

Sandy Bears Nursery & Pre School

Whistle Blowing Policy

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their setting. However, they may not express their growing concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be just suspicion of malpractice and wrongdoing at work.

Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person linked with the setting and/or others (e.g. Parents/Carers) to come forward and voice those concerns. Staff at Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school are given a wide range of opportunities to speak up about concerns on a day to day basis, staff are also given opportunities during:

- An open and honest working relationship with management team (daily/ weekly talks)
- Staff meetings (every month or due to Covid-19 we may use a different way of communicating information)
- Supervisions (every half term/ term)
- Appraisals (every 12 months)
- Informal room meetings (daily/ weekly by room leader or supervisor)
- Morning debriefs (daily)

This policy document makes it clear that employees, Parents/Carers and others can do so without fear of reprisals. Our Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns within Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school rather than overlooking the problem. The procedure allows employees, Parents/Carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the Management/Staff of Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school.

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response;
- Reassure you that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.
- There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staff's own employment, Parent/Carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies.

This Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

That concern may be about something that:

- Is against the policies and procedures of Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school;
- Falls below established standards of practice;
- Amounts to improper conduct;
- Is a Health and Safety risk, including risks to the public as well as children, other colleagues,

Parents/Carers and others;

- Contradicts Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre-school policies.
 - Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre-school.
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- The procedure will be communicated to all employees as well as Parents/Carers, Students and others.

Harassment or victimisation

Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal. Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. However, should you feel that you have suffered harassment, either directly or indirectly as a result of raising a concern, you should speak with to Laura Yates and refer to the Employees Staff Handbook or Complaints Policy.

This does not mean that if you are already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, that those procedures will be halted as a result of your whistleblowing.

Confidentiality

Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern. However, it must be appreciated that, in the interests of natural justice, any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.

Anonymous Allegations

You are strongly encouraged to put your name to any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate.

In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account when considering how to deal with any allegations:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the allegation;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Allegations (for employees)

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make a

malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against you in accordance with the Policies and Procedures.

How to raise a concern (for employees)

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your Deputies (Beckie Whitley, Laura Silverwood or Amy Sides). You may firstly wish to talk this through with our designated Well being officers (Kat or Lucy) or Manager- Astone Richardson/ Harriet Edwards. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you think may be involved in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that your deputy is involved, you should approach the Manager. Or if you feel management is involved, you should approach the Owner (Laura Yates).

With specific regard to Safeguarding issues, that may involve a member of staff, you should initially consult with the Manager or Owner of Sandy Bears Nursery. If you suspect they or the owner may be related to the issue you should contact our local safeguarding board or Social Services Referrals Department for advice and assistance. Other useful contacts are listed at the end of this policy.

Concerns are better raised in writing. You are advised to set out background and history of your concerns, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. The earlier you express your concern, the easier it is for Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school, Social Services or local safeguarding board to take action.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for initial enquiries to be made.

How Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school Will Respond

The action taken by Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- Be investigated internally;
- Be referred to the Police;

Allegations referred directly to the Childcare Officer, local safeguarding board or Social Services will be dealt with in accordance with their policies and procedures. Any person who is the subject of an allegation should, at the appropriate times be given details of the allegation in order to respond.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. Safeguarding or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation. The following process will be followed in the event of complaints:

- Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre-school will ensure that a letter is sent to confirm the receipt of the complaint.
- The complaint will then be fully investigated and within 5 days of when the complaint was first received. Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre-school endeavour to investigate all complaints in a non-discriminatory manner.

- A letter will be sent detailing how Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre-school has dealt with the complaint.

How the Matter Can Be Taken Further

Firstly, it must be made clear the concern has not been resolved effectively.

If the complaint has not been dealt with in a manner which is satisfactory to the employee, Parent/Carer or others involved, and they have expressed this to the Manager and also Owner of Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school then they contact OFSTED directly or get advice from the following professionals:

- **OFSTED- 0300 123 1231**
- **LADO- 01606288931 (Cheshire West) 01270685904 (Cheshire East)**
- **IART/ LSCB - 0300 123 7047 (Cheshire West) 03001235012 (Cheshire East)**
- **Anti Terror Hotline- 0800 0324539**
- **Emergency Duty Team - 01244 979277 (Cheshire West) 0300 1235022 (Cheshire East)**

Local Safeguarding Board (Office hours)- 01606 275099 (Out of hours)- 01244 977277

Health Visitor- 01829 770234

Children's Social Care Contact and Referral Team (CART) or Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for help and advice- 01606 275 099 or EDT Out of hours: 01244 977 277

Cheshire Police- 0845 458 0000 (999 in an emergency)

Ofsted- whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

WBHL

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Ofsted's Whistleblowing Hotline- 0300 1233155

You can also find advice on reporting child protection risks at-

www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education.

NSPCC Helpline- 0808 800 5000 or website www.nspcc.org.uk/help-and-advice/worried-about-a-child/are-you-worried-hub_wdh72939.html

If you are worried about a child please contact Social care services on 020 7332 1224 or email

social.services@cityoflondon.gov.uk