



Whistleblowing Policy

Future Roots have a whistleblowing policy that protects staff members who report colleagues they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties. All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns where they exist.

Whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Wrongdoing covered by this 'public interest disclosure' includes:

- Someone's health and safety is in danger;
- Damage to the environment;
- A criminal offence;
- Not obeying the law;
- Covering up wrongdoing;
- Misusing public funds; (and in schools)
- Where the welfare of children is being negatively affected.

Where staff have concerns they should aim to report it internally first before using an external 'prescribed person or body'. Making a report to an external person may only be undertaken where the staff member thinks the Director and Board will cover it up and would treat them unfairly if they complained or have raised the matter before, but the concern hasn't been dealt with.

Julie Plumley, Director, should receive concerns of this kind.

Staff members with concerns should follow these steps:

- Senior Worker
- Specified person – Julie Plumley
- Board Members
- Local Authority - LADO
- Prescribed Person or Body (e.g. Ofsted, Education Funding Agency, Children's Commissioner or NSPCC)
- Alternatively contact the whistleblowing charity, 'Public Concern At Work' www.pcaaw.org.uk

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) Chapter 2, paragraph 4 says that 'organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

'clear whistleblowing procedures, which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed'

Working Together (2015) applies to all schools and therefore Future Roots has also adopted the requirement to have a whistleblowing policy. The principles of the Francis' Report are outlined in the next section.

Freedom to Speak Up Report – Sir Robert Francis

In February 2015, the Freedom to Speak Up report was published. This report written by Sir Robert Francis QC looked at how incidents of poor care practice in the National Health Service could be prevented. Sir Robert found that NHS staff found it difficult to report their concerns and could be penalised for doing so.

Whilst the Freedom to Speak Up report is written primarily about the NHS, Sir Robert's findings have been applied in other fields, including those organisations covered by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).

Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review report can be found at:
freedomtospeakup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/F2SU_web.pdf

The principles in the report are grouped into five themes which are set out below.

Working Together to Safeguard Children is expecting these principles to be particularly evident in the safeguarding systems in schools and colleges. The aspects set out in Theme 1, will fit appropriately into the ethos and values section of a school's policies, not only safeguarding.

Theme 2 should be included in the policy section that describes how concerns will be dealt with, particularly the need for prompt investigation.

In schools, Theme 3 will emphasise training and communication so that staff understand what the whistleblowing policy is there for and what concerns are covered. Where a school has a strongly hierarchical approach, a 'Freedom To Speak Up' Guardian may ensure that all staff feel that they have someone to speak to without approaching a senior manager.

Theme 4 develops the idea of ensuring that no-one feels unable to raise concerns, but recognises that some staff may feel they will not be listened to. Schools should also recognise that temporary staff, part-time staff, volunteers and students may find Success in Schools Ltd. it harder to raise their concerns. Theme 5, changes to legislation, refers only to the NHS.

Principles for Whistleblowing

Theme 1 – the need for culture change

- Culture of safety and learning
- Raising concerns
- Culture free from bullying
- Culture of visible leadership
- Value staff who raise concerns
- Culture of reflective practice

Theme 2 – the need for improved handling of cases

- Informal and formal raising and resolution of concerns,
- Prompt, swift, proportionate, and blame free investigation
- Mediation and dispute resolution

Theme 3 – the need for measures to support good practice

- Support to those raising concerns
- Introduction of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
- Provision of support is recommended to those who have difficulty finding employment in the NHS after making a protected disclosure
- Training for every member of staff about raising concerns and handling them
- Transparency accountable
- External review
- Regulatory action
- NHS organisations that successfully support good practice should be recognized by way of their CQC assessment or by some other means

Theme 4 – the need for particular measures for vulnerable groups

- Locums and agency and bank staff should have access to the same support and procedures as permanent staff,
- Black and minority ethnic backgrounds who raise concerns might need action over and above what is in the report to support and protect them
- Students and trainees should also be subject to all the principles
- Primary care, standards for empowering and protecting staff to enable them to raise concerns freely

Theme 5 – Not applicable

Signed: ...

Name: Julie Plumley

Date: 01/04/2017

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as and when there are any changes in the law, procedures or processes within the organisation.