

1.1b Little Avenues Pre-school Whistle-Blowing Policy

Little Avenues 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

How to raise a concern:

- Concerns should normally be raised with the pre-school manager (Jane Dickson). Alternatively the Safeguarding officer (Toni McGenity).
- Alternatively staff can contact the OFSTED Whistle Blowing Hotline on 0300 1233155 (by email whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk) or the independent whistleblowing charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 (by email at whistle@pcaw.org.uk).
- If staff are worried about the way Little Avenues is dealing with child protection issues or don't feel able to escalate these issues internally they can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285
- Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.
- Although a member of staff is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, they will need to demonstrate that they have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.
- The pre-school will respond to any concerns raised. In order to protect a member of staff who raises a concern and those accused of wrong-doing, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
- Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, conduct or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

- If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- Staff will be told how the pre-school proposes to deal with a concern within ten working days of the concern being brought to the pre-school's attention.

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 of the matter as a whole, 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) who can be contacted through the Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service on 01245 436744. 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.

Manager's signature _____ Date _____

Safeguarding Officer _____ Date _____