



FEVERSHAM
FIRST STEPS UNDERCLIFFE

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2018

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Whilst we expect all our colleagues, both internal and external, to be professional at all times and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their paramount objective, there may be occasions where this may not be happening.

Employees are often the first to realize that there may be something seriously wrong within their setting, however, they may not express their growing concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimization. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be just suspicion of malpractice and wrongdoing at work.

It is vital that all team members talk through any concerns they may have with their nursery manager at the earliest opportunity to enable any problems to be ironed out as soon as they arise.

Feversham first steps nursery is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person/s linked with the setting and/or others (e.g. parents/carers) to come forward and voice those concerns. This policy document makes it clear that employees, parents/carers and others can do so without fear of reprisals. The 'Whistleblowing Policy' is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns within the nursery rather than overlooking the problem. The procedure allows employees, parents/carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the staff at the nursery.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Allows you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response
- Reassure you that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimization for whistleblowing in good faith

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staffs own employment, parent/carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

If, in the course of your employment, you become aware of information which you reasonably believe tends to show one or more of the following, you **MUST** use the nursery's disclosure procedure set out below:

- Is against the policies and procedures of Feversham first steps Nursery
- Falls below established standards of practice
- Amounts to improper conduct
- Is a Health and Safety risk, including risks to others as well as children
- Parents/carers and others

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- Contradicts Feversham first steps Nursery's Code of Conduct
- That a criminal offence has been committed or is being committed or is likely to be committed
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject (e.g. EYFS, National Minimum Standards, National Care Standards)
- That a miscarriage of justice that has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be, endangered That the environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be, damaged contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of the setting
- That information tending to show any of the above, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed

The procedure will be communicated to all employees as well as parents/carers, students and others

RAISING CONCERNS PROCEDURE

If this information relates to safeguarding, the 'safeguarding policy' should be followed, with particular reference to the staff and volunteering section. As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate line manager or senior management, however, this depends on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you think may be involved in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that your line manager is involved, you should approach senior management. If you feel the senior management may be involved, you should approach the directors of Feversham first steps nursery Lynn Murphy or Sajida Muneer. The initial complaint should be done in writing. The letter must state what the issue is and who it is from. The earlier you express your concern, the easier it is for the setting, social services or the relevant childcare officer attached to the setting to take action.

With specific regard to safeguarding issues, that may involve a member of staff, you should initially consult with the senior management/directors of the setting. If you suspect they or the owner may be related to the issue you should contact relevant childcare officer attached to the setting. You can also contact the social services referrals department for advice and assistance. Contact details are available at the end of this policy.

Concerns are better raised in writing. You are advised to set out background and history of your concerns, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. Employees will suffer no detriment of any sort for making such a disclosure in accordance with this procedure. For further guidance in the use of the disclosure procedure, employees should speak in confidence to the nursery manager.

Any disclosure or concerns raised will be treated seriously and will be dealt with in a consistent and confidential manner and will be followed through in a detailed and thorough manner. Any employee who: is involved in victimizing employees who make a disclosure; takes any action to deter employees from disclosing information; or makes malicious allegations or disclosures in bad faith will be subject to potential disciplinary action which may result in dismissal. Failure to report serious matters can also be investigated and potentially lead to disciplinary action which may result in

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dismissal. Any management employee who inappropriately deals with a whistleblowing issue (e.g. failing to react appropriately by not taking action in a timely manner or disclosing confidential information) may be deemed to have engaged in gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for initial enquiries to be made.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. safeguarding or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation.

The following process will be followed in the event of complaints:

- Feversham first steps Nursery will ensure that a letter is sent to confirm the receipt of the complaint
- The complaint will then be fully investigated within 5 days of when the complaint was first received. Feversham first steps Nursery endeavor to investigate all complaints in a non-discriminatory manner
- A letter will be sent detailing how the nursery has dealt with the complaint

The action taken by Feversham first steps Nursery will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- Be investigated internally, or
- Be referred to the Police

Allegations referred directly to the childcare officer or social services will be dealt with accordance to their policies and procedures. Any person who is the subject of an allegation should at the appropriate times be given details of the allegation in order to respond.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Feversham first steps Nursery will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern. However, it must be appreciated that, in the interests of natural justice, any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

You are strongly encouraged to put your name to any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of Feversham first steps Nursery and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate.

In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account when considering how to deal with any allegations:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the allegation;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable **sources**

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HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

If the complaint has not been dealt with in a manner which is satisfactory to the employee, parent/carer or others involved, then they can contact OFSTED directly at the following address.

Early Years OFSTED Royal Exchange Building St Ann's Square

Manchester

M2 7LA

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

By registering a formal complaint with OFSTED an Officer in most cases will be sent to the Nursery to carry out a further investigation. If applicable, a report would then be sent with action points.

POLICY STATEMENT

Feversham first steps nursery undertakes to ensure that all aspects of the nursery policies and procedures are kept under review and that they operate in a nondiscriminatory manner

The Management will ensure that all staff, parents/carers, voluntary workers and others are aware of the policy and any channels through which they lodge complaints and appeals on all matters.

This policy was reviewed by management on: 24.029.18