



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children.

1.8 Whistle blowing

Policy statement

Pirton Pre-School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. Staff will often be the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Pre-School. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Pre-School. They may also fear harassment or victimisation, in these circumstances they may feel it easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 encourages individuals to raise concerns about malpractice in the workplace and this policy document makes it clear that staff can raise serious concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage and is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise those concerns within the Pre-School, rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. All concerns raised will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The Policy applies to all staff and committee members. All staff and committee members will be made aware of this policy and encouraged to use its procedures if and when necessary

This policy aims to:-

- Encourage staff and committee members to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about the Pre-School.
- Set procedures for raising concerns and receiving feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that a response is received to any concerns and raise awareness of how to pursue those concerns if you are not satisfied.
- Reassure the staff or committee member that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosure in good faith.

The Whistleblowing policy is not intended to replace the Pre-School's Disciplinary and Grievance procedure, instead it is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law.
- Disclosures related to conduct within or outside of the Pre-School which may affect the parents/carers' confidence in the setting.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the children, parents/carers as well as staff and committee members.
- Damage to the premises, garden or equipment.
- The unauthorised use of funds including possible fraud or corruption.

This policy is intended to support the Pre-School's Safeguarding Children Policy.

This policy enables the reporting of any serious concerns which:

- Makes staff or committee members feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, experience or the standards the Pre-School subscribes to.
- Is against the Pre-School's policies.
- Falls below established standards of practice.
- Amounts to improper conduct.

Harassment or Victimisation

The Pre-School is committed to good practice and high standards and supports its staff and committee members. It is recognised that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make but reassures staff and committee members that there is nothing to be feared from voicing a genuine concern as this is doing their duty to the employer and those accessing our service.

The Pre-School will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressure) and will take appropriate action to protect anyone raising a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that may affect the member of staff.

Anonymous Allegations

Although all allegations will be treated in the strictest confidence, this policy encourages staff and committee members to put their name to their allegation whenever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Chairperson and the Manager (or in the case of either person being the subject of the allegation, the co-Chair and Assistant Manager).

In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised,
- The credibility of the concern, and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Where an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person making the allegation. If, however, an allegation is made maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken using the Pre-School's agreed Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.

How to raise a concern

Initially, concerns should be brought to the attention of the Manager, or Assistant manager in her absence. However, if the concern relates directly to the Manager or the matter is felt to be so serious and sensitive, the Chairperson should be approached directly.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff or committee members wishing to make a written report are requested to give the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates where possible) and the reason for the concern. All concerns received will be registered immediately with the Manager or Chairperson, or if the concern involves the Manager and/or Chair; the co-Chair or Assistant Manager

The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it will be to take action. The member of staff/committee member will not be expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, but will need to demonstrate to the Manager/Chairperson that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

Once a concern has been raised under the Whistleblowing Policy the person reporting the concern should be mindful that any further discussions with other parties may impede the maintenance of confidentiality.

How the Pre-School will respond

A response will be given to all concerned. However, interviewing and questioning the person voicing the concern is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

Where appropriate the matters raised may:

- be investigated by the Chairperson, Treasurer and Manager.
- be referred to Ofsted.
- be referred to the police .

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, 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 policies (for example, safeguarding or equal opportunities), will normally be referred for consideration under those policies.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the Chairperson will acknowledge receipt of the concern and advise in writing:

- indicating how the matter is to be dealt with giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response.
- whether any initial enquiries have been made, whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the persons considering the issues and the person who has raised the concern will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought.

Should a meeting be arranged (off-site if required) the person who has raised the concern may be accompanied by another member of staff or of the committee. Steps to minimise any difficulties which may be experienced as a result of raising a concern will be taken. For instance, in cases where the person who has raised the concern is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings arrangements will be made for advice to be received about the procedure.

The Pre-School accepts that assurances are needed that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, the outcomes of any investigation will be made available. Copies of all papers relating to the concern will be kept in a confidential file which will be securely stored.

How the matter can be taken further

The Pre-School hopes that any action taken will be satisfactory. However, if the person who voiced their concern feels that the matter has not been adequately dealt with, they should contact Ofsted, National Business Unit, Royal Exchange Buildings, St. Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA or Tel: 08456 404040.

Depending on the nature of the concern, it may also be appropriate to contact

- The police

- The Charities Commission, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG, Tel: 0845 3000218olicy statement

<i>This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pirton Pre-School Committee.</i>	
Held on (date)	
Signed on behalf of the Management Committee / Proprietor	
Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson)	