



Services to Schools, Academies and other Educational Establishments



Managing Safeguarding Allegations Manager Guidance

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1. Introduction

It is recognised that from time to time allegations will be made that an employee, volunteer or agency worker has behaved towards a child or young person in a way that:

- would potentially constitute a criminal offence against them
- indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with them
- has harmed/may have harmed/is likely to harm them

Any such allegation will be taken very seriously. However, we recognise that some allegations may be unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious.

2. What should I do first?

You must always take any safeguarding concerns which have been raised seriously.

All allegations/disclosures/concerns of abuse by an employee/volunteer should be reported promptly to the Headteacher who must then follow this guidance.

The Headteacher should immediately, and no later than 24 hours from becoming aware of any concern, contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). The LADO can give you advice about who else you should tell at this stage.

Following initial contact with the LADO, you must contact your HR Adviser to discuss any possible disciplinary action that may be necessary.

3. What will happen next?

Both disciplinary and criminal procedures may be followed, although not necessarily concurrently, depending on the information arising from the investigation. The threshold for criminal conviction is 'beyond all reasonable doubt'; the threshold for disciplinary action is 'on the balance of probabilities'.

If the allegation is serious enough, you may need to consider suspension or amended duties pending the outcome of an investigation.



4. What should I tell the employee?

When an allegation is made, you should clarify factual details of the allegation *only* (such as names, dates, locations etc) and should not to probe further or ask more questions, as this might interfere with a police or social care investigation.

If the employee is not aware of the allegation, you should seek advice from the LADO before discussing things with them. When advised to do so, you should offer any relevant support, including counselling or trade union representation, ensure that the employee understands the procedure and that you will keep them informed of the progress of the investigation.

5. Should I start a disciplinary investigation or any disciplinary actions, such as suspension?

If the police are involved, it might not be possible to conduct a disciplinary investigation in parallel with a police investigation.

Not all allegations will require immediate disciplinary action (including suspension), so it's important to discuss the options with HR. The threshold for disciplinary action is 'on the balance of probabilities'.

In each individual case, you will need to discuss with HR and consider the following:

- that the level of risk to the child is properly considered and managed
- all alternative options and the consequences of any immediate action taken (for example, suspension, change of duties, supervision) are appropriately considered
- any action is taken in the best interests of all concerned and is based on assessment of risk, with a clear rationale

6. What information can be used as part of a disciplinary investigation?

If the police or social care are undertaking their own investigations, you should ask them to obtain consent from witnesses for their information to also be used as part of the disciplinary process, and possibly in referrals to the professional body (i.e. DBS). This will enable them to share information with you promptly and not cause a delay.

When storing this information, it is important to protect the identity of any children or adults at risk, as well as other employees or volunteers.



7. What are the possible outcomes?

Once all appropriate procedures have been concluded you will, with the support of HR, need to manage the outcomes. These may include:

- management of the return to work where an individual has been suspended
- dismissal of the employee following disciplinary investigation
- a referral to the DBS
- a referral to the relevant professional regulatory body
- improvements to procedures or practice
- depending on the circumstances of the alleged abuse, support for others at the workplace, including other members of staff or other children or adults at risk

The LADO, along with HR, will provide you with advice and guidance throughout the investigation and may also work in conjunction with the local safeguarding boards, whose individual procedures for managing allegations will be followed.

8. What if allegations made against volunteers or agency workers?

As for employees, you must take any concerns very seriously and immediately contact the LADO, together with HR, as soon possible after a concern has been raised.

Although there is no formal disciplinary procedure, consideration should be given to clarifying what, if any, work they may continue to be offered by the council during the course of an investigation. The employing agency should also be involved.

The council has a legal duty to refer cases to the DBS for consideration for barring in relation to contractors or volunteers.

9. Record Keeping

Records of allegations and associated documents should be retained until the volunteer/adult has reached either age 65 or for 10 years since the date of the allegation whichever is the later.



10. Poole LADO contact details

(LADO - Local Authority Designated Officer)

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