WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Approved by: SLT

Approved date: September 2025

To be reviewed by: SLT

Review date: September 2026

Accessibility: Available on the school website and paper copy on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery, Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, The Fledglings Nursery

Introduction

At Ashbridge Independent School and Nurseries, we expect all adults who are employed by the company or are part of the wider team and work with us in other capacities, such as volunteers, students, supply staff and freelance teachers, to be professional at all times and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their paramount objective.

We recognise that there may be occasions where this may not happen and this procedure sets out the expectations we have regarding disclosures to ensure the welfare and safety of children or any other people is not unnecessarily put at risk.

We promote a culture of safety and raising concerns and as part of this it is essential that all team members talk through any concerns they may have with their line manager at the earliest opportunity to enable any problems to be resolved as soon as they arise.

Disclosure of information

The disclosure procedure set out below must be followed if anyone connected to Ashbridge as detailed above, becomes aware of information or witnesses something and reasonably believes one or more of the following is happening, may be happening, or is likely to happen:

- A child or adult at risk of harm, have been harmed or are otherwise in danger
- An adult is showing a low-level concern, as detailed in the Safeguarding policy
- Failure to adhere to the company safeguarding policy and procedures
- A criminal offence
- Non-compliance with any legal obligation to which the company is subject (e.g. EYFS, Equalities Act 2010)
- Miscarriage of justice
- Endangerment of Health and Safety
- Damage to the environment
- Concealment of information relating to any of the above

Where this information relates to child protection then the company Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be followed.

Disclosure procedure

- Where an employee or associated member of the wider team reasonably believes one or more of the circumstances listed above has been witnessed or has occurred, they should promptly disclose this to a member of the Nursery Management or Senior Leadership Team so that any appropriate action can be taken.

    - If it is inappropriate to make such a disclosure to a particular individual (i.e. because it relates to them personally) they should speak to another member of the Senior Leadership Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead or company director.
- Any disclosure or concerns raised will be treated seriously and will be dealt with in a consistent and confidential manner and will be followed through in a detailed and thorough way. Confidential records will be retained.
    - This may include liaising with external contacts including the LADO, Police or other relevant bodies.
- Provision for mediation and dispute resolution will be provided by the Senior Leadership Team if appropriate.

Further information

- Employees and associated members of the wider team will suffer no detriment of any sort for making such a disclosure in accordance with this procedure.
- The following actions by any person will be subject to investigation which may lead to disciplinary action:
    - Involvement in the victimisation of employees or others who make a disclosure or taking any action to deter a staff member from disclosing information.
    - Making malicious allegations or disclosures
    - Failure to report serious matters
- In addition, the following actions by any member of the Nursery Management or Senior Leadership Team following a disclosure will be subject to investigation which may lead to disciplinary action:
    - Failing to take action in a timely manner
    - Failing to investigate properly or follow procedures
    - Disclosing confidential information relating to the disclosure
    - Failing to protect the person who has raised an issue or disclosed information

All employees and associated members of the wider team have contact details for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Local Children's Social Care and may contact them directly if they find they are unable to disclose to anyone internally about the issues/concerns they have witnessed or are aware of.

In addition, employees and associated members of the wider team may contact the NSPCC free Whistleblowing Advice line on 0800 028 0285 or can email help@nspcc.org.uk.

For further clarification in the use of the disclosure procedure, employees and associated members of the wider team are advised to speak in confidence to a DSL or member of the Senior Leadership Team.