

Employment

Whistle Blowing

Policy statement

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their **place of work**. 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. This policy document makes it clear that employees, parents/carers and others can do so without fear for reprisals. The whistle blowing procedure allows **all people who are connected to Mr Bee's, including outside agencies** to raise concerns about the **conduct of any Trustee, Employee, Student or Volunteer at 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 **in Employee Hand Book**).
- for parent/carer concerns or complaints (refer to Making a Complaint policy **on Mr Bee's website**).
- Allegations of Abuse against an adult within the setting or concerns about a child (refer to Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Safeguarding posters **on Mr Bee's website**).

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 **in order that a thorough investigation may take place**. Anonymous allegations will be **investigated** and action taken **to the point where the whistle blower remains anonymous**. In exercising **the whistle blower anonymity**, 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.

After considering the points above, in line with the Information Sharing policy, it may be necessary to share the name of the whistle blower (i.e. safeguarding and disciplinary action). If allegations are in good faith, the whistle blower will face no repercussions.

MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

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 allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against you in accordance with the Mr Bee's Family **Centre's employment and safeguarding policies**.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN?

Whistle blowers are encouraged to take the followings steps to raise a concern:

- Firstly, raise your concern with your immediate line manager (Centre Lead / Supervisor). If you feel raising your concern with your line manager causes a conflict of interest, you should approach their line manager **or another senior management staff member**.
- You will be asked to put your concerns in writing, including any evidence which substantiates your concern – this can be done anonymously if preferred.
- 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.

- The person contacted will begin initial investigations seeking support from the Senior Early Years Professional or HR Officer if appropriate, or external agency as outlined in paragraph below '**EXTERNAL AGENCIES**'..
- The person contacted will make a decision based on investigations as to whether further action will or will not be taken as appropriate.
- The person contacted will inform the whistle blower of the processes to be taken in writing where possible within 48 hours.
- If whistle blower wishes to appeal any decision made this can be done by following the Appeal procedure outlined in the Mr Bee's Grievance policy.

SAFEGUARDING:

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.

EXTERNAL AGENCIES

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) be one or more of the following ways:

- 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.

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 **the follow the Appeal policy** if employment related.

Legal framework

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
Children Act (1989 s47)

Linked Policies:

Grievance
Making a Complaint
Safeguarding and Child Protection

Useful Contacts for Whistle Blowing Policy:

	Name:	Telephone Number:
Centre Lead / SLPs North Lynn:	Lisa Webster Deputy: Rachel Richardson,	01553-777097
Centre Lead / SLPs Springwood:	Matthew Foulkes Deputy: Sophie Bailey	01553-766661
Centre Lead/SLPs St. Augustine's:	Jess Smith Deputy: Kim Morgan	01553-816907
Trustee for Employment and Health and Safety:	Jeanette Nowrung	01553-692797 and leave message
Trustee for Safeguarding:	Jeanette Nowrung (SLP)	01553-770439
Professional Consultation Line:	Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	0344 800 8020
LADO:	--	01603 223473
OFSTED:	--	0300 123 1231

Re: Whistle Blowing

This policy was reviewed at a meeting of Mr. Bee's Family Centre
Held on 25th November 2020
Date to be reviewed August 2022

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:	
Name and Role of signatory	Jeanette Nowrung, Chairperson
Centre Manager's Signature:	