

Employment

Whistle Blowing

Policy statement

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their Centre. 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.

Mr Bee's Family Centre is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, **honesty** and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person linked with the organisation and/or others, for example parent/carers, to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy document makes it clear that employees, parents/carers and others can do so without fear for reprisals. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns within Mr Bee's Family Centre rather than overlooking the problem.

The procedure allows employees, parents/carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the trustees/management/staff/volunteers and students of Mr Bee's Family Centre.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy aims to:

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

Existing policies are in place:

- to lodge a grievance relating to staff's own employment (refer to Grievance policy).
- for parent/carer concerns or complaints (refer to Making a Complaint policy)
- Allegations of Abuse against an adult within the setting or concerns about a child (refer to Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Safeguarding posters).

This Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. That concern may be about something that:

- Is against the policies and procedures of Mr Bee's Family Centre;
- Falls below established standards of practice;
- Amounts to improper conduct;
- Is a Health and Safety risk, including risks to the public as well as children, other colleagues, parents/carers and others;
- Contradicts Mr Bee's Family Centre's Codes of Conduct.
- Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of Mr. Bee's Family Centre.

The procedure for whistle blowing will be communicated to all employees as well as parents/carers, students and others during the induction process.

HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

Mr Bee's Family Centre recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to take, not least because of the fear of reprisal. Mr Bee's Family Centre will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. However, should you feel that you have suffered harassment, either directly or indirectly as a result of raising a concern, you should refer to the procedures outlined in the Grievance 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 parents/carers of the Centre who then decide to seek alternative childcare.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Mr Bee's Family Centre 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 any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of Mr Bee's Family Centre and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate. In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account when 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 the Mr Bee's Family Centre's procedures.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN?

As a first step, you should normally raise your concern with your immediate line manager (or **manager of centre if a parent/carer, volunteer, student or other adult**). This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who you think may be involved in the malpractice. If you feel raising your concern with your line manager causes a conflict of interest, you should approach their line manager or the nominated Trustee.

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.

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

Safeguarding issues which involve a member of staff should initially be reported directly to the centre Safeguarding Lead Practitioner. If you suspect there may be conflict of interest in reporting to your centre SLP you should report to the deputy SLP at your centre, the Senior **Early Years Professional** or the nominated Trustee whose contact numbers are shown below, all of who will be SLP trained. If you have not been able to report to a nominated SLP as previously mentioned, follow the guidance on the 'Allegations against an adult in a childcare setting' flow chart, located in each centre's office and staff room.

The earlier you express your concern, the easier it is for Mr Bee's Family Centre, OFSTED, Children's Services or LADO to take action.

HOW MR BEE'S FAMILY CENTRE WILL RESPOND.

The action taken by Mr Bee's Family Centre will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may (in no particular order) one or more of the following ways:

- Be investigated internally;
- **Be investigated by the Trustees;**
- **Be investigated by OFSTED**
- Be referred to the Police;
- Be referred to LADO or **Norfolk MASH.**

Allegations referred directly to the **Norfolk MASH** or LADO will be dealt with in accordance with their policies and procedures. Any person who is the subject of an allegation should, at the appropriate times be given details of the allegation in order to respond.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. safeguarding or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation. The following process will be followed in the event of complaints:

- Mr Bee's Family Centre will ensure that a letter is sent to confirm the receipt of the complaint within 24 hours.
- The complaint will then be fully investigated within three weeks of when the complaint was first received. Mr Bee's Family Centre endeavour to investigate all complaints in a non-discriminatory manner.
- A letter will be sent detailing how Mr Bee's Family Centre has dealt with the complaint.

HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER?

If the concern has not been dealt with in a manner which is satisfactory to the employee, volunteer, student, parent/carer or others involved, is able to make a complaint directly to OFSTED **if childcare related or ACAS/legal advice if employment related.**

Legal framework

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
Children Act (1989 s47)

Linked Policies:

Grievance
Making a Complaint
Safeguarding and Child Protection

Re: Whistle Blowing

This policy was reviewed at a meeting of
Held on

Mr. Bee's Family Centre
20th April 2018

Date to be reviewed

May 2020

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Name of signatory

Jeanette Nowrung

Role of signatory

Trustee

Centre Manager's Signature:

Useful Contacts for Whistle Blowing Policy:

	Name:	Telephone Number:
Centre Lead / SLPs North Lynn:	Lisa Webster Deputies: Rachel Richardson, Matthew Foulkes, Kim Morgan, Anna Calton	01553-777097
Centre Lead / SLPs Springwood:	Karen Gibbons Deputy: Tessa Claxton / Jodie MacDonald	01553-766661
Centre Lead/SLPs St. Augustine's:	Jess Smith Deputy: Shelly Brown	01553-816907
Company Secretary:	Sue Kirk	01553-816905
Trustee for Employment and Health and Safety:	Richard High	01553-692797 and leave message
Trustee for Safeguarding:	Jeanette Nowrung (SLP)	01553-770439 or 815644
Professional Consultation Line:	Children's Services Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	0344 800 8020
LADO:	--	01603 223473
OFSTED:	--	0300 123 1231