

Whistleblowing Policy



Statement of Intent

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their setting. However, they may not express their growing concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be just suspicion of malpractice and wrongdoing at work.

Mereworth Pre-School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this and/or others (e.g. Parents/Carers) to come forward and voice their concerns. This policy makes it clear that Mereworth Pre-School wish to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns with Mereworth Pre-School rather than overlooking the problem.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Allows you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response
- Reassure that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimisation or whistleblowing in good faith

Mereworth Pre-School have policies and procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staffs own employment, Parent/Carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies. The whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of the other procedures and policies that Mereworth Pre-School uphold.

That concern may be about something that:

- Is against the policies and procedures of Mereworth Pre-School
- Falls below established standards of practice
- Amounts of improper conduct
- Is a Health and Safety risk, in risks to the public as well as children, other colleagues, Parents/Carers and others
- Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of Mereworth Pre-School

The procedure will be communicated to all employees as well as Parents/Carers, students and others.

HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

Mereworth Pre-School recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make not least because of fear of reprisal. Mereworth Pre-School will not tolerate harassment or

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victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. However, if you feel you have suffered harassment either directly or indirectly as a result of raising a concern, you should refer to the Complaints Policy.

This does not mean that if you are already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures that those procedures will be halted as a result of your whistleblowing.

This also applies to Parent/Carers of the setting who then decide to seek alternative childcare.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Mereworth Pre-School will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern. However, it must be appreciated that, in the interests of natural justice, any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

You are strongly encouraged to put your name to allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of Mereworth Pre-School and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate.

In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account considering how to deal with any allegations:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the allegation;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

MALICIOUS OR VEXATIOUS ALLEGATIONS – STAFF

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against you in accordance with Mereworth Pre-School procedures.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN – EMPLOYEES

As a first step, you should normally raise your concern with the Manager, Jenny Thompson or Deputy Andrea Burghardt. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you think may be involved in the malpractice. i.e. if you believe your manager is involved you should approach the Committee of Mereworth Pre-School.

With specific regard to safeguarding issues that may involve a member of staff, you should initially consult with Julie Davoren, Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) or Jenny Thompson,

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Manager of Mereworth Pre-School. If you suspect that they may be related to the issue you should contact the Committee of Mereworth Pre-School. If involvement of the Committee is suspected, then you should contact the Safeguarding Officer for West Kent. All contact numbers are available in this policy.

Concerns are better raised in writing. You are advised to set out background and history of your concerns, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier you express your concerns the easier it is for Mereworth Pre-School, Social services or the relevant childcare officer attached to the setting to take action.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation you need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for initial enquiries to be made.

HOW MEREWORTH PRE-SCHOOL WILL RESPOND

The action taken by Mereworth Pre-School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- Be investigated internally
- Be referred to the Police

Allegations referred directly to the Childcare Officer or Social Services will be dealt with in accordance with their policies and procedures. Any person, who is object of an allegation should at the appropriate time be given details of the allegation in order to respond.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations may fall within the scope of specific procedures. Some concerns may be solved by agreed actions without the need for an investigation. The following process will be followed in the event of a complaint:

- Mereworth Pre-School will ensure that a letter is sent to confirm the receipt of the complaint
- The complaint will be fully investigated and within 5 days of when the complaint was first received. Mereworth Pre-School endeavour to investigate all complaints in a non-discriminatory manner
- A letter will be sent detailing how Mereworth Pre-School has dealt with the complaint.

HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

If the complaint has not been dealt with in the manner which is satisfactory to the employee, Parent/Carer or others involved, they can then contact OFSTED directly at the following address:

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Early Years OFSTED

The National Business Unit
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Tel: **0300 123 3159 (Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm)**

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

By registering a formal complaint with Ofsted an officer in, most cases will be sent to the setting to carry out a further investigation. If applicable a report would be sent with action points.

CONTACT DETAILS

Mereworth Pre-School Committee

mereworthpreschoolcommittee@gmail.com

Area Safeguarding Adviser (Education) West Kent

Tel: **03000 41 22 84**

Kent Specialist Children's Services – Central Duty Team

Telephone: **03000 41 11 11**

Kent Specialist Children's Services – Out of Hours

Central Duty Telephone: **03000 41 91 91**

FOR HELP AND ADVICE

Whistleblowing Helpline: **0800 0280285 (Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm)**

Email: help@nspcc.org

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Date of Policy:	June 2018
Date to be reviewed:	June 2020
Signed by the Manager:	
Signed by the Committee:	
Name of signatory:	
Role of signatory:	

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Name	Sign	Date
Jenny Thompson		
Julie Davoren		
Andrea Burghardt		
Jackie Moffat		
Valerie Bell		
Cristina Brown		
Hayley Bull		
Celia Jeffrey - Admin		
Lisa Barker - Admin		