Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and secure process for staff and volunteers at Little Steps Day Care to report concerns about wrongdoing or misconduct. This includes concerns related to the safety and welfare of children, unethical behaviour, illegal activities, or breaches of policies and procedures.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, students, contractors, and temporary workers at Little Step Day Care.

3. Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting concerns about wrongdoing within an organization. This may include:

- Safeguarding or child protection concerns
- Unsafe practices that put children or staff at risk
- Suspected criminal offenses
- Fraud, corruption, or financial misconduct
- Breach of legal or professional obligations
- Neglect of duties or gross misconduct
- Breach of the setting's policies or procedures

4. Our Commitment

Little Steps Day Care is committed to:

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care
- Creating a culture of openness, honesty, and accountability
- Supporting staff to report concerns in good faith
- Investigating concerns thoroughly and fairly
- Protecting whistleblowers from victimization or retaliation

5. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible, ideally in writing, and should include:

- The nature of the concern

- The background and history, including relevant dates
- Names of individuals involved (if known)
- Any evidence to support the concern

Concerns can be raised with any of the following:

- **Nursery Manager**
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
- **Room Leader**
- **Owner or Responsible Individual**

If the concern involves the manager or DSL, or if you feel unable to raise it internally, you can contact:

- **Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline**: 0300 123 3155 or whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**: 01234 276693 or 01234 276560
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line**: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk

6. Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to support investigation and resolution. Whistleblowers may remain anonymous if they wish, although doing so may limit the investigation.

7. Protection for Whistleblowers

Whistleblowers will not be penalized, dismissed, or victimized for raising concerns in good faith. Any retaliation against a whistleblower will be treated as a serious disciplinary offense.

8. Investigation Process

All concerns will be acknowledged within 3 working day and investigated promptly. The whistleblower may be asked to provide further information. Where appropriate, an outcome will be communicated once the investigation is complete, though full details may be limited due to confidentiality.

9. False Allegations

False or malicious allegations made deliberately will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.