

036 Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Whistleblowing is a term used when an employee raises a concern about practices in their workplace. Employees or those working in or with an organisation are often the first people to realise/suspect when misconduct is happening within the workplace.

The aim is to

- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity
- Provide avenues for you to raise 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 made any disclosure in good faith

Any concerns can be reported without this leading to any harassment or victimisation and that every effort will be made to keep both the concern and the member of staff's identity confidential.

What should be reported?

- The inappropriate treatment or care of a child
- Any breach in the behaviour of staff, managers, owners or committee member
- Discrimination of any kind
- Concerns that could impact on the Health & Safety or Safeguarding of the children or adults

Procedure

If you have witnessed wrongdoing

- You should first raise your concern internally, with the Supervisor. If you feel unable to do this (perhaps because your concern relates to them), you should raise your concern with the Chair of the management committee.
- Discuss the information about the nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true, together with the background, history of the concern and provide the relevant dates. There are no expectations to prove beyond doubt the truth of your suspicion; however, you will need to demonstrate that you are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for your concern.
- If you have raised your concern internally but feel it has not been properly addressed, or if you feel unable to raise your concern at any level within your organisation, you may feel that you need to **raise your concern outside your place of work**. It is advisable, in terms of both addressing the concern and securing your own protection as a whistle blower, to do this first **with the body that has some oversight of the work of your employer**. This may be the LADO, the Early Years Alliance or OFSTED.
- If your concern is about an immediate or current risk to an individual child or children, it is important that you follow the child protection procedures that apply to the local authority. The NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures. Staff can call **0800 028 0285** (Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 10.00pm, weekends 9.00am to 6.00pm) or email help@nspcc.org.uk

Concerns will be dealt with in the following way:

Equality of all employees will be promoted including those who may be wrongly or rightly accused, initial enquiries shall be made in deciding whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take.

Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup - procedure

Where appropriate the matters raised may:

- Be investigated by management, or through the disciplinary/grievance process
- Be referred and put through established child protection/abuse procedures
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, you will be informed in writing:

- Acknowledgment that the concern has been received
- An indication as to how the management will proceed to deal with the matter
- Supply you with information on staff support mechanisms
- Inform you as to whether any further investigation will take place and if not, why not.

It may be necessary for management to interview you to ensure that your disclosure is fully understood. Any meeting can be arranged away from your workplace, if you wish, and a representative or a friend may accompany you in support.

If there are any difficulties experienced as a result of raising a concern, these will be supported and minimised by the management.

You will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation to assure you that your disclosure has been properly addressed unless legal reasons determine otherwise.

Confidentiality will be maintained and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. If, however you make an allegation frivolously maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action may be taken.

Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith believing it to be true, but unconfirmed by the investigation, the management will recognise your concern. If, however you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action may be taken.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 seeks to protect employees from discrimination as a result of 'blowing the whistle' on their organisation, or individuals within it, through amendments to employment law.

The organisation **Protect** runs a free legal help line for people concerned about serious malpractice in the workplace. Protect advisers can help you decide whether and/or how to raise your concern. Call 020 3117 2520 or email whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- 034 GEP Child protection and safeguarding policy
- 035 GEP Dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers procedure

This procedure was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory: