

# Wanborough Playgroup

Registered Charity Number 1026150

Ofsted Registration Number: 109096



Village Hall, High Street, Wanborough, Swindon. SN4 0AD

Telephone Number: 790428

www.wanboroughplaygroup.org.uk Email: wanboroughplaygroup@hotmail.co.uk

## Disclosure Policy

### Statement of Intent

Employees of Wanborough Playgroup would possibly be the first to realise something is seriously wrong within the group. However, they may not express concerns because they feel speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or the Playgroup. 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 a suspicion of malpractice.

Wanborough Playgroup believes in openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspects of the Playgroup's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy document makes it clear that staff can do so without fear of reprisals. This Disclosure Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns within the Playgroup rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.

### Aim

This policy aims to provide avenues for staff to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken, and to reassure staff that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

The concerns that may be raised may be about something that:

- Is unlawful
- Is contrary to Playgroup policies or procedures
- Falls below established standards or practice
- Amounts to improper conduct

For example:

- Ill treatment of staff/volunteers/families by a member of staff
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to health and safety at work
- A breach of regulations
- Abuse of children

(This list is not exhaustive)

The overriding concern should be that it would be in the public interest for the malpractice should be corrected and, if appropriate, sanctions applied.

### Safeguards

#### Harassment or Victimisation

The Playgroup recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The Playgroup will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect staff when they raise a concern in good faith. The Playgroup will treat any harassment or victimisation as a serious disciplinary offence to be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

This does not mean that if staff are already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, that those procedures will be halted as a result of their whistleblowing.

### Confidentiality

The Playgroup will do its best to protect a staff member's identity when they raise a concern and do not want their name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by staff may be required as part of the evidence.

### Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages staff to put their name to their allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the Playgroup Committee. In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### Untrue Allegations

If staff make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, staff make malicious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

### **Method**

As a first step staff should normally raise concerns with the supervisor. This depends however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice.

Concerns are better raised in writing. Staff are invited to set out the background and history of their concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why they feel they are particularly concerned about the situation. If staff do not feel they are able to put their concern in writing, they can telephone or meet the chair of the committee.

The earlier staff express the concern, the easier it is to take action.

Although staff are not expected to prove the truth of the allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for the concern.

Staff may invite a work colleague to raise a matter on their behalf.

### **How Playgroup will Respond**

The action taken by the Playgroup will depend on the nature of the concern and may:

- Be investigated internally
- Be referred to Ofsted
- Be referred to Social Services in a case involving Safeguarding Children

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation and staff will be involved in those discussions.

If an investigation is required, the committee will consult with any outside bodies as appropriate and will, within ten working days write to the member of staff:

- Acknowledging that an investigation will be carried out
- Indicating how the committee propose to deal with the matter
- Telling them whether any initial enquiries have been made
- Telling them whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not
- Advising them that any investigation will be carried out in the strictest confidence; and
- Keeping them informed of the progress of the investigation

The amount of contact between the committee considering the issues and the staff member will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from staff.

When any meeting is arranged, staff have the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by a work colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

The Playgroup will take steps to minimise any difficulties which staff may have as a result of raising a concern.

The Playgroup accepts that staff need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, they will receive information about the outcomes of any investigation. In addition, they will be informed as to what action has been taken to correct working practices that have been found to be at fault by the investigation.

### Right of Appeal

The person against whom the allegations have been made has a right of appeal against the decision if they consider that the process of the investigation to be procedurally flawed and therefore unfair, or the conclusion and/or recommendations to be unreasonable. The purpose of appeal is therefore to consider whether the process of the investigation, and/or the conclusion and/or recommendations are reasonable in all circumstances. The purpose is not to reinvestigate the complaint.

Any appeal should be made in accordance with the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

Wanborough Playgroup  
Committee

Held on (date)

7<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee/Proprietor

Name of Signatory

Kath Liston

Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.)

Chairperson

This policy was reviewed at a meeting of

Wanborough Playgroup

Held on (date)

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee/Proprietor

Name of Signatory

Ali Petherbridge

Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.)

Chairperson