



Cornerstone Nurseries Procedure for allegations against employees

In the case of an allegation being made against a member of staff, the procedure below will be followed whether the allegation has been made by another staff member, parent or child.

In all cases as soon as the allegation has been made or the incident occurred, the nursery safeguarding officer must be notified. It is not acceptable to withhold allegations or wait until the next day.

If an incident happens at work that a member of staff is concerned about, they should immediately alert the safeguarding officer or member of the senior management team by phone and inform them that they request an 'urgent safeguarding meeting'. This will allow the safeguarding officers to arrange cover and a confidential environment to discuss the concerns.

As soon as possible (ideally same day) a written statement of the event should be recorded. The employee must make sure that they include full names, times, dates and all relevant details, such as what the child or staff member said. This must be passed over to the safeguarding officer and will form part of the evidence collected.

In the case of a child making an allegation, the employee(s) who they disclose this to should write the statement. In this case, it is very important to accurately record exactly what the child said using their own words and not to make assumptions of what the child said.

In the case of a parent making an allegation, a safeguarding officer or member of management should accurately record the allegation during the disclosure. Ideally, during this type of meeting, two members of staff should be present. Once the allegation is recorded, the parent or reporter will need to sign it to confirm it is an accurate account.

Once this evidence is collected, the internal investigation into the allegation can start. This is also when our Head of People & Operations will be notified of the allegation and will, in turn, notify the nursery owners.

If an allegation has been made against you must:

- Stay calm
- Follow the instructions given by your manager
- Cooperate with questions and enquiries
- Seek advice and support
- Keep detailed records of events including any conversations
- It is a good idea to have a witness present at any meetings
- DO NOT CONFRONT YOUR ACCUSER

If a child has been harmed or there is an accusation of harm, the child's parents will be notified and if appropriate or necessary, medical attention will be sought for the child. Any injuries or marks to a child must be recorded on an accident form or existing injuries form.

The management team and/or safeguarding officer will then conduct interviews with the persons involved. Depending on the type of allegation and evidence given, the following action may be taken:

- The employee may be suspended from work on full pay during this investigation
- Where the allegation is considered very serious, a full investigation which includes representatives from Police, Social Services and the nursery will take place
- OFSTED will be informed of any "significant event"
- The Nursery Manager will speak with the parents/carers and explain the action taken and why
- The Nursery Manager will ensure that appropriate supervision and support is available for if, or when the employee returns to work
- Disciplinary action may be necessary to discuss any aspect of an employee's behaviour which has led to the accusation.
- All staff will be reminded to safeguard themselves against accusations by behaving in a professionally appropriate and open manner when with the children. The manager should review the Child Protection Policy with the staff team within One week of the incident being reported.

During these interviews there will always be two members of staff, one to ask questions and another to be a witness and record any notes. However, if it is the nursery manager or member of the senior leadership team who is making the accusation or has had the allegation made against themselves, then the next in line manager (usually Head of People & Operations or the nursery owners) will take their place instead.

Once the internal investigation has taken place, the Nursery Manager will then inform the LADO, who will in turn support and guide the nursery in the next step. Informing the LADO should be undertaken as soon as possible.

If there is no further action on the allegation then all persons involved in the investigation will be informed of the result, although information will be limited to a need to know basis or names redacted.

Depending on the investigation disciplinary action may be taken against the person facing the accusation. Any accusations found to be malicious will have disciplinary consequences for the accuser.

All documents relating to the accusation and investigation will be kept in a confidential file and all the staff members involved will be reminded to keep what happened confidential.

Step by step timeline to dealing with accusations against members of staff:

1. A staff member/child/parent witnesses/hears/suspects possible abuse or harm towards a child
2. This is to be immediately reported to the nursery safeguarding officers. In their absence, this would be to the manager in charge who would immediately contact the Nursery Manager or Area Manager.
3. Written statements would be taken from all persons involved.
4. The Nursery Manager would conduct an internal investigation talking to all parties involved.
5. Depending on the nature of the allegation the parent would be informed and kept updated.
6. The Manager will then phone the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will give guidance
7. Staff members involved will be updated with the investigation and outcome.