

# OFFWELL UNDER FIVES

## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### **Statement**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 was enacted to ensure a climate of greater frankness between employers and workers so that irregularities can be identified and addressed quickly and to strengthen employment rights by protecting responsible workers who blow the whistle about wrongdoing or failures in the workplace. The policy set out in this document applies those statutory provisions to the administration of Offwell Under Fives

Offwell Under Fives is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty, accountability and openness. In line with that commitment we encourage parents, employees and others with any serious concerns about any aspect of the settings operations to come forward and voice those concerns. Obviously in certain cases we may have to proceed on a confidential basis. Any employee of the setting can follow this policy without any fears of reprisals including harassment or victimisation. This Whistle Blowing Policy is in place to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the setting other than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.

All Offwell Under Fives staff have an individual responsibility and the right to raise matters of concern regarding poor or insufficient practice at work. The staffs priority is the well-being and safety of all children attending the setting. This takes priority over any loyalty towards work colleagues.

### **This policy is intended to:**

- Enable and encourage individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns.
- To support staff to take an active role in the elimination of poor or insufficient practices.
- Investigate any concerns raised appropriately and confidentially.
- Ensure protection to those making the complaint against any form of retaliation or victimisation.

We have other policy and procedures in place to cover grievance and complaints. This Whistle Blowing Policy is intended to complement those. This policy will cover any concerns that fall outside the scope of the other policies.

The Chairperson and committee will act promptly and investigate thoroughly, all concerns raised in accordance with this policy, and appropriate action will be taken.

### **Safeguards:**

Offwell Under Fives recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. Offwell Under Fives will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. It will not tolerate any resulting harassment or victimisation (including informal or indirect pressures) and

will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the appropriate procedures.

### **Confidentiality:**

The Management Committee will respect and protect a person's identity when a concern is raised, however in certain circumstances identities will have to be revealed to the person complained against and the complainant may be asked to provide written evidence in support of the complaint.

If a person's identity is to be disclosed, he or she will be informed before the disclosure and given the reasons why this was necessary.

Once a concern has been raised the Management committee will expect the complainant not to discuss the complaint. The complainant should not talk about it with any person, inside or outside the setting.

### **Anonymous Complaints:**

This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation. If a complaint is made anonymously, these cases are a lot harder to investigate and hold less power. It is easier for us if people state their name and put any concerns in writing.

### **Procedures:**

Firstly any concerns should be brought to the attention of the Play Leader However, this may not always be appropriate. If this is the case concerns should be expressed to the Chairperson of the management committee. If this too is not appropriate, Ofsted can be contacted via their Whistle-Blowing Hotline: **0300 123 3155**

Concerns are better raised in writing. If you can include any background and history that would be names, dates, times and places wherever possible. State the reason for your concerns. Express your concerns early as it is easier to take action. If you do not wish to put your concerns in writing, the person to whom you are making the complaint will make a written record of the interview and you will be asked to sign to confirm accuracy of the notes.

You will be required to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concerns; although you will not be expected to prove the truth about your allegations.

### **Untrue Allegations:**

If an allegation is made in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the complainant. However if an allegation is proved to be malicious and/or completely unfounded, action may be taken against the person responsible.

You must not under any circumstances:

- Investigate the matter yourself.

- Tell those you suspect to be involved.
- Accuse or approach individuals.
- Tell anyone other than the designated persons: The Play leader or The Chairperson

Within one weeks of the receipt of your concern, you will receive a written acknowledgement of your concern, also a copy of the statement you had written.

The Chairperson / committee will investigate your concerns and **within 2 weeks you will be informed of what action is being taken.** You will be kept up to date on the progress of the investigation. Finally you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

**If you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation, or at any point during it, you may elevate your concerns directly to:**

#### **Ofsted**

- Ofsted's whistle blowing dedicated hotline (**0300 1233155**) was launched in April 2009. It is staffed from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.
- Whistle blowing disclosures can also be submitted to Ofsted by email to the Ofsted whistle blowing team ([whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)) or by post to:
- WBHL  
Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2wd

**This policy was adopted by Offwell Under Fives Pre-School on: 29/ 09 / 2011**

Review date 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School by:  
Clare O'Toole - Chairperson & Kay George - Play leader