Allegations of Abuse Policy

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Allegations made against school staff guidance G319a

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1. Introduction

1.1 Schools have clear responsibilities for dealing with allegations of abuse of children made against their staff, whether those staff are paid or unpaid.

1.2 The statutory guidance entitled *Keeping children safe in education'* applies under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2010 as amended by SI 2012/2962 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special schools) (England) Regulations 2011. Schools must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It should be read in conjunction with 'Working together to safeguard children. Links to both of these documents can be found under weblinks in the 'Allegations of abuse' section of InfoSpace.

In addition, procedural guidance is outlined in the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) 'Allegations against persons who work with children' procedure. That procedure (section 8.3) gives guidance to schools on how to comply with the 'Keeping children safe in education' document.

Where schools receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities) the school, as with any safeguarding allegation, should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

2. Procedure for handling allegations of abuse

2.1 Schools should follow the Norfolk Local Safeguarding Board 'Allegations against persons who work with children' procedure (Section 8.3 of the NSCP policies and procedures manual on the NSCP website) when allegations or concerns of abuse are identified. A link to this document can be found under weblinks in the 'Allegations of abuse' section of InfoSpace.

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3. The Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection

3.1 The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) plays a key role in the process of dealing with allegations of abuse against staff.

3.2 The LADO for Norfolk schools can be contacted by telephone on 01603 307797.

The harm threshold and low-level concerns:