

Safeguarding –Whistle blowing policy

Policy Statement

If workers bring information about a wrong doing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain ways under the *Public interest disclosure Act 1998*.

This is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'. The law that protects whistle-blowers is for the public interest-so people are encouraged to speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation. Blowing the whistle is more formally known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest'.

Our setting will work with children, parents, staff and the community to ensure the safety of children. All persons adopting the whistle blowing policy will be protected within the law stated.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
Keeping safe	- Respecting each other - Parents as partners	The wider context	Inclusive of AUC/PR/EE

Policy and procedure

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who 'blow the whistle' about wrong doing. It applies where a worker has a reasonable belief that their disclosure tends to show one or more of the following offences or breaches:

- a criminal offence;
- the breach of a legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- a danger to the health and safety of any individual;
- damage to the environment; or
- deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above.

Little Saints Pre-School strongly supports measures which protect whistle blowers from any form of victimisation. Little Saints Pre-School has a procedure to ensure that concerns are dealt with effectively and efficiently and will do all that they can to preserve the confidentiality of workers who raise such concerns.

Staff who genuinely believe that people they work with are behaving in a way that seems wrong or have a serious concern about an aspect of service will be doing their duty and acting in the public interest by speaking out.

How to raise a concern

The procedure seeks to encourage and enable individuals to disclose information through appropriate channels first, rather than going directly to an outside person or body.

As a first step, concerns should normally be raised with **Nicola Coit (Nicky C)** (DSL) or **Carole Sale** (Manager & Deputy DSL) or Little Saints Trustee Members. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of any wrong doing.

Staff can raise concerns with (local authority or SEYC or Trustees) as a third option.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are advised to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reasons for making the disclosure. This will make the investigation easier to complete.

Although a member of staff is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, they will need to demonstrate that they have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.

Little Saints Pre-School will respond to any concerns raised. In order to protect a member of staff who raises a concern and those accused of wrong-doing, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, conduct or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted. Staff will be told how Little Saints Pre-School proposes to deal with a concern within ten working days of the concern being brought to the Company's attention.

Finding Solutions Together (Formally Escalation Procedure)

If a staff member feels their concerns have not been taken seriously by the DSL or DDSL, they have a duty to implement the SURREY CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP Finding Solutions Together procedure by contacting C-SPA if the concern raised is about a child or LADO if the concern raised is about a staff member with immediate effect.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated with confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal a staff member's identity, if they so wish. However, while making all reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the matter as a whole, at a certain stage in the investigation it will be necessary to make the origin of the complaint known to the person or persons the allegations concern.

All concerns raised within the remit of this procedure will be assessed to determine if the confidentiality extends to withholding the name of the complainant. There shall be a substantial reason for doing so, such as a real risk of personal harm.

Complainants should be aware however, that their identity may be revealed by inference.

Low level concerns that do not meet the allegation/harm threshold.

At Little Saints Preschool we have a procedure in place to deal with low level concerns (including allegations)

The term low-level concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the setting may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

The purpose of reporting low-level concerns is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the setting's values and expected behaviour set out in the staff code of conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff.

The setting creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.

Reports should be made to Nicola Coit (Nicky C) DSL and or Carole Sale Manager/DDSL in a timely manner and follow procedures by informing Ofsted. If the DSL or DDSL has any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about the individual as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they will consult with the LADO.

We respond to low level concerns because any form of inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. A concern can still be significant even if it does not meet the threshold of harm. Left unaddressed, low-level concerns can escalate.

Low level concerns may also highlight a need for further training or improved staff induction.

All low-level concerns are recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Records are reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the DSL and Manager decide on a course of action, either through disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO

Untrue allegations

The Company accepts that deciding to report a concern can be very difficult and uncomfortable.

If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against him/her. If, however, a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding Child Protection failures internally or have concerns about a way a

concern is being handled by their setting. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Name and Contact number for a suspected case of Child Abuse:

Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership

Children's Single Point of Access Safeguarding Hub (C-SPA) – for a consultation or to make a referral

Tel: **03004709100**

Text Line: 07527 182861

North East Referral Hub/C-SPA

Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk

Outside hours, weekends and public holidays contact:

Emergency Duty Team (EDT) – 01483 517898

Edt.ssd@surreycc.gov.uk

Surrey Police – 101 or 999 in an emergency

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

OFSTED

Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline

Tel: 0300 123 3155

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD

Helpline: 0300 123 1231

Changes to Policy and Procedure

Any changes to this policy and any procedures may come into force following Government Guidance and Legislation changes to law or any new Legislation that the Government sees fit to implement. This includes any changes due to the Coronavirus Act 2020 and any subsequent Acts that will affect the Early Years Sector and our setting now or in future communication and changes.

Acts and legislation includes but is not exhaustive to:

Coronavirus Act 2020

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Guidance for educational settings

Early Years Foundation stage: Coronavirus Disapplications

Actions for Early Years and Childcare providers

This policy was adopted at a meeting of **Little Saints Pre-School**

Held on (date)

Signed on behalf of CIO Trustees