Whistleblowing Policy

Statement of Intent

Little Monsters Day Nursery is committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct, care, and safeguarding. Staff, volunteers, and students have a duty to raise concerns about any practice or behaviour that may put children, colleagues, or the organisation at risk.

This policy provides a clear framework for raising concerns about serious issues in the workplace that fall outside normal grievance procedures, such as:

1. Conduct that may be a criminal offence.
2. Miscarriages of justice.
3. Health and safety risks to children, staff, or the public.
4. Suspected fraud or corruption.
5. Breaches of statutory procedures or legal obligations.
6. Environmental risks.
7. Sexual, physical, or verbal abuse of children, parents, or staff.
8. Other unethical or improper conduct.
9. Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

Staff are encouraged to speak up about any serious concern that they reasonably believe could affect the welfare of children, staff, or the integrity of the nursery.

Protection for Whistleblowers

- Staff who raise concerns in **good faith** are protected from **harassment, victimisation, or discrimination**.
- Whistleblowing concerns will be treated **separately** from any disciplinary or grievance issues affecting the whistleblower.
- Staff will not face any retaliation for reporting concerns honestly and reasonably.

Roles and Responsibilities

Nursery Management is committed to:

- Supporting staff through the whistleblowing process.
- Ensuring that concerns are taken seriously and investigated appropriately.
- Protecting staff from victimisation or retaliation.

Staff have a responsibility to:

- Report concerns promptly.
- Act in the public interest when raising a concern.
- Follow the whistleblowing procedure to ensure concerns are handled appropriately.

How to Raise a Concern

Staff should raise concerns as soon as possible with:

- **Shweta Ganger, Nursery Manager**, or the **Deputy Manager**.
- Concerns may be raised **verbally or in writing**. Written reports should include:
    - Background and history of the concern.
    - Names, dates, and places where possible.
    - Reasons for the concern.

Staff are **not expected to prove allegations** but must demonstrate a **reasonable and honest suspicion** of malpractice.

Escalation to External Authorities

If a concern cannot be resolved internally, staff may contact:

- **Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline:** 0300 123 3155
- **Website:** Safeguarding children – Ofsted Whistleblower

This is recommended only if internal reporting is not appropriate or the matter is particularly serious.

Procedure

1. **Initial Review:**
    - Management will make initial enquiries to determine whether an investigation is required.
    - Concerns falling under other policies (e.g., disciplinary or grievance) may be referred accordingly.
2. **Investigation:**
    - Investigations will be conducted promptly, impartially, and confidentially.
    - Urgent action may be taken immediately if necessary to protect children or staff.
    - Staff raising concerns will be informed within **10 working days** about how the concern will be addressed.
3. **Confidentiality:**
    - Staff identities will be kept confidential wherever possible.
    - In certain cases, it may be necessary to disclose the whistleblower's identity to conduct a fair investigation.
    - Disclosure will only occur if necessary and with justification.
4. **Outcome:**
    - If the allegation is substantiated, appropriate action will be taken.
    - If unsubstantiated but raised in good faith, no action will be taken against the whistleblower.
    - Frivolous, malicious, or dishonest reports may result in disciplinary action.

Summary

Little Monsters Day Nursery encourages a culture of openness and accountability. Staff who raise concerns responsibly are **acting in the public interest** and are supported by the nursery's management.

Acknowledgement of Policy

I have read and understood the Whistleblowing Policy and agree to follow the procedures outlined.

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____