

## **Whistle-Blowing Policy**

The Public Disclosure Act 1998 was introduced to provide protection to employees who 'blow the whistle' on their fellow employees or their employer, where the employee has reasonable belief that their disclosure shows one or more of the following;

- A criminal offence
- The breach of legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of an individual
- Damage to the environment
- A breach of safeguarding policy
- Deliberately covering up information tending to show any of the above

### **Aim**

To encourage individuals to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.

Whistle-blowing encourages and enables employees to arise serious concerns within Pre-school rather than overlooking the problem.

We are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with this commitment, we expect staff and others we deal with in the wider community, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Pre-school's work, to come forward and voice those concerns.

### **Procedure**

- Any staff member or volunteer who has concerns about possible misconduct must bring the matter to the attention of the Pre-school Manager. If the informant believes that the Pre-school Manager is party to the wrong-doing, the Chairperson of the Committee must be informed.
- If it is not a viable option for the informant to bring the concern to the attention of someone connected with the Preschool, then one of the following organisations may be informed as appropriate.
  - The Health and Safety Executive
  - The Charity Commission
  - The Local Education Authority (North Yorkshire Council)
- The Pre-school Manager alongside the Chairperson will then decide whether the matter is relevant to our Grievance Procedure (If the complaint is of a personal nature) If this is not the case, then the Preschool Leader will investigate the complaint, whilst taking every possible step to maintain the anonymity of the employee who has made the allegation.
- The Pre-school Manager will involve outside agencies as appropriate. Any investigation may involve the informant being required to give assistance by way of clarification or further evidence. The informant will be kept informed of any investigation whilst protecting the confidentiality of all parties involved.
- If the outcome of the enquiry does not satisfy the informant, they have the right to raise the matter with a higher authority internally (If available) or one of the outside authorities detailed above.

### **Principles**

Within the sphere of their roles, employees and volunteers in Pre-school have access to material of a confidential nature. Terms and conditions of employment or volunteer agreements provide that except in the proper performance of duties, employees and volunteers are forbidden from disclosing such confidential information. However, the law does allow 'protected disclosures' of certain information (In cases of breaches or offences as detailed in the public interest act)

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the informant's identity, if they so wish.

Informants must believe their complaint is substantially true.

Informants must not act maliciously or make false allegations.

Informants must not seek any personal gain in making the allegations.

Disciplinary action may be taken if;

- Any employee fails to report knowledge of abuse, theft or fraud.
- Any employee makes a malicious complaint and abuses this policy.
- Any employee stops or discourages another member of staff from coming forward to express a serious concern.
- Any employee criticises or victimises another member of staff after a concern has been expressed.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pickering Pre-School Playgroup held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**Date to be reviewed – Before end of August 2024.**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee**

**Name of signatory – Richard Allenby (Chairperson).**