



WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

“Whistle-blowing” is when a worker reports suspected wrong-doing at work. The official term is, “Making a disclosure in the public interest.”

All adults who come into contact with children in their work – whatever their role might be – have a duty of care* to safeguard and promote the children’s welfare.

By working or volunteering at Footprints Pre-school Playgroup, each employee and volunteer acknowledges their individual legal and moral responsibility to bring matters of concern to the management and/or relevant agencies.

It is recognized that individuals might be reluctant to express their concerns for various reasons; for example, feeling disloyal to colleagues or fear of personal repercussions. As understandable as this might be, they must never let these feelings prevent them reporting their concerns because:

- The safeguarding of children is paramount.
- The sooner a matter is raised the sooner any necessary action can be taken, reducing the impact of any malpractice.
- Individuals who report suspected wrongdoing can be confident that they will not be harassed or victimized because:
 - a) Footprints’ highest priority is always the well-being of our children. As a matter of urgency, we would want to identify and rectify anything which might have a negative impact on their current or future well-being.
 - b) the law protects whistle-blowers under The Public Disclosure Act 1998.

Reasons for Whistle-blowing

An individual should raise their concerns if they have a reasonable belief that one of the following is happening:

- a criminal offence
- a breach of legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health and safety of any individual
- damage to the environment
- deliberate covering up of information regarding any of the above

Wherever possible, whistle-blowers will be able to disclose information in confidence and remain anonymous.

No disciplinary action will be taken against whistle-blowers who act in good faith. The independent charity, 'Public Concern At Work' (www.pcaw.org.uk) can help with decisions as to whether/how to raise a concern.

How to Report a Concern

Express your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. You will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

Approach one of the pre-school leaders. However, if the concern is about the leaders, or if they do not respond satisfactorily, report to the Chairperson of Footprints' Management Committee. If the response is still unsatisfactory, or the concern involves the entire management, contact Ofsted (Tel: 0300 123 3155). Depending on circumstances, it might be appropriate to disclose concerns to Social Care or to the police.

Make sure you get a satisfactory response – do not let matters rest.

What Happens Next

The pre-school leader(s)/Chairperson/other agency will discuss the issue with the whistle-blower in confidence, recording their concerns and storing the records confidentially.

An investigation will begin based on the established procedure for Safeguarding or Complaints as appropriate. If the investigator is unsure whether or how to proceed they will contact Ofsted immediately for advice.

As far as possible, the whistle-blower will remain anonymous and appropriate support will be offered.

The whistle-blower will be informed of the results of the investigation. If the results are unsatisfactory, the whistle-blower must report their concerns to a higher authority.

* See H. M. Government's, "Working Together To Safeguard Children," 2013.

SEE ALSO COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE; SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY; SAFEGUARDING-CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE (B);

Date reviewed.....

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