension from work

### Confidentiality:

Every effort will be made to protect the identity of the person raising the concern; however, the information may be passed to those with a legitimate need to have it. Sometimes it may be necessary for the individual to provide a written statement or act as a witness. This will always be discussed with the individual first.

### Protection for the whistleblower:

All concerns raised will be treated seriously and a decision will be made about whether or not an investigation is appropriate. If possible you will be kept informed about the progress of the investigation and any actions taken. In some cases the investigation may result in criminal or disciplinary proceedings. If this happens you may have to give a written statement or give evidence at a hearing. The nursery will support you in this process and ensure that you are clear about what will happen.

The nursery will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of anyone who made an allegation.

If allegations are found to be untrue we will take no action against you providing that you:

- Were acting in good faith
- Believed the information you were disclosing to be true
- Did not act for personal gain

Disciplinary action will be considered for anyone who raises a false or malicious allegation.

All written records of allegations and the outcomes are confidential and will be kept safe.

### Anonymous allegations:

These will only be considered at the manager's discretion. The following will be taken into account:

- The seriousness of the issue
- The credibility of the issue
- The possibility of confirming the allegation from other credible source

### Taking matters further:

The aim of this policy is to provide staff with an appropriate way to raise their concerns. Hopefully they will be satisfied with any action taken and the outcome. Should this not be the case and they feel it is necessary to take further action, they should contact:

- OFSTED
- The police

If a concern is raised outside the nursery it should be raised with one of the above mentioned contacts. A public disclosure to anyone else will take the whistleblower outside the protection of this policy.