

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how allegations, concerns, or complaints about the conduct of staff, volunteers, supply staff, contractors, governors/trustees and agency workers are to be managed. Its primary purpose is to safeguard children and young people, ensure a fair process for adults, and promote a strong safeguarding culture where concerns are identified and responded to early.

This policy applies to all adults working on behalf of the organisation, whether paid or unpaid.

2. Legislative and Statutory Framework (England)

This policy reflects current UK legislation and statutory guidance, including:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – September 2025

Working Together to Safeguard Children – March 2026

Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004

Education Act 2002 (s.175/157)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Sexual Offences Act 2003 (positions of trust)

Human Rights Act 1998

Equality Act 2010

Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

This policy should be read alongside the organisation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

3. Core Safeguarding Principles

The welfare of the child is paramount.

All concerns are taken seriously, regardless of who raises them.

Allegations are managed promptly, consistently, and proportionately.

A culture of transparency and accountability is actively promoted.

“It could happen here” underpins all safeguarding practice.

4. What Is an Allegation?

An allegation relates to behaviour by an adult that may indicate they:

Have behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;

May have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

Have behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;

Have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Allegations may relate to behaviour inside or outside of work, including online activity.

5. Low-Level Concerns

5.1 Definition

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult may have acted in a way that:

Is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct; and

Does not meet the harm threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples may include:

Being over-familiar or having favourites;

Inappropriate comments or humour;

One-to-one contact in unsuitable settings;

Breaches of professional boundaries;

Use of personal devices contrary to policy.

5.2 Importance of Managing Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns act as an early warning system. When addressed promptly they:

- Help prevent escalation to harm;
- Reinforce professional boundaries;
- Protect children and staff;
- Support a healthy safeguarding culture.

5.3 Recording and Responding

All low-level concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Head/Principal.

Concerns are recorded confidentially and reviewed for patterns or escalation.

Actions may include advice, supervision, training, or management intervention.

Where concerns cumulatively suggest risk, the LADO will be consulted.

6. The Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO oversees the management of allegations against adults in positions of trust and:

- Provides advice and guidance to employers;
 - Determines whether an allegation meets the harm threshold;
 - Liaises with police, children's social care, and other agencies;
 - Monitors the progress of cases to ensure timely, fair, and consistent handling.
- The LADO must be contacted within one working day of any allegation meeting the harm threshold.

7. Reporting Routes

7.1 If a Child Is in Immediate Danger

Police or Ambulance: 999

7.2 Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Report immediately to:

Headteacher/Principal/Director, or

Chair of Governors/Trustees (if the allegation is about the Head/Principal), or

DSL (who will escalate appropriately).

Do not investigate or question children yourself.

7.3 External and Whistleblowing Routes

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): via the local authority children's services

Local MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub): via the local authority

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285

NSPCC Safeguarding Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Police (non-emergency): 101

8. Managing an Allegation – Overview of Process

Concern received and recorded.

Immediate risk assessed – protective action taken if required.

Consultation with LADO (where harm threshold may be met).

Strategy discussion (LADO, police, children's social care if needed).

Investigation – criminal, safeguarding, disciplinary or combined.

Outcome recorded and learning embedded.

Possible outcomes include: substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded, malicious or false.

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only.

Records are stored securely in line with data protection legislation.

Parents/carers are informed unless doing so would place a child at further risk or compromise an investigation.

10. Supporting Those Involved

Children and young people are supported throughout the process.

Adults subject to allegations are offered appropriate welfare support.

Suspension is not a default response and is considered only where necessary.

11. Promoting a Strong Safeguarding Culture

The organisation commits to:

Clear codes of conduct and safer working practice;

Regular safeguarding and low-level concerns training;

Visible, approachable safeguarding leadership;

Encouraging curiosity, challenge, and professional respectful reporting;

Reinforcing that abuse can occur in any setting – including our own.

A strong culture ensures concerns are raised early, respectfully and without fear of reprisal.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if:

Legislation or statutory guidance changes;

Learning from safeguarding incidents requires updates.

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