



4.7 Whistleblowing

Introduction

We are committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability. All staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.

This policy is designed to ensure concerns are raised and dealt with appropriately, and to safeguard the welfare of the children in our care.

We want staff and volunteers to feel confident to whistleblow and report certain types of wrongdoing from another colleague.

Policy Awareness

Staff and volunteers are made aware of the whistleblowing policy during their induction. It is also discussed and explained during team meetings and in supervision meetings.

Staff are reassured that any whistleblowing concerns they report will be taken seriously.

Our Commitment to Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a mechanism where staff or volunteers can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion in circumstances where their concerns have not been dealt with or they do not feel able to follow usual reporting lines for some reason.

We want staff and volunteers to raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity so that they can be considered and hopefully resolved quickly. We are committed to dealing with any disclosure appropriately, consistently, fairly and professionally and no-one should feel that any issue or concern is not important enough to be raised.



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We do not tolerate bullying, harassment or victimisation in any form, including to those who raise a concern in connection with this policy. Furthermore, we will not tolerate any attempt to bully someone into not raising any such concern.

The Meaning of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the term used to describe the disclosure of information about suspected wrongdoing or dangers identified at work. It is a “protected disclosure” under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 when made in good faith.

This includes concerns such as:

- A child being at risk of harm
- Neglect or abuse of a child
- A breach of safeguarding procedures
- Unsafe working conditions or practices
- Fraud or misuse of nursery funds
- Discrimination or harassment
- Criminal activity or misconduct

Safeguarding Concerns

While safeguarding concerns should normally be raised through our Safeguarding Policy, we recognise there may be times when staff feel unable to use the standard reporting procedures — for example, if:

- They believe their concern is not being taken seriously.
- They feel there has been a failure to follow the safeguarding policy or procedures.
- They feel there has been an inadequate response to a safeguarding disclosure or incident.
- They fear repercussions for reporting a concern.
- The person responsible for safeguarding may be implicated.



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In such cases, safeguarding concerns can and should be raised under this whistleblowing policy. Staff are encouraged to raise concerns internally following the procedure set out in this policy but may also contact external whistleblowing services if they do not feel able to do so, or if they believe the matter has not been properly addressed.

Whistleblowing, Complaints and Grievances

Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. The term 'whistleblowing' usually applies when a person is acting as a witness to misconduct or malpractice that they have observed and which threatens other people.

A grievance is when an employee has a dispute about their own circumstances relating to their employment. Anyone who meets this criterion should follow our grievance policy.

A complaint is where a person, or a person close to the complainant, has personally been poorly treated and are seeking redress or justice for themselves or that person. In these circumstances the person making the complaint should follow our complaints policy.

Whistleblowing Procedure

If you have a whistleblowing concern, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your line manager. This may be done orally or in writing. Those who wish to make a written statement should set out the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates) and the reasons why they are particularly concerned about the situation. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier it will be to take action.

We do not expect an individual to prove their concern is true, but it will be necessary to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for the issue to be raised.

If an individual feels unable to raise the matter with their line manager, then the next point of contact is the Manager or, if the Manager is their line manager, the Chair of Committee. This person can be contacted by email (see website for details).

The person the whistleblowing concern is reported to will:



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- formally acknowledge receipt of your concern.
- formally notify you who will be investigating your concern.
- offer you an opportunity of a meeting to discuss the issue if required, so long as you have not submitted your concern in writing anonymously. You can be accompanied by a work colleague if required.
- respect your confidentiality where this has been requested.
- take steps to ensure that you have appropriate support and advice.
- agree a timetable for feedback.
- provide you with as much feedback as it is possible while observing data protection regulations; and
- take appropriate and timely action against anyone who victimises you.

Whistleblowing to a Prescribed Body

If a staff member is unhappy with the outcome of the internal whistleblowing procedure or feels unable to raise their concerns using the internal procedure, they can whistleblow to a prescribed body rather than our organisation.

The organisations below can offer support with this:

Protect - Free confidential whistleblowing advice.

Call on 020 3117 2520

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) - Contact them about matters relating to child welfare and protection. Tel: 0800 028 0285. This phoneline is staffed 365 days a year: Mon-Fri (incl. bank holidays) 8am to 10pm and weekends 9am to 6pm. Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Ofsted - Contact them about matters relating to regulation and inspection of children's social care. Tel: 0300 123 3155 Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

General guidance from the Government

[Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower - GOV.UK](#)



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Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence, and the identity of a member of staff or volunteer will not be revealed, unless they wish it to be. However, in some cases, confidentiality may not be possible, for example when reporting abuse or a criminal offence, as action may need to be taken and the person reporting the concerns may be needed to provide evidence in disciplinary or criminal proceedings. Staff will be consulted if it does become necessary to reveal their identity.

Anonymous Allegations

Whenever possible, staff and volunteers should be prepared to put their name to an allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much harder to investigate but should be considered by senior managers.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.

False Allegations

If a member of staff or volunteer makes an allegation in good faith, but the allegation is not confirmed by any subsequent investigation, no action should be taken against them.

However, we may consider disciplinary action where it is believed that an employee has made an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain.



This policy was adopted at a meeting:	
Held on	Date
Date to be reviewed	Date
Signed on behalf of the Committee	
Name of signatory	
Role of signatory (e.g. Chair)	