



Families Growing Together
Heidi Pannell

Allegations and Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Introduction

I prioritise the welfare and well-being of children and seek to keep them safe. This policy and procedure sets out how i will respond to allegations of abuse, suspicions or harm, or concerns about me or anyone working around me.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Scope of the Policy

The Policy covers an allegation or concern that I or anyone working near me has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

Allegations Policy

I will take any concerns raised about me or anyone working near me seriously, regardless of who they are. I will respond to allegations promptly and sensitively and will ensure a child making an allegation is given appropriate support.

Reducing the risk of allegations

I takes measures to reduce the risk of an allegation being made which include;

- Not undertaking work with a child without a parent being present unless a risk assessment has been untaken and safety precautions are in place.
- Making video recordings of all sessions involving children, with parental consent
- Advising the referring social worker immediately if anything happens which may be misconstrued and/or lead to a complaint or allegation of abuse
- Seeking advice from supervisors/referring social worker if I am in any doubt about how to behave in a specific situation
- Ensuring I have an enhanced DBS check
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Procedure for responding to concerns and allegations

- I will inform the referring social worker immediately about any allegations, suspicions or concerns about me or anyone working near me.
- I will remind a child/adult that I have a statutory responsibility to share information if anyone is at risk. I will give reassurance and an explanation of what will happen



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- I will listen to the child/adult carefully demonstrating acceptance of the information. I will not ask the child/adult leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegation.
- I will record the disclosure or allegation with as much detail as soon as possible afterwards
- In an emergency situation contact should be made with the local safeguarding team or the police.
- I will contact the referring social worker to assess and evaluate the information and make a decision about what action should be taken. This will be recorded
- If the assessment concludes there is not a need for statutory involvement then a decision will be made over what other steps are required.
- If there is a need for statutory involvement, liaison and referral will be undertaken immediately
The Local Authority Designated Officer's role is to manage and oversee investigations of allegations against people who work with children
- The individual whom the allegation is against may be required to suspend themselves from working whilst the investigation is undergoing.
- Social Work England may be required to be notified of the outcome of the investigation.
- Records of the allegations; including follow up, investigations, decisions made and actions taken will be kept

Concerns about other professionals and Whistleblowing

I am open to hearing a professional's concerns regarding another professional and commit to support them in the process. Anyone working for or on behalf of Walking Together who feels unable to report an incident within the company can report their concerns to the police, local child protection services, or by contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

Confidentiality and support

Working Together will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated and all parties need to be aware of this.

Consideration will be given as to how best to support those involved in the allegation for example:

- telling parents or carers and the individual concerned about the allegation as soon as possible (as long as this does not place any children at further risk of harm)
- informing those involved about how the allegation will be managed
- keeping those involved informed about progress and outcomes

Learning Lessons

If an allegation is substantiated it is important that Walking Together commit to improving their safeguarding practice by taking account of:



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- factors that may have contributed to or failed to prevent abuse occurring
- whether safeguarding and child protection measures need reviewing
- the need to change organisational policies and procedures
- whether a case review by an independent reviewer is required

Roles and responsibilities

The Directors of Walking Together, Heidi Pannell and Carla Coley are responsible for ensuring the Policy and Procedure dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse about someone who works on behalf of the company is adhered to and regularly reviewed.

Policy devised by Heidi Pannell and Carla Coley

Policy Operational Date March 2023

Policy review date March 2024