MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Responsibility: Governing Body
Approved: September 2025
Review Cycle: Annually alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (or earlier if legislation or guidance changes)
Reviewed: September 2026 (strengthening of allegations management procedures to improve safeguarding compliance, governance oversight, confidentiality, record keeping, support for vulnerable children and operational consistency in line with statutory guidance)

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1. When this Procedure Applies

This procedure applies to all allegations about adults working in or on behalf of the school, including:

- staff;
- volunteers;
- supply staff;
- agency workers;
- contractors;
- governors.

The procedure applies where there may be a risk of harm to a child.

Statutory Context

This procedure is implemented in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures;
- the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

It should be read alongside:

- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Low-Level Concerns Policy;
- Disciplinary Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Safer Recruitment Policy.

Low-Level Concerns

This procedure does not apply to low-level concerns.

A low-level concern is behaviour that does not meet the harm threshold but may be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct.

Examples may include:

- poor professional judgement;
- over-familiarity with a child;
- boundary issues;
- behaviour that falls below professional expectations.

Low-level concerns will be managed through the school's Low-Level Concerns Policy and Staff Code of Conduct procedures.

Where a pattern of low-level concerns emerges, the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors where concerns relate to the Headteacher) will consider whether the cumulative behaviour meets the harm threshold and whether consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is required.

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2. Allegations that Meet the Harm Threshold

An allegation meets the harm threshold if an adult has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including conduct outside school.

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3. Immediate Actions (Same Day)

a) Protect the Child

- Ensure the child is safe.
- If there is immediate danger, call 999.
- Arrange medical attention where required.
- Take any immediate safeguarding action necessary.

b) Report Immediately

Any member of staff receiving or witnessing an allegation must report it immediately to the Headteacher.

If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, it must be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors. If neither is available, concerns must be reported to the Deputy Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

A factual written record should be completed as soon as possible.

c) Contact the LADO

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors acting as Case Manager must contact the LADO on the same day to discuss the allegation and agree next steps.

d) Preserve Confidentiality

- The allegation must only be discussed with those who need to know.
- The adult subject to the allegation must not be informed until advised by the LADO.
- Records must be stored securely.

e) Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

The school will record:

- who information was shared with;
- why it was shared;

- when it was shared.

The school will comply with all relevant data protection legislation and ensure information is processed lawfully and stored securely.

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4. Role of the Case Manager

The Case Manager will be:

- the Headteacher; or
- the Chair of Governors where the allegation concerns the Headteacher.

The Case Manager will:

- seek and follow LADO advice at every stage;
- undertake fact-finding only where authorised;
- ensure no action compromises police or social care enquiries;
- arrange communication and welfare support;
- maintain accurate records;
- consider suspension and alternative arrangements;
- ensure timescales are met;
- oversee secure record keeping.

Timescales and Monitoring

The Case Manager will:

- maintain a chronology of all actions;
- record dates and times of all key decisions;
- review interim safeguarding measures every 10 school days;
- review any suspension or redeployment arrangements every 10 school days in consultation with the LADO;
- provide updates every 20 school days to the individual subject to the allegation and, where appropriate, the child's parents or carers, unless advised otherwise by the LADO, police or Children's Social Care.

Internal and Disciplinary Investigations

Internal disciplinary investigations must not prejudice police or Children's Social Care investigations.

The Case Manager will agree with the LADO:

- whether internal fact-finding may proceed;
- when disciplinary procedures may commence;
- what information may be shared.

Where appropriate, arrangements will be made to minimise disruption to children's education and support.

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5. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- ensure safeguarding actions continue throughout the process;
- make referrals to Children's Services where required;
- liaise with police and social care;
- support the child and family;
- ensure safeguarding records are maintained.

Supporting the Child

The welfare of the child remains paramount.

The DSL will consider:

- emotional wellbeing;
- pastoral support;
- safeguarding monitoring;
- educational continuity;
- liaison with parents and professionals.

For children with SEND, the school will make reasonable adjustments which may include:

- adapted communication methods;
- visual support;
- trusted adult support;
- additional explanations;
- specialist involvement where appropriate.

The school will seek to minimise disruption to learning and curriculum access wherever possible.

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6. Risk Management (Including Suspension)

Suspension is not automatic.

Before considering suspension, alternatives should be explored, including:

- redeployment;
- supervision arrangements;
- amended duties;
- temporary removal from direct contact with children;
- adjusted timetables.

Suspension will only be used where:

- a child may be at risk of harm;
- the allegation is sufficiently serious that dismissal is likely;
- suspension is necessary to protect the investigation.

The Case Manager will make decisions in consultation with the LADO.

All protective measures and decisions will be documented.

Any suspension, redeployment or alternative arrangement will be formally reviewed every 10 school days.

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7. Informing Parents and Carers

Parents or carers should be informed that an allegation has been made and advised about next steps.

This should only occur when the LADO, police and Children's Social Care agree it is appropriate.

Information shared will be limited to protect:

- confidentiality;
- the integrity of the investigation;
- the welfare of children involved.

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8. Supporting the Person Subject to the Allegation

Once authorised by the LADO and any relevant agencies:

- the individual will be informed of the allegation;
- a named point of contact will be identified;
- welfare support will be offered;
- professional or union advice may be sought;
- expectations regarding confidentiality will be explained.

