Whistleblowing Policy for Chevening School Nursery

September 2026

Policy Statement:

Chevening School Nursery is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. We encourage employees and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work and to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

This procedure encourages employees to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within Chevening School Nursery rather than overlooking a problem or raising the matter outside.

It applies to all employees, agency workers and those contractors working on our premises, for example, cleaners, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with us in their own premises.

Aim and scope:

This procedure aims to ensure individuals are:

- encouraged to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- provided with avenues to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- given a response to their concerns and are aware of how to pursue them if not satisfied
- reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief any disclosure has been made in good faith.

There are existing procedures in place to enable individuals to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment including issues relating to harassment and bullying. This procedure is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur, the result of which we fail to comply with a legal obligation. For example unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud and corruption, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- disclosures related to past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees (see below)
- past, current or likely damage to the environment

Concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of any members of staff, can be reported under the confidential disclosure procedure. This may be about something that you:

- feel uncomfortable about in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe we subscribe to: or
- are against our standing orders and policies; or
- falls below established standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct.

Our complaints procedure should be used to raise any issues, concerns or complaints of a health and safety nature and which are not confidential.

Confidentiality:

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous allegations:

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual. However, anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at our discretion.

In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include the:

- seriousness of the issues raised
- credibility of the concern; and
- likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.
- Untrue allegations:

If you make an allegation in good faith that is not subsequently confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken. Disciplinary action will only be taken against individuals who knowingly make false, malicious or vexatious allegations.

Other complaints procedures:

This Whistleblowing procedure is separate from our complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. The Manager is responsible for making service users aware of these procedures. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

You can also call the NCPCC whistleblowing line 0800 028 0285

Or Ofsted's whistleblowing number: 0300 123 3155 or email: **whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk**

(9am – 5pm Monday to Friday)

How to raise a concern:

General

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing/email. A concern raised in writing should:

- set out the background and history of the concern, and where possible, give names, dates and places;
- the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier a concern is raised the easier it is to take action. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

Step One - Raising a Concern

Whenever possible you should raise your concern with the setting Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Suzanne Lingard/Sarah Thornton). If this is not appropriate, you should approach the Chair of the Management Committee.

Step Two - How we will respond

The action we take will depend on the nature of the concern:

If a child is at risk of immediate harm and/or is unsafe to go home, make an urgent **Request for Support to the Front Door Service via the portal** or call the Police on 999.

- If no immediate risk of harm, provide internal support and/or refer to other agencies in line with **Kent Safeguarding Support Level Guidance and KSCMP procedures,** as appropriate. For example, signposting to community services and/or early help open access, a non-urgent call to the Police via 101, reporting allegations against staff to the County LADO Service, or make a Request for Support via the **Front Door Service Portal**.
- Where the setting is unsure, advice can be sought at the Front Door Service on **03000 411 111**
- Where support is required out of working hours, contact the Out of Hours Service on **03000 41 91 91**.
- The matters raised may be investigated internally by The Management Committee

In order to protect individuals and Chevening School Nursery, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g., child protection/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 investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Within 10 working days, the responsible person will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how we propose to deal with the matter
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- informing you if any initial enquiries have been made
- whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not

Contact:

The amount of contact between staff considering the issues and you 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.

Attending meetings:

When any meeting is arranged you have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

Support:

We will take steps to minimise any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, we will advise or arrange for you to have advice about the procedure.

We will not tolerate harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take action to protect individuals who raise a concern in good faith.

We accept that you need to be assured that concerns will be properly addressed and, subject to legal constraints, will provide information about the outcomes of any investigations.

How the matter can be taken further:

This procedure is intended to provide individuals with an avenue to raise concerns within the Nursery. If you are not satisfied, and feel it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

- If no immediate risk of harm, provide internal support and/or refer to other agencies in line with **Kent Safeguarding Support Level Guidance and KSCMP procedures,** as appropriate. For example, signposting to community services and/or early help open access, a non-urgent call to the Police via 101, reporting allegations against staff to the County LADO Service, or make a Request for Support via the **Front Door Service Portal**.
- Where support is required out of working hours, contact the Out of Hours Service via **03000 41 91 91**.
- An external mediator. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved. Staff or volunteers within the Pre-school Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- Ofsted may be approached directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.

Public interest disclosure:

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives employees two safeguards in respect of disclosures of information.

An employee is entitled not be subjected to any detriment by virtue of having made a protected disclosure.

The dismissal of any Nursery employee directly due to the individual having made such a disclosure will automatically be unfair.

This policy was originally adopted at a meeting of the Nursery Management Committee in 2007 and is renewed/amended annually/when needed