Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose

Splatt Farm Gardens is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and safeguarding. This Whistleblowing Policy provides a clear framework for staff, volunteers, and stakeholders to raise concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or risks to children safely and responsibly.

It ensures that anyone raising concerns can do so without fear of retaliation.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Consultants
- Any individual working in regulated activity with children

It covers concerns including, but not limited to:

- Safeguarding or welfare concerns affecting children or vulnerable adults
- Criminal activity
- Breaches of health and safety
- Financial malpractice, fraud, or theft
- Unethical or unlawful conduct
- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Environmental damage

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3. Principles

Splatt Farm Gardens will:

- Take all concerns seriously
- Investigate concerns thoroughly and impartially
- Maintain confidentiality where possible
- Protect whistleblowers from victimisation or retaliation

- Act in accordance with safeguarding obligations if children are at risk

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4. Raising a Concern

Concerns should ideally be raised as soon as possible. Individuals can raise concerns through the following routes:

1. **Immediate Line Manager or Activity Lead** – If appropriate and safe to do so.
2. **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – For child protection or safeguarding concerns.
3. **Trustees / Management** – Where the concern involves management, the DSL, or serious misconduct.

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing. When raising a concern, include:

- The nature of the concern
- Relevant dates, locations, or persons involved
- Any evidence available

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5. Investigation

- All concerns will be recorded and acknowledged within a reasonable timeframe.
- The management team will determine whether the concern warrants formal investigation.
- Investigations will be conducted impartially, fairly, and confidentially.
- Outcomes will be communicated to the whistleblower where appropriate.

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6. Confidentiality and Protection

- Whistleblowers will be protected from any form of retaliation, harassment, or victimisation.
- The identity of the whistleblower will be kept confidential wherever possible.
- Concerns raised maliciously or without foundation may be addressed through disciplinary procedures.

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7. External Reporting

If internal channels are inappropriate, ineffective, or unsafe, whistleblowers may report concerns to **external authorities**, such as:

- **Ofsted** (for education / childcare provision)
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** – for child safeguarding issues

- **The Health and Safety Executive** – for health and safety concerns
- **Charity Commission** – for financial or governance concerns
- **Police** – for criminal matters

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8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required to ensure it remains effective and compliant with statutory guidance.

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9. Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): [Name] – [Email / Phone]
Management / Trustee Contact: [Name] – [Email / Phone]