# Whistle blowing Policy

Definition

Whistleblowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation.

Making a disclosure in the public interest (whistle blowing) is essential for keeping children safe in the setting and to ensure good quality practice across the setting. We are committed to safeguarding the children in our care and supporting the staff to feel confident to raise any concerns they may have about the setting or practice at the setting

Protection

Steps Ahead Nursery is committed to delivering a high quality service, promoting accountability and maintaining public confidence. This policy provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation or punishment when they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the nursery. The policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace, in order to promote good governance and accountability in the public interest. The Act covers behaviour which amounts to:

* A criminal offence
* Failure to comply with any legal obligation
* A miscarriage of justice
* Danger to health and safety of an individual and/or environment
* Bullying, humiliation, discrimination, poor practice, unsafe practice, abuse or neglect
* Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above

If any issue is raised which suggests a child may be at risk of significant harm this will be managed through our Safeguarding procedure.

It is not intended that this policy be a substitute for, or an alternative to the settings formal complaints procedure. It is designed to nurture a culture of openness and transparency within the setting, which makes it safe and acceptable for employees and volunteers to raise, in good faith, a concern they may have about malpractice and misconduct.

An employee or volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such a concern should normally report the matter to the Duty Manager in Charge or Principal either verbally or in a written private and confidential letter or by email to the Principal & registered person Mrs Janine Collishaw (janine@stepsahead.co.uk). Any discussion at a subsequent meeting will be recorded, read & signed by both parties. The matter will then be investigated. This may include the involvement of outside agencies such as contacting the Designated officer for Allegations (formerly LADO). You will be kept informed of time scales & the outcome of any investigation. Concerns should be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.

Steps Ahead will notify **Ofsted** of any serious incident, accident or concern and of any changes in our arrangements, which affect the well-being of our children. Ofsted must be notified within 14 days of the allegation being made.

If an employee or volunteer feels that the matter cannot be discussed with the manager/s or registered person or their complaint has not been done effectively, they have the right to contact Ofsted either by phone on 0300 123 1231 or

email – whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk  for advice on what steps to follow

Other important contact details:

* Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – 0300 456 0108
* Designated Officer for Allegations – 01225 713945

A disclosure in good faith to the Manager or Principal will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and the employee or volunteer will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice within the setting.

Any fabricated or malicious allegations will be dealt with through our disciplinary procedure

**Allegations of abuse against adults who work or volunteer in the nursery**

If a safeguarding allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, the following action will be taken (as per the ‘Allegations against Adults who work with Children guidance flowchart)

• The setting will ensure the immediate safety of the children.

 • The setting will investigate and immediately contact the Designated Officer for Allegations (Designated Officer) who will decide if it could be a safeguarding concern.

 • If the Designated Officer decides that there is a safeguarding concern, external/internal agencies (e.g. police) will be informed by the Designated Officer and the setting will act upon the advice given to ensure that any investigation is not jeopardised.

• It may be necessary for the employer to suspend the alleged perpetrator. Suspension is a neutral act to allow a thorough and fair investigation.

• If it is agreed that there is not a safeguarding concern, the setting will investigate further and feed back the outcome

• The setting will notify Ofsted of a significant incident.

This policy should be read in conjunction with :

* *the Staff Code of conduct for safer practice*
* *Safeguarding Children and Staff Policy,*
* *Allegations against Adults who work with Children – guidance flowchart issued by Wiltshire safeguarding children board (no. 9)*
* *Complaints Policy*
* *Staff Recruitment Policy ,*
* *Disciplinary Procedure*