

## EXPLORERS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Name	Whistleblowing Policy
No. of pages	4

## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Whistle blowing encourages and enables employees and committee volunteers to raise serious concerns within the organisation of Explorers rather than overlooking a problem or “blowing the whistle outside”. Explorers are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice their concerns.

By using this policy we aim to:

- Provide avenues for relevant parties to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that they receive a response to their concerns and that if they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- Reassure them that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made a disclosure in good faith.

Explorers recognise that the decision to report a concern can be difficult one to make. If what is being said is true, there should be nothing to fear because the relevant party will be doing their duty to their employer and those that Explorers provides a service for. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistle blower if they so wish. At the appropriate time, however, they may need to come forward as a witness.

Explorers are committed to good practice and high standards and want to be supportive of employees. Explorers will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect their staff when they raise a concern. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect the staff.

This policy encourages the staff however to put their name to the concern whenever possible.

Please note that:

- Staff/volunteers must disclose the information in good faith.
- Staff/volunteers must believe it to be substantially true.
- Staff/volunteers must not act maliciously or make false allegations.
- Staff/volunteers must not seek any personal gain.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the committee. In exercising this discretion the factors taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern; and Explorers Pre-School.
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

If an allegation is made in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person who made the disclosure. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the informant.

The whistle blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of law
- Disclosures related to a miscarriage of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the children as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual or physical abuse of children or staff or other unethical conduct

- Thus, any serious concerns that staff have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees of Explorers or others acting on behalf of Explorers staff can be reported under the whistle-blowing policy. This may be about something that:
- Makes anyone feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe Explorers subscribes to; or
- Is against Explorers Policies and Procedures
- Falls below established standards of practice; or
- Amounts to improper conduct

#### How to raise a concern

As a first step the concerns should be raised either verbally or in writing with the group's immediate supervisor/manager. This may depend, however on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved who is suspected of malpractice. For example, if it is believed that management is involved a more senior level of management should be approached if possible or the chairman of the committee.

Staff/volunteers who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- The reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

If a concern is raised immediately after it happens; the easier it becomes to take action. The whistle blower will not be expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, but will need EXPLORERS PRE-SCHOOL to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for concern. It could be that the person noticing the issue may wish to consider discussing the concern with a colleague first or may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) people who have the same experience or concerns. It is also possible to invite a professional representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns that have been raised.

Explorers have in place a complaints procedure for further guidance as to what procedures to follow. This policy does NOT replace the complaints procedure.

Explorers will respond to any concerns using the guidelines within this policy and the complaints policy and procedure. Explorers hope this will satisfy the relevant parties especially with regard to any action taken. If this does not answers the concerns, and it is felt that it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

Public Concern at Work (Tel: 02074046609), a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential

- Ofsted – ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau

- Your trade union
- The police

If the matter is taken outside Explorers, it should be ensured that no confidential information is disclosed. Please check with our confidentiality policy for guidance.

Please note:

The information below only needs to be included on the main policy which has been adopted and not on the parent/carer/guardian copy.

This policy was adopted at an Explorers committee meeting held on

Date: 15/07/2022

Approved by:

Kelly Groves – Chair Person

Anna Swinburn - Supervisor