



## **Little Cherries Whistleblowing policy and procedure**

It is important to Little Cherries that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees, or people engaged in the organisation's business, is reported and properly dealt with. We therefore encourage all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the early years setting or the way in which the early years setting is run.

We recognise that effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with and the organisation's success ensured.

Whistleblowing relates to all those who work within the early years setting and who may from time-to-time think that they need to raise with someone, in confidence, certain issues relating to the organisation.

Whistleblowing is separate from the grievance procedure. If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances, you should use the normal grievance procedure. If you have a concern about malpractice within the organisation, then you should use the procedure outlined below:

### **Procedure**

- Report any concerns to your line manager. If this is not possible, then report your concerns to a more senior member of staff or a trustee.
- All employees and those involved within the early years setting should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing within the organisation. You should be watchful for illegal, inappropriate or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that you become aware of.
- Wrongdoing could include:
  - abuse of a child or vulnerable person
  - a child, parent, employee or volunteer being put at risk of harm
  - unsafe working practices
  - a failure to comply with statutory or legal obligations
  - a criminal offence which has or is about to be committed
  - the use of unsafe equipment
  - falsification of financial records
  - bribery and/or corruption which is about to take place or has taken place.
  - covering up of any wrongdoing or malpractice
- Any matter you raise under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation will be reported back to you.
- You will not be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that your

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continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training will not be prejudiced because you have raised a legitimate concern.

- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualifying disclosure (something that it is in the public interest to disclose) will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure, the disciplinary procedure will be used in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- If you make a malicious or false allegation, then this will be considered a disciplinary offence and disciplinary action will be taken against you.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If you are told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. In this event you should report the matter to a more senior member of staff or a trustee.

### **Reporting a concern**

Concerns should be raised with the manager or trustee and reported in writing. Included in this report should be:

- Reference to the fact that it is a whistle blowing disclosure
- The background and history of concerns
- Names, dates and places ( where possible)
- Reason why the worker is concerned about the situation

### **Who to contact**

The following people can be contacted in confidence:

**Anita Yates (Manager) - [anita@littlecherries.org.uk](mailto:anita@littlecherries.org.uk) / 07725951619**

**Jennie Peacock (Chair of committee) - [committee@littlecherries.org.uk](mailto:committee@littlecherries.org.uk)**

**Public Concerns At Work (whistle blowing charity) [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)  
Tel: 02031172520**

### **Investigation**

The action taken will depend upon the nature of the concern. All matters (with the exception of an allegation of abuse of a worker or criminal or unlawful activity) will be investigated internally.

The designated persons will investigate thoroughly, ensuring a written response is provided within 10 working days.

The response should include details of:

- How the allegation was investigated
- Conclusions drawn from the investigation
- Whom the worker can contact should they be unhappy with the response and wish to raise the matter further.

If the investigation cannot be completed within the timescale as set above, the worker should receive a response that indicates:

- Progress to date
- How the matter is being dealt with
- How long it will take to provide a final response.

In order to protect individuals, initial inquiries (usually involving a meeting with the individual raising their concern) will take place to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that raise issues which fall within the scope of other policies and procedures will be addressed under the relevant procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved at this initial stage by agreed action or an explanation regarding their concern, without the need for further investigation.

If a worker feels that the complaint has not been dealt with effectively or concerns are still apparent then he/she has the right to refer their concerns to Ofsted.

If we have concerns about an adult who works or volunteers with children we will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice or support.

### **Relevant contacts**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)      01223 727967

LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Ofsted      0300 123 123

This policy was adopted at a meeting at Held on:	<b>Little Cherries</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2019
Due for Review:	November 2020
Signed on behalf of the management committee	
Name of signatory:	Jennie Peacock
Role of signatory:	Chairperson