



Whistleblowing Policy

This document forms part of our Safeguarding Pack

Whistleblowing is the term used when someone who works in or for an organisation wishes to raise serious concerns about malpractice in the organisation (for example, crimes, civil offences, miscarriages of justice, dangers to health and safety or the environment), and the cover up of any of these.

The term whistleblowing applies when an employee raises a concern about malpractice or serious wrongdoing in their workplace that has a public interest aspect to it, usually because it threatens others as well. It applies to raising a concern within the organisation as well as externally; to OFSTED for example.

Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. It only applies when you have no vested interest and you are acting as a witness to misconduct or malpractice that you have observed.

We want staff and volunteers to feel confident to whistleblow and report certain types of wrongdoing from another colleague.

Examples of Whistleblowing

Issues which might be raised could include:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- sexual, physical or verbal abuse or criminal offence against or related to a child, employee, the public or other users i.e. parents
- health and safety risks to children, employees, the public or other users i.e. parents
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of funds, or possible fraud or corruption
- unethical conduct including behaviour that has harmed or may harm a child
- behaviour that is against Sunflower Club's policies and practices or amounts to improper conduct, or indicates unsuitability to work with children

Preamble

The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998, known as the Whistleblowing Act, is intended to promote internal and regulatory disclosures and encourage workplace accountability and self-regulation. The Act protects the public interest by providing a remedy for individuals who suffer workplace reprisal for raising a genuine concern, whether it is a concern about child safeguarding and welfare systems, financial malpractice, danger, illegality, or other wrongdoing. The concern may relate to something that is happening or has happened in the past.

This policy is in line with statutory guidance Working together to safeguard children 2023 recommending that all organisations that provide services for, or work with, children, have appropriate whistleblowing procedures, and an open culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed by the organisation.

Aims of Whistleblowing Policy

Sunflower Club is committed to safeguarding children from harm. Sunflower Club believes the welfare of the child is paramount and considers children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs at all times. This policy is to be used alongside our Safeguarding Policy. Our aim in adopting this policy also is to ensure that employees, volunteers, parents and committee members feel confident in voicing their concerns and can raise legitimate concerns or worries about Sunflower Club's activities and practices and feel safe and confident that their concerns will be heard. We will encourage an open culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed within the setting.

Procedure for Staff who wish to raise a Concern

Staff can raise a concern through their Manager, Supervisor or through any member of the Management Committee, who will ensure confidentiality as far as practicable, but obviously this cannot be guaranteed in all circumstances, for example if the matter is proved to be a criminal offence, police may be involved.

Whistleblowing concerns within the organisation should be reported in writing explaining the full information and circumstances that have given rise for the concern.

This should be sent to the Manager or Chair in writing or by email. They will respond to your concern to acknowledge it has been raised within one working day.

Manager@sunflowerclub.co.uk – Chair@sunflowerclub.co.uk

Upon receiving the concern the Manager or Chair will discuss this with you and make enquiries to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and what the next stage is.

Our aim is to:

1. Help staff to feel confident in raising concerns either verbally or in writing and encourage staff to question and act upon concerns about practice. Encourage staff to raise the matter when it is just a concern rather than waiting for proof, however they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for their concerns. In the first instance the concern should be raised within the Sunflower Club to either the Manager or Management Committee.
2. Offer all staff regular supervision sessions and give them the opportunity to express any concerns. The earlier an employee expresses concerns the easier it is to take action.
3. Provide a clear wall display showing details of procedures to follow should staff have an immediate concern about an individual child or children.
4. Ensure Sunflower Club's Safeguarding procedures comply with all relevant legislation and other guidance or advice from the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). – LADO@norfolk.gov.uk

5. Reassure staff that Sunflower Club Management Team and Management Committee will do their utmost to protect staff from reprisals, or victimisation for raising concerns in good faith
6. Inform staff that they can take the matter further if dissatisfied with Sunflower Club's response. Should staff feel unable to raise their concerns with the Chair or any other member of the Management Committee, or staff feel they need to escalate a concern raised with their immediate superior or nominated person on the Management Committee they could also approach:
 - The independent voluntary organisation Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609
 - OFSTED Early Years – 0300 123 1231
 - The Executive Head Teacher or Head of School (RRIS) – 01603 457120
 - The Charity Commission 0845 300 0218
 - OFSTED also has a whistleblowing dedicated hotline (0300 1233155).Whistleblowing disclosures can also be submitted to OFSTED by email to the OFSTED whistleblowing team (whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk) or by post to:

WBHL Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD

Keeping Records

A detailed record of any whistleblowing concerns raised will be kept for a minimum period of two years. Should a whistleblowing concern be received, a confidential and independent examination process will begin. Whistleblowing will involve the Management Team and Committee who will document fully dates, times, details and names of persons involved. All discussions will be recorded including the names of all persons spoken to. Sunflower Club will refer to the LADO within one working day any concerns about an adult working or volunteering where their behaviour may harm or have harmed a child, involves a criminal offence against or related to a child, or behaviour towards a child that indicates unsuitability to work with children.

Any concerns about a child will also be referred to The Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8021. OFSTED will also be informed. Sunflower Club will comply and take advice from LADO, (CADS) and the Police wherever necessary.

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