

Whistle Blowing Policy



Aims:

- To encourage staff and volunteers to feel confident in reporting serious concerns about any aspects of the setting's work.
- To provide ways for staff and volunteers to report concerns.
- To ensure that staff and volunteers get a response to their concerns and that they know what to do if they are not satisfied with this.
- To reassure staff and volunteers that they will not be penalised for coming forward with their concerns.

Definitions

What is whistleblowing?

Whistle blowing is reporting a serious concern, which someone reasonably believes shows wrongdoing or a cover-up by that organisation. The concern may relate to something that has happened, is happening or that a person may fear will happen in the future. This may be passed on to a senior member of staff or management for action if they are not complicit but may go directly to an appropriate external organisation.

1. General statement of policy

Oldbury Court Out Of School Clubs is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. In line with that commitment it encourages employees/volunteers with serious concerns about any aspect of OCOSC work to come forward and voice those concerns. It recognises that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy makes it clear that staff/volunteers can do so without fear of reprisals and is intended to provide avenues for staff/volunteers to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.

This policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. It is not intended as an alternative to well established disciplinary or grievance procedures.

2 Procedures

2.1 Serious concerns:

- A criminal offence
- Abuse or neglect of children
- Bullying or victimisation of staff/volunteers or children
- Financial malpractice
- A health and safety risk
- A failure to deliver appropriate standards of care

There may be other serious concerns, which do not fit into these categories.

2.2 Confidentiality

All Staff / volunteers, will be encouraged to put their names to any allegations and not to express their concerns anonymously as this makes them more difficult to investigate. Any concerns raised will be dealt with confidentially wherever this is possible. If other organisations need to be involved, it may not be possible to conceal the source of the information.

2.3 Untrue allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith but not confirmed by the investigation, no reprisals will be taken against the person making the allegation. If, however, they make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

2.4 Harassment or victimisation

OCOSC will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect those who report a concern in good faith

2.5 How to raise a concern

Internal Reporting Routes

Staff and volunteers may raise concerns with:

- **The Manager**
- **If the concern involves the Manager: with the OCOSC Chair and the Director in charge of safeguarding via the confidential email: ocoscsafeguardingdirector@outlook.com**

This inbox is monitored only by the Chair and the Director in charge of Safeguarding and is intended for confidential safeguarding or whistleblowing concerns.

Concerns can be raised orally but it is good practice if for any concerns to be in writing to ensure that all the details are accurate and correctly understood. A written allegation should set out the background and history of the concern (giving names, dates and places where possible) and the reason the person is particularly concerned about the situation.

The person contacted who records a verbal allegation made by a member of staff/volunteer will provide them with a copy of the account to give them an opportunity to agree this as a correct record.

Although the member of staff/volunteer raising the concern is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation they will need to demonstrate to the contacted person that there were sufficient grounds for their concern.

If a whistleblower believes their concern has not been properly addressed, they may escalate to external bodies, including:

- **Ofsted Whistleblowing Team 0300 123 3155 or email whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk**
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Lado@bristol.gov.uk or lado@southglos.gov.uk**
- **Police (if a crime is suspected) 999 or 111 if not an emergency**
- **Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) 020 3117 2520**
- **ACAS 0300 123 1100**

2.6 How OCOSC will respond

The action taken by OCOSC will depend on the nature of the concern

- All reported concerns will be investigated.
- Verbal concerns will be recorded in writing.
- After initial enquiries to assess the seriousness of the matter it may be investigated internally or referred to the Police or Social Services
- If urgent action is required in response to a concern this may well be taken before a full investigation is conducted.
- In some cases the concern may be better addressed under another policy or procedure, such as child protection, health and safety or disciplinary and grievance
- The person reporting the concern will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible normally within two weeks of the date of their concern. Where a longer time is needed for the investigation the person will be informed in writing.
- Where a person is not satisfied with the outcome, they should put their concerns in writing to the person in charge of the organisation.

In any event within ten working days of a concern being received, OCOSC will write to the staff/volunteer raising the concern.

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how OCOSC proposes to deal with the matter
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- Stating whether initial enquiries have been made
- Stating if further investigations are taking place.
- Naming an independent person to support them during any investigation.

The named support person will make contact with the staff/volunteer member raising the concern immediately, explain their role, deal with all confidentiality issues, agree frequency of contact and keep them informed about the progress of the investigation.

The staff /volunteer can raise any concerns they have about the conduct of the investigation. The support person will take appropriate steps to support them in the workplace and at any proceedings which result from the investigation. The person raising the concern has a right to be accompanied by a union representative or a friend.

2.7 Detriment

OCOSC is committed to ensuring that an employee/volunteer who makes an allegation in good faith suffers no detriment from doing so.

2.8 How to take your concern further

This policy is intended to provide staff/volunteers with an avenue to raise concerns with in OCOSC. If they are not satisfied with the response or out come of their concern they may take the matter outside to the following organisations.

Legal framework and contact details:

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Work (PCAW) on 020 7404 6609 or email whistle@pcaw.co.uk
- Ofsted hotline on 0300 123 3155 Monday to Friday or email whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk. Ofsted regulates childcare providers in England in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Ofsted's role is to make sure that the childcare provider is following all registration requirements and to take action if necessary. To complain about a childcare provider or childminder agency, get in touch at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or 0300 123 4666 / 0300 1231231. Complaints procedure - Ofsted – GOV.UK

- Advice Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) on 0300 123 1100
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Hotline. 0800 0280285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Provides free help and advice to people who suspect their organisation might be putting children at risk, even if they're not certain that this is the case. For further info: Whistleblowing Advice Line| NSPCC.
- General guidance on whistleblowing: Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower – GOV.UK.

Reviewed by: Ebi Cole

Date: March 2026

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