



## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

### 1. General statement of policy

All Stars is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment it encourages employees (and others where appropriate) with serious concerns about any aspect of All Stars' work to come forward and voice those concerns. It recognises that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy makes it clear that staff can do so without fear of reprisals and is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns within All Stars rather than overlooking a problem or publicly disclosing the matter. This policy aims to provide avenues for staff to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.

This policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. It is not intended as recourse against financial or business decisions made by All Stars. Nor is it an alternative to well-established disciplinary or grievance procedures.

### 2. Procedures

#### 2.1 Appropriate concerns

Concerns raised under this Whistle Blowing Policy should be about something that is or may be:

- unlawful or a criminal offence
- a breach of a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- mistreatment or abuse of a client or a member of the public for whom All Stars has a responsibility
- disregard of legislation governing health and safety at work
- seeking undue favour over a contractual matter or a job application
- improper conduct or unauthorised use of public funds
- has led to or could lead to damage to the environment
- deliberately covers up information tending to show any of the above.

#### 2.2 Harassment or victimisation

All Stars recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. All Stars will take action to protect staff when they raise a concern in good faith. It will not tolerate any resulting harassment or victimisation (including informal or indirect pressures) and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the appropriate procedures. Any investigation into an allegation of malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures which already affect staff.

#### 2.3 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence. If investigation of a concern discloses a situation which is sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action or police involvement then the member of staff's evidence may be important. Their name will not however be released as a possible witness until the reasons for its disclosure at this stage have been fully discussed with them.

## 2.4 Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages staff to put their name to any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they will be considered at the discretion All Stars against the following criteria:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources
- All Stars' best interests the protection of All Stars' assets.

## 2.5 Untrue allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no reprisals will be taken against the staff member making the allegation. If, however, they make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

## 2.6 How to raise a concern

Any concern should be raised first with the Children and Families Worker. If the complaint is that something seriously wrong is occurring at a senior management level at All Stars, then staff can approach the Minister (Copplestone Methodist Church) who will then deal with the matter appropriately, in consultation, if needed, with the church leadership team and council.

Concerns can be raised orally but it is good practice for the concern to be recorded in writing at an early stage to ensure that all the details are correctly understood. A written allegation should set out the background and history of the concern (giving names, dates and places where possible) and the reason why the staff member is particularly concerned about the situation. It is preferable for the person to record this in writing themselves. However, where the person to whom they voice their concerns writes these down, a copy will be sent to their home address to give them an opportunity to agree this as a correct record.

Although the staff member raising the concern is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for their concern.

## 2.7 How All Stars will respond

The action taken by All Stars will depend on the nature of the concern.

- After initial enquiries to assess the seriousness of the matter it may be investigated internally or referred to the police or social services.
- If urgent action is required in response to a concern this may well be taken before a full investigation is conducted.
- Some concerns may be resolved by action agreed with the staff member raising the concern without the need for investigation or it may be that an investigation can be completed without the person or persons under investigation being aware of the process.

In any event within ten working days of a concern being received, All Stars will write to the staff member raising the concern at their home address:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how All Stars proposes to deal with the matter
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- stating whether any initial enquiries have been made
- stating whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not
- naming an independent person to support them during any investigation.

This named support person will make contact with the staff member raising the concern immediately, explain their role, deal with all confidentiality issues, agree frequency of contact and keep them informed about the progress of the investigation. The staff member should raise with this

support person any concerns they have about the conduct of the investigation. The support person will take appropriate steps to support them in the workplace and at any criminal or disciplinary proceedings which may eventually result from their concern and at which they are asked to give evidence. If the staff member raising the concern wishes to retain anonymity they will need to nominate a representative to whom correspondence may be directed in order to keep them informed.

The amount of contact between those people investigating the situation and the staff member raising the concern will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from them. When any meeting is arranged, the person raising the concern has the right, if they wish, to be accompanied by a union or professional association representative or a friend. The person raising the concern will receive information about the outcome of any investigations and/or proceedings.

#### 2.8 Detriment

All Stars is committed to ensuring that an employee who makes an allegation in good faith suffers no detriment from doing so.

#### 2.9 How the case can be taken further

This policy is intended to provide staff with a way to raise concerns within All Stars. If they are not satisfied with the response they receive they may wish to take the matter outside All Stars and, if so, the following are possible contact points:

- the Headteacher
- relevant trades unions, professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- solicitor or legal adviser
- the Police
- the Health and Safety Executive
- 'Public Concern at Work' – a Registered Charity

#### 2.10 Responsibility

Copplestone Methodist Church Council is responsible for All Stars After School Club.

### 3. Contact details

Minister, Copplestone Methodist Church:

Revd John Wiltshire 01363 877281 revjohnw@btinternet.com

### 4. Related All Stars documents

Code of Conduct

Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy

Grievance Procedure

Complaints Procedure

Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

**Date:**                    **January 2015**

**Signed:**

**Reviewed:**            **August 2015**

**Signed:**