



WHISTLE-BLOWING

PURPOSE

This policy provides employees and trustees with the opportunity to express a genuine concern they might have about suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities.

This policy covers allegations of:

Actions contrary to any code of conduct or ethics, bribery, corruption, creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment, criminal activities, dishonesty, fraud, financial irregularities and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

The purpose of this is to give York Childcare (YC) the chance to investigate and take appropriate action, thereby eliminating the need to go public.

SCOPE

Any employee or trustee with a concern is encouraged to raise it initially following the Procedure for Raising a Concern. (See below)

The procedures are not to be used by employees for raising grievances about their permanent employment.

Our Confidentiality Policy is not intended to prevent staff who have legitimate concerns about malpractice from raising them under these procedures.

It is better that employees raise matters, rather than keep quiet about something which turns out to be serious, even if they lack hard evidence or are concerned about getting into trouble with Management or their colleagues.

Deliberately false and malicious allegations will be dealt with under the company's Disciplinary Procedure.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any individual who raises a concern will have the matter treated confidentially. Their name will not be disclosed to the perpetrator of the malpractice without their prior consent.

PROCEDURE FOR RAISING A CONCERN

Where an individual feels it appropriate to raise a concern, they should raise the matter in the first instance to the General Manager (GM) or with the Out of School Club Service Manager, or with another Nursery Manager if the GM is not available or is implicated in the alleged activity. Concerns may be raised either in writing or verbally.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A CONCERN

The GM will carry out an investigation as quickly as possible providing the concern raised falls within her/his normal level of responsibility.

In normal circumstances it is anticipated that an investigation will be completed within 10 working days. Some issues may require immediate action eg issues of safety. Some issues may require a longer timescale.

Effective steps must be taken to maintain confidentiality and minimise any rumours.

Representations made by individuals must be protected during the investigation process.



The General Manager will:

- Acknowledge the concern to the individual in writing and ask for strict confidentiality whilst the investigation is being carried out.
- Ensure that the Chair of the Management Board and, if appropriate, the relevant line manager is informed, whilst retaining a high level of confidentiality.
- Liaise with appropriate members of the company in order to carry out a proper investigation. If the issue is beyond the normal responsibility or level of authority of the GM it may be appropriate that the Chair leads the investigation.
- Ensure compliance with YC's Disciplinary Procedure, should the subject raised involve potential disciplinary matters regarding another employee.
- Report back to the individual in writing about the progress of the investigation, should it take longer than anticipated.
- Communicate the outcome in writing to the concerned individual once the investigation is concluded.

PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUALS

Effective steps must be taken to maintain confidentiality and minimise any rumours, to protect the reputations of individuals if allegations are subsequently found to be false.

Employee's rights under YC's Disciplinary Procedure must be observed.

ACCESS

Any employee who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the General Manager has the right to raise it in confidence with any member of the Management Board. This may be done by addressing a letter to the named director marked "Private and Confidential" and delivered to the General Office. The named director will only open any mail addressed as such.

If the resulting investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated, yet the employee is still convinced there is a matter for concern, then they have the right to raise it with an appropriate official body. Employees are strongly encouraged to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. 'Public Concern at Work' is a charity dedicated to supporting employees who need to 'whistleblow' and operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details can be found on their website which is: www.pcaw.org.uk/

PROTECTION OF WHISTLE-BLOWERS RIGHTS

Individuals who raise genuine concerns must not suffer any detriment because of it.

Employees who harass or bully colleagues who raise concerns using this agreed procedure will be dealt with under the company's Disciplinary Procedure. If YC concludes that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.



CONCLUSION

Following the resolution of a genuine whistle-blowing issue, a brief report will be made to the Management Board.

Ofsted Whistleblowing hotline number (0300 123 3155). It is staffed from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. You can also email the Ofsted whistleblowing team (whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk) or send your concerns by post to:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD