



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Catkins Preschool

July 2022

Whistle Blowing Policy

Catkins Preschool is committed to ensuring an environment of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect all employees, volunteers, students, professionals and any adults associated with Catkins who have any concerns to come forward and voice them without any fear of reprisal. This policy has been written to support staff in coming forward with concerns. We understand that some issues raised will have to be dealt on a confidential basis.

Aim

This policy aims to create a safe and confidential avenue for staff, children, parents and professionals to raise concerns and receive feedback. This provides the awareness of how to express concerns on any suspicious or bad practice, protects the 'Whistleblower' from victimisation/intimidation. Catkins Preschool is an environment that enables adults to raise serious concerns. We also feel that Whistleblower should be able take the concerns further if not happy with the response they receive.

Principles of Whistleblowing

- Enables adults/children to raise genuine and legitimate concerns
- Support staff to take an active role in eliminating bad practice
- Ensure all concerns are appropriately investigated
- Protect the Whistleblower from intimidation/retaliation

Behaviour that should cause concern

The following behaviours should be reported and explored and staff, parents and other adults with links to Catkins should feel comfortable in doing so. This list is not exhaustive but examples include:

- Unlawful behaviour
- Fraud or dishonesty
- Breaches of policies/procedures
- Improper conduct
- Endangering the health and safety of children and staff
- Conduct which is, has been or is likely to be, in breach of the law

Raising a concern

Concerns should be made in writing and include dates, times, names and why the concern has been raised. The managers should be made aware by the Whistleblower as soon as they are aware of breach. The Whistleblower is able to demonstrate enough grounds for concern, although they will not be expected to prove the concern to be true. The Whistleblower may ask for support and be accompanied by someone when they voice their concerns this will be welcomed by the managers.

Dealing with Concerns

Catkins Preschool take all reports of whistleblowing seriously and concerns will be dealt with promptly. In the first instance, concerns should be raised with Anne Phillips. If this is not appropriate concerns should be raised to Amy Davey. Concerns are best raised in writing. As explained above you are encouraged to set out the background and history of the concern giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned. The earlier you express your concerns the easier it is to take action. If you do not wish to put the allegations in writing, the person to whom you are making the complaint will make a written record of the interview and will ask you to sign to confirm accuracy of the notes taken.

You should not:

- Investigate the matter yourself.
- Tell those suspected of being involved.
- Approach or accuse individuals
- Tell anyone other than the designated persons

You will receive a written acknowledgment of your concern, with a copy of your statement where appropriate. Your concern will be investigated and within 2 weeks you will be informed of what action is being taken and will be kept up to date on the progress. You will also be informed of the outcome of any investigation. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you may elevate your concerns directly to Ofsted. Workers who 'blow the whistle' on wrong doing in the workplace, can claim unfair dismissal if they are dismissed or victimised for doing so.

Anonymous Reports

These will be at the manager's discretion and will depend on:

- Seriousness of issue
- Credibility of issue
- Confirmation of the allegation from any other credible sources

Untrue Allegations

If allegations are made but after investigating not found true no action will be taken on the Whistleblower providing they were acting in good faith and did not act for personal gain.

Safeguards in Place

Catkins Preschool understands that reporting a concern is a difficult decision and the managers will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone who has acted in good faith, however if the Whistleblower is already undergoing disciplinary action, the procedures will not be halted as result of reporting concerns.

Confidentiality

The following must be observed when considering the confidentiality of the concern:

- Where necessary consent will be gained before revealing the identity of Whistleblower.
- Staff need to be aware that in some situations an investigation cannot be concluded without a statement from the Whistleblower as evidence.
- If identity is to be disclosed they will be notified before and why this is necessary.
- Once a concern has been raised we expect that this will not be discussed with any other person inside or outside of the setting.
- Anne Phillips is responsible for the records of concern, outcome and will maintain confidentiality where ever possible.