

46. Whistleblowing

Statement of intent

We are committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty, integrity and accountability.

Aim

Polesden Lacey Playschool intends this policy to set out a procedure which individuals; staff or parents/guardians can follow when they discover evidence of malpractice or wrongdoing. Within the Playschool, they can disclose this information internally without fear of reprisal.

Practice

Our Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover concerns such as:

- Financial malpractice or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Dangers to health and safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour

This policy should not be used to question business decisions made by the Playschool, or to raise any matters that are covered under other policies (eg discrimination or racial harassment).

Any allegations relating to safeguarding will follow the procedures set out in the Safeguarding Children policy.

Raising a concern

Ideally the staff member should put his or her allegations in writing, setting out the background to the situation, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why they are concerned about the situation.

In the first instance concerns should be taken to the Manager.

If due to the nature of the problem, this is not possible concerns should be raised with the Playschool's management committee.

If this Manager or Committee are unwilling or unable to act on the concern, the staff member should then raise it with:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (if it concerns a Safeguarding issue and is not already covered by the procedure set out in the Playschool's Safeguarding Children policy)
- NAVEX Global Navex on their freephone helpline 0800 069 8180 or email whistle@protect-advice.org.uk
- Ofsted (if it concerns the safe and effective running of the Playschool) Tel: 0300 123 3155 or email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- Ultimately, with the police (if a crime is thought to have been committed).

If the member of staff is still uncertain about how to proceed with the concern, contact the whistle-blowing charity 'Protect' for advice - 020 3117 2520 or via their website - <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

Responding to a concern

Initial enquiries will usually involve a meeting with the individual raising the concern, where it will be decided whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. If a concern relates to issues which fall within the scope of other policies, it will be addressed under those policies.

If the initial meeting does not resolve the concern, further investigation is required. The appropriate person will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days where feasible, or if this is not possible, giving a date by which the final response can be expected. The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and who to contact if the member of staff is unhappy with the response and wishes to take the matter further.

Rights and responsibilities of the whistle-blower

All concerns will be treated in confidence and the Playschool will make every effort not to reveal the identity of anyone raising a concern in good faith. At the appropriate time, however, the member of staff may need to come forward as a witness.

If a member of staff raises a concern in good faith which is then not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that person.

If the investigation concludes that the member of staff maliciously fabricated the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that person.

Contact information

Navex Global, freephone helpline number 0800 069 8180. Email whistle@protect-advice.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Helpline 0808 800 5000. Email help@nspcc.org.uk or
Ofsted: 0300 123 1231. Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Protect - 02031172520 Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

Policy Review

As part of Polesden Lacey Playschool monitoring of whistleblowing this policy will be subject to periodic review.

Policy adopted by: Ellie Pragnell (Chair), Caroline O'Leary (Manager)

Date: September 24

Policy Review Date: September 25