

Winton Pre-School

Little Explorers

Whistle Blowing Policy

Statement of Intent

Whistle blowing encourages and enables staff, volunteers, students to raise serious concerns within the setting of Winton Pre-School Little Explorers rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle outside'. Winton Pre-School is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with the commitment Winton Pre-School Little Explorers expects staff, volunteers, students, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice their concerns.

It is our intention that staff working at Winton Pre-school Little Explorers feel confident about coming forward and reporting any issues/concerns that they may have regarding the areas documented below, whilst remaining protected from any subsequent discrimination.

Aim

- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity.
- Provide avenues for staff to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosures in good faith.

Winton Pre-School Little Explorers recognises that the decision to report a serious concern can be a difficult one to make. If what 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 Winton Pre-School Little Explorers provides a service for. Any concerns can be reported without this leading to any harassment or victimisation, and every effort will be made to keep both the concern and the member of staff's identity confidential. At the appropriate time, however, they may need to come forward as a witness. This policy encourages staff however to put their name to the concern whenever possible.

The **whistle blowing 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 the law.
- Disclosures related 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.
- The inappropriate treatment or care of a child.

- Any breach in the behaviour of staff, students or volunteers.
- Discrimination of any kind.
- Any kind of abuse to staff or others
- Any other unethical conduct.

Methods

- Concern can be initially raised by any staff member to their Management team/Directors verbally or in writing.
- Discuss the nature of the concern together with the background, history of the concern and provide the relevant dates.
- There is no expectation that staff prove beyond doubt the truth of their suspicion; however they will need to demonstrate that they are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for their concern.
- Staff must not act maliciously, make false allegations or seek any personal gain.
- All staff will be treated fairly.

If a concern is raised immediately after it happens, the easier it becomes to take action. 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.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Management/Directors or the development officer.

Concerns will be dealt with in the following way:

- The seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributed sources.
- Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take.
- The incident will be investigated by Management/Directors or Development Officer.
- If appropriate it will be referred and put through established Safeguarding children procedures and may form the subject of an independent inquiry.
- Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the member of staff will receive in writing:
 - Acknowledgment that the concern has been received.
 - An indication as to how the Pre-school will proceed to deal with the matter.
 - Supply the member of staff with information on staff support mechanisms.
 - Inform the member of staff concerned as to whether any further investigation will take place and if not, why not.

It may be necessary for the Pre-school to interview staff to ensure that their disclosure is fully understood. Any meeting can be arranged away from the workplace, if so wished, and a representative or a friend may accompany the involved member of staff for support.

Winton Pre-School Little Explorers will respond to any concerns using the guidelines within this policy and the complaints policy. Winton Pre-School hope this will satisfy the relevant parties especially with regard to any action being taken. If this does not answer the concerns, and its felt that it is right to take the matter further the following are possible to contact:

- Development Officer – Josie Dyer, phone...01202 127697.....

- Local Authority Designated Officers – Hayley Cowmeadow and Carline Benoit
Phone 01202 817600.....
- Ofsted – www.ofsted.gov.uk
- The local citizens Advice Bureau.
- The Police.

If the matter is taken outside Winton Pre-School, it should be ensured that no confidential information is disclosed. Please check with our confidentiality policy for guidance.

If there are any difficulties experienced as a result of raising a concern, support will be offered.

Staff will be kept informed, of the progress and outcome of any investigation to assure that any disclosure has been properly addressed unless legal reasons determine otherwise.

If an allegation is made in good faith, but it 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.

Confidentiality – will be maintained and every effort will be made not to reveal a member of staff's identity if they so wish. If however a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action, that could include disciplinary action, may be taken.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 seeks to protect employees from discrimination as a result of 'blowing the whistle' on their organisation, or individuals within it, through amendments to employment law.

Winton Pre-School has a complaints policy for further guidance as to what procedures to follow. This policy does NOT replace the complaints policy.