



Whistleblowing Policy

The word Whistleblowing in this Policy refers to the disclosure by workers of malpractice, either internally or externally, as well as illegal acts or omissions at work.

Policy Statement

Staple Preschool is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and the highest possible ethical standards in public life and in all of its practices. To achieve these ends, it encourages freedom of speech. It also encourages staff to use internal mechanism for reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions by its employees or ex-employees.

Other policies and procedures

Staple Preschool has a range of policies and procedures, which deal with standards of behaviour at work; they cover Discipline, Grievance, Recruitment and Selection. Employees are encouraged to use the provisions of these procedures when appropriate. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures, e.g. Child Protection, will normally be referred under its own procedure. This policy is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures and may relate to something which:

- Malpractice or ill treatment of a child, parent/carer or colleague by a member of staff.
- Repeated ill treatment of a child, parent/carer or colleague, despite a complaint being made.
- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.
- Suspected fraud.
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to health and safety at work.
- The environment has been, or is likely to be, damaged.
- Breach of standing financial instructions.
- A breach of a code of conduct.
- Information on any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be concealed.

This list is not exhaustive.

Staple Preschool will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures), and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Who can an employee raise a concern with?

The employee should firstly raise their concerns with the coordinator. However, if they don't feel able to do this then they should approach the Chair or a Committee Member.

How does an employee raise a concern?

The concern can be shared verbally or put in writing but the Employee needs to make sure the person they are talking to is aware they are following the Whistle Blowing Procedure.

How will the concern be dealt with?

The person who receives the initial concern (part of the management team) will make initial enquiries to determine whether the concern raised needs further investigation. Such initial enquiries should be dealt with promptly, thoroughly, impartially and confidentially, in accordance with the Procedure. The management team will acknowledge the concern in writing, within 10 days, and give an indication of how the concern will/or has been dealt with. If it hasn't been dealt with then an indication of how long the procedure will take needs to be included.

Initial enquiries

As part of the initial enquiries the member of the management team may meet with the employee to gather further information or clarify certain details. Employees are expected to co-operate fully with the investigation and disclose all relevant information. The member of the management team will record, in written format, all meetings. If other employees are able/willing to substantiate the concern they should also meet with the member of the management team dealing with the concern. If the management team believe other employees are aware, but don't feel able to come forward, then the management team should approach them and offer them opportunity to share their concerns.

Possible outcome of initial enquiries

Depending on the nature of the concern, and the evidence found, possible outcomes include:

- Unable to investigate due to anonymous report and not enough information to proceed
- If the concern was shared but was inaccurate no further investigation would be carried out
- Where there is believed to be grounds for concern then further investigation will be carried out

Further investigations

Dependant on the nature of the concern e.g. suspected fraud, theft, and serious malpractice etc., the management team may investigate further.

- The investigation may need to be carried out under the terms of strict confidentiality to:
 - Protect the employee(s) concerned
 - Avoid alerting anyone about whom a concern has been raised
 - by not informing the subject of the complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so.
 - Avoid alerting other employees who may then warn the subject of the concern.
 - Record the information as the record may be used in a formal hearing, if it is a serious complaint.
 - Keep all records secure and confidential
- In certain cases, however, such as allegations of ill treatment of a child, parent/carer or a colleague, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. Protection of children, parents/carers and colleagues is paramount in all cases.

- The management team will offer to keep the whistleblower informed about the investigation and its outcome. (This will not include details of any disciplinary action, which will remain confidential to the individual concerned).
- If the result of the investigation is that there is a case to be answered by any individual, the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure will be used.
- Where there is no case to answer, but the employee held a genuine concern and was not acting maliciously, the management team should ensure that the employee suffers no reprisals.
- Only where false allegations are made maliciously or for personal gain, will it be considered appropriate to act against the whistleblower under the terms of the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Following the investigation

If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, Staple preschool recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission, or the utility regulators, or where justified, elsewhere.)

Legislation Links:

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Useful documents/websites:

Ofsted – whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

ACAS – www.acas.org.uk

Public concern at work – www.pcaw.co.uk

This policy was adopted by	Staple Pre-School
Date:	September 2021
Date to be reviewed	September 2022
Signed on behalf of the management committee	Lauren Gupta-Miles
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chairperson