



1.6 Whistleblowing

'Whistleblowing means raising or reporting any concern regarding the welfare or safety of a child or children and young people.'

Everyone who encounters children and families in their everyday work has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Central@RLK is an organisation committed to delivering a high-quality pre-school service, promoting organisational accountability and maintaining public confidence.

This policy provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation or punishment where they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the organisation.

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 health and safety of an individual and/or environment
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above.

Staff, professionals, visitors and students/volunteers should be watchful for any illegal, inappropriate, or unethical conduct and should report anything of that nature that they become aware of if there is a failure to meet Ofsted's standards of registration or safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

In such instances, the concerns about the unacceptable practise or behaviour should be raised, as soon as possible, no matter how trivial it may seem. This is to prevent the problem worsening or widening, to protect others and to prevent becoming implicated themselves. Don't think, what if I'm wrong? – think, what if I'm right?

Staff should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves or undertake any action (such as interviewing the alleged victim or witnesses or informing the parents/carers or alleged perpetrator) that would undermine any future investigation.

1. We encourage employees to recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Manager. If the concern relates to the Manager, they should report these to the Chairperson. The Chairperson can be contacted directly via email: rebecca.luneddavies@googlemail.com If the concern is about the Chairperson, or the 'whistleblower' does not feel comfortable to speak with the Manager or Chairperson, the concerns should be raised with the Local Area Safeguarding Officer (LADO) on (01793 463854)

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures with the Manager or



Chairperson, or who have concerns about the way the setting has dealt with a concern. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 and email: help@nspcc.org.uk

2. Concerns should be raised verbally and in writing, and in both instances the member of staff will be required to discuss and record:
 - a. Any background information related to the concern
 - b. The reason/nature of the concern
 - c. The extent to which they have personally witnessed or experienced the concern.
3. The Manager/Chairperson will in the first instance decide if the concern falls within the scope of other policies and procedures. If so, the concern will be acted upon using the appropriate procedure.
4. If the concern is not related to safeguarding, the Manager/Chairperson will consider the information that has been disclosed and decide whether to investigate or not.
5. If a decision is made not to investigate the concern, the reasons for this will be fully explained to the person making the allegation.
6. The Manager/Chairperson will decide who will conduct the investigation. Some investigations may involve external agencies such as the Local Authority. If an investigation is to take place, the person who raised the concern will be informed and they may be asked to give further information.
7. The Manager/Chairperson will inform the person about whom the concern was made, giving them the details of the concern but not informing them of who made the concern, the person will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations.
8. The Manager/Chairperson and/or external agencies will decide, after the investigation, if there is a need for further external involvement from organisations such as the police and the action, if any, which is to be taken against the person whom the concern was raised about.
9. If the concern is related to safeguarding, I will report it to the LADO and following all recommendations and advice from the LADO.
10. I will keep accurate records of every concern raised and of the outcome.
11. If the person with the concern feels unable to discuss the matter with me, or if they don't feel I have dealt with the concern sufficiently, then they should refer the matter to the LADO and/or relevant outside agency directly.

The manager has a responsibility to prevent harassment of the complainant and should keep them informed of the progress of any investigation. No action against the complainant will be taken if the concern proves to be unfounded but was made in good faith. However, malicious allegations will be considered a disciplinary offence. If a child has been injured or there is clear evidence of, or risk of, significant harm, then immediate referral to the LADO, SSP, Police and Ofsted must be made and the Manager/Designated Person for Child Protection informed as soon as possible afterwards. The safety and welfare of the child is the overriding concern.

We ensure that staff, feel able to express their concerns without the fear of harassment, victimisation or not being believed. If the allegations concern abuse against a child, the manager or Chairperson will contact the LADO (see above) or SSP for consultation, a referral form will also be used. The LADO will record a note of the consultation and will advise on the appropriate action that needs to be taken.