Little Disciples Childcare

Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure

"Caring for children, supporting parents and sparking imaginations – where quality, affordability and excitement meet!"

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Policy Statement
At Little Disciples Childcare, we are committed to providing a seamless and cohesive approach to childcare across all our services. This policy and procedure apply equally to both our Nursery Plus provision and our Breakfast, Afterschool and Holiday Club services. This integrated framework ensures consistent standards of care, safety and quality across all aspects of our provision, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for every child in our care.

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

If workers raise a genuine concern about a wrongdoing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain circumstances under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'. Blowing the whistle is more formally known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest'. The law that protects whistle-blowers is for the public interest, so people are encouraged to speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure.

Other Policies and Procedures

The setting has a range of policies and procedures, which deal with standards of behaviour at work. Please use these procedures when appropriate. There may be times, however, when the matter needs to be handled in a different way.

Qualifying disclosures for the whistleblowing procedure are disclosures of information where the worker reasonably believes one or more of the following matters is either happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future:

- A criminal offence
- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above.

If you are blowing the whistle on malpractice or wrongdoing in the workplace you should make the disclosure (reveal the information) to your employer or to ‘a prescribed person’ so that your employment rights are protected. The prescribed person is detailed below.

Reporting a Disclosure

Initial Steps: Concerns should ideally be raised with the line manager, either verbally or in writing.
Escalation: If the matter is serious or unresolved, it should be reported to the Chair of the Committee or the Manager. If the concern involves the manager, it should be reported to Mrs. Anna Stephens, the Chairperson.

Prescribed Persons:

In addition to the routes for disclosure detailed above, employees can make disclosures to other prescribed persons:

- Health and Safety Executive
- Care Standards Issues: Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
- Other Relevant Authorities: Depending on the nature of the concern, disclosures can be made to other relevant authorities as justified.

Investigation Process

Confidentiality: Disclosures are handled confidentially and whistle-blowers can choose to remain anonymous.

Meeting: A meeting will be arranged to discuss the concerns and the whistle-blower can be accompanied by a colleague or union representative.

Outcome: The investigation will be thorough, fair and prompt, with updates provided to the whistle-blower.

Upon receipt of a whistleblowing report, the organisation is committed to handling all concerns promptly, fairly and in a confidential manner. The following outlines the typical timescales for investigating and responding to whistleblowing disclosures:

Acknowledgement of Report
The whistleblower will receive an acknowledgement of their report within 2 to 3 working days of submission.

Initial Assessment
An initial review will be conducted to determine whether the matter falls within the scope of this policy and whether a full investigation is warranted. This assessment will be completed within 5 working days of receipt.

Notification and Planning
Relevant internal parties will be notified and an appropriate investigator will be appointed. A preliminary investigation plan will be developed within 10 working days of the report being received.

Investigation Process
The formal investigation, including evidence gathering and interviews, will aim to be completed within 30 calendar days from the initial receipt of the report. Complex matters may require additional time; in such cases, the whistleblower will be informed of any revised timescales.

Reporting and Decision
Following the investigation, a report will be prepared and reviewed by senior management or designated authorities. A decision on any required actions will be made within 45 calendar days of the report being received.

Communication of Outcome
The whistleblower will be informed, where appropriate and within legal constraints, of the outcome of the investigation within 60 calendar days.

Follow-Up Actions
Any necessary corrective or disciplinary actions will be implemented promptly. The situation will be monitored to ensure no retaliation occurs and any learning points will be used to improve policies and procedures.

If Unsatisfied

Further Action:
If the whistle-blower is not satisfied with the handling of their concern, they can raise it with the Setting Management Committee.

Corrective Action

Disciplinary Measures: Disciplinary action will be taken if there is a case to answer. Genuine concerns raised without malice will ensure no reprisals for the whistle-blower.

False Allegations: Malicious false allegations will lead to disciplinary action.

Protection and Support

No Detrimental Treatment: Whistle-blowers are protected from dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment.

Grievance Procedure: If a whistle-blower suffers detrimental treatment, they should inform their line manager and use the Grievance Procedure if necessary.