

HETTY PRESCHOOL AND BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

Whistle Blowing Policy

INTRODUCTION

This procedure has been developed for the use of all staff who work within HETTY as Hoole Enterprise Trust – Time for You employees.

However it can also be used by agency staff, other people acting in a similar capacity to an employee, by Contractors and their staff and other individuals providing services/support to the Preschool (e.g. volunteers). The same principles in terms of protection from harassment and victimisation, confidentiality, support and information on the Hoole Enterprise Trust Time for You response will apply.

As a social enterprise trust organisation, HETTY will use public funds prudently and apply the highest standards of conduct throughout the organisation. This procedure encourages any member to help maintain these standards, by enabling them to draw attention any concerns which they may have about the operation of our School and Nursery . Initially HETTY will seek to deal with concerns through its internal procedures.

Public disclosure may well be justified at some point but this should be at the discretion of the HETTY Manager and HETTY Trustees; premature or unnecessary publicity may impede proper investigations, hurt individuals or damage HETTY reputation.

Examples of concerns that may be raised under the procedure are:

- Law breaking.
- Dishonesty, fraud and corruption.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Sexual, physical or financial abuse of clients.
- Health and safety risks (to anyone).
- Bullying
- Damage to the environment.
- Other unethical conduct; which can be discussed at the discretion of the manager and Governors.
- Unauthorised use of money.

HETTY Preschool wants normal operational or managerial channels to be sufficiently open and effective for most concerns to be raised that way. However, it is understood that this is not appropriate or possible and that is why we have a Confidential Reporting Procedure (CRP).

The CRP offers the means to raise concerns about any aspect of service provision, the conduct of staff, elected members or other people acting on behalf of HETTY. A concern may arise, for example, from worries about failure to observe standards or policies being circumvented or improper conduct.

The procedure does not cover concerns that are covered by other procedures. For example, an employment problem may well be covered by the Grievance Procedure.

HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

Individuals may be 'put off' raising a concern because they are worried about reprisals. If a concern is raised in good faith and believed to be well founded, an individual will be treated with respect and civility. It is important to remember that HETTY staff members are expected to act in a professional manner. HETTY will not tolerate harassment or victimisation (including covert pressure) and will do all it can to protect those involved. If an individual is involved in other procedures, such as disciplinary or redundancy, these will be kept quite separate from the investigation of the complaint; unless there is a direct link between the two.

An individual who makes an allegation in good faith which is not confirmed through investigation should not fear reprisals. A concern that is raised frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain may result in action being taken against the person who raised the issue.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any concerns will be treated in strict confidence, within this Procedure, and everything done to keep the identity of the person raising the grievance confidential, where possible. However, the person raising the grievance may have to be a witness at some point, if the case proceeds. It might then not be possible to keep any identity completely confidential.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

An anonymous concern is likely to carry much less weight than one which is named; the investigating manager would have to decide whether or not to accept it. This decision would depend on the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation in other ways.

RAISING A CONCERN

Who to approach

Concerns may be raised with any member of HETTY Management Team: Trustee's
If the allegation involves, for example, the manager or deputy will be consulted and vice versa. (LADO) Local Aphorised Designated officer, Ofsted

How to raise your concern

Concerns can be raised orally (i.e., face to face) or in writing. Envelopes should be marked, 'personal and confidential' and as much factual information as possible should be provided. Written information should also be dated and signed.

If the person raising the concerns is not employed by HETTY PRESCHOOL they should explain their relationship with HETTY PRESCHOOL (*for example, contractor, partner organisation.*)

The following headings could help you organise thoughts but are obligatory:

- The concern and the background information.
- Any other procedures which have been followed - and what happened.
- The people who are involved and where they work.
- Dates or periods of time.
- The names and jobs of any other people who will (or may) support the concern.

The earlier a concern is raised the better. Whilst a person with concerns will not be expected to prove that allegations are true, they will need to show that there is a reasonable basis for the concern.

A concern may be discussed with one or two colleagues first; although this should be done sensitively and confidentially. Support could be helpful. There is nothing to stop two or more individuals putting their names to a concern.

Involvement of a trade union or professional association, or other support, such as a friend.

A trade union or professional association or other support may be asked to be present during the raising of a concern. In these cases - if they wish - the person may remain anonymous when the concern is first raised; but may have to be involved personally if the matter goes further.

A trade union, professional association or a friend may also be requested to attend any meeting or interview.

Help with the procedure

Any of the following will help you to understand the procedure:

- The Manager or Deputy manager of HETTY
- Trustees of HETTY

HOW THE CONCERN WILL BE DEALT WITH

As a start, discreet enquiries will be made by a senior manager to decide whether an investigation is needed and if so, how it should be carried out. This will help protect everyone concerned. The overriding principle will be the public interest.

If this first, testing, stage shows that the concern should be followed up, there will either be a special examination or another procedure will be used, if appropriate. Examples of special procedures are HETTY Disciplinary Procedure, the Personal Harassment and Bullying Procedure or child protection procedures as stated in employee hand book. It may be necessary to involve other agencies, for example

the police or the Council's external auditors. Any urgent action will be taken before the investigation starts. It may be possible of course, to sort out the concern without a detailed investigation.

WHAT THE PERSON RAISING THE CONCERN WILL BE TOLD

Within 10 working days of a concern being received, the person who carries out the initial enquiries will contact the concerned, confirming:

- What initial enquiries have been made?
- How the concern has been or will be dealt with.
- How long any further action may take (as far as this can be known).
- What further work is planned and how the concerned person may be involved.

The amount of contact between the concerned person and those considering the matter will depend on many things. These include the type of concern, the potential difficulties of investigating it and the availability of information.

Wherever possible, the person raising the concern will be told the outcome of an investigation.

PERSONAL SUPPORT

HETTY will do all it can to minimise any difficulties which may arise as a result of the raised concern. As far as possible, personal support will be offered, which the manager leading the investigation will arrange.

IF THE CONCERNED PERSON IS NOT SATISFIED WITH HETTY RESPONSE

This procedure is meant to give everyone an effective way to raise a concern *within* HETTY (and if possible, to resolve it internally). If the person raising the concern is still unhappy after using the procedure (and getting a final response), they are entitled to consider taking the concern elsewhere. If this happens, these are some contacts which are available:

- HETTY external auditors (see the last page for contact details).
- An individual's trade union.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau.
- A relevant professional or regulatory body.
- A relevant voluntary organisation.
- The police.
- Ofsted www.ofsted.gov.uk
- LADO 0151 3374 570 safeguardinglado@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

If the matter is raised outside School, the rules about disclosing confidential information (for employees, see Section 12 of the Code of Conduct) must be taken into account.

MONITORING THE PROCEDURE

HETTY PRESCHOOL's Board of Trustees

Pre School

HETTY (Hoole Enterprise Trust Time For You)

