



1.11 Whistle blowing Policy

Policy statement

This policy should be used as a guide for Thorns Community Trust staff, including casual workers, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers or work experience students.

Thorns Community Trust is committed to providing childcare of the highest standard in a safe, secure and diverse environment with equality of opportunity for all. In line with this commitment we expect employees and others that we deal with, to recognise a duty of care to the organisation and its learners.

If employees suspect that there is something wrong with the behaviour of one of their colleagues, their loyalty to that colleague or to the company may prevent them from reporting their suspicions. They may also fear harassment or victimisation and thus ignore their concerns rather than report them. By adopting and implementing a whistle blowing policy Thorns Community Trust will ensure all staff have the opportunity to report any concerns in an open and transparent manner. Thorns Community Trust is fully committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment we expect employees, who have concerns about any aspect of work and practices, to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

Any person, who has a concern, is able to raise disclosures about wrongdoing under this policy, in order that problems can be identified and resolved quickly.

Employees raising a concern in good faith will be protected from possible victimisation under this policy as well as being protected by law. Legal protection is afforded only to employees who raise genuine concerns and not those making false or vexatious allegations.

1. What is whistle blowing?

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees against detrimental dismissal as a result of any disclosure by them. Thorns Community Trust whistle blowing policy, as set out, is in line with this Act. Whistle blowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within Thorns Community Trust in the first instance, rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' externally.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

The policy applies to all employees (including those designated as casual workers, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers or work experience) of Thorns Community Trust.

3. The aim of the policy

- To provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.

- To ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- To reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisal or victimisation, if you have made a disclosure in good faith.

4. What types of concern are covered?

A disclosure will qualify for protection if the concern raised relates to unlawful conduct. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Sexual or physical abuse
- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law e.g. possession of drugs
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Working under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the workplace
- Fraud and corruption.
- Damage to the environment
- Information relating to any of the above is being deliberately concealed or attempts are being made to conceal the same

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. The whistle-blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. For any issues involving child protection, this whistle blowing policy should be followed alongside 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection.

Procedures

5. How to report a concern

Initially, you should raise any concern either verbally or in writing with the Pre-School Manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe the Pre-School Manager is involved you should approach the Committee Chairperson directly.

If your concern is with the Management Committee, it may be necessary to seek external advice or report a concern to another agency. Free, confidential advice can be obtained from the independent whistle blowing charity Public Concern at Work; it can help you to decide whether and/or how to raise your concern. You can call on 020 7404 6609 or email whistle@pcaw.org.uk. For further information, go to the Public Concern at Work website (www.pcaw.org.uk) which includes guidance on whistle blowing legislation. Other agencies can include Warwickshire County Council, Preschool Learning Alliance, National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), Citizens Advice Bureau or the Police. However, it is worth reiterating that Thorns Community Trust should be given the opportunity to conduct an internal investigation and resolve any concern prior to external involvement.

6. Safeguards and victimisation

Thorns Community Trust recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. Employees raising legitimate concerns have nothing to fear as you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service. Thorns Community Trust will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

7. Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness if the serious concern results in external force involvement.

This policy encourages you, however, to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that:

- Staff must disclose the information in good faith.
- Staff must believe it to be substantially true.
- Staff must not act maliciously or make false allegations.
- Staff must not seek any personal gain.

Legal framework

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Further guidance

This policy was adopted by	Thorns Community Trust	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	18/05/2020	<i>(date)</i>
	Updated August 2021	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	<hr/>	
Name of signatory	Jonathan Wright	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chair	