



Cornerstone Nurseries Policy regarding Dignity at Work Preventing harassment

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and respectful environment for all children, employees, visitors, parents, and contractors at our nursery. This policy outlines our commitment to preventing harassment, particularly sexual harassment, in line with current UK legislation and forthcoming changes in workplace laws from October 2024.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, parents, visitors, contractors, and anyone else engaged with the nursery, whether on the premises or participating in off-site nursery activities.

Policy Statement

Cornerstone Nurseries are committed to providing a working and learning environment free from harassment, including sexual harassment. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated, and we are committed to addressing all complaints promptly, confidentially, and in line with legal requirements.

Definition of Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic (e.g., age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment is against the law. It includes but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances, comments, or physical contact.
- Inappropriate jokes, remarks, or gestures of a sexual nature.
- Displaying or sharing offensive or sexually suggestive material, including online.
- Any behaviour that coerces, pressures, or intimidates someone based on their sex or sexual orientation.

Cornerstone Nurseries will never cover up or ignore a sexual harassment complaint

We will not tolerate misuse of power in workplace relationships, for example through seniority or influence

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Nursery Management:** Ensure the policy is enforced, provide training on harassment and sexual harassment prevention, and take all complaints seriously.
- **Employees:** Respect others, report incidents of harassment, and cooperate with any investigations.
- **Visitors, Contractors, and Parents:** Comply with the policy when on nursery premises or engaged in nursery activities.

Reporting Harassment

Any person who feels they have been harassed should report the incident to the Nursery Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head of People & Operations as soon as possible. Complaints can be made verbally or in writing. A member of staff who makes a complaint that's not upheld will not face any disciplinary action, as long as their complaint was not malicious. The nursery has an anonymous reporting procedure should any employee or visitor feel unable to make a report in person. Posters are displayed on site and available on the staff handbook section of our website.

Responding to Complaints

- Staff are encouraged to report sexual harassment complaints early
- All complaints will be treated seriously, promptly, and confidentially.
- An investigation will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner.
- Both the complainant and the alleged harasser will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation.

Consequences of Breaching the Policy

- Where there is a case to answer after investigation, employees found to have engaged in harassment will face disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.
- Normal procedures for disciplinary action will apply and both the complainant and the alleged harasser will be offered the right of representation from a colleague or trade union representative.
- The right of appeal will be offered.
- Visitors, contractors, or parents (customers) who breach this policy may be banned from the premises and reported to the appropriate authorities.
- In cases where a crime may have been committed, the nursery will report the incident to the police.

Support

- The nursery will provide support to individuals who have experienced harassment, including access to counselling services where appropriate.
- Victims will be protected from retaliation and victimisation following their complaint.

Training and Awareness

- Regular training will be provided to all staff to raise awareness of harassment and sexual harassment issues, legal responsibilities, and how to report concerns.
- Information will be made available to visitors, parents, and contractors on expected conduct within the nursery in advance through a Supplier Service Agreement.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in legislation or nursery procedures. The nursery is committed to continuous improvement and will update this policy as necessary.

This policy ensures the nursery complies with the latest UK regulations regarding harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace, and promotes a safe, respectful environment for everyone involved.

Further information & Support

Employees are encouraged to use the company's employee assistance programme HSF Assist. They can be contacted on 0800 988 6599 more information can be found within our policy on mental health and wellbeing.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/sexual-harassment-and-harassment-work-technical-guidance>

<https://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/sexual-harassment-at-work-law/>

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/help-after-rape-and-sexual-assault/>

<https://www.survivorsuk.org/> Specifically for men, boys and non binary victims of sexual violence/assault.

<https://galop.org.uk/> Specifically for members of the LGBTQ+ community who have experienced sexual violence/assault.

To contact the police call 999 in an emergency, call 101 if it's not an emergency. When you're reporting a crime, you can ask to speak to a specialist officer who's trained to deal with sexual violence.

Policy reviewed 06/11/24 CJS - Review Annually