



12 Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Whistle blowing encourages and enables employees and committee volunteers to raise serious concerns within the organisation of Long Hanborough Playgroup rather than overlooking a problem or “blowing the whistle outside.” Long Hanborough Playgroup 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 our work to come forward and voice their concerns.

The aims of this procedure are to:

- Provide avenues for relevant parties to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that they receive a response to their concerns and that if they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- Reassure them that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have reasonable belief that they have made a disclosure in good faith.

Long Hanborough Playgroup recognises that the decision to report a concern can be difficult one to make. If what is being said is true, there would be nothing to fear because the relevant party will be doing their duty to their employer and those that Long Hanborough Playgroup provides a service for. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistle blower if they so wish. At the appropriate time, however, they may need to come forward as a witness.

Long Hanborough Playgroup is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees. Long Hanborough Playgroup will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect their staff when they raise a concern. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect the staff.

This policy encourages the staff however to put their name to the concern whenever possible. Please not that:

- Staff/volunteers must disclose the information in good faith.
- Staff/volunteers must believe it to be substantially true.
- Staff/volunteers must not act maliciously or make false allegations.
- Staff/volunteers must not seek any personal gain.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the committee. In exercising this discretion the factors taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised.
- The credibility of the concern.
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

If an allegation is made in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person who made the disclosure, If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the informant.

The whistle blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of law.
- Disclosures related to a miscarriage of justice.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment.
- The unauthorised use of funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual or physical abuse of customers or staff or
- Other unethical conduct.

These issues could have arisen in the past, be currently happening or likely to happen in the future. The law does not protect an employee who would be breaking the law in making the disclosure.

If you have a serious concern it should be reported using the following procedure.

How to raise a concern.

As a first step the concerns should be raised either verbally or in writing with the group's immediate Manager. This may depend, however on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved who is suspected of

malpractice. For example, if it is believed that management is involved a more senior level of management should be approached if possible or the chair person of the committee.

Staff/volunteers who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- The reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

If a concern is raised immediately after it happens; the easier it becomes to take action. The whistle blower will not be expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, but will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for concern. It could be that the person noticing the issue may wish to consider discussing the concern with a colleague first or may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) people who have the same experience or concerns. It is also possible to invite a professional representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns that have been raised.

Long Hanborough Playgroup has in place a complaints procedure for further guidance as to what procedures to follow. This policy does NOT replace the complaints procedure.

Long Hanborough Playgroup will respond to any concerns using the guidelines within this policy and the complaints policy and procedure. Long Hanborough Playgroup hopes this will satisfy the relevant parties especially with regard to any action taken. If this does not answer the concerns and it is felt that it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

Public Concern at Work (tel: 020 7404 6609), is a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential.

- The police
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Ofsted - (www.ofsted.gov.uk)
- Education & Childcare Advisory Service - Early year team contact

If the matter is taken outside Long Hanborough Playgroup, it should be ensured that no confidential information is disclosed. Please check with our confidential policy and procedure.

The NSPCC has launched a government funded Whistleblowing Advise Line. This will take calls from professionals from any sector who are worried

about the way their, or another, organisation is dealing with child protection issues. Employees who don't feel able to escalate these issues internally can contact the service, as well as those who have been unsuccessful in doing so. It can be reached for free on 0800 028 0285 or by Email and can be contacted anonymously.

[Find out more about the NSPCC's whistleblowing advice line](#)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of LONG HANBOROUGH PLAYGROUP

Held on.....

Date to be reviewed.....

Signed on behalf of the provider.....

Name of Signatory.....
.....

Role of signatory.....
.....