

1.1b Little Avenues Pre-school Whistle-Blowing Policy

Little Avenues preschool is committed to the highest possible standards and recognises that its staff, students and volunteers are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the setting. The whistle blowing policy encourages staff with concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice or any adult's, volunteer's or student's conduct to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the setting rather than overlooking a problem.

The Whistle Blowing Policy aims to help and protect both staff and children by:

- preventing a problem getting worse,
- safeguarding children and young people, and
- reducing the potential risks to others.

Aims

- To comply with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to protect staff who 'blow the whistle' about wrongdoing. (General allegations of wrong doing is known as Whistle-Blowing.)
- To protect a member of staff who has a reasonable belief that their disclosure tends to show one or more of the following offences or breaches:
 - a criminal offence;
 - the breach of a legal obligation;
 - a miscarriage of justice;
 - a danger to the health and safety of any individual;
 - damage to the environment; or
 - deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosures in good faith

Procedures

Concerns should normally be raised with the pre-school manager (Jane Dickson). Alternatively the Safeguarding officer (Toni McGenity).

Staff or volunteers can raise concerns (no matter how small they may appear) internally as a matter of course and receive feedback on any action taken.

Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly as possible and appropriately.

Staff and volunteers are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. All matters raised (with the exception of allegations of abuse against a staff member / volunteer, or criminal or unlawful activity) will be investigated internally. The appropriate person/s will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days.

The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and whom to contact should the worker be unhappy with the response and wish to raise the matter.

If the investigation cannot be completed within the timescale above, the individual should receive a response that indicates: Progress to date, How the matter is being dealt with, How long it will take to provide a final response.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries (usually involving a meeting with the individual raising the concern), will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

Concerns or allegations that raise issues that fall within the scope of other policies/procedures, will be addressed under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved at this initial stage simply, by agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for further investigation.

Staff and volunteers can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the setting response and seek external advice and guidance from OFSTED Whistle Blowing Hotline on 0300 1233155 (by email whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk) or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285

All concerns will be treated with confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal a staff member's identity, if they so wish. However, while making all reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality, at a certain stage in the investigation it might be necessary to make the origin of the complaint known to the person or persons the allegations concern. Complainants should be aware that their identity may be revealed by inference.

Allegations of abuse Against Staff or Volunteers

If anyone (staff or member of the public) has a concern about a member of staff or volunteer where they have:

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

They must report concerns to the pre-school manager Jane Dickson or in her absence Toni McGenity. The allegations must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) Tel: 03330 139797. If a serious crime has been committed the police will be contacted.

All allegations will be acted on and fully investigated by the pre-school.

The pre-school accepts that deciding to report a concern can be very difficult and uncomfortable. If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against him/her. If, however, a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.