

Whistleblowing Policy

Statement of Intent

Once upon a time is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of nursery to come forward and voice those concerns. If a whistleblowing disclosure is related to child protection, our Child Protection Policy will be followed, and the Local Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted immediately.

Whistleblowing definition

Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing.

Legal framework

The public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, commonly referred to as the 'Whistleblowing Act', Amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for employees who raise legitimate concerns about specific matters. These are called 'qualifying disclosures.'

A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by an employee who has a reasonable belief that any of the following is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed:

- ★ A criminal offence
- ★ A miscarriage of justice
- ★ An act creating risk to health and safety
- ★ An act causing damage to the environment
- ★ A breach of any other legal obligation or concealment of any of the above
- ★ Any other unethical conduct
- ★ An act that may be deemed as radicalised or a threat to national security.

Disclosures do not have to be made 'in good faith' but they must be made in the public interest. This is essential when assessing a disclosure made by an individual.

The public Interest Disclosure Act has the following rules for making a protected disclosure:

- ★ You must believe it to be substantially true
- ★ You must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- ★ You must not seek any personal gain.

It is not necessary for the employee to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be committed; a reasonable belief is sufficient.

Aim

We aim to:

- ★ encourage you to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about Once upon a time, an employee or a student's practice,
- ★ provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken,
- ★ ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied, and
- ★ reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

We do this by:

- ★ Ensuring that understanding Whistleblowing forms part of our staff induction training.
- ★ Ensuring confidentiality, all concerns will be treated in confidence, and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.
- ★ Ensuring all staff are aware of who their line manager is.
- ★ Providing Supervision meetings with line managers a minimum of six times a year.
- ★ Providing opportunities at meetings to express opinions.
- ★ Providing information on the types of conduct which should be reported, such as:
 - Conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law.
 - Failure to comply with legal obligations.
 - Health and Safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
 - The unauthorised use of nursery funds or equipment.
 - Sexual, physical or other abuse of staff or children.
 - Actions by staff which are unprofessional, inappropriate or conflict with the general understanding of what is right or wrong.
- ★ Any employee who is involved in victimising employees who make a disclosure, takes any action to deter employees from disclosing information, or makes malicious allegations in bad faith will be subject to potential disciplinary action which may result in dismissal.
- ★ Failure to report serious matters can also be investigated and potentially lead to disciplinary action which may result in dismissal.
- ★ Any management employee who inappropriately deals with a whistleblowing issue (e.g. failing to react appropriately by not acting in a timely manner or disclosing confidential information) may be deemed to have engaged in gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal.

Methods

Making a disclosure at Once upon a time.

- ★ As a first step, staff members should normally raise concerns with their immediate line manager. This may depend however on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice.
- ★ Staff must disclose information in good faith.
- ★ Staff must believe the information to be substantially true.
- ★ Staff must not act maliciously or make false allegations.
- ★ Staff must not seek any personal gain.
- ★ If you are unhappy with how your line manager has handled your concern, or if the concern is connected to your line manager, you should go to the Deputy Nursery Manager.
- ★ If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your disclosure, then the Nursery Manager should be consulted.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome and the whistleblowing is in connection with a child, you can contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) by filling in a referral form at: <https://www.norfolkscb.org/people-working-with-children/how-to-raise-a-concern/local-authority-designated-officer-lado/> then click on **LADO Referral/Consultation Form October 2022**

See 'Whistleblowing concerns flowchart' at the end of this policy.

