



Whistle-blowing Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis

Introduction

1.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 was enacted to ensure a climate of greater frankness between employers and workers so that the irregularities can be identified and addressed quickly and to strengthen employment rights by protecting responsible workers who blow the whistle about wrong doing or failures in the workplace. The policy set out in this document applies to Pippins Pre-School and Nursery.

1.2 Employees are often the first to realise that something seriously wrong may be happening within Pippins Pre-school and Nursery. However, they may not express their concerns either because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to Pippins Pre-school and nursery or because they fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern than to report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

1.3 Pippins Pre-school and Nursery is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment it encourages employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of Pippins Pre-school and nurseries care to come forward and voice their concerns. It recognises that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy makes it clear that Early Years Educators can do without fear of reprisals and is intended to encourage and enable Early Years Educators to raise serious concerns within Pippins Pre-school and Nursery rather than overlooking a problem or publicly disclosing the matter.

2.0 Aims and Scope of this Policy

2.1 This policy aims to;

provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any actions taken; allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with Pippins Pre-school and nursery response.

2.2 This policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. It is not intended as recourse against financial or business decisions made by Pippins Pre-school and nursery or its trustee directors under our procedures. Nor is it an alternative to well-established disciplinary or grievance procedures. It may however overlap with other corporate policies for dealing with complaints.

Concerns

Concerns raised under the Whistle-blowing Policy should be about something that is or may be:

- Unlawful or a criminal offence; or

- A breach of a legal obligation; or
- A miscarriage of justice; or
- Mistreat or abuse of a client or a member of the public for whom Pippins Pre-school have responsibility; or
- In disregard of legislation governing healthy and safety at work; or
- Seeking undue favour over a contractual matter or a job application; or
- Amounts of improper conduct or conduct or unauthorised use of public funds;
- Has led to or could lead to damage to the environment; or
- Deliberately covers up information tending to show any of the above.

Safeguarding

3.1 Harassment or Victimisation

Pippins Pre-school and nursery recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. Pippins Pre-school and Nursery will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. It will not tolerate any resulting harassment or victimisation (including informal or indirect pressures) and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the appropriate procedures.

3.2 Any investigation into an allegation or malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures which already affect you.

3.3 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and Pippins Pre-school and nursery will do its best to protect your identity if you do not want your name to be disclosed. If investigation of a concern discloses a situation which is sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action or police involvement then your evidence may be important. Your name will not however be released as a possible witness until the reasons for its disclosure at this stage have been fully discussed with you.

3.4 Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they will be considered at the discretion of Pippins Pre-school and nursery against the following criteria.

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources;
- Pippins Pre-schools and nurseries best interest;
- The protection of Pippins Pre-schools and Nursery assets.

3.5 You should also bear in mind that if you choose to raise a concern anonymously it will be more difficult for the matter to be investigated and for you to be provided with feedback.

3.6 Untrue allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no reprisals will be taken against you. If however you make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

4.0 How to raise a concern

4.1 As a first step, you should normally raise with your immediate manager. If for some reason this first step is inappropriate then the concern should be raised to the committee. If your complaint is that something seriously wrong is occurring at the management level within Pippins Pre-school and Nursery you should approach the chairperson of the trustee directors.

4.2 Concerns can be raised orally but it is good practice for the concern to be recorded in writing at an early stage to ensure that all the details are correctly understood. A written allegation should set out the background and history of the concern (giving names, dates and places where possible) and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. It is preferable for you to record this in writing yourself. However, where the person to whom you voice your concerns writes these down a copy will be sent to your home address to give you an opportunity to agree this as a correct record.

4.3 The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action.

4.4 Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

5.0 How Pippins Pre-school and nursery will respond

5.1 The action taken by Pippins Pre-school and nursery will depend on the nature of the concern. After initial enquires to assess the seriousness of the matter it may be investigated internally (employing specific procedures where these are applicable- for example in child protection or discrimination issues) or to the police.

5.2 If urgent action is required in response to a concern this may well be taken before a full investigation is conducted.

5.3 Some concerns may be resolved by action agreed with you without the need for investigation or it may be that an investigation can be completed without the person or persons under investigation being aware of the process.

5.4 In any event within ten working days of a concern being received, Pippins Pre-school and nursery will write to you at your home address;

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- Telling you whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.
- Naming an independent trustee director to support you during any investigation.

5.5 This independent trustee director will make contact with you immediately, explain their role, deal with all confidentiality issues, agree frequency of contact and keep you informed about the progress of the investigation. The manager and chairperson are informed of any further issues you think are necessary. You should raise with the independent person any concerns you have about the conduct of the investigation. The independent person will take appropriate steps to support you in the workplace and at the criminal or disciplinary proceedings which may eventually result from your concern and at which you are asked to give evidence.

5.6 If you wish to retain your anonymity you will need to nominate a representative to whom correspondence may be directed in order to keep you informed.

5.7 The amount of contact between the independent person and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from you.

5.8 When any meeting is arranged, you have the right, if you so wish, to be accompanied by another professional or a friend.

5.9 Pippins Pre-school and nursery accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus subject to legal constraints, you will receive information about the outcome of any investigations and/or proceedings.

6.0 Detriment

Pippins Pre-school and nursery is committed to ensuring that an employee who makes an allegation in good faith suffers no detriment from doing so.

7.0 How the matter can be taken further.

7.1 This policy is to intend to provide you in a way to raise concerns within Pippins Pre-school and nursery. Pippins Pre-school and Nursery hopes you will be satisfied by its response. If you are not you may wish to raise the matter with the manager and follow the settings complaints procedure.

Whistleblower Hotline

There may be times when council employees and those working with young children will want to report to Ofsted concerns about practices and procedures for the safeguarding of children and young people.

You can contact Ofsted on their hotline in three ways.

- Call them on 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm)
- Email them at; whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk.
- Write to them at;
WBHL
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Before you contact the hotline

Ofsted suggests that you first read the policy and then raise your concerns with your manager.


If you are still not sure how to raise your concerns with your manager then it is suggested that you first get free, confidential advice from the independent whistleblowing charity Public Concern at Work. It can help you to decide whether and/or how to raise your concern. You can call on 020 7404 6609 or email helpline@pcaw.co.uk. For further information go to the Public Concern at Work website- it includes guidance on the whistleblowing legislation.

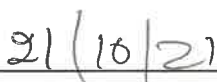
This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pippins Pre-school and Nursery

Held on Wednesday 20th October 2021

Signed on behalf of the Management Trustee Directors

Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.)





Chairperson

Commenced 2011 - Reviewed 20.10.2021