



Peter's Patch  
Forest School - Day Care - After School Club

## Whistle-Blowing Policy

The phrase 'whistle-blowing' in this policy refers to the disclosure, internally or externally, by employees of malpractice, as well as illegal acts or omissions at work.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety; it is not designed to question business decisions made by the company, nor should be used to reconsider any matters that have already been addressed under harassment, grievance, disciplinary or other internal procedures.

Once the whistle blowing procedures are in place, it is reasonable to expect employees to use them rather than air their complaints outside of work. However, it should also be highlighted that whistle blowing is not intended to replace normal grievance procedures.

### Policy Statement:

Peter's Patch is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information that they believe shows serious malpractice or wrong - doing within the company, then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal.



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The public interest disclosure Act, which came into force on the 2nd July 1999, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns.

The company has endorsed the provisions set out below to ensure that no member of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

This policy is designed to enable employees of the company to raise concerns internally and to disclose information that the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety.

The public interest disclosure Act protects people who raise concerns about past, present and future malpractices in relation to:

- A criminal act
- A failure to comply with a legal duty
- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate cover-up of any of these



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### Safeguards

#### Protection:

This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees who disclose such concerns, provided the disclosure is made:

#### Harassment or Victimisation

Harassment or victimisation of individuals who have raised concerns will not be tolerated and will be treated as a serious disciplinary procedure.

Any investigation into allegations of malpractice will not influence any disciplinary procedures that may already affect the person. Neither does it mean that any disciplinary matters to which the person is already subject to will be halted as a result of raising concerns.

#### Confidentiality

The company will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner, the identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation.

However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence.



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### Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the company. In exercising this discretion, the factors taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised.
- The credibility of the concern.
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### False Allegations

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are less credible but never the less will be considered at the discretion of the company. In exercising this discretion, the factors taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised.
- The credibility of the concern made.
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.



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### Raising a Complaint

If you have a concern, you should not approach or accuse individuals directly or attempt to investigate the matter yourself. You should raise the complaint with a member of management. Who will take note of the complaint and then pass this information on to the appropriate investigation body as soon as is reasonably practicable.

### The Investigation

The investigating body should follow the following steps:

- Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained
- The investigators should inform the employee against whom the complaint is made.
- The investigators will make a judgement concerning the complaint and the validity of the complaint. This will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigation and the reasons for the judgement.

The complaint should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and the final outcome.





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\*Please note if raising a whistle blowing concern and it is about all management you may contact social services directly. If about one member of management you may contact the other members of management.

### Useful Contact Numbers:

Designated officers- Management- 02892 688005/ 02892682794

Nichola McAleese (Social Worker)- 02844 513807

Early years team out of hours- 02895 049999

P.S.N.I - 101

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