



Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose of the policy

We operate a whistleblowing policy in order to safeguard both our employees as well as the children we care for. This policy describes what whistleblowing is and outlines the procedures in place at Wildwood Nature School to raise concerns.

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is a term used when someone who works in or for an organisation wishes to raise concerns about malpractice or misconduct in the organisation. Whistleblowing encourages and enables staff to raise serious concerns within the school, rather than overlooking a potential problem/concern.

Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. The term 'whistleblowing' usually applies when a person is acting as a witness to misconduct or malpractice that they have observed and which threatens other people.

A grievance is when an employee has a dispute about their own circumstances relating to their employment. Anyone who meets this criterion should follow their organisation's procedures in relation to grievances.

A complaint is where a person, or a person close to the complainant, has personally been poorly treated and are seeking redress or justice for themselves or that person. In these circumstances the person making the complaint should follow the relevant organisation's complaints procedures.

Whistleblowing and the law

Wildwood Nature School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. Making a disclosure in the public interest (whistleblowing) is essential for keeping children safe in the setting and to ensure good quality practice across the setting. This 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 that 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.

How to raise a concern

If any employee/volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such concern they should report the concern to the head of school or designated safeguarding lead.

It is considered best practice for the concern to be submitted in written form, with particular attention given to dates, times and specific actions/speech that occurred as well as the main reason for concern. If when raising a complaint the person is not able to do this, the co-head of school or designated safeguarding lead will make a written record of the interview and then ask for a confirmation of accuracy.

Concerns will be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible. If an employee or volunteer feels that the matter cannot be discussed with the persons listed above then The Camden Lado (Local Authority Designated Officer - Jacqueline Fearon) can be contacted on 020 7974 4556 and LADO@camden.gov.uk.

Ofsted can also be contacted by email - whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by phone on 0300 123 1231.

We follow the guidance as outlined in Part 4 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2022\)](#).

Confidentiality

Wildwood Nature School will take all steps possible to maintain confidentiality (if requested) when concerns are raised. In some cases, the school may be required by law to break confidentiality. It is possible for concerns to be raised anonymously, however it is more difficult to pursue these fully or give feedback about the outcome of the concern being raised.

It is important to note that Wildwood Nature School will not tolerate any harassment or

victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect staff/parents/volunteers if appropriate when a concern is raised.

Whistleblowing is a protective disclosure and, if made in good faith, should not result in any form of detriment to the worker. It is not necessary for an employee to provide their own evidence when raising a concern.

If a member of staff believes that what he/she is saying is true, they should have nothing to fear as he/she will be doing their duty to their employer and those for whom they are providing a service.

Further advice

If further advice is needed please follow the link below to the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Tel : 0800 800 5000

Policy review

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