



## **Barn Croft Primary School Safeguarding: Whistle blowing Policy**

This guidance is written for staff<sup>1</sup> working with children and young people in education settings.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who is targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

***Don't think what if I'm wrong - think what if I'm right***

### **Reasons for whistle blowing:**

You should whistleblow if you have any reasons to make an allegation against anyone working in the school, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Each individual 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:**

- Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

<sup>1</sup> Staff includes any adult, paid or voluntary, who works at Barn Croft Primary School. This includes supply teachers, volunteers and contractors. We may have to raise an allegation against an individual not directly employed by the school, where our disciplinary procedures do not fully apply because agencies will have their own policies and procedures; for example, supply teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business. The school will work closely with the agency or business to investigate the matter and ensure guidelines are followed and appropriate action taken.

### **How to raise a concern:**

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you 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
- Approach the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Emma-Jane Kelly Deputy Headteacher) or if your concern is about the Headteacher then approach the Chair of Governors or the LA for guidance
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest
- Ideally, you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places wherever you can
- **A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.**

### **What happens next**

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

### **Self reporting**

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps 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 is available from the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher, and/or your professional or trade union.

***"Absolutely without fail - challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong."*** (reproduced with acknowledgement to "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos)



## Barn Croft Primary School

### **Safeguarding Children: Allegations regarding person(s) working in or on behalf of Barn Croft Primary School (including volunteers)**

To manage allegations against professionals, every Local Authority appoints a Designated Officer/s (LADO). The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children at Barn Croft has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

The following information is taken directly from the Safeguarding Policy:

*“The term “professional” in this context includes paid employees, volunteers, casual/agency staff and self-employed workers who will have contact with children as a part of their role. The LADO ensures that all allegations or concerns about professionals or adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. The LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.*

*The LADO is available for consultation via email [lado@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:lado@walthamforest.gov.uk) or by telephone discussion 0208 496 3646 for anyone who has a concern that a person who works or volunteers in a capacity that brings them into contact with children in Waltham Forest, may pose a safeguarding risk.*

*Any allegations or concerns MUST be reported to the LADO within 24 hours (or one working day) of it coming to notice.*

*Low level concerns should always be undertaken in consultation with the LADO in congruence with local procedures and guidance. The consultation process allows for concerns to be evaluated objectively and to ascertain whether or not similar concerns may have been raised by a previous employer but not met the threshold for investigation. Whilst the LADO will only record those allegations which appear to meet the threshold for consideration within these procedures, the employer should record any concern that arises in respect of a member of their staff.*

*In normal circumstances the LADO will be contacted by the Headteacher/DSL. It is important to note that anyone can contact the LADO if they are concerned about a person’s conduct with children. In Waltham Forest the LADO will accept a referral from any person who wishes to report a concern that meets the criteria above.*

*If there are any concerns that a member of staff (including supply teachers) or volunteer has caused harm (emotional, physical, sexual, neglect) to a child, this represents an allegation against staff and*

volunteers. All allegations against staff (including supply teachers) and volunteers must be reported to the Headteacher in the first instance. The person against whom the allegation is made should not be notified at this point. If the allegation is against the Headteacher the concerns must be reported to the chair of governors and the LADO.

You should:

- report it to the Headteacher within your organisation as soon as possible, however trivial it may seem;
- maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being considered or investigated and follow local information sharing protocols

You should not:

- attempt to deal with the situation yourself;
- make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents;
- keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality;
- take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or carers.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*, and Part 7 of the *London Child Protection Procedures*."

We will apply the same principles as in the rest of other safeguarding documents and we will always follow the procedures outlined in the London Child Protection Procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children. This includes allegations against staff in their personal lives.

Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly, in line with agreed procedures and outcomes recorded.

### **Initial Response to an allegation or concern:**

#### **Initial Action by person receiving or identifying an allegation or concern**

- Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind
- Make a written record of the information using the CP Record Form (Appendix 1), including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said and sign and date this. (Do not record on My Concern –keep a paper copy)
- Immediately report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy in their absence or where the DSL is the subject of the allegation

#### **Initial Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead** (The DSL is

Emma-Jane Kelly - Acting Headteacher). If the DSL is the subject of the allegation, then the Chair of Governors will take the following action:

- Obtain written details of the concern or allegation but do not investigate or interview child, adult or witnesses

- Contact the Referral and Assessment Team or LADO within 1 working day
- Discuss with the LADO next steps using the London Child Protection Procedures Flow Charts Allegations/Concerns Against Staff (See Appendix 2)
- Inform the Chair of Governors/committee/owner of the allegation

### **Subsequent Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- Action to be informed by any professional strategy meeting held.
- Contribute to the child protection process by attending professional strategy meetings.
- Conduct a disciplinary investigation, if an allegation strategy meeting indicates the need for this
- Maintain contact with the LADO
- Ensure clear and comprehensive records regarding the allegation, and action taken and outcome are retained on the staff member's personnel file
- The decision to suspend a member of staff is the responsibility of the headteacher, taking into account of any advice given by the LADO. The protection of children and the staff member must be the paramount consideration and suspension must be without prejudice and without delay in line with disciplinary procedures.
- Refer to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, if this outcome is agreed with the LADO

***"Absolutely without fail- challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong."***  
(reproduced with acknowledgement to "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos)

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Emma-Jane Kelly (Deputy Headteacher)  
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Gina Nair (SENDCo), Chris Moses (Parent Liaison Leader), Debra Pipe (EYFS Leader), Roxana Caba (Tea Time Club Playworker) and Gloria Jimenez (Tea Time Club Supervisor)  
Chair of Governors – Colin Whitehead  
Link Governor for Safeguarding – Anna Collin

**Signed:**

**Date: September 2023**

**Review date: September 2024**

**Appendix 1****RECORD FORM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Safety and Welfare Concern Form (to be written ASAP after not during your conversation with the child)*

Child's Name:	Class:	DOB:	Gender:

Date:	Time:	Place:	Name of person completing this form (please print):

Nature of Concern/Conversation (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)
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Describe any marks you may have seen – noting size and position (refer to body map)

Name of person you reported your concerns to

Action to be taken / recommendations from the designated member of staff

Signed:

Position:

**Return the completed form to the Designated member of staff ASAP**

## APPENDIX 2



