



Cuddington & Sandiway Youth Club Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Important Contact Details

Interim Designated Safeguarding Lead

Sarah Jane Ford

07702 820721

sjford@outlook.com

C&S Youth Club Chair

Steve Chivers

07775 733333

stevechivers@outlook.com

Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)

safeguardinglado@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

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1.0 Policy Overview

We are committed to working ethically and to high standards of quality, integrity, accountability and professionalism. We also recognise that there may be occasions when we do not always get things right or when you may have concerns. In these instances, we all have a right and responsibility to speak up.

This whistleblowing policy and procedure applies to all who work and volunteer with Cuddington & Sandiway Youth Club. It outlines when and how to raise any genuine and serious concerns that do not align with these values, and the protection you are afforded as a whistleblower.

1.1 What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing in the context of safeguarding refers to raising concerns about poor practice, misconduct, or abuse that may put children, young people, or vulnerable adults at risk. It is intended to protect individuals and ensure accountability within organisations.

It can be referred to as ‘making a disclosure’ or ‘blowing the whistle.’ The terms ‘report’ and ‘disclosure’ refer to the same act throughout this policy.

Whistleblowing is when a staff member, volunteer, or professional reports concerns about:

- Abuse or neglect
- Unsafe practices
- Breaches of safeguarding policies
- Failure to act on known risks
- Cover-ups or deliberate inaction

It differs from a personal grievance or complaint — whistleblowing is about protecting others and acting in the public interest.

1.2 Protecting the ‘whistleblower’

Provided you are acting genuinely, with reasonable belief of a concern, and in the best interests of the public, it does not matter if you are mistaken.

However, if it is proven through an investigation process that an allegation of wrongdoing has been made maliciously, then the person who made the allegations may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and in some cases may be subject to criminal investigation where illegality has occurred.

Malicious allegations include but are not limited to:

- raising a matter which you know to be untrue
- making an allegation without having reasonable grounds for believing it to be substantially true
- improperly collecting the information to support the allegations
- being involved in any way in the malpractice qualifying disclosure
- making an allegation for personal or third-party gain.

When a malicious allegation has been made, it is unlikely a person will have protection.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) grants protection to employees, as well as certain workers, contractors, trainees and agency staff. However, there are gaps in the law that mean other individuals do not have legal protection. They include, but are not limited to:

- Interns
- Volunteers
- Priests or ministers of religion
- Foster carers
- Members of the armed forces
- Self-employed workers

Section 43 of PIDA provides protection for individuals who raise legitimate concerns, as outlined in section 2.2. PIDA protects from detriment, dismissal or redundancy for disclosing information.

However, to show our commitment to working ethically and to maintaining high standards of quality, integrity, accountability and professionalism, we will, in so far as is possible, aim to treat all individuals disclosing the ethos of PIDA.

2.0 Confidentiality

2.1 Internal & External Whistleblowing Procedures

Please see the procedures in the appendices below for full details. However, here is a brief summary.

You should raise your whistleblowing concern as soon as possible. This will make it easier to act and enable any problems to be reported or resolved quickly.

1. You should always look to raise the matter with your line manager in the first instance. For all Study Space staff and volunteers, this will be the Study Space project lead. Where this is not appropriate, you may contact the C&S Youth Club lead youth worker.

2. Where this is not appropriate because both of these people may be involved in the alleged malpractice, wrongdoing or illegal acts or omissions in some way, raise your concern with C&S Youth Club's Chair.

3. In circumstances where it would be inappropriate for you to approach your line manager or the Chair, you should raise the matter directly with the appropriate agencies.

2.2 Untrue Allegations

No disciplinary or other action will be taken against a whistleblower who makes an allegation in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so even if the allegation is not substantiated by an investigation.

However, disciplinary action may be taken against a whistleblower who makes an allegation without reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so (e.g. making an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain where there is no element of public interest).

2.3 Further Help and Assistance

If, at any stage in the procedure, you are unsure about what to do and would like independent advice, you can discuss your concern with someone at Protect. This body is an independent charity staffed by lawyers, which offers free and confidential legal advice on how people can raise concerns about malpractice at work. They can also provide advice about what legal protection may be available to you. You can find them by following the following link:

<https://protect-advice.org.uk>

Appendix A: Internal Whistleblowing Procedure

1. Raising a Concern

You should raise your whistleblowing concern as soon as possible. This will make it easier to act and enable any problems to be reported or resolved quickly. You can make your disclosure orally, but written disclosures are preferable as these will make the process more efficient and effective. In your disclosure you should:

- Provide all relevant information including:
 - Dates
 - Time
 - Venue
 - Who was involved?
- State clearly why the situation causes concern

You must say that you are raising your concern using the whistleblowing policy and whether you wish your identity to be kept confidential. While we will make every effort to deal with your case confidentially, depending on the circumstances of the case this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, you will be notified of this and told the reasons why it is not possible.

We will consider anonymous disclosures, but we do not encourage them as anonymity often makes it difficult to properly investigate concerns, protect employees or give feedback on any outcomes.

2. Who Should I Raise My Concerns With?

In the first instance, you should always try and raise an issue with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Sarah Jane Ford:

07702 820721

sjford@outlook.com

Where this is not appropriate because they may be involved in the alleged malpractice, wrongdoing or illegal acts or omissions in some way, raise your concern with C&S Youth Club's Chair.

Steve Chivers

07775 733333

stevechivers@outlook.com

3. What Happens After I Raise a Concern?

Your disclosure will always be acknowledged within 3 working days. It will be investigated by the person that you raise your concern to. They will arrange to meet you as soon as possible, away from the workplace if necessary, to enable you to explain your concern. We may not always be able to keep your details confidential, but we will always let you know if it is not possible to do so.

You will be told either at the meeting or as soon as possible afterwards, what action will be taken to address the concerns you have raised. Where action is not taken, you will be informed and given an explanation. The action taken in response to a disclosure will depend on the nature of the concern.

Typically, a concern raised may result in one or more of the following responses:

- No action required
- Action being taken according to C&S Youth Club policies or procedures
- An internal investigation under this policy or procedure
- A referral to the police or other relevant statutory body
- A referral to Ofsted
- An independent enquiry

Any Cuddington & Sandiway Youth Club manager or senior figure receiving a potential whistleblowing concern must notify the Chair immediately and inform them of progress in resolving the concern.

Appendix B: External Whistleblowing Procedure

Non-Safeguarding concerns:

We strongly encourage you to exhaust the internal processes set out above in the first instance. In exceptional or urgent circumstances, however, or where, having made a disclosure, you are unhappy with the outcome, you have a legal right to make a disclosure to relevant bodies.

These include but are not limited to:

- HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
- Environmental Agency
- Fundraising Regulator

Similar to the rights and obligations of an employee, Cuddington & Sandiway Youth Club reserves the right to make a referral to any of the above agencies without your consent.

Safeguarding Concerns:

If you are unsure whether to make a referral you can contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and request a consultation. You can then discuss the situation with them and they will advise you on what to do next. If a referral needs to be made, they will advise you of this.

Where you are confident there is a Safeguarding Concern and you need to make a referral, you should do so by contacting the Local Area Safeguarding Officer (LADO) using the below details:

Safeguardinglado@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

If appropriate, the LADO may arrange for the concern to be investigated externally and independently of Cuddington & Sandiway Youth Club, and for appropriate follow-up action to be taken.

Policy Control and Approval Record

This policy was formally reviewed, approved, and adopted by the Management Committee of Cuddington & Sandiway Youth Club.

- Date of Committee Approval: 08/09/2026
- Next Mandatory Review Date: September 2027