



Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Statement

ClubsComplete is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the operation of any settings, operations to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy document makes it clear that employees can do something without fear of reprisals. It is intended that this policy will encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the setting they are working in or to HQ rather than overlooking a problem or having it play on their mind.

Procedure

Staff have the right and individual responsibility to raise any matters of concern regarding poor practice at work. Staff are responsible for safety and well being of all children attending their clubs and this takes priority over loyalty towards colleagues.

General Principals

This policy is intended to:

- Encourage and enable individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns
- Support staff to take an active role in the elimination of poor practice
- Ensure concerns are appropriately investigated
- Protect those making the complaint from victimisation or retaliation

In addition to this policy we have other policies and procedures covering discipline, grievance and complaints. This policy is intended to complement these and to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. The Setting Manager (if the staff member is not whistleblowing about them) and DSL will investigate promptly and thoroughly, all concerns that are raised in accordance with this policy and will take appropriate action.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Child Protection Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

Confidentiality

The management will do its best to protect a person's identity when a concern is raised, however in some circumstances identities will have to be revealed to the person complained against and the complainant may be asked to provide written or verbal evidence in support of their complaint. If a person's identity is to be disclosed, he or she will be told before the disclosure and the reasons why this is necessary. Once the concerns have been raised, we expect that the complainant will not talk about this to any other person inside or outside the setting.

Anonymous Complaints:

When a concern is expressed anonymously it is much less powerful and harder to investigate. However they may still be considered and looked at.

Untrue allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the complainant. If, however, an allegation proved to be malicious, action may be taken against the person responsible for the malicious act.

How to raise a concern:

In the first instance, concerns should be raised with the Setting Manager of the club the individual is working in. If the individual is looking to whistleblow concerning the Setting Manager, they will raise the concern with the company DSL. If the concern is regarding the DSL they should report to the Proprietors - Stacey Dean or Kerry Goodacre. All staff are provided with details of who to contact when in their induction and handbook.

Concerns are best raised in writing, included in this should be the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates, places where possible and the reason why you are particularly concerned. The earlier you express your concerns the easier it is to take action. If you do not wish to put the allegations in writing, the person to whom you are making the complaint will make a written record of the interview and will ask you to sign to confirm the accuracy of the notes taken. Although you will not be expected to prove the truth of your allegations, you will be required to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

You should not:

- Investigate the matter yourself
- Alert those suspected of being involved
- Approach or accuse individuals
- Tell anyone other than the designated person's i.e. Manager and DSL

Within a week of the receipt of your concern, you will receive a written acknowledgement of your concern, with a copy of your statement where appropriate. The Setting Manager and DSL will investigate your concern and within 2 weeks will be informed of what action is being taken and you will be kept up to date on the progress of the investigation. You will also be informed of the outcome of any investigation. If your concerns cannot be expressed to the

Setting Manager or DSL then you can contact the LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) at the relevant council you are working under. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you may elevate your concerns directly to Ofsted. Members of staff may contact Public Concern at Work at any stage for free, confidential advice, if they are unsure how to raise a concern. For more information on the law visit:

www.pcaaw.co.uk/law/uklegislation.htm

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, we will follow the procedure below.

An allegation against a member of staff/student/volunteer/supply staff or any other person may relate to a person 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 he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

If as an individual you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the local authority children's social care team yourself directly. A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (local authority children's social care team, Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled. ClubsComplete will follow all instructions from the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required. Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with local authority children's social care team support and advice. ClubsComplete reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation, legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law.

All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities. Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police will also be informed. Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment, Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision along with notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated. All safeguarding records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation. ClubsComplete retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry. Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated. A return to work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the individual staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring and external support.

[Procedure for dealing with the allegation](#)

The procedures to be followed, including when the alleged abuser is a volunteer or student, are as follows:

- Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
- If the time and place is inappropriate, arrange a suitable time and place as soon as possible.
- If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said); keep your original notes, however rough.
- Never make a promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret.
- If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to report it so that action can be taken.
- Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
- Do not ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. "Did he do X to you?" -just ask, "What do you want to tell me?" or "Is there anything else that you want to say?")
- Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Representative – A member of staff must make a detailed written note of allegations of abuse, and pass this directly to the Designated Person as quickly as possible and certainly within twenty-four hours, since any reports to the LADO will be required by then.
- The Designated Person will consult with other colleagues as appropriate and a course of action will be decided upon. If an allegation is made against the Designated Safeguarding Representative, or a member of the Management Team then the Proprietor must be informed immediately. If an allegation is made against the Proprietor, the Operations Manager must be informed immediately.
- Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Representative whether any steps need to be taken to protect the person who has told you about the abuse.
- Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people etc. Social services and police staff are the people trained to do this. You could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings.
- If the complaint is considered to be sufficiently serious, i.e. the allegation is that a member of staff or volunteer has: (a) behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; (b) possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or (c) behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they worked regularly or closely with children.(e.g. sexual or physical abuse, criminal acts or gross misconduct) then the Designated Safeguarding Representative must refer the matter to LADO as soon as possible (and certainly within 24 hours) and their guidance is followed next.
- Suspension of the staff member in question should not be a default response to an allegation; it should be used only if there is no reasonable alternative. Suspension may be appropriate where:
 - A child or children are at risk
 - Allegations are so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct is considered
 - Suspension will allow the investigation to proceed unimpeded

Allegations found to be malicious should be removed from personnel records. Records of all others must be kept, but any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious should not be referred to in employer references.

Last reviewed, 5th February 2024
Due for review: 5th February 2025

#