

# **Whistle Blowing Policy**

**Adopted: October 2019**

**To be reviewed: October 2021**

# Child Protection Whistle Blowing Policy: Guidance for Employees

This guidance is written for staff working with children and young people working in education settings and should be read in conjunction with Cambridgeshire LA's whistleblowing procedures (2017)

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation; these feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who is targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

**\*\*\* Don't think what if I'm wrong - think what if I'm right \*\*\***

## Reasons for whistle blowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

## What stops people from whistle blowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

## How to Raise a Concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier concern is expressed the easier and sooner it is possible for action to be taken
- Try to pinpoint what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach someone you trust and who you will believe will respond
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern

'It is important to remember that often it is the most vulnerable groups that are targeted by individuals who may seek to abuse those in their care. Therefore, these groups rely on responsible individuals to protect them and to safeguard their welfare'.

*Cambridgeshire County Council's Whistleblowing policy – September 2019*

### **What Happens Next**

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and as raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

### **Self Reporting**

Staff have a responsibility to report any relevant changes of circumstance to their employer. These include any criminal investigations, convictions or warnings they may become the subject of and/or if their own children become involved in any child protection related concern

There also may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty maybe a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children

### **Further Advice and Support**

Full details of Cambridgeshire County Council's whistleblowing policy and procedures can be obtained from the HR Department of the County Council.

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, your HR provider and/or your professional or trade union.

***"Absolutely without fail - challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong". With acknowledgement to Sounding the Alarm - Barnardos***