

# Harrold Pre-School Policies



## Whistle Blowing Policy

Harrold Pre-School endeavours to achieve the highest possible standards and recognises that its staff and parent/carers are the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the setting. However, staff and parent/carers may not feel able to express their concerns, as it may be perceived as being disloyal to their colleagues, or they may fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore their concerns rather than report them.

By following the procedure, positive steps will be taken towards:-

- Safeguarding children
- Preventing a problem getting worse
- Reducing potential risks to others

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment.

In accordance with this Act, Harrold Pre-School encourages its staff members and parent/carers with concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice or colleague's conduct, to come forward and voice their concerns, in confidence, within the setting rather than overlooking a potential problem.

The aim of this policy and procedure is to establish an internal procedure that will encourage and enable staff, parent/carers to raise concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice, (which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint or grievance), in confidence and without fear of reprisals.

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

- Unlawful
- Failing to comply with the setting's policy and procedures
- Poor practice
- Improper conduct.

All staff, parent/carers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour. Harrold Pre-School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect colleagues when they raise a concern in good faith. Harrold Pre-School 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 Harrold Pre-School may have to disclose the identity of the worker without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the worker first if possible. Appropriate advice and support will be made available to staff, parent/carers who raise concerns. Those who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.

Harrold Pre-School will not tolerate malicious allegations; these may be considered a disciplinary offence.

## **PROCEDURE**

Staff or parent/carers 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, parent/carers are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith. Staff, parent/carers can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the setting's response and seek external advice and guidance (see useful contacts). Issues raised are addressed via other procedures and policies as appropriate, e.g. safeguarding policy, making a complaint policy etc. Appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.

Staff, parent/carers should raise concerns with the Pre-School Leader, Georgie Markham or Chair of Committee, Laura Porter. If your concern is regarding the Pre-School Leader, you should speak to the Safeguard Lead, Sarah Burrows. Concerns should be raised in writing 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 they are concerned about the situation.

Staff, parent/carers who feel unable to put concerns in writing, can telephone or meet with the Pre-School Leader, Safeguard Lead or Chair of Committee.

### **Contact details:- 07929 618244**

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. All matters raised will be investigated by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Tel: 01234 276693. The appropriate person/s will investigate the concerns thoroughly. The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and whom to contact should the concerned person be unhappy with the response and wish the matter to be investigated further. If the investigation cannot be completed within a short timescale, they must 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.

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 they do not feel that the complaint has been dealt with effectively or they still have concerns, the person concerned has a right to refer their concerns to Ofsted.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member or volunteer, the following action will be taken:-

- Harrold Pre-School will ensure the immediate safety of the child/children.
- The Safeguard Lead, Georgie Markham, will be informed immediately.
- The Safeguard Lead will notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who will decide if it could be a child protection concern. If the Safeguard Lead is unavailable, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted directly.
- Harrold Pre-School will notify Ofsted of any significant incident.

**Useful Contacts:**

- **Safeguard Lead, Sarah Burrows - 07929 618244**
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Karen Osborne – 01234 276693**  
**lado@bedford.gcsx.gov.uk**
- **Ofsted – 0300 123 1231**