



Registered Charity No.: 1155711

Whistleblowing Policy

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Manager or Committee Chair.

We understand that when the conduct of a colleague concerns you, it can be difficult to speak out. However, it is particularly important to do so where the welfare of children may be at risk, if you believe a child has been/could be harmed or a member of staff's conduct raises concern.

Staff may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or they may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk.

Staff should remember that it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who are targeted. These children need someone to safeguard their welfare.

If you suspect or become aware that a colleague/s are subject to unwanted treatment by others it is your duty to report this to the manager or committee chair.

Unwanted treatment may be obvious, however, bullying often comprises of gradual and less obvious behaviours such as negative remarks about an individual or unhelpful actions which result in feelings of isolation from the rest of the team.

At St Martin's Pre-School, we recognise the importance of teamwork, and we expect very high standards of professionalism from our staff to ensure that our team work happily and peacefully in collaboration to achieve our shared vision.

Reasons for whistle blowing

- Everyone has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistle blowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals.
- Disrupting the work or staff team.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern

- Immediately someone has a concern, suspicion or feels uneasy about something then they should voice this as soon as they can. The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- If your concern is about a child or a member of staff, inform the Manager (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), or Committee Chair.
- If your concern is about the Manager, inform Committee Chair. If your concern is about the Committee Chair, inform the LADO.
- Any allegation that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm due to the conduct of an employee or volunteer must be reported to LADO within 24 hours, by the Manager or Committee Chair.
- If your concern is about the welfare of a child and you feel you need to take it to someone outside the pre-school, you can seek advice from NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285. You can also contact Surrey Early Year's Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) directly on 0300 123 1650 or email LADO@surreycc.gov.uk.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – do not let matters rest.
- You must put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates, and places where you can.
- You will not be expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next

- The Manager or Committee Chair, once in receipt of the information, will conduct a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice, or assistance e.g., Surrey County Council, legal or personnel advisors or the police.
- If an allegation has been made or there is reason to suspect that there are grounds for an allegation against an employee or volunteer, LADO will be contacted within 24 hours. The Manager or Chairperson will work in collaboration with the LADO to ensure the statutory procedures are followed.
- Records will be kept of actions taken throughout the investigation. The person conducting the investigation will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police.
- The whistle blower will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter.
- No action will be taken against the whistle blower if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

- If the whistle blower is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the Manager, Committee Chair or directed to LADO.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible the pre-school will seek to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the person raising the concern and will, as far as possible, protect them from reprisals. The pre-school will not tolerate any attempt to victimise or harass the whistle blower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, a physical or mental health problem which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support are available from the Manager, Management Committee, or the Early Years Effectiveness Team: earlyyearsadvisors@surreycc.gov.uk.

This policy has been adopted by St Martin's Pre-School Committee:

Date:	October 2026
Signed:	Hayley Simms
Role of signatory:	Committee Chair