

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

Safeguarding children

1.10.1 Whistleblowing

Policy statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

Whistleblowing encourages and enables staff, committee members and parents to raise serious concerns about the organisation of St Joseph's Pre-school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle outside'. St Joseph's Pre-school is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice their concerns.

By using this policy we aim to:

- provide avenues for relevant parties to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken;
- ensure that they receive a response to their concerns and that if they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied; and
- reassure them that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made a disclosure in good faith.

St Joseph's Pre-school recognises that a decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what is being said is true, there should be nothing to fear because the relevant party will be doing their duty to their employer and those that St Joseph's Pre-school provides a service for. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistleblower if they so wish. At the appropriate time, however, they may need to come forward as a witness.

St Joseph's Pre-school is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees. The Pre-school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect their staff when they raise a concern. Any investigations into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect the staff.

This policy encourages the staff, however, to put their name to the concern wherever possible.

Please note that:

- staff/committee members/parents must disclose information in good faith;
- staff/committee members/parents must believe it is substantially true;
- staff/committee members/parents must not act maliciously or make false allegations; and
- staff/committee members/parents must not seek any personal gain.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the committee. In exercising this discretion the factors taken into account would include:

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

If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person who made the disclosure. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the informant.

The whistleblowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is an offence or breach of law;
- disclosures relating to miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- damage to the environment;
- the unauthorised use of funds;
- possible fraud and corruption;
- sexual or physical abuse of customers or staff; or
- other unethical conduct.

Thus, any serious concerns staff have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees of St Joseph's Pre-school or others acting on behalf of St Joseph's Pre-school can be reported under the whistleblowing policy. This may be something that:

- makes anyone feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe St Joseph's Pre-school subscribes to; or
- is against St Joseph's Pre-school's policies and procedures.
- Falls below established standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct.

How to raise a concern

As a first step the concerns should be raised either verbally or in writing with the group's immediate supervisor/manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of malpractice. For example, if it is believed that management is involved a more senior level of management should be approached if possible or the chair of the committee.

Staff/committee members/parents who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- the background history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

If a concern is raised immediately after it has happens; the easier it becomes to take action. The whistleblower will not be expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, but will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for concern. It could be that the person noticing the issue may wish to consider discussing the

concern with a colleague first or may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) people who have the same experience or concerns. It is also possible to invite a professional representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns that have been raised.

St Joseph's Pre-school has in place a complaints procedure for further guidance as to what procedures to follow. This policy does NOT replace the complaints procedure.

St Joseph's Pre-school will respond to any concerning using the guidelines within this policy and the complaints policy and procedure. St Joseph's Pre-school hopes this will satisfy the relevant parties especially with regard to any action taken. If this does not answer the concerns, and it is felt that it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

Protect (previously known as Public Concern at Work). For whistleblowing advice call 030 3117 2520. Protect is a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential. [website: www.pcaw.org.uk]

- Gloucestershire Early Years team – 01452 427224
- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (www.ofsted.gov.uk)
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Your trade union
- The police

If the matter is taken outside St Joseph's Pre-school, it should be ensured that no confidential information is disclosed. Please check with our confidentiality and client access to records policy for guidance.

Version Number	Author	Purpose of Change	Date
1.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and page numbered	Sept 2014
2.0	Committee	Reviewed	Sept 2017
3.0	K Coupe & H Elliott	Reviewed, updated and version controlled	01/05/2019 Cttee Mtg