



Safeguarding in Education

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

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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 2020) Part 4 -Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other staff'
- 2) ERSCP procedures & Guidance- allegations of abuse made against adults who work or volunteer with children
- 3) Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children & young people in education settings (May 2019)
- 4) School Safe Working guidance / Code of Conduct (Sept 2020)
- 5) School Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy (Sept 2020)
- 6) Use of reasonable force advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies DfE July 2013

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 part 4)

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.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

(These include any concerns about behaviour towards their own children or other children outside the workplace.)

Initial steps on receipt of a possible allegation

- A. If there is a **possibility** that the 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 should follow the same procedure if they **might** match the criteria above
- 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 other agencies. 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 already available
- 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 possible 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 referrer to provide or obtain 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 depending on the initial details shared require the referrer to complete and return immediately an 'Allegation referral form'. This form is available at www.erscp.org.uk or from the LADO.
- M. 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 Social Care and / or police investigation
- support for the child and member of staff pending appropriate actions

N. If an allegation is initially received by Police, Social Care, ERSCP, 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.

O. 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' Sept 2020.**

Contact details

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