

Whistle-blowing Policy

Consideration of whistle-blowing relating to a child protection or safeguarding context

The Pony Club is committed to developing a culture where it is safe and acceptable for all those involved in the organisation to raise concerns about unacceptable practice and misconduct. You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but you may not feel able to express your concerns out of a belief that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or you may fear harassment, victimisation or disadvantage. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember that it is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Those involved in the Pony Club must acknowledge his/ her individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult it is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. The Pony Club assures all involved in the organisation that they will be treated fairly and that all concerns will be properly considered. In cases where the allegations prove to be unfounded, then no action will be taken against those who report their suspicions/ allegations provided they acted in good faith and without malicious intent.

Reasons for whistle-blowing

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour:

- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risk to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistle-blowing?

- Starting a chain of events which spirals.
- Disrupting the work or training.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

The Pony Club safeguarding whistle-blowing procedures

Should concerns be raised via a “tip-off”, the person receiving the tip-off should attempt to obtain the following information from the informant.

- Name, address and telephone number.
- Names of individuals involved.
- The manner of the alleged incident/s or circumstances.

You should not attempt to deal with any allegation or concern yourself, rather inform the Lead Safeguarding Officer or the BEF Advisory Group.

Specifically do not:

- Inform the person about whom the concern was raised.
- Inform any other members, participants or employees.
- Commence your own investigation.

- Annotate or remove evidence.
- Delay in reporting the suspicion.

Also do not assume

- “All is well, otherwise it would have been spotted earlier.”
- “It doesn’t matter” or “No harm will arise.”
- That you can ignore it as “It is not my responsibility.”

Who do I tell?

The first person to whom you should report your suspicion or allegation is your Branch / Centre Safeguarding Officer. If for any reason you cannot or do not wish to report to your that officer, you should refer to your Lead Safeguarding Officer who is specifically trained to help and advise.

If you cannot, or do not wish to, report the information to either of these, then please contact the BEF Safeguarding Secretary on 02476 698871.

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- All concerns will be treated in confidence. During the process of investigating the matter, every effort will be made to keep the identity of those raising the concern unknown, except to the minimum number of individuals practicable.
- Your Branch/ Centre Safeguarding Officer, the Pony Club Lead Safeguarding Officer and the BEF have a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence.

Feedback

The amount of feedback relating to the issue will vary depending on the nature and result of the investigations. However, where possible, those who have raised concerns will be kept informed of the progress and eventual conclusion of investigations.