The school recognises that allegations can be highly stressful and appropriate support should be offered throughout the process.

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9. Strategy Discussions and Investigations

Following initial consultation, the LADO may:

- determine that no further action is required;
- arrange a strategy meeting;
- refer the matter to Children's Services;
- refer the matter to the police.

Internal investigations may only proceed when authorised by the relevant agencies.

The school will cooperate fully with all external investigations.

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10. Special Situations

Supply and Agency Staff

The school remains responsible for managing safeguarding concerns whilst the individual is working on site.

The Case Manager will:

- notify the agency immediately;
- record the date and time of notification;
- request cooperation with enquiries;
- obtain a named liaison contact.

Contractors and Volunteers

The same procedure applies.

The school will involve employer organisations where relevant and consider:

- site access arrangements;
- supervision requirements;
- safeguarding risks.

Early Years Context

Where allegations involve practitioners working with children under five:

- EYFS safeguarding requirements will be followed;
- developmental and communication needs will be considered;
- age-appropriate recording and support arrangements will be used;
- statutory staffing ratios and routines will be maintained.

As a small school, contingency arrangements will be made to ensure safe staffing and continuity of provision during investigations.

Allegations Against the Headteacher

The Chair of Governors will act as Case Manager and contact the LADO immediately.

Allegations Against Governors

The same procedures apply.

The governing body may consider removal from office if allegations are substantiated.

Historical Allegations

Where an adult reports abuse from childhood:

- they should be encouraged to contact the police;
- the school must also seek advice from the LADO.

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11. Possible Outcomes

Outcomes may be:

Substantiated

There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.

Malicious

The allegation is deliberately invented.

False

Evidence shows the allegation did not occur.

Unsubstantiated

There is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation.

Unfounded

There is no factual basis for the allegation.

The Case Manager will agree next steps with the LADO based on the outcome.

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12. Post-Case Actions

Learning and Improvement

Following conclusion of a case, the school will review:

- relevant policies;
- procedures;
- training needs;
- safeguarding practice;
- lessons learned.

An anonymised learning summary may be shared with staff where appropriate.

Allegation management, including low-level concerns, will form part of:

- safeguarding induction;
- annual safeguarding training;
- volunteer induction;
- agency staff briefings.

DBS and TRA Referrals

The school must make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where the statutory threshold is met.

This includes where an individual:

- is dismissed because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child; or
- would have been dismissed had they not resigned.

Referrals will normally be completed within one month of the relevant decision.

Records will be maintained of:

- referral dates;
- referral copies;
- outcomes received.

Record Keeping and Retention

Records relating to allegations will be kept:

- securely;
- separately from routine personnel files where appropriate;
- with restricted access.

Access will be limited to:

- the Case Manager;
- HR advisers where required;
- authorised governors where appropriate.

Records will be retained in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's retention schedule, normally until the individual's normal retirement age or for ten years from the date of the allegation, whichever is longer.

Where an allegation is found to be malicious and removal is requested, the school will retain a brief record of the allegation and its resolution in accordance with statutory guidance.

Safeguarding records relating to the child will be retained on the child's safeguarding file.

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13. Communications and Media

No member of staff should communicate with the media regarding allegations.

All media enquiries must be directed to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

Any public statements must:

- avoid identifying those involved;
- protect the integrity of investigations;
- be agreed with the LADO;
- be agreed with police or Children's Social Care where appropriate.

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14. Quick Reference Guide for Staff

If you receive an allegation about an adult:

- Keep the child safe.
- Call 999 if there is immediate danger.
- Report immediately to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the allegation concerns the Headteacher).
- Make a factual written record.
- Do not investigate.
- Do not question the child extensively.
- Do not inform the adult concerned.
- Ensure the Headteacher or Chair contacts the LADO the same day.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements for the child continue.

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15. Governance Oversight

The Headteacher will provide anonymised termly reports to governors detailing:

- the number of allegations received;
- outcomes;
- emerging themes;
- training implications;
- lessons learned.

Governors will use this information to:

- monitor safeguarding effectiveness;
- scrutinise compliance with statutory guidance;
- identify patterns and trends;
- support continuous improvement.

Where an allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will ensure governors receive appropriate anonymised updates and external advice where necessary.

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16. Checklists

A. Initial Allegation Record

- Date and time reported
- Person reporting
- Child's name and class
- Adult involved
- Factual description of concern
- Immediate actions taken
- Individuals informed and when
- Advice received
- Signature and date

B. Case Manager Checklist

- Child safeguarded
- LADO contacted same day
- Parents informed when permitted
- Adult informed when permitted
- Risk assessment completed
- Protective measures considered
- Records secured
- Investigation authorised
- Outcome agreed
- DBS/TRA referral completed if required
- Learning identified
- Training updated
- Governance informed

Review and Oversight

This procedure will be reviewed annually alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The review will take account of:

- statutory guidance;

- local authority procedures;
- safeguarding audits;
- case outcomes;
- governor monitoring;
- lessons learned from investigations.

Any significant updates will be communicated through safeguarding training, staff briefings and induction processes.