

## **Runnymede Pre-school Whistleblowing Policy**

**Definition:** Whistleblowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation or through an independent structure associated with it (UK Committee on Standards in Public Life).

**Protection:** As a member of Pre-School Learning Alliance, Runnymede pre-school is committed to delivering a high quality pre-school service, promoting organisational accountability and maintaining public confidence.

This policy provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation or punishment where they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the organisation. The policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace, in order to promote good governance and accountability in the public interest. The Act covers behaviour, which amounts to:

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to health and safety of an individual and/or environment
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above.

It is not intended that this policy be a substitute for, or an alternative to the group's formal Grievance Procedure, but is designed to nurture a culture of openness and transparency within the organisation, which makes it safe and acceptable for employees and volunteers to raise, in good faith, a concern they may have about misconduct or malpractice.

Employees and volunteers are entitled to expect fair and reasonable treatment from their employer and colleagues. This group has in place formal procedures that paid or unpaid staff can use if they feel they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against. Employees and volunteers can seek advice from a Trade Union, a lawyer, or others as they see fit.

This group accepts that there may be rare occasions in the organisation when situations arise which are illegal, improper or unethical, or which are otherwise in conflict with the codes of practice of Social Service Workers and Employers. The group is committed to providing paid and unpaid staff with an effective mechanism for dealing with such situations.

An employee or volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such a concern should normally report the matter to their Supervisor who will advise the employee or volunteer of the action he or she will take in response to the concerns expressed. Concerns should be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.

If an employee or volunteer feels the matter cannot be discussed with their Supervisor, he or she should report it to the Chairperson of the Committee. The Chairperson will decide, in consultation where necessary with PLA and/or OFSTED, what action is to be taken. This may include whether the issue raised can be dealt with through the group's own Grievance Procedure.

A disclosure in good faith to the supervisor, or Chairperson will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and the employee or volunteer will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice within the organisation.

**Notes to the policy:** The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 came into force in July 1999. The Act encourages people to raise concerns about malpractice in the workplace without fear of dismissal or victimisation and, helps to prevent cover up of serious malpractice.

**Malpractice:** applies to people at work raising genuine concerns about crime, civil offences (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment and the cover up of any of these. It applies whether or not the information is confidential.

In addition to employees the policy applies to relief staff, trainees and student placements, and unpaid workers.

There are no restrictions under employment law on minimum length of service and age.

Under the Act, employees may safely seek legal advice on any concerns they have about malpractice.

The Act does not presently cover volunteers.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on .....**

**Signed on behalf of the pre-school ..... (name)**

**.....(position)**