



4.6 Whistle Blowing Policy

Policy statement

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.

PVPG is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment we encourage all employees or others with genuine concerns about any person linked to PVPG and /or others (e.g. Parents/Carers) to come forward and voice their concerns

This policy makes it clear that PVPG wish to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns with PVPG rather than overlooking the problem.

Procedures

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Allows you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response
- Reassure that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimisation or whistleblowing in good faith.

PVPG have policies and procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staffs own employment, Parent/Carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies. The whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures and policies that PVPG uphold.

That concern may be about something that:

- Is against the policies and procedures of PVPG
- Falls below established standards of practice
- Amounts to improper conduct
- Is a Health and Safety risk, in risks to the public as well as children, other colleagues, Parents/Carers and others.

- Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of PVPG
- The procedure will be communicated to all employees as well as parents/carers, students and others.

Our Commitments:

HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

PVPG recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make not least because of fear of reprisal. PVPG will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. However, if you feel you have suffered harassment either directly or indirectly as a result of raising a concern, you should refer to the 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. This applies to Parent/Carers of the setting who then decide to seek alternative childcare.

CONFIDENTIALITY

PVPG 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 allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of PVPG and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate. In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account 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.

MALICIOUS OR VEXATIOUS ALLEGATIONS – STAFF

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 PVPG procedures.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN –EMPLOYEES

As a first step you should normally raise your concern with the Manager or Deputy. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you may think may be involved in the malpractice. i.e if you believe your manager is involved you should approach the Executive Committee of PVPG.

With specific regard to safeguarding issues that may involve a member of staff, you should initially consult with the Manager of PVPG. If you suspect that they may be related to the issue you should

contact the Chair of PVPG. If involvement of Committee members is suspected, then you should contact the relevant childcare officer attached to the setting.

You can also contact Children's Social Services or the Early Years Safeguarding Officer for West Berkshire.

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 concerns the easier it is for PVPG, Social services or the relevant childcare officer attached to the setting to take action.

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

HOW PVPG WILL RESPOND.

The action taken by PVPG 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 or Social Services will be dealt with in accordance with their policies and procedures. Any person, who is subject of an allegation, should at the appropriate time be given details of the allegation in order to respond.

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

Some concerns may be solved by agreed actions without the need for an investigation. The following process will be followed in the event of a complaint:

- PVPG will ensure that a letter is sent to confirm the receipt of the complaint.
- The complaint will be fully investigated and within 5 days of when the complaint was first received. PVPG endeavour to investigate all complaints in a non-discriminatory manner.
- A letter will be sent detailing how PVPG has dealt with the complaint.

HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

If the complaint has not been dealt with in the manner which is satisfactory to the employee, parent/carer or others involved, they can then contact OFSTED directly at the following address:

Early Years OFSTED
The National Business Unit
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD TEL: 0300 123 1231

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

By registering a formal complaint with Ofsted an officer in, most cases will be sent to the setting to carry out a further investigation. If applicable a report would then be sent with action points.

This policy was adopted by

Pangbourne Valley Playgroup

On

June 2019

Date to be reviewed

June 2021

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Kelly Mullenger

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Chair
