SCALLYWAGS PRE-SCHOOL, HALWILL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

It is important to Scallywags Pre-School 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.

Procedure

- Report any concerns to the Pre-School Leader. If this is not possible, then report your concerns to the Chair of Committee.
- 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.
- You should be watchful and report any wrongdoing. Wrongdoing could include:
  - abuse of a child or vulnerable person
  - a child, parent, employee or volunteer being put at risk of harm
  - unsafe working practices
  - a failure to comply with statutory or legal obligations
  - a criminal offence which has or is about to be committed
  - the use of unsafe equipment
  - falsification of financial records
  - bribery and/or corruption which has taken or is about to take place
  - covering up wrongdoing or malpractice

- 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 the Pre-School Leader or Chair of Committee.

- If you are unsure how to raise a concern, you may contact the charity Protect at https://protect-advice.org.uk or 020 3117 2520) at any stage for free, confidential advice.

- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 08000280285 – 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 EC2A3NH.

Ofsted
If you do not wish to speak to either the Pre-School Leader or the Chair of Committee, or if you feel that your concern has not been dealt with appropriately, you may contact Ofsted as follows:

- A dedicated whistleblowing hotline – 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm).
- By email to the whistleblowing team – whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- By post: WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

The hotline can be used by anybody who has a whistleblowing concern about services or practice in any local authority, or in a care or educational setting regulated and inspected by Ofsted, include:

- Employees and former employees
- Agency staff currently and formerly working within care or educational settings
- Voluntary workers in care or educational settings

Confidentiality: If a member of staff/volunteer/student comes to Ofsted anonymously – this is when they do not know who they are – it will be harder for them to take up the matter, or be sensitive to the person's position, though they will look into the substance of the information that has been provided.

Ofsted encourage either open or confidential whistleblowing as the best means for protecting staff/volunteer/student and for the concern to be addressed.

Ofsted will ensure that their work in the handling of all concerns, complaints and safeguarding issues complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Under the Freedom of Information Act, Ofsted has the legal obligation to provide information in response to a request unless the information is available by other means; it would not be reasonably practicable to supply it; or the information falls within the exemptions of the Act. If Ofsted receives requests for disclosure of information obtained under the whistleblowing procedure, they will always seek to maintain confidentiality where this has been requested. However, Ofsted cannot guarantee confidentiality in every case.

Safeguarding
If the concern is about an immediate or current risk to an individual child or children, it is important to follow Devon Safeguarding Board's child protection procedures.

To raise concerns about failures in practices and procedures for the safeguarding of children in early years setting in Devon, you should contact MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) by using their online referral form at https://www.devonscp.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-in-devon If it is urgent (risk of significant harm) you can call 0345 155 11071 Mon-Thurs 9am-4pm & Fri 9am-4pm or out of hours via the Emergency Duty Service on 0345 6000 388.

Please refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

This policy, adopted on 6th October 2025, replaces a version adopted at a meeting of Scallywags Pre-School held in June 2018 and reviewed and updated on 21st May 2024.

Signature …….....

Name ……..

Position ……..

If you require clarification of any part of this policy, please speak to the Administrator.