



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the nursery. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues, the company or other agencies. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

Katey's Nursery & Pre-School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the nursery to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

The policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This Whistle blowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the nursery rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

The policy applies to all employees and applies equally to those designated as casual, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers or work experience.

These procedures are in addition to the company's complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. All employees should be made aware of the existence of these procedures

AIMS:

- Encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- Provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance etc relating to your own employment. The Whistle blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of Law
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public, children as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of company funds
- Possible fraud and corruption – see note below
- Sexual or physical abuse of adults and children where referral under Child Protection procedures is not appropriate
- Other unethical conduct

Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of nursery staff, directors, officers, or others acting on behalf of the nursery can be reported under the Whistle blowing Policy. This may be about something that:



- Makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience of the standards you believe the Director's subscribe to ; or
- Is against the Company's policies & procedures; or
- Falls below established standards of practice ; or
- Amounts to improper conduct
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NB: This policy does not replace the company's complaints procedures.

SAFEGUARDS

Harassment or Victimisation

Katey's Nursery & Pre-School is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees.

It is recognised that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.

Katey's Nursery & Pre-School will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered in the context of the following factors:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern, and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS

If you make an allegation in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with a Nursery Manager. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that senior management of the Nursery is involved you should approach the Company Director: Mrs Katey Barrington

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format;

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates)
- The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

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



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

Obtain advice/guidance on how to pursue matters of concern from a union rep.

You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.

You may invite your Trade Union representative or a work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

How Katey's Nursery & Pre-School will respond

The action taken by Katey's Nursery & Pre-School will depend on the nature of the concern, and may

- Be investigated internally
- Be referred to OFSTED
- Be referred to Social Services in a case involving safeguarding children

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation, and staff will be involved in those discussions

If an investigation is required, Katey Barrington will consult with any outside bodies as appropriate and will, within **ten working days** of a concern being raised, write to the member of staff:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- Indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- Telling them whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- Supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms (where appropriate)
- Telling them whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.
- Advising them that any investigations will be carried out in the strictest confidence, and
- Keeping them informed of the progress of the investigation

The amount of contact between those considering the issues and the staff member will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary further information may be sought from staff.

When any meeting is arranged, staff have the right if they so wish, to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague who is not involved the area of work to which the concern is related.

Katey's Nursery & Pre-School will take steps to minimise any difficulties which staff may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if they are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, arrangements will be made for them to receive advice about the procedure.

It is accepted that staff need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, they will be informed of the outcome of any investigation.

All our Policies & Procedures are crafted to ensure the highest possible standards at our setting and will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner, if necessary, in light of specific events or relevant statutory changes.