Whistleblowing Policy

Our setting's whistleblowing procedures will enable staff, volunteers and others to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice, failures in safeguarding arrangements, or conduct that may place children at risk. Brightwell Pre-school will ensure that all adults working in the setting will know how to raise concerns internally and externally and feel confident that genuine concerns will be taken seriously.

It is important to Brightwell Preschool that any 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.

Whistleblowing relates to all those who work or volunteer 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.

Aims of this procedure:

- To encourage staff, volunteers and others to report suspected wrongdoing at the pre-school promptly, in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously
- To provide guidance on how to raise concerns
- To reassure staff that they are able to raise genuine concerns made in the public interest without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken

The whistle blowing procedure must be followed in the first instance if:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject. This includes non-compliance with policies and procedures, breaches of EYFS and/or registration requirements
- an injustice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
- the working environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding clauses has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

Procedure

There are 3 stages to raising concerns as follows:

1. If staff identify a concern about poor or unsafe practice, potential failures in the setting's safeguarding arrangements, or any issues which might fall into the above categories, they should normally raise with their manager/ designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or the Deputy Manager in her absence
2. Staff who are unable to raise the issue with their manager/DSL should raise the issue with the designated safeguarding lead on the committee
3. If staff are still concerned after the investigation or the matter is so serious they cannot discuss it with their manager/DSL or with the committee DSL then concerns should be escalated to the Oxfordshire LADO, the MASH or Ofsted

If they would prefer to raise their concerns elsewhere, then they are able to contact the NSPCC whistleblowing line on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk for national organisations, or Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a provider: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK.

Further guidance can be accessed through: Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2) and through the NSPCC website What is Child Abuse & How to Keep Your Child Protected | NSPCC (https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/)

- After a concern has been raised, the manager/line manager will decide how to respond in a reasonable and appropriate manner. Normally this will involve making internal enquiries first, but it may be necessary to carry out an investigation.
- Whilst it is hoped that such disclosures will never be necessary, the setting management recognises that it may find itself in circumstances which are new to it. Each case will be treated on its own merits.
- 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 qualifying disclosure (something that it is in the public interest to disclose) 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 false allegation then this will be considered 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 a more senior manager or a committee member or the organisations listed below.

Contact List:

Key Personnel / Local Contacts	Name / Service	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	DSL Natasha Hillier	Manager@brightwellpreschool.org 07780 584025
Deputy DSL	DDSL Lisa Wells	07701 068142
Chair of committee Nominated DSL of the committee	Emma Harpin/ Kristina Meader Emma Harpin	Chair@brightwellpreschool.org Emma: 07733440935 Kristina: 07305380695
Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	MASH	0345 050 7666 For immediate safeguarding concerns during office hours
Oxfordshire Emergency Duty Team (EDT)	Out of hours EDT	0800 833 408
Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) and Education Safeguarding Advisory Team (ESAT)	**LADO Team** Jo Lloyd Sandra Barratt Amie Pilcher	01865 810603 Lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk ESAT.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership	OSCP	oscp@oxfordshire.gov.uk Use OSCP procedures, thresholds, learning zone and local guidance

Ofsted	Ofsted's whistleblowing hotline	call: 0300 1233155 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk write to: WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	call: 0800 028 0285 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 9am-6pm Saturday to Sunday) email: help@NSPCC.org.uk https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/
Whistleblowing outside of the organisation	Prescribed people or bodies	If you decide to blow the whistle to a prescribed person rather than your employer, you must make sure that you have chosen the correct person or body for your issue. A full list of prescribed people or bodies can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies

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Date ratified: November 2018

Updated: November 2026

Signed by for the Pre-school: Emma Harpin (co-chair)