



Clifton Playgroup Ltd
Company Ltd by Guarantee 07342930

MAKING A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE "WHISTLE BLOWING" POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Clifton Playgroup is committed to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour within the organisation. Consequently, any form of malpractice that is identified will be taken very seriously and this policy enables employees and volunteers to make disclosures i.e. report any wrong doing internally without fear of reprisals or victimisation in accordance with legislation.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 Employees and volunteers are protected in making disclosures internally which are made in good faith and relate to an incident that has happened or may happen and relates to:
- improper conduct or unethical behaviour towards a child, parent or another employee;
 - unlawful conduct - either criminal activity or failure to comply with legal obligations;
 - financial malpractice - impropriety or fraud;
 - dangers to the public or environment;
 - Attempts to conceal any of the above.
- 2.2 The policy is not intended to be used to question financial or business decisions made by the Board of Directors nor to reconsider any other matters which may have been addressed under other procedures such as grievance, complaint, or disciplinary. However, investigation under this policy may lead to the implementation of other procedures such as disciplinary.
- 2.3 Clifton Playgroup will treat all disclosures confidentially and sensitively, although it must be highlighted that it may not be possible to maintain the confidentiality of the person making the disclosure due to the content of the complaint. Anonymous allegations may be made but it may be more difficult to investigate the matter.

- 2.4 Should the individual making the disclosure decide to withdraw the allegation, the Manager/Investigating Officer dealing with the matter will be obliged to consider whether the investigation should continue in view of seriousness of it.
- 2.5 Should an allegation be made which cannot be confirmed, no action will be taken against the complainant unless the member of employee or volunteer had deliberately made the disclosure for malicious or vexatious purposes, in which case, disciplinary action may be taken, which may result in dismissal or the volunteering opportunity will be brought to an end.
- 2.6 Once this policy has been implemented, all employees and volunteers are expected not to discuss the matter outside of the organisation and should be aware that disclosure of confidential information in circumstances not covered by relevant legislation outside of the organisation may lead to disciplinary action.

3. PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

3.1 Raising a matter of concern

- 3.1.1 When an employee or volunteer becomes concerned, they should initially raise the matter with their Playgroup Manager in writing providing details such as any background information, names and dates.
- 3.1.2 Should an individual's concerns relate to their Playgroup Manager, or the Playgroup Manager fails to take appropriate action they should contact the Chair or other Director of the Board.
- 3.1.3 For concerns relating to the actions of a Director the matter must be raised with the Chair of the Board.
- 3.1.4 If the Chair is believed to be party to the concern the matter should be raised with another Director who following discussion with other Directors may decide that the appropriate course of action is to appoint an external independent investigator.
- 3.1.5 All concerns will be investigated by an appointed "investigating officer", identified by the Chair who will determine if this policy is the most appropriate mechanism for dealing with the matter or whether it is appropriate to deal with the concern under another procedure e.g. Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Should this be the case, written acknowledgement of the concern and the process that will be followed will be provided to the employee or volunteer raising the concern within ten working days.

3.2 Investigating Matters of Concern

3.2.1 The investigating officer will be vigilant in the investigation and have responsibility for:

- Obtaining full details of the complaint,
- Informing the individual whom the allegations are made against and of their right to be accompanied by a representative at any future interview,
- Determining and advising if the cases warrant referral to the Police or any other external agency and/or with assistance of any other individuals/bodies,
- A written report detailing the findings and the judgement concerning the validity of the complaint to be presented to the Chair, within 10 working days.

3.2.2. The Chair will decide on the appropriate action, which may be disciplinary. Both the employee or volunteer making the disclosure and the employee or volunteer complained of will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

3.2.3 Every effort will be made to conclude internal investigations within two months but it is possible that some circumstances could delay this process.

4. Appeal

- 4.1 Should the individual making the complaint not be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may appeal in writing to the Chair against the decision within five working days of receiving notification of the outcome. The Chair will decide who will hear the appeal and this will be completed within one month.
- 4.2 If the employee or volunteer is still dissatisfied they may raise the matter externally to prescribed persons such as the Health and Safety Executive or Local Government. Any external disclosure should not be taken until this procedure has been concluded. If disclosure is made externally before the concern has been dealt with under this procedure or confidential or sensitive information is disclosed this could result in disciplinary action being taken. The Chair may direct further investigation or reviews as appropriate.
- 4.3 An employee or volunteer who is subject to action arising from a disclosure under this policy may make representation to the Chair within five working days of the action being taken as a result of the disclosure. The Chair may direct further investigation or reviews as appropriate.

5. Recording and Monitoring

5.1 A register will be maintained by the Playgroup Manager of any issues of concerns raised, which will be reported on an annual basis to the Board. Under the Safeguarding title on the Board meetings agenda.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Playgroup Committee held on: October 2018

**Signed on behalf of
Playgroup:**



Name:
Liz Newbold

Designation:
Chair of The Board of Directors
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