

Whistle-blowing

Policy Statement

Whistle-blowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation.

Brixworth Centre Pre-School is committed to delivering a high quality pre-school service, promoting accountability and maintaining public confidence. This policy provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation or punishment when they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the setting. The policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace, in order to promote good governance and accountability in the public interest. The act covers behaviour which amounts to:

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to the health and safety of an individual and/or environment in the workplace
- Funds are used in an unauthorised or illegal manner
- Breach of legal obligation or statutory codes of practice
- Serious failure to comply with appropriate professional standards
- Deliberate concealment of information regarding any of the above

It is not intended that this policy be a substitute for, or alternative to the settings formal complaints procedure. It is designed to nurture a culture of openness and transparency within the setting, which makes it safe and acceptable for employees and volunteers to raise, in good faith, a concern they may have in relation to misconduct or malpractice in the workplace.

Procedures

- An employee or volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such a concern should normally report the matter to the DSL who will advise the employee of the action that will be taken in response to the concerns expressed. This may be done verbally in the first instance, but ideally in writing. The following should be included:

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant names, dates etc where possible)
 - The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation
 - The possible implications of your concerns
- Concerns should be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.
 - If an employee or volunteer feels that the concerns cannot be discussed with the pre-school DSL, he or she should contact the Chairperson of Brixworth Centre Pre-school Committee on chairperson@brixworthcentrepreschool.co.uk.
 - If they feel they can not contact the Preschool Chairperson they should contact a Centre Trustee, these can be found on the Preschool website.
 - Alternatively Ofsted can be contacted:
 - Ofsted 0300 123 1231 (Monday – Friday 8.00am – 3.00pm)
 - E-mail Ofsted at whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
 - Write to Ofsted at WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
 - A disclosure in good faith to the Pre-school Supervisor/Chairperson will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and the employee/volunteer will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace.
- It is essential that no investigation occurs until and unless the LADO has expressly given consent for this to occur, however, the person responding to the allegation does need to understand what explicitly is being alleged.
 - The designated safeguarding lead must take steps to ensure the immediate safety of children, parents, and staff on that day within the setting.
 - The LADO is contacted as soon as possible and within one working day. If the LADO is on leave or cannot be contacted the LADO team manager is contacted and/or advice sought from the point of entry safeguarding team/mash/point of contact, according to local arrangements.
 - The designated safeguarding lead ensures staff completes Whistleblowing Record Form.
 - Notification to Ofsted is required for any allegations made against a member of staff, therefore the designated safeguarding lead will inform Ofsted as soon as possible, but no later than 14

days after the event has occurred. The designated safeguarding lead will liaise with the designated officer/line manager about notifying Ofsted.

- Ofsted must be updated of the actions taken by the setting, even if the LADO decides the allegation does not meet their threshold for investigation.
- Avenues such as performance management or coaching and supervision of staff will also be used instead of disciplinary procedures where these are appropriate and proportionate. If an allegation is ultimately upheld the LADO may also offer a view about what would be a proportionate response in relation to the accused person.
- The designated safeguarding lead must consider revising or writing a new risk assessment where appropriate, for example if the incident related to an instance where a member of staff has physically intervened to ensure a child's safety, or if an incident relates to a difficulty with the environment such as where parents/carers and staff are coming and going, and doors are left open.
- All allegations are investigated even if the person involved resigns or ceases to be a volunteer.

Escalating and whistleblowing concerns

- If a member of staff at Brixworth Centre Preschool time that children may be in danger due to the actions or otherwise of a member of staff or volunteer, they must discuss their concerns immediately with the designated safeguarding lead.
- If after discussions with the designated safeguarding lead, they still believe that appropriate action to protect children has not been taken they must speak to the designated officer/line manager.
- If an issue cannot be resolved and the member of staff believes a child remains at risk because the setting or the local authority have not responded appropriately, the NSPCC have introduced a whistle-blowing helpline 0800 028 0285 for professionals who believe that:
 - their own or another employer will cover up the concern
 - they will be treated unfairly by their own employer for complaining

An open culture for sharing concerns

- Staff are encouraged to share any concerns throughout their employment. Preschool strives to provide an open, transparent environment where staff feel safe and supported to share their concerns.

- Staff are given ample opportunities to raise concerns, questions and opportunity to share comes up in their termly 1:1 supervisions, weekly briefings and annual appraisals.