



Whistle Blowing Policy

Introduction

Bright Eyes is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Company's ability to provide safe, quality childcare to come forward and voice those concerns.

This procedure makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. It is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious problems within the setting rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

This procedure has been obtained from Cornwall Council who have discussed it with the relevant trade unions and professional organisations and has their support.

The Management Committee have an appointed staff member with specific responsibility for this procedure. The person responsible is Stephanie Kelly (known here on as 'the Monitor'). If 'the monitor' is absent, the Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator Kirsty Webb takes on the role of 'monitor'.

Aims and Scope of this Procedure

This procedure aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.

The procedure is intended to supplement, rather than to replace, the existing complaints, disciplinary and grievance procedures. It is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures and may relate to something which:

- is against the Bright Eyes Childcare in Cornwall policies and procedures, or
- falls below established standards of practice, or

- amounts to improper conduct, including something you believe may be:
 - against the law
 - a Health and Safety risk
 - damaging to the environment
 - corruption or unethical conduct

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to provide a statement or act as a witness and will be expected to co-operate fully with the investigation and disclose all relevant information.

Anonymous Allegations

This procedure encourages you to put your name to your concern as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate/prove.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be investigated unless the Monitor in consultation with the management agrees there is insufficient evidence to proceed.

Untrue Allegations

If you raise a concern in good faith, but it is not subsequently confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

How to Raise a Concern

As a first step you should normally raise concerns with your Line Manager and inform him/her you are using this procedure. However, the Management recognise that on occasion this may not be appropriate.

A number of alternative contacts may be appropriate depending on the nature of the concern. For example any office staff or management. Margaret Larson, Nursery Owner and Nominated Person, is the next appropriate point of contact after sharing your concern with the senior team.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. If a concern is shared verbally, this will be documented and signed by the person making the complaint and the person contacted regarding the complaint.

Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your concerns, you will need to demonstrate that you have reasonable grounds to raise them.

Where employees fail to report their concerns they may become themselves implicated and consequently the Management may treat failure by an employee to report such matters as a serious matter which could lead to disciplinary action.

You may wish to obtain assistance in putting forward your concern from a Trade Union representative or a colleague. You may choose to be represented by a Trade Union representative or colleague at any meetings which are required.

How the Management will Respond

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

The person with whom you have raised your concern will inform the Monitor of the facts. The Monitor will write to you, within ten working days with the following:

- acknowledgement that the concern has been received
- an indication of how the concern will be dealt with
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a full response
- whether any initial enquiries have been made
- whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

The Management will inform you in writing of the outcome of any investigation, or any action taken, subject to the constraints of confidentiality and the law.

The Responsible Officer

The Monitor has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy within the setting. That Monitor will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes and will report as necessary to the Management. The recording and reporting procedure will be in a form which ensures your confidentiality.

How the Matter can be Taken Further

This procedure is intended to provide you with a route within the setting to raise concerns but if you do not feel your concern has been addressed adequately you may raise it with an independent body such as one of the following:

- your Trade Union
- your local Citizens Advice Bureau

- Cornwall Children, Schools & Families
- a relevant professional body or regulatory organisation
- a relevant voluntary organisation such as the Pre-School Learning Alliance
- the police
- the Local Government Ombudsman

You have a duty to the setting not to disclose confidential information. This does not prevent you from raising concerns with an independent body referred to above, or Public Concern at Work (telephone number 020 7404 6609 or more information is available at www.pcaaw.co.uk, a registered charity which advises on serious malpractice within the workplace in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Date of Policy: March 2019

Signed By: Nursery Manager