November 2025

Cambridgeshire County Council early years

Whistle Blowing Policy

ACE Nursery School

The whistle blowing procedure aims to help and protect both staff* and children. By following the procedure you are acting to:

- **prevent a problem getting worse,**
- **safeguard children and young people, and**
- **reduce the potential risks to others.**

The earlier you raise a concern, the easier and sooner it is possible for the setting to take action.

*** Throughout this policy the term 'staff' includes paid staff, volunteers and students**

Introduction

ACE Nursery School is committed to the highest possible standards and recognises that its staff are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the setting. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or they may fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, the setting actively encourages its workers with concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice or staff member's conduct to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the setting rather than overlooking a problem.

Objective

The aim of this policy and associated procedures is to establish an internal procedure that will encourage and enable staff to raise concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice, (which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint, grievance or allegation), in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the setting continues to work within best practice and safeguard children and young people.

Scope

Concerns that should be raised via the Whistle Blowing Policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other staff, or about something that is perceived as:

- unlawful
- failing to comply with the setting's policy and procedures

- poor practice
- improper conduct

Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- All staff have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all staff.
- The setting will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect workers when they raise a concern in good faith.
- The setting will do its best to protect a whistle blower's identity when he/she raises a concern and does not want his/her name to be disclosed. However, if the concern raised needs to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedure, the worker may be required to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence.
- In some circumstances the setting may have to disclose the identity of the worker without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the worker first.
- Appropriate advice and support will be made available to staff
- Those who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.
- The setting will not tolerate malicious allegations; this may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Procedures

Procedures for reporting and investigating 'whistle blowing' concerns have been developed to ensure that:

- Staff can raise concerns (no matter how small they may appear) internally as a matter of course, and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and appropriately.
- Staff are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.
- Staff can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the setting response and seek external advice and guidance.
- Issues raised are addressed via other procedures and policies as appropriate, e.g. safeguarding policy, allegations against an adult working in a setting, grievance, disciplinary, health and safety.
- Appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.

Raising a Concern

Staff should raise concerns with the DSL/Headteacher/Senior practitioner or DSL on the Parents' Committee. Concerns should be raised in writing (using the 'log of allegation' form located in the staff room and library) and include:

- reference to the fact that it is a whistle blowing disclosure
- the background and history of the concerns
- names, dates and places (where possible)
- the reasons why the individual is concerned about the situation.

Staff who feel unable to put concerns in writing, can telephone or meet either the manager or a member of the management committee.

Who should you contact?

You should contact one of the following people in confidence (Designated Safeguarding Leads):

Lisa Tuohy or Diana Church at ACE Nursery School- 01223 357181

Hanna Ochalik-Baca at ACE Day Nursery School – 01223 366355

Also,

Jennifer Payne – Safeguarding Officer for ACE Parents' Committee

acesafeguarding@gmail.com

Investigation

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. All matters raised, **with the exception of an allegation against a staff member, or unlawful activity**, will be investigated internally.

The appropriate person/s will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days.

The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and whom to contact should the staff member be unhappy with the response and wish to raise the matter.

If the investigation cannot be completed within the timescale above, the staff member should receive a response that indicates:

- progress to date
- how the matter is being dealt with
- how long it will take to provide a final response.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries (usually involving a meeting with the individual raising the concern), will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that raise issues that fall within the scope of other policies/procedures, will be addressed under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved at this initial stage simply, by agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for further investigation.

If you do not feel that the complaint has been dealt with effectively or you still have concerns, you have a right to refer your concerns to Ofsted.

Allegation against a person who works or volunteers with children

An allegation may relate to a person who works or volunteers with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

If you feel a concern meets this criteria, please follow the process in the blue and yellow allegation flowchart and accompanying guidance.

Local Authority Designated officer (LADO)	01223 727967
Ofsted	0300 123 1231
Senior Adviser Intervention and Safeguarding (Gemma Hope)	01223 714760

Further Advice and Support

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) whistleblowing helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their setting. Staff can: call 0800 028 0285, the line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and 9am to 6pm at weekends, or email: help@nspcc.org.uk. Additionally see Section 3.7 and 3.8 in the EYFS 2025 document.

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager and your HR provider.

"Absolutely without fail - challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong". *Sounding the Alarm - Barnardos*

This policy was adopted November 2025, having been reviewed by settings DSL's and Committee's Safeguarding Officer:

Lisa Tuohy and Diana Church - ACE Nursery School

Hanna Ochalik-Baca – ACE Day Nursery

Jennifer Payne: ACE Parents' Committee Safeguarding Officer

acesafeguarding@gmail.com