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WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

This policy is applicable to all Hill Holt Wood and Hill Holt In The Community employees.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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REVISION RECORD

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18/09/2012	1.0	Transfer to new format, review by CEO
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17/10/2025	1.6	Reviewed by CEO

1. TITLE

Whistle-Blowing Policy

2. POLICY STATEMENT

These guidelines state the requirement for staff members to bring matters of concern to the attention of either senior management or relevant connected parties.

3. PURPOSE

This policy states how HHW will respond to Whistleblowing allegations. The Board of Trustees and Senior Management team, always operate an open workplace culture of truth, integrity and fairness in regard to any whistle-blowing concerns and treat all matters seriously and with all due consideration from any and all staff members, volunteers, agency workers and contractors who express concern.

The full purpose of this policy is to encompass the scope of individuals affected (section 4) and that all issues are treated fairly and confidentially. This policy is to cover serious concerns reported directly to the SMT or any escalated concerns from the low-level concerns raised to the Staff Representative.

4. SCOPE

This guidance is written for staff working with children and young people in education and vocational settings. Safeguarding and protecting children and young adults.

5. OBJECTIVE

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.

6. POLICY DETAILS

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 are 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.

6.1 Reasons for whistle-blowing

- 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

6.2 What stops people from whistle-blowing

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

6.3 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. You should report this to your SMT.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing, however a report will be recorded by the Manager to ensure that records are specific.

When raising a concern you should try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why. Relevant dates and a brief history would also be useful.

Where a concern is raised you may be accompanied or represented at any time in connection with the concerns raised.

6.4 Action

The following action will be taken in relation to any Whistle blowing allegations:

- An initial assessment will be made to determine what appropriate action to take.
- Investigation by management through disciplinary process or complaints procedure.
- Form the subject of an independent investigation commissioned by HHW.
- Be referred to the police.
- The person raising the concern will be notified in writing within 10 days.
- Where there is ongoing investigation the complainant will be kept informed of the progress.
- Through out all stages you will be protected 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Party / Parties	Roles and responsibilities
Steve Donagain	CEO

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

9. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning

10. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy

Complaints Policy

Grievance Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Managing Allegations Against Staff & Volunteers Policy

Low Level Concerns Policy

Incident Reporting Policy

11. REFERENCES
