



Allegation Against Staff and Volunteers Procedure

Responding to allegations of abuse by staff procedures

Handling allegations, particularly serious ones, is a complex and delicate process. All allegations need to be taken seriously. Good record-keeping is essential to the success of child protection practices.

Allegation of abuse is made: If you become aware that a staff member or volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that could have harmed a child/young person
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or young person
- Behaved in a way towards a child or children that indicates they would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children or s/he is unsuitable to work children or young people

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of; physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.

The child and/or alleged abuser **MUST NOT** be questioned a record will be kept of what happened.

Action to be taken:

- Person first receiving the complaint should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind. They should not; investigate or ask leading questions, make assumptions or offer alternative explanations, promise confidentiality but can give an assurance that the information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis.
- They should
- Confiscate any devices involved
- Keep all evidence. Do NOT view or copy
- Make a written record of the information (child's own words if possible), including time, date, place of incident, persons present and what was said.
- Sign and date the written record and immediately report the matter to the designated senior manager (DSM).
- Ensure the child/young person is safe and comfortable. Allow them to continue activity if appropriate.

Report allegation: The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. The DSM should obtain the information above. Record any further information regarding times witnesses etc and any discussions about the child or member of staff and any decisions made and their rationale.

The designated senior manager must report the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Ruth Lacey **within 1 day, referrals should not be delayed to gather information**. In her absence one of the child protection advisors should be contacted. The DSM will also be required to report the matter with Ofsted.

Initiate allegations procedures: The LADO will decide whether the incident fits the criteria of an Allegation Against Staff. In other words: Did the alleged incident potentially cause harm to the child? Does the alleged incident potentially constitute a criminal offence? Does the alleged incident suggest that this person is potentially unsuitable to work with children?

Workplace arrangements: The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should remain in the workplace or whether they should go on 'garden leave' or be suspended until the investigation is resolved. If the member of staff remains in the workplace, safeguards will be put in place to protect the member of staff and the child/children involved. The DSM will keep both the member of staff and the family up to date with regard to timescales of meetings and the procedures being put in place.

Where suspension is necessary, it will usually be necessary to tell the person why they are being suspended. Details of the allegation should not be shared until this is agreed as part of the investigation process. It is enough to simply say that an allegation has been made.

Suspension protects the individual concerned as well as the child as it can prevent further allegations or any recriminatory behaviour.

Staff who become the subject of the allegation should be supported, treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved. Parents and carers should also be made aware of the prohibition on reporting or publishing allegations about teachers in section 141F Education Act 2002.

If the person is a member of the union or professional association, s/he should be advised to seek support from that organisation.

The DSM must also consider whether the person has access to children in another setting and through consultation with the LADO, decide whether those organisations / agencies need to be informed.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

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Designated Senior Manager (DSM)

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Reviewed 10/04/2017