

## **Safeguarding**

## **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).
- for parent/carer concerns or complaints (refer to Making a Complaint).
- Allegations of Abuse against an adult within the setting or concerns about a child (refer to Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on our website and safeguarding posters located in parent areas at Mr Bee's).

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 **legal** investigation 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 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 procedures outlined in the Mr Bee's Appeal 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  
Conflict of Interest

## Useful Contacts for Whistle Blowing Policy:

	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Telephone Number:</b>
<b>Centre Lead / SLPs North Lynn:</b>	Lisa Webster Deputy: Becky Ford	01553-777097
<b>Centre Lead / SLPs Springwood:</b>	Matthew Foulkes Deputy: Sophie Bailey	01553-766661
<b>Centre Lead/SLPs St. Augustine's:</b>	Jess Smith Deputy: Shannon Cardy	01553-816907
<b>Trustee for Employment and Health and Safety:</b>	Jeanette Nowrung	01553-692797 and leave message
<b>Trustee for Safeguarding:</b>	Jeanette Nowrung (SLP)	01553-770439
<b>Children's Advice and Duty Services (CADS):</b>	Consultant Social Worker	0344 800 8021
<b>LADO:</b>	How to make a referral can be found at: Or a message left on for ongoing cases:	<a href="http://www.norfolkscb.org">www.norfolkscb.org</a>  01603 223473
<b>OFSTED:</b>	--	0300 123 1231

## Re: Whistle Blowing

This policy was reviewed at a meeting of:

Mr. Bee's Family Centre

Held on:

26.09.2022 – updated 14.8.2023

Date to be reviewed:

May 2025

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:	
Name of role of signatory:	Jeanette Nowrung, Chairperson
Signed by Senior Early Years Professional:	
Individual Centre Lead's Signature:	
North Lynn:	
Springwood:	
St Augustine's:	