

ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE IS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

1. All allegations against a **member of staff** must be reported directly to the **Head**, and not to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.

If the allegation is against the Head, then it must be reported directly to the Chair of Governors.

Any staff member to whom an allegation of abuse by a member of staff is made, or who observes possible abuse of a child by a member of staff, should:

- limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only, strictly avoiding 'leading' the student or adult who has approached them by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their own ideas about what may have happened. (Do **not** ask questions like 'Did s/he do x to you?', using instead a minimum number of questions of the 'Tell me what has happened' type)
- stop asking any more questions as soon as the student or adult has disclosed that he or she believes that something abusive has happened to him or her, or to someone else
- tell the informing student or adult that the staff member will now make sure that the appropriate people are brought in to follow the problem up (these will include the specialist social worker, and that worker may need to involve the police)
- ask the informing student or adult what steps they would like to be taken to protect them now that they have made an allegation, and assure them that the school will try to follow their wishes
- refer the matter the same day, with all relevant details, to the **Head** directly. (If this cannot be done, the staff member him/herself should contact the Social Services Local Area Designated Officer as below)
- make a handwritten record as soon as possible of what they have been told, using the child's or adult's words as far as possible, and make a copy of this available to the **Head**.

2. When an allegation is passed on

On receiving an allegation of abuse committed by a member of staff, the **Head** must:

- take any steps needed to protect any student involved from risk of immediate harm. (This may involve allocating an appropriate member of staff, as far as possible a person chosen by the student him/herself to stay with him or her. Similarly an inspector receiving an allegation of abuse at the school may stay with the student concerned until suitable arrangements for his/her protection are made)
- not interview or investigate the allegation further, but refer the matter the same day to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). He/she should speak personally to the LADO and not rely on leaving a message
- consult the LADO (or officer deputising for him/her) and follow his/her advice about contacting parents, other staff, police, doctor or alleged perpetrator or witnesses direct. Agree with the LADO (or officer deputising) any necessary next steps in relation to:
 - informing a student's parents (there are circumstances where it would be inappropriate to inform parents immediately when an allegation has been made)

- medical examination or treatment for the student (again, there are circumstances where medical evidence will be needed)
- immediate protection that may be needed for a student who has been the victim of abuse, a student who has given information about abuse, and a student against whom an allegation has been made (each of these may now be at risk)
- informing other appropriate people at the school (including any other members of staff) of the allegation and its investigation. (Care should be taken at this stage, as knowledge of an allegation or impending investigation can lead to a serious risk of the alleged perpetrator 'covering up' evidence that may be sought by police – or putting pressure on others to remain silent)
- informing the placing authority, if there is one
- contacting the LADO will initiate an independent investigation if this proves to be necessary, and the LADO will arrange, within pre-set time limits, the involvement of the relevant specialist police personnel and if necessary a meeting of the agencies who may need to be involved, together with the school.

- 2.1 Inform the student or adult who made the initial allegation of what the next steps are to be, having agreed these with the LADO. (It may be helpful for the call to the LADO to be made while the student or adult is waiting, so that he or she can be told the likely next steps immediately after the call. If this is not possible the student or adult should be told the next step as soon as possible after the call)
- 2.2 Inform the Chair of Governors (unless he is the subject of any of the allegations or suspicions) of the allegation and the action taken as above, and agree necessary further action in line with these standards.
- 2.3 The Head makes the decision whether to suspend from duty, pending investigation, any staff member who is alleged to have abused a student or students. A Risk Assessment must be completed as part of this decision-making process. (The decision to suspend should be based on firm grounds such as the accused could impede an investigation, there is a continued threat of harm or the allegations are so serious that they are likely to be grounds for dismissal)
- 2.4 Take any necessary steps for the longer term protection and support of each student who has made allegations of abuse, or is alleged to have suffered from abuse, taking his or her wishes fully into account. (This may involve the student receiving continuing support and protection from a staff member chosen by him/her, or changing boarding accommodation, or returning to his/her parents temporarily)
- 2.5 Take any necessary steps to protect and support the member of staff who is alleged to have abused a student or students. (The allegation may not later be substantiated, but even if it is, the school continues to have a statutory welfare responsibility towards this member of staff while he/she is at the school). Ensure that any staff member being interviewed by the police has available a supportive member of staff of his/her own choice to accompany him/her if this becomes necessary.
- 2.6 Notify the LADO of the action taken as soon as possible.
- 2.7 Notify the Department for Education of any allegation against a member of staff that is being investigated by the Children and Young People's Services and/or police.

- 2.8 Ensure co-operation and information sharing by and with the school in any subsequent investigation by the Children and Young People's Services or police.
- 2.9 Make arrangements where feasible for any student who has been the subject of abuse to receive any necessary continuing counselling and support, by agreement with his/her parents where appropriate.
- 2.10 A Summary of Child Protection Allegation must be completed and a copy must be held in the relevant member of staff's personnel file.

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September 2019