

Whistleblowing (Confidential reporting) policy

In this policy 'Whistleblowing' is defined as the reporting by trustees, staff or volunteers of suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act in line with the charity's constitution.

If you are considering raising a concern you **should read this policy first.**

Purpose

The aim of this Policy is to encourage staff, volunteers and others who have serious and genuine concerns about any aspect of the charity's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

Those working or volunteering with the charity are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong. 'Whistleblowing' is viewed by the charity as a positive act that can make a valuable contribution to the charity's efficiency and long-term success.

It is not disloyal to colleagues, fellow volunteers or the charity to speak up. The charity is committed to achieving the highest possible ethical standards in its work and in all of its practices. To help achieve these standards it encourages freedom of speech.

This policy also reflects the requirement within the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (The 'Act'), to protect individuals who disclose, in good faith, information about alleged wrongdoings, providing:

- The information is disclosed in good faith;
- They reasonably believe that the information, and any allegation contained in it to be substantially true;
- They do not act maliciously or make false allegations; and
- They do not act for personal gain.

The 'Act' protects disclosures of information relating to one or more of the following:

- a criminal offence
- the breach of a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health or safety of any individual
- damage to the environment;
- or deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above five matters.

Principles

Caring Kits for Kids will ensure that any trustee, member of staff or volunteer who raises issues of wrongdoing in good faith, and who does so lawfully and without malice, is not subject to disciplinary sanctions, victimisation, or other penalties for doing so.

As a charity we will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern and any such harassment or victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified concern will be a serious disciplinary offence.

The charity recognises that a trustee, member of staff or volunteer may want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy, and the identity of the person raising the concern will not be disclosed without their consent. However, in situations where concerns cannot be resolved without revealing the trustee's, staff member's or volunteer's identity (for instance because their evidence is needed in court) this will be discussed with the person raising the concern and a decision reached on how and whether the charity can proceed.

Maliciously making a false allegation is a serious offence.

The charity recognises that a trustee, member of staff or volunteer may in exceptional circumstances decide to raise concerns with an appropriate external body such as the Charity Commission or the Fundraising Regulator, depending on the nature of the concern. The charity will work honestly and openly with any such external body to resolve the concern and have included in this policy details on how to contact such bodies.

How to raise a concern

In the first instance, any concerns should be emailed to the chair of the board of trustees, using the following email address, who will arrange an investigation into the matter.

Mark Houghton

whistleblowing@caringkitsforkids.org.uk

An investigation may involve the person raising the concern and other individuals involved giving a written statement.

Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out above. The statement of the individual raising the concern will be taken into account and the individual will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained.

The chair of the board of trustees will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. The chair of the board of trustees will also invoke any disciplinary action required.

At the conclusion of any investigation, the individual who raised the concern will be told the outcome and what the charity has done, or proposes to do, about it.

If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

How to take a concern further

If the individual who raised the concern reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, the individual should report the matter to the relevant body, which may include the Charity Commission, the Fundraising Regulator or any other relevant body.

To find out further guidance on what sort of wrongdoing you can report to the Charity Commission, and how to report it visit:

www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer