

Venue: Birstall Highcliffe County Primary School Community Centre

Greengate Lane, Birstall, Leicester

Tel: 0116 2672795

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children

1.2a Whistle blowing

Policy statement

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children

We understand that whistle blowing is an important aspect of safeguarding where staff volunteers and students are encouraged to share genuine concerns about a colleague's behaviour. We understand that this behaviour may not be abuse be not be in keeping with the appropriate code of conduct for the setting.

We recognise that if a member of staff, volunteer or student raises concerns about a wrong doing they are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The Act applies where a worker has reasonable belief that their disclosure tends to show one or more of the following offences or breaches:

- A criminal offence
- The breach of legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the environment
- Deliberate covering up of any of the above

We support measures that protect whistle blowers of any victimisation. We have a procedure to ensure that concerns are dealt with effectively and will do all that we can to preserve the confidentiality of the person/s who has/have raised a concern.

Procedures

- If a member of staff, volunteer or student has a concern the procedure below should be followed:
- Raise concern with the manager (unless the concern relates to them)
- Raise concerns with the local education authority
- Submit your concern verbally or put them in writing

- Ensure concerns are clearly written and include the background, history, names, dates and places and reason for disclosure. When raising a concern the whistle blower needs to demonstrate that they have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.
- The manager/local authority will respond to the concern by carrying out an initial enquiry to decide if an investigation should take place.
- If the concern falls within the offences/breaches listed above these will be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- Concerns may be resolved by agreed actions without the need for investigation.
- If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is carried out.
- We will explain to the whistle blower how concerns will be dealt with within 10 working days.

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal staff members, volunteers or students identity. However, while making all efforts to maintain confidentiality of the concern at a stage in the investigation it will be necessary to make the origins of the concern known to the person or persons the allegations is against.

All concerns raised within the remit of the above procedure will be assessed to determine if the confidentiality extends to withholding the name of the complainant. There will be a substantial risk of personal harm.

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

We realise that reporting a concern can be very difficult and uncomfortable. If a member of staff, volunteer or student makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If a member of staff, volunteer or student makes an allegation frivolously or maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary actions may be taken against them.

If concerns relate to allegations of abuse then this should be referred to the LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer.

Whistle blowing

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their setting. However, they may not express their growing concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be just suspicion of malpractice and wrongdoing at work.

We are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person linked with the setting and/or others (e.g. Parents/Carers) to come forward and voice those concerns.

We make it clear that employees, Parents/Carers and others can do so without fear or reprisals. Our Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns within the setting rather than overlooking the problem.

The procedure allows employees, Parents/Carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the Management/Staff of Acorn Under Fives.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response;
- Reassure you that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staff's own employment, Parent/Carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies. This Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. That concern may be about something that:

- Is against the policies and procedures of Acorn Under Fives
- Falls below established standards of practice;
- Amounts to improper conduct;
- Is a Health and Safety risk, including risks to the public as well as children, other colleagues, Parents/Carers and others;
- Contradicts Acorn Under Fives Code of Conduct.

• Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of Acorn Under Fives

The procedure will be communicated to all employees as well as Parents/Carers, Students and others. The local authority designated officer (LADO) should be contacted if there are any concerns regarding a staff member at Acorn Under Fives.