Raising an issue directly with an outside support agency

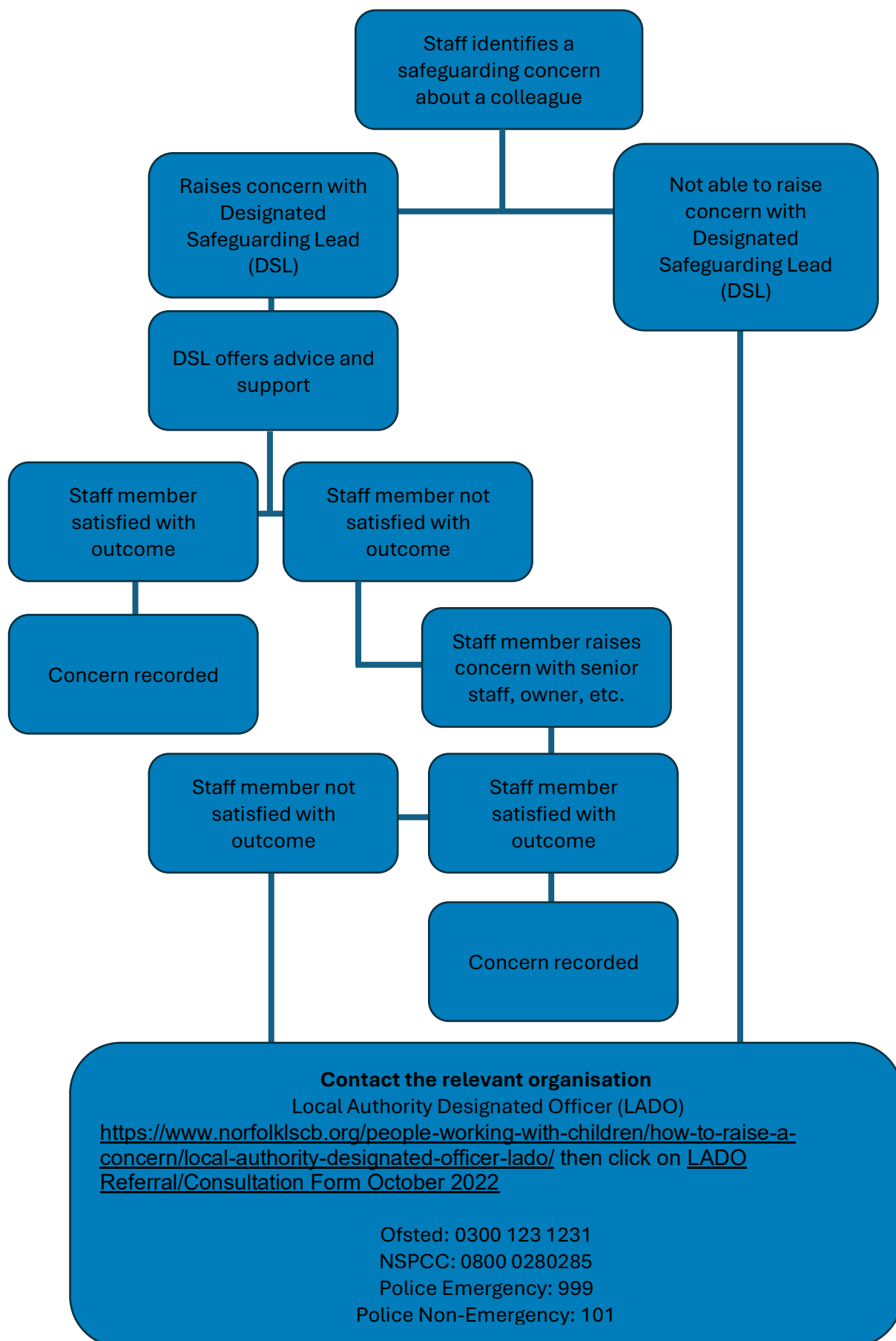
If the matter is urgent, and you are not satisfied with the outcome after following the **Once upon a time** whistleblowing procedure, you should contact Ofsted on telephone **0300 123 4666**, or email Ofsted Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should use the other channels open to them:

- ★ Contact Ofsted on telephone **0300 123 4666**, or email Ofsted Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a provider: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).
- ★ NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.
- ★ General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Whistleblowing for employees.

Once upon a time also has a Safeguarding Policy, Complaints procedure and a Staff Grievance procedure.

Whistleblowing concerns flowchart



This policy was adopted by Once upon a time nursery school

Date: 1 September 2012

And last updated on: 1 September 2025

Signed on behalf of the nursery

To be reviewed: Annually or sooner if any matters arise

