

Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines The Acorn Nursery School's commitment to delivering a high quality service, promoting organisational accountability and maintaining public confidence. The needs of the children in our care are paramount.

Definition

Whistleblowing is the name given to the act of the disclosure of information to the employer or the relevant authority by an individual who knows, or suspects, that the Company is responsible for or taken part in some wrongdoing or malpractice.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including casual, temporary, voluntary and work-experience staff. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns.

Qualifying disclosures

Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as "qualifying disclosures". A "qualifying disclosure" means a disclosure of information that the employee or volunteer genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that the Company has committed a "relevant failure" by:

- committing a criminal offence
- failing to comply with a legal obligation, which includes the duty of care to safeguard children in their care
- a miscarriage of justice
- endangering the health and safety of an individual
- environmental damage or
- concealing any information relating to the above.

These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen. The Company will take any concerns that you may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.

Employees must reasonably believe that the disclosure is "in the public interest". We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

The procedure

In the first instance an employee or volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise a concern should report the matter to the Manager or DSL. The Manager will treat the matter with complete confidence and advise of the action that will be taken in response to the concerns expressed. Concerns will be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible. If the complaint is against the Manager, the employee or volunteer can report the matter to the Head of Nursery – Pauline Crowder.

If an employee or volunteer feels the matter cannot be discussed with the Managers or the Head of Nursery, or they are not satisfied with the explanation or reason following investigation, they should raise the matter with the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body. Which are LADO, Ofsted or, in the case of a child being in immediate danger, the Police. The NSPCC also offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

LADO	0300 1231650 option 3	lado@surreycc.gov.uk
Ofsted	0300 1233155	whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Police	999	
NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline	0800 028 0285	help@nspcc.org.uk

Safeguarding

Where an allegation relates to child protection and safeguarding then The Acorn Nursery School's Safeguarding Children policy should be followed. If an employee or volunteer becomes aware of information which they reasonably believe indicates that a child is, or may be, or is likely to be, at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation, they must use the disclosure procedure set out above. Failure to report serious matters can also be investigated and potentially lead to disciplinary action which may result in dismissal.

Treatment by others

All staff should feel safe to make disclosures and should talk to the Manager or the Head of Nursery at the earliest opportunity. We value a strong culture of openness and want our staff to feel safe to raise concerns.

An employee or volunteer who makes a disclosure in good faith will be protected by The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and the employee or volunteer will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising any genuine concern about child protection, misconduct or malpractice within the setting.

Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.