**Organisational Whistle Blowing Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children**

Introduction

Improving the way in which people and organisations safeguard and promote the welfare of children is crucial to improving outcomes for children and young people. Key local organisations named under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, have a duty to demonstrate that they have effective arrangements in place within their organisation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Policy Statement

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) expect all staff and employees including adults working with children and young people, temporary staff, volunteers, students, contractors, or external partner agencies, to express any concerns that they may have with regards to the conduct of any individual(s). The term ‘staff’ will hereafter include all the wider workforce, as stated above.

In line with the expectations of both Boards, Scallywags Playgroup is committed to

the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. All persons working for, or with this organisation, must feel safe and supported to express their concerns. This policy document is intended to encourage and enable our staff to raise their concerns and to do so without fear of victimisation or discrimination. It does not replace the Complaints Procedure or the Safeguarding Policy or the organisation’s standard procedures for reporting allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers.

The concern may relate to something that is happening or has happened in the past.

Aims

This policy aims to:

* Encourage adults working for or within the organisation to feel confident in raising concerns.
* Provide a process by which concerns can be raised and dealt with.
* Receive feedback on the process (where appropriate); and
* Provide a means by which staff can receive support where concerns have been raised.

What does the safeguarding whistle blowing policy cover?

This policy is designed to cover concerns that staff have about the conduct of individuals, who work with children, within the organisation which could be detrimental to the safety or wellbeing of young people and where staff, for whatever reason, feel unable to raise them under the organisation’s standard child protection procedures around dealing with such allegations. It would include issues about:

* Unprofessional behaviour
* Any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect)
* Name calling
* Personal contact with children and young people which is contrary to the organisations policies and codes of conduct
* Any form of racial abuse
* Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
* Knowledge about an individual’s personal circumstances which may indicate they could be a risk to children or where there are concerns about an adult who works with children where:
* They have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
* They have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
* They have behaved toward a child(ren) in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children (would pose risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Please be mindful that these are examples of concerns and are not exhaustive.

Safeguarding against harassment or victimisation

Scallywags is committed to professional standards and to supporting staff. It is recognised that the decision to report a concern is a difficult one to make.

Harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated, and Scallywags will take appropriate action to protect the person raising the concern when they are acting in good faith.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence, however, there may be a need for the whistle blower to give evidence e.g., if they have witnessed a crime or regarding disciplinary procedures if this is the outcome.

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages staff to raise concerns to be identified in doing so as part of their professional role/responsibility. However, anonymous allegations will be investigated as thoroughly as possible.

False allegations

If staff raise a concern in good faith which is not confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken. However, if a concern is raised maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken.

How to raise a concern

Staff should normally raise their concerns with a designated manager under the

organisations standard procedures for dealing with allegations about a person in a position of trust: Mrs Michelle Howell (Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead)

If the Designated Person is the subject of concern the matter should be referred to Mrs Donna Roberts Deputy DSL or, if this is not possible, the Whistle Blowing Policy can be implemented.

Under standard procedures, if there are concerns that an adult working with children may have abused a child or be unsuitable to work with children and young people, concerns will be passed to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) by the manager.

In certain circumstances, staff may feel they are unable to follow the organisation’s standard procedures e.g., because they feel their position in the organisation would be in jeopardy, they would be subject to intimidation, or that the person of concern is the designated manager to whom they should report such matters and there is no one senior to refer to. They should then follow the Whistle Blowing Policy by contacting the management committee.

The Policy may also be used in circumstances when the matter has been raised under appropriate organisation procedures for referring child protection concerns, but the referrer considers that the manager has not taken the concerns seriously or acted appropriately with relation to them. In such circumstances, referrers are encouraged to contact the management committee for the organisation or a LADO directly for discussion and advice. The LADO contact details are listed at the end of the policy.

When following the Whistle-blowing Policy, concerns may be shared verbally, but should also be recorded in writing.

How Scallywags will respond

Any concern regarding child protection will be referred to external agencies for investigation (children’s services, police, LADO).

If the concern is not of this nature, there will be:

* Investigation by management
* Disciplinary process if appropriate
* Consideration of policies, processes, and procedures if such issues arise from the investigation.
* Within 10 working days of a concern being raised the referrer will receive a written response from the responsible person which will:
* Acknowledge that the concern has been received.
* Supply information on relevant support mechanisms
* Advise whether further investigations will take place; or
* Advise that no further action has taken place and why.

If it is felt that it would be unsafe for any reason to share concerns with the named persons from your organisation The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available on 0808 800 5000.

Lado via Front Door – 0300 111 8007

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on …………15.06.22

Signed on behalf of the pre-school ……………Gary Cox

Reviewed 15.08.23