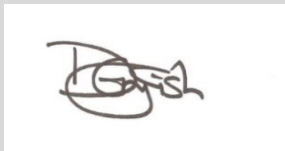
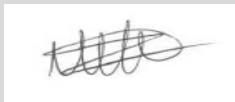


Whistleblowing Policy

Cippenham Nursery School

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 14 th October 2025
Last reviewed on:	July 2025	
Next review due by:	July 2028	
Updated on School Website:	n/a	
Signed: (Chair of Governors)  (Headteacher) 		
The school will review the Whistleblowing policy every 3 years or sooner if required		



Cippenham Nursery School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person linked with the setting and/or others (e.g., Parents/Carers) to come forward and voice those concerns.

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. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young-person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think, "What if I'm wrong?" – think, "What if I'm right?"

This policy document makes it clear that employees, Parents/Carers and others can do so without fear of reprisals. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns **within** Cippenham Nursery School rather than overlooking the problem.

The procedure allows employees, Parents/Carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the Management/Staff of Cippenham Nursery School

This policy has been written in line with the [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and that their confidentiality will be respected
- Let all staff in the school know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the trust
- Set clear procedures for how the trust will respond to such concerns
- Let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern
- Assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue)

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staff's own employment, Parent/Carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies. This Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The policy applies to all employees or other workers who provide services to the trust in any capacity, including self-employed consultants or contractors who provide services on a personal basis and agency workers.

Definition of whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is "in the public interest". Examples of whistle-blowing include (but are not limited to):

- Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption
- Pupils' or staff health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Breaches of financial management procedures
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- Damage to the environment
- Is against the policies and procedures of Cippenham Nursery School
- Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of Cippenham Nursery School.

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the trust, or individual schools in the trust, count as whistle-blowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

When staff have a concern they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance or complaints procedures.

Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) has:

- [Further guidance](#) on the difference between a whistle-blowing concern and a grievance that staff may find useful if unsure
- A free and confidential [advice line](#)

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

HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

Cippenham Nursery School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal. Cippenham Nursery School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. However, should you feel that 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 applies to Parents/Carers of the setting who then decide to seek alternative childcare.

Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation in line with Cippenham Nursery procedures

CONFIDENTIALITY

Cippenham Nursery 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 any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of Cippenham Nursery School and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate.

WHEN TO RAISE A CONCERN

Staff should consider the examples in section 3 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or trust procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN (for employees)

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate line

Manager or Senior Management This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you think may be involved in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that your Line Manager is involved, you should approach the Headteacher. If you feel the Headteacher may be involved, you should approach the Chair of Governors.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN (All)

With specific regard to Safeguarding issues, that may involve a member of staff, you should initially consult with the Headteacher Mrs Nisha Gill (DDSL) or Mrs Kathy Li (DDSL) or Satpal Badhan (DSL) or Marta Reyes (DDSL). If you suspect all of them, or the Chair of Governors may be related to the issue you should contact the **Slough Borough Council LADO**.

- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Dawn Lisles**
Email: LADO@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
- Phone: 07927 681858 / 01753 690906

Where possible, please use the LADO referral form:

<https://www.sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk/what-we-do/lado/>

Or

Slough Children First 01753 875362

Or

Thames Valley Police 101

Contact details of all other external bodies are available in Appendix 1 at the end of 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 concern, the easier it is for Cippenham Nursery School, **Slough Children First or the LADO** to take action.

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

HOW CIPPENHAM NURSERY SCHOOL WILL RESPOND.

The action taken by Cippenham Nursery School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- Be investigated internally

- Be referred to the Police
- Be referred to the LADO

When a concern is received by the headteacher – referred to from here as the 'recipient' – they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure
- Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken.
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:
 - o The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the Chair of Governors if appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police
 - o The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps

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

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g., Safeguarding or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation. The Cippenham Nursery Schools Complaints Procedure should then be followed for this.

Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any

recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police. They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the Headteacher and governors, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

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

Early Years OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate

Manchester

M1 2WD

TEL: 0300 123 4666 (Monday to Fridays 9am - 5pm)

Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Webform: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-to-ofsted>

By registering a formal complaint with OFSTED an Officer in most cases will be sent to the Nursery to carry out a further investigation. If applicable, a report would then be sent with action points.

Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. The Full Governing Body have responsibility for monitoring & reviewing the on-going impact of this policy.

The Headteacher will ensure that all Staff, Parents/Carers, Voluntary Workers and others, are aware of the policy and any channels through which they lodge complaints and appeals on all matters.

Linked Policies:

Grievance Procedure

Complaints Procedure

Child protection and Safeguarding policy

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF EXTERNAL BODIES

Updated and extended list can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

NAME & ADDRESS	AREA OF CONCERN
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Protect The Green House 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road London E2 9DA Tel: 0203 117 2520	All matters of malpractice and/or wrongdoing. Web form: https://protect.tfaforms.net/f/Contact-the-Advice-Line
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH Tel: 0300 061 0614	Maladministration – causing injustice to a member of the public Web form: https://www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/6047/Complaint-form-October-23.pdf
Thames Valley Police Windsor Road, Slough, Berkshire. Tel: 999 or 101	Breach of the Criminal Law / Fraud https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/fo/v1/fraud/ CRIMESTOPPERS Tel:0800 555111
The Heath & Safety Executive Priestley Hse, Priestley Road BASINGSTOKE, Hants RG24 9NW Tel: 0300 0031647	Health & Safety dangers Webform: https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/index.htm
The Environment Agency Thames Regional Office Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading, RG1 8DQ Tel: 0870 850 6506	Environmental dangers enquires@environment-agency.gov.uk
Department For Education	Disclosure in the public interest (including whistleblowing) https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing