

Smartkidz Play and Learn are committed to the highest possible standards and recognises that its staff are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the setting. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or they may fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be suspicion of malpractice.

The public interest disclosure act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with that act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, Smartkidz actively encourages its workers with concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice or staff member's conduct to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the setting rather than overlooking a problem.

## **Objective**

The aim of the policy and associated procedures is to establish an internal procedure which will encourage and enable staff to raise concerns about any aspect of Smartkidz' practice, which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint, grievance or allegation, in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that Smartkidz works within best practice and safeguard children and young people.

## **Scope**

Concerns that should be raised via the whistle blowing policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other staff, or about something that is perceived as:

- Unlawful
- Failing to apply with the settings policies and procedures.
- Poor practice.
- Improper conduct.

## **Principles**

The policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- The staff have a right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all staff.
- The settings will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect workers when they raise a concern in good faith.
- The setting will do its best to protect a whistle blowers' identity when he/she raises a concern and does not want his/her name to be disclosed. However, if the concern raised needs to be addressed through another procedure, e.g., disciplinary procedure, the worker may be required to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence.
- In some circumstances the setting may have to disclose the identity of the worker without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the worker first.
- Appropriate advice and support will be made available to staff.
- Those who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.
- The setting will not tolerate malicious allegations, and this may be considered a disciplinary offence.

## **Procedures**

Procedures for reporting and investigating "whistle blowing" concerns have been developed to ensure that:

- Staff can raise a concern, no matter how small they may appear, internally as a matter of course, and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and appropriately.
- Staff are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

- Staff can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the setting response and seek external advice and guidance.
- Issues raised are addressed via other procedures and policies as appropriate e.g.
- safeguarding, allegations against an adult working in a setting, grievance, disciplinary, health and safety.
- Appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.

### Raising a concern

Staff should raise concerns with their line manager. Concerns should be raised in writing and include:

- Reference to the fact that it is a whistle blowing disclosure.
- The background and history of the concerns.
- Names, date and places (where possible).
- The reason why the individual is concerned about the situation.

Staff who feel unable to put their concern in writing, can telephone or meet the manager.

Who you should contact:

Overall Safeguarding leads within Smartkidz Play and Learn	Emma Lythgoe - Manager Adam Smart – Managing Director
Girton DCPO	Berenice Termote
Haddenham DCPO	Jess Hew-Martin
Ridgefield DCPO	Amy Stebbings
Mayfield DCPO	Faiza Djermane-Aoune

### Investigation

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. All matters raised, with exception of an allegation against a staff member, or unlawful activity, will be investigated internally.

The appropriate person/s will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days.

The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and whom to contact should the staff member be unhappy with the response and wish to raise the matter.

If the investigation cannot be completed within the timescale above, the staff member should receive a response that indicates:

- Progress to date.
- How the matter is being dealt with.
- How long it will take to provide a final response.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries, usually involving a meeting with the individual raising a concern, will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that raise issues that fall within the scope of other policies/procedures, will be addressed under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved at this initial stage simply, by agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for further investigation.

If you do not feel that the complaint has been dealt with effectively or you still have concerns, you have a right to refer your concerns to Ofsted.

An allegation may relate to a person who works or volunteers with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

If you feel a concern meets this criteria, please follow the process in the blue and yellow allegation flow chart that is on our staff and parents board within each setting.

**Contact numbers**

Social Care: 0345 045 5203

Out of hours contact: 01733 234 724

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): 01223 727967

CPSCB (Cambridge and Peterborough safeguarding children board) : 01480 373522

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Police: 999 (non-emergency) 101

NSPCC: 0808 800 500

For Prevent concerns Call 101 and quote prevent.

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789321

For Procedural enquiries email the Education safeguarding team:

[ECPS.general@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:ECPS.general@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

This policy was adopted by: Smartkidz Play and Learn	Date: 1/11/2017 Date reviewed: 20/11/2018 Date reviewed: 16/08/2019. Date reviewed: 14/08/2020
To be reviewed: 14/08/2021	Signed: 