



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Fusion Childcare Services is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. If a member of staff discovers evidence of malpractice or wrongdoing within Fusion, they can disclose this information internally without fear of reprisal.

Our Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover concerns such as:

- Damage or Criminal offences (including towards a child)
- Financial malpractice or fraud- misuse of funds
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Dangers to health and safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behavior
- Neglecting policy or procedure
- Covering up wrongdoing
- Staff who do not safeguard or protect children in their care
- Staff who behave in a way that poses a risk
- Staff who harm or staff whose behaviour indicates that they are not suitable to work with children.

This Policy should not be used to question business decisions made by Fusion, or to raise any matters that are covered under other policies (eg Discrimination or Racial Harassment). Any allegations relating to Child Protection will follow the procedures set out in the Safeguarding Policy. The whistleblowing procedures is in place for staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in Fusion's safeguarding provision.

All those reporting have the right to remain anonymous and we will ensure they are not subject to any retaliation or other abuse as a result of them reporting a concern.

Raising a Concern

All employees/ visitors/ volunteers and anyone who comes into contact with children must feel supported in raising a public interest disclosure to the manager in the first instance. Ideally the staff member should put their allegations in writing, setting out the background to the situation, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why they are concerned about the situation. In the first instance concerns should be taken to the Management Team. If, due to the nature of the problem, this is not possible, the concern should then be raised with the offsite Owner of Fusion Childcare Services. If this person or

body is unable or unwilling to act on the concern or the whistleblower feels that the company may cover up a report, they feel they would be unfairly treated or they have raised the matter before and it has not been dealt with, the staff member should then raise it with:

- Ofsted (if it concerns the safe and effective running of the club)
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (if it concerns a Child Protection issue and is not already covered by the procedure set out in Fusion's Safeguarding Policy).
- Ultimately, with the Police (if a crime is thought to have been committed).

If the member of staff is still uncertain about how to proceed with the concern, they should contact the whistle-blowing charity PCAW (Public Concern At Work) or Peninsula, Fusion's HR system for advice.

Fusion ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Management. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not addressed, other channels are open to them:

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- [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.
- Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider: [Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK](#).
- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Whistleblowing for employees](#).

After the whistleblower has reported a concern, Fusion's Management team or they will appoint a senior member of the team to ensure the whistleblowers welfare is looked after. Regular meetings will be held to support the whistleblower.

Responding to a Concern

Initial enquiries will usually involve a meeting with the individual raising the concern or the named individual if they wish to remain anonymous, and will decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. If a concern relates to issues which fall within the scope of other Policies, it will be addressed under those Policies.

We have a culture of working together which means, we promptly and proportionately carry out a blame free investigation, taking guidance from the local authority and Ofsted when required. Swift investigation takes place to ascertain if the allegation is substantiated, malicious, false, unsubstantiated or unfounded and the relevant action and/or agencies will be informed for further advice.

If an initial meeting does not resolve the concern, further investigation will be required. The appropriate person will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days where feasible, or if this is not possible, giving a date by which, the final response can be expected. The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and who to contact if the member of staff is unhappy with the response and wishes to take the matter further.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Whistle-Blower

All concerns will be treated in confidence and Fusion will make every effort not to reveal the identity of anyone raising a concern in good faith. At the appropriate time, however, the member of staff may need to come forward as a witness. If a member of staff raises a concern in good faith, which is then not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that person.

If the investigation concludes that the member of staff maliciously fabricated the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that person.

Safeguarding & Welfare

- We ensure that all staff looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles through training, ongoing support and a culture of teamwork, respect and accountability.
- We identify inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person on the premises including visiting professionals, students and volunteers. Inappropriate behaviour could include, but is not limited to, sexual comments; excessive one to one attention beyond roles and responsibilities; inappropriate sharing of images.
- We inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children within 14 days.
- We meet our responsibilities to make a referral Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm in line with advice given from Ofsted and/or the local authority.
- We ensure anyone who whistle blows is protected through reporting anonymously or are given a named contact.
- We ensure our staff declare any change in their physical or mental health which will affect their ability to care for children.
- We deal with concerns swiftly, from communicating a report, to initial assessment, followed by investigation. We then advise on the subsequent action to be taken, critical

reflection and communicate the findings and review policies and procedures in light of any incidents.

- We ensure any allegations are reported to the manager, LADO, HSCP and Ofsted.
- Allegations of previously employed staff will be referred to HSCP.
- Effective support and a high level of confidentiality is in place for anyone undergoing an investigation or who is subject to an allegation, they are provided with a named contact if they are suspended.

Contact information:

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership Team -
www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk – 01922 588757

Children's Support Services (CSS) – Customer Service Centre – 0300 123 4043

Targeted Advice Services (TAS) – 01438 737511

Designated Officer (DO)- 01992 555420

Ofsted- 0300 123 1231

PCAW (Public Concern at Work)- 020 7404 6609

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<i>Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2026): Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Whistleblowing [3.7, 3.8].</i>			
Signed and approved:	Fusion Childcare Services		