**Hingham Playgroup**

**Whistle Blowing Policy**

*Please use this policy in conjunction with:*

* *LADO referral form*
* *Information leaflet for persons referred to LADO*
* *A guide to managing allegations against adults working with children and young people*
* *Leaflet guide to managing allegations*

The aim of this policy is to ensure the needs of the children are paramount, and in creating a culture where it is safe to voice concerns, having a clear process understood by all staff. (Paid and unpaid)

It can be difficult to express concerns about a colleague and it is not unreasonable to be worried about the possible consequences of expressing a concern. It is therefore important that this policy lays out clear guidance on reporting concerns and that they will be taken seriously and treated sensitively and confidentially.

It is necessary for everyone to know it is important to express concerns about the behaviour of adults, whether paid or unpaid, that might have a negative impact on a child. The child’s needs must remain paramount.

Any of the following concerns MUST be reported to the Local Area Designated Office (LADO) within one working day.

Where a member of staff, student, volunteer or visitor who works with children has:

* Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
* Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates unsuitability to work with children.
* Had an allegation made about them out of setting.
* behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Timescales

* Any allegation against a person who works with children should be reported immediately to a senior manager within the organisation.
* The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer’s attention or that are made directly to the police.

Who do you report a concern to?

The settings Safeguarding Lead Practitioner (SLP) – Nicola Hindle.

If concerns are about the SLP, then the deputy SLP – Alison Austin.

If you feel approaching either of the SLPs inappropriate, then you can contact the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) direct. – 01603 223473

The Role of the LADO

The role of the LADO is to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. They are not responsible for undertaking investigations. They can provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations. Please note:

* Norfolk LADO service do not deal with allegations re bullying, unless there is clear evidence that it is by an adult working with children.
* Parental complaints need to go through the organisational complaints process, initially raising the complaint with the Manager of the setting in the first instance.
* General dissatisfaction with a setting or individual needs to go through the settings complaints process.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the whistle-blower’s identity. At the appropriate time however, the whistle-blower may need to come forward as a witness.

Self-reporting

We ask that if staff have any concerns about their own health/personal problems which may be impacting on their work with children, that they discuss these with their line managers.

We also ask that staff talk to their line managers if they feel their personal actions within the workplace may have been misinterpreted. While respecting staff members honesty in coming forward we may need to take advice from the LADO before concluding the situation.

Barriers to expressing concern

Hingham playgroup recognizes that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you will have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service.

Hingham Playgroup will not tolerate any harassment or victimization (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Procedures for reporting concerns.

* Allegation/concern is reported to the identified SLP on duty in the setting.
* The identified SLP listens to and records concerns and discussions.
* **If there are any concerns about a child’s immediate safety the police should be contacted on 999 if immediate action is needed, or MASH team on 0344 800 8020**
* Fill in a referral/consultation form if you want advice if the behaviour you are reporting meets the LADO criteria or you are unsure. Sometimes behaviours may concern you and make you wonder whether someone is suitable to work with children i.e. there has been a pattern of inappropriate behaviour that has been addressed via disciplinary procedures but the behaviour continues to occur.
* For both forms please ensure you give as much detail as possible so they are able to make an informed decision on the way forward.
* Once the LADO Referral/Consultation form has been completed, it needs to be returned to LADO@norfolk.gov.uk where it will be read by the duty LADO who will then respond with the appropriate advice and information.
* The allegation/concern is reported to the LADO team on 01603 223473 and Ofsted are informed. All discussions are recorded including name of person spoken to.
* Consultation/referral takes place with the LADO and all subsequent advice and guidance regarding the process is followed.

If concerns are about the SLP you can report to the assistant SLP, but if you feel this is not appropriate you should:

* **If there are any concerns about a child’s immediate safety the police should be contacted on 999 if immediate action is needed, or MASH team on 0344 800 8020**
* Or contact the LADO team directly yourself – 01603 223473

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| Last review date | June 2020 |
| Reviewed/agreed by staff team / date |  |
| Reviewed/agreed by committee/date |  |
| Signed on behalf of committee |  |
| Print name/date/role |  |
| Date of next review | June 2021 |

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