
PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE (WHITLEBLOWING)

Policy Intention

This policy is designed to ensure that everyone can provide information or report a procedural failure or professional concern that they may have about a staff member's behaviour, conduct or professional identity.

All those reporting have the right to remain anonymous and we will ensure they are not subject to any retaliation or other abuse as a result of them reporting a concern.

All employees, volunteers, students, stakeholders, contractors, consultants and anyone who comes into contact with children must feel supported in raising a public interest disclosure to the line manager in the first instance or to an external person or body if they think that person may cover up a report, they feel they would be unfairly treated or they have raised the matter before and it has not been dealt with.

Public interest disclosure or whistleblowing means the reporting of damage, criminal offences (including towards a child), covering up wrong doing, misuse of funds or resources, neglecting policy or procedure, staff who do not safeguard or protect children in their care, staff who behave in a way that poses a risk, staff who harm or staff whose behaviour indicates that they are not suitable to work with children.

We have a culture of working together which means, we promptly and proportionately carry out a blame free investigation, taking guidance from the local authority and Ofsted when required.

Procedure

Safeguarding & Welfare

- We ensure that all staff looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles through training, ongoing support and a culture of team work, respect and accountability.
- We identify inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person on the premises including visiting professionals, students and volunteers. Inappropriate behaviour could include, but is not limited to, sexual comments; excessive one to one attention beyond roles and responsibilities; inappropriate sharing of images.
- We inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children within 14 days.

- We meet our responsibilities to make a referral Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm in line with advice given from Ofsted and/or the local authority.
- We ensure anyone reporting a public interest disclosure is protected through reporting anonymously or are given a named contact.
- We ensure our staff declare any change in their physical or mental health which will affect their ability to care for children.
- We deal with concerns swiftly, from communicating a report, to initial assessment, followed by investigation. We then advise on the subsequent action to be taken, critical reflection and communicate the findings and review policies and procedures in light of any incidents.
- We ensure any allegations are reported to the line manager, specified person (nominated or registered person), local authority, union or professional association or Ofsted.
- Allegations of previously employed staff will be referred to the relevant authority.
- Effective support and a high level of confidentiality is in place for anyone undergoing an investigation or who is subject to an allegation, they are provided with a named contact if they are suspended.
- Swift investigation takes place to ascertain if the allegation is substantiated, malicious, false, unsubstantiated or unfounded and the relevant action and/or agencies will be informed for further advice.

Useful links:

[Guidance Report a serious childcare incident](#)
[NSPCC Whistleblowing](#)

Other policies:

- [Continued Professional Development](#)
- [Safer Recruitment](#)
- [Supervision](#)

Suggested policies for settings to develop:

- Staff Code of Conduct to including medication, alcohol and substances, harassment or bullying, breaches of all policies, professional identity
- Disciplinary