

Razzy's Daycare & Nursery

Whistleblowing Policy

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Introduction

At Razzy's Daycare & Nursery we expect all our colleagues, both internal and external, to be professional at all times and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their paramount objective. We recognise that there may be occasions where this may not happen and we have in place a procedure for staff to disclose any information that suggests children's welfare and safety may be at risk.

We expect all team members to talk through any concerns they may have with their line manager at the earliest opportunity to enable any problems to be resolved as soon as they arise. Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing. We actively promote a culture of openness in which all staff feel safe, supported, and confident to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity without fear of reprisal.

Legal Framework

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, commonly referred to as the 'Whistleblowing Act', amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for employees who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called 'qualifying disclosures.'

A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by an employee who has a reasonable belief that any of the following is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed:

- A criminal offence
- A miscarriage of justice
- An act creating risk to health and safety
- An act causing damage to the environment
- A breach of any other legal obligation or concealment of any of the above
- Any other unethical conduct
- An act that may be deemed as radicalised or a threat to national security.

This policy also supports our statutory duties under the Prevent Duty (2015), which requires all early years providers to report concerns relating to radicalisation or extremism.

Disclosures do not have to be made 'in good faith' but they must be made in the public interest. This is essential when assessing a disclosure made by an individual.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act has the following rules for making a protected disclosure:

- You must believe it to be substantially true
- You must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- You must not seek any personal gain.

It is not necessary for the employee to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed; a reasonable belief is sufficient.

Disclosure of information

If, during the course of your employment at our nursery and daycare setting, you become aware of any information that you reasonably believe indicates that a child is, may be, or is likely to be at risk of harm, you **MUST** follow the nursery's disclosure and safeguarding procedures without delay. This includes any situation where you suspect that a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed; where an individual has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation (such as the EYFS statutory requirements or the Equalities Act 2010); where a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or may occur; where the health or safety of any child, staff member, or other individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered; or where the environment has been, is being, or is likely to be harmed. Staff must also report any information that suggests or tends to show any of the above concerns. All disclosures must be made promptly and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care.

Disclosure procedure

When a member of staff needs to make a disclosure, the following procedure must be followed. If the information relates specifically to child protection or safeguarding, staff must follow the nursery's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy, **with particular reference to the section on staff and volunteers**. Where you reasonably believe that any of the circumstances listed in the previous section have occurred, you must report this promptly to your manager so that appropriate action can be taken. If it is not appropriate to disclose this information to your manager, for example, if the concern involves them, you must instead report your concerns directly to the nursery director. Employees will not suffer any detriment for raising a concern in accordance with this procedure. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, employees are legally protected from dismissal, victimisation, or any negative impact on their employment as a result of raising a genuine concern and staff may seek confidential guidance from the nursery manager or the owner if they require support. All disclosures and concerns will be taken

seriously, handled consistently, treated in strict confidence, and followed through in a detailed and thorough manner. Any employee who victimises or seeks to deter another employee from raising a disclosure, or who makes malicious allegations in bad faith, may face disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal. Likewise, failing to report serious matters may also lead to disciplinary proceedings. Managers who fail to act appropriately when a disclosure is made such as not responding promptly or sharing confidential information inappropriately may be considered to have committed gross misconduct, which could result in dismissal.

Anonymous Reporting

Concerns may be raised anonymously. While anonymous disclosures may limit the ability to investigate fully, the nursery will still take all anonymous concerns seriously and act upon them wherever possible.

External Whistleblowing Contacts

Staff may raise concerns externally if they feel unable to report internally or if the concern has not been appropriately addressed.

The following agencies can be contacted:

Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline: 0300 123 3155

Ofsted General Helpline: 0300 123 1231

Royal Borough of Greenwich LADO: 020 8854 8888

Royal Borough of Greenwich Children's Social Care / MASH: 020 8921 3172

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285

These contact details are provided to all staff and displayed in staff areas.

Record Keeping

All whistleblowing reports and outcomes will be recorded securely and stored confidentially in accordance with GDPR and the nursery's data retention policy. Access will only be granted to those who require it for safeguarding or investigatory purposes.