WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Whistleblowing is the term used when someone who works within an organisation wishes to raise concerns about malpractice within the workplace, without the fear of repercussions; for example, concerns about the conduct of a colleague.

Kirsty's Little Treasures (KLT's) expects employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of their work to come forward and voice their concerns internally, within the setting rather than overlooking the problem or "blowing the whistle" to someone outside.

KLT's encourages employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns and practice.

Who can an employee raise a concern with?
The employee should firstly raise their concerns with the Manager. However, if they do not feel able to do so they should approach the Support Manager.

How does an employee raise a concern?
The concern can be shared verbally or put in writing.

How will the concern be dealt with?
The person who receives the concern will make initial enquiries to determine whether the concern raised needs further investigation. Such initial enquiries should be dealt with promptly, thoroughly, impartially and confidentially.

The Manager will acknowledge the concern in writing, within 10 days, and give an indication of how the concern will/or has been dealt with. If it hasn't been dealt with then an indication of how long the procedure will take will be included.

Initial Enquiries
As part of the initial enquiries the Manager may meet with the employee to gather further information or clarify certain details. Employees are expected to co-operate fully with the investigation and disclose all relevant information. The Manager will record the information in written format.

If other employees are able/willing to substantiate the concern they should also meet with the Manager. If the Manager believes other employees are aware, but do not feel able to come forward, then the management team should approach them and try to persuade them to share their concerns. Again all of these meetings will be documented.

Possible outcome of initial enquiries
Depending on the nature of the concern, and the evidence found, possible outcomes include:
• Unable to investigate due to anonymous report and not enough information to proceed.
• If the concern was shared but was inaccurate no further investigation would be carried out
• Where there is believed to be grounds for concern then further investigation will be carried out

Further investigations
Dependant on the nature of the concern e.g. suspected fraud, theft, serious malpractice etc., the Manager may investigate further.

Care needs to be taken when carrying out the investigation to:
• Protect the employee(s) concerned
• Avoid alerting anyone about whom a concern has been raised
• Avoid alerting other employees who may then warn the subject of the concern
• Record the information as the record may be used in a formal hearing, if it is a serious complaint
• Keep all records secure and confidential

Untrue allegations
If an employee raises a concern in good faith, but it is subsequently confirmed by the investigation to be untrue, no action will be taken against the employee. However, if the allegation is found to have been malicious or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the employee.

For more information Ofsted recommend the 'Public Concern at Work' website www.pcaw.org.uk for further information about whistleblowing.

See policy 2 'Safeguarding' for information around the LADO; all allegations against a staff member will involve the support from a LADO.

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