

Whistleblowing Policy

Little Acorns Day Nursery is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability.

An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of the Company to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently to the Management Team.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into effect in 1999, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. The Company has endorsed the provisions set out below so as to ensure that no members of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising Legitimate concerns

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice, impropriety or a member of staff who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. It is not designed to question neither financial or business decisions taken by the Company nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under harassment, complaint, disciplinary or other procedures. Once the "whistleblowing" procedures are in place, it is reasonable to expect staff to use them rather than air their complaints outside the Company.

Confidentiality

The Company will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Company.

Where there are concerns of extremism or radicalisation, Staff will be encouraged to make use of our internal system to whistleblow or raise any issue in confidence (*Prevent guidance 2015*).

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable Sources

Untrue Allegations

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

Little Acorns will notify Ofsted of any serious whistleblowing accusations if found to be substantiated in line with the EYFS

Procedure when Whistleblowing on a member of staff

Any of the staff who witness inappropriate behaviour towards a child, another member of staff, volunteer or visitor, they must NOT at any point discuss this with any other member of staff other than the Nominated Safeguarding Person, or in their absence the next appropriate person. Nor must they at any point disclose what they have witnessed to the member of staff of whom the allegation has been made. If a member of staff disclosure this to anyone other than the appropriate person, this may result in a disciplinary action and it will be considered as gross misconduct as they have breached this policy.

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