

Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Statement

Pathways is committed to the highest possible standards and recognise that staff, volunteers and students may be the first to notice a problem within the setting.

The responsibility for expressing concerns about practice or behaviour rests with all staff, volunteers and students.

Our whistleblowing policy enables staff, volunteers and students to report concerns or any allegations in the strictest of confidence. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees from victimisation or harassment.

The aims of this procedure are to:

- Encourage employees working in the nursery to report any suspected concerns as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concern will be taken seriously and investigated, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- Provide guidance on how to raise any concerns.
- Reassure anyone raising a concern that they are able to raise genuine concerns without fear of any reprisals, even if they turn out to be untrue.
- Provide appropriate advice and support to anyone raising a concern
- Keep those raising a concern informed of the progress and the outcome of any investigation.
- Pathways will not tolerate malicious allegations; this will be considered as a possible disciplinary offence.

A concern that should be raised via this policy is:

- Failure to comply with policies and procedures
- Poor practice which falls below standards
- Improper conduct
- Anything unlawful

These issues could have happened in the past, the present or likely to happen in the future.

Raising a Concern

If you wish to raise a concern then this must normally be to you manager. This can be done in person or in writing. Pathways recognise at times that approaching your manager may be inappropriate (if the concern relates to the manager). In these circumstances, depending on the nature of your concern a number of alternatives are available:

- The deputy manger
- The trustees
- LADO service (details can be found at the end of this policy)
- Ofsted

Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your concern, you will need to demonstrate that you have sufficient evidence or other reasonable ground to raise them.

A concern should include:

- Reference to the fact that this a whistleblowing disclosure

- The background and the history of the concern
- Names, dates and places if possible
- The reason you are concerned

Investigation

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. Investigations will be done internally with the exception of allegations of abuse against a member of staff, volunteer or student and criminal and unlawful activity. We follow advice from the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB). Please see this policy.

Step 1

You will be notified by the person who you made the concern with within 10 days about how this will be dealt with. The information you can expect to receive from them is:

- Acknowledgement of the concern
- An indication of how the concern will be dealt with
- How long it will take to provide a final response
- Whether any initial enquiries have already been made
- Whether further investigation will take place and if not why
- Information about any support available for you

The person dealing with the concern will also notify the trustees that a whistleblowing disclosure has been made.

Step 2

Enquiries will be made as to whether an investigation is appropriate. When this is necessary this may take the form of one or more of the following:

- An internal investigation by the manager or a trustee(s), may form a disciplinary investigation)
- Referral to LADO (safeguarding concerns)
- Referral to Ofsted or the police

Step 3

You will be informed of the outcomes of the investigation in writing, and any actions taken place or that will take place subject to any confidentiality constraints. If you are not happy with the outcome of the concern then you may wish to raise it with:

- Trustee(s)
- Ofsted
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Police

You have a duty to Pathways not to disclose any confidential information. This does not prevent you from seeking independent advice from the charity Protect on 020 3117 2520 (general enquires) and <https://protect-advice.org.uk> in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Important Numbers

LADO 0300 111 8007 via the first response team - Mon-Thurs 8.30-5.00 & Fri 8.30-4.30

Email: eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk

Emergency outside of hours 0345 604 2886

Email Ofsted at whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by phone on 0300 123 1231

