



## 11.01 Whistleblowing Policy

It is important to Stepping Stones Preschool 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 your line manager. If this is not possible, then report your concerns to a more senior manager or Chairperson.
- 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 a more senior manager or Chairperson

### **Further guidance**

[Complaint Investigation Record](#) (Early Years Alliance 2021)