



## Safeguarding

## Whistle Blowing

### Policy Statement

Our aims are to:

- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity.
- Provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation of you have made any disclosure in good faith

Any concerns can be reported to the designated officer by staff members without leading to harassment or victimisation and that every effort will be made to keep the staff members identity confidential

What should be reported?

- The treatment or care of a child
- Any breach in behaviour of staff/manager or committee member
- Discrimination of any kind
- Concerns that could impact on the health and safety of the children or colleagues.

Our designated officer is: **Amanda Adams** (Chairperson)

### **Procedure**

- The first step to raising a concern can be verbally with the designated officer or deputy.
- Provide information about the nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true, and the background and history of the concern (giving the relevant dates).

Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your suspicion, you will need to demonstrate that you are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

*Concerns will be dealt with in the following way:*

To be fair to all employees including those who may be wrongly or mistakenly accuse, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take.

*Where appropriate the matters raise may:*

- Be investigated by management, or through the disciplinary/grievance process
- Be referred and put through established child protection/abuse procedures
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry

*Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the person investigating your concern will write to you:*

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how the management proposed to deal with the matter
- Supply you with information on staff support mechanisms
- Telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not

It may be necessary for management to interview you to ensure that your disclosure is fully understood. Any meeting can be arranged away from playgroup, if you wish, and a representation or a friend may accompany you in support.

The management will do what it can to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern. You need to be assured that your disclosure has been properly addressed, unless there are any legal reasons why this cannot be done, you will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.

Confidentiality – All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identify if that is your wish.

### **Untrue Allegations**

If you make an allegation in good faith believing it to be true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, the management will recognise your concern. If however you make an allegation frivolously maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action may be taken.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 seeks to protect employees from discrimination as a result of 'blowing the whistle' on their organisation, or individuals within it, through amendments to employment law.

The organisation Public Concern at Works runs a free legal help line for people concerned about serious malpractice in the workplace.

# Whistleblowing Flow Chart

The aim is: To ensure staff feel confident regarding their duty to raise a serious concern, if they have witnessed wrongdoing at work.

## Staff responsibilities to:

- Report/raise a serious concern confidentially at the earliest opportunity with dates
- Ensure you receive a response
- Negotiate protection from possible reprisal victimisation & ensure confidentiality

## Management/committee responsibilities to:

- Ensure all the staff are made aware of policy & procedure
- Listen/investigate concerns
- Ensure there is a response
- Protect individual from possible reprisal victimisation
- Confidentiality/equality is promoted whether rightly or wrongly accused

## What should be reported?

- Inappropriate treatment/care of a child
- Serious Health & Safety or Safeguarding concerns relating to children or adults
- Discrimination of a child/adult/family
- Breach of behaviour or confidentiality

## The Investigation process:

- Management - investigates through the disciplinary/grievance process
- Referral - through established child protection/abuse procedure
- Independent inquiry

## From Investigation:

For the person raising a concern

- Written acknowledgment from the management within 10 working days
- Staff support mechanism & information
- Inform on any decision to further or make ongoing investigations which are to take place if not/why not

## An allegation

- If made in good faith and true, but yet unconfirmed by an investigation the Management will recognise your concern
- If an allegation is made for personal gain/frivolously/maliciously or inappropriately disciplinary action may be taken

**Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998** - through employment law, the 1998 act sets out to protect employee and individuals from discrimination

Free legal, helpline "Public Concerns at Works" for serious/malpractice on: 020 7404 6609 or email [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk).

Ofsted's Pilot Whistleblower Hotline on 0300 123 3155 Mon - Fri 8 - 6 or email [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)