

Safeguarding in Education

Managing Allegations Advice for Head-teachers, Senior Staff and Governors



Initial Allegation Management Procedures

Guidance for the Headteacher, Senior Managers and Chair of Governors.

This guidance is to provide practical advice at the point when an allegation is received immediately prior to contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice. Following that contact advice will be given and Statutory Guidance followed.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- 1) DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSiE) (Sept 2016) Part 4 -Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other staff'
- 2) Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children & young people in education settings (Oct 2015)
- 3) School Safe Working guidance / Code of Conduct (Sept 2016)
- 4) School Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy (Sept 2016)
- 5) Safeguarding Whistle Blowing Guidance (Sept 16)
- 6) The guiding principle for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers is that;

'It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in a school or college is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.' (KCSiE)

The following Allegation procedures will be followed if there is a concern that a member of school staff, other visiting support staff or volunteer 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 or children in a way that indicates that s/he would pose a risk of harm to children if they work regularly with children

Initial steps on receipt of a possible allegation

- A. If there is a possibility that any of the criteria above applies to the allegation received the headteacher, governor or a senior member of staff designated to deal with the allegation will follow the procedure set out in *(KCSiE)* and contact the (LADO) without delay.
- B. All involved should be aware that allegations relating to the behaviour or affairs of a member of staff or volunteer out of school
- C. The LADO should be informed of all allegations that come to a school's attention and might meet the criteria so that other agencies can be contacted if appropriate.
- D. If the headteacher is unsure if the criteria apply then advice should be sought immediately from the LADO to discuss the matter and agree an initial course of action
- E. Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out above, or may do so without warranting consideration of either a police investigation or enquiries by Children's Social Care. If so the LADO will advise accordingly and a record of advice and decisions will be agreed.
- F. If the allegation concerns the Headteacher the person making the allegation should do so to a Senior Manager or Chair of Governors. If this is difficult for any reason the LADO should be contacted.
- G. If an allegation is made against the headteacher to the headteacher s/he should designate a Senior Member of staff or contact the Chair of Governors immediately to ensure clear independence in dealing with the matter.
- H. Before contacting the LADO the headteacher (or other appropriate person as in E & F above) should obtain:
 - the name, Dob, and contact details of the child, the parents / carers and the person who is the subject of the allegation
 - details of any special or additional needs the child may have
 - details of the allegation made and by whom
 - details of any potential witnesses
 - any relevant incident reports

- I. All involved in the matter must be made aware that strict rules of confidentiality must apply. In the case of allegations against teachers the publication on for example social networking sites by a parent of information that may identify a teacher as being subject to an allegation would be a breach of the law.
- J. Apart from this initial gathering of information an investigation should not be carried out until the LADO has been contacted which should be done without delay.
- K. The purpose of an initial discussion is for the LADO, and the head teacher or principal, to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action under the terms of the Statutory Guidance (1). The LADO may ask the senior manager to provide or obtain any additional information which may be relevant such as previous history, whether the child or their family have made similar allegations and the individual's current contact with children.
- L. The LADO may need to consult other agencies immediately such as Children's Social Care, the Police and HR before an initial strategy is agreed. Consideration will need to be given to issues such as:
 - course of action if allegation does not reach allegation threshold
 - convening a strategy meeting and interim measures
 - possible precautionary suspension or change of duties pending investigation
 - informing parents/ carers
 - informing the member of staff
 - interviewing witnesses
 - possible immediate Sec 47 police and Social Care investigation
 - support for the child and member of staff pending appropriate actions
- M. If an allegation is initially received by Police, Social Care, ERSCB, or other agencies they will contact the LADO who will contact the head-teacher (or other as appropriate) as soon as possible to consider the issues above and agree an initial strategy.

N. Following these initial steps the LADO will oversee the progress of the appropriate level of investigation and liaise with the school and agencies involved as detailed in **'Keeping Children Safe in Education part 4-Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other staff'** July 2015.

Contact details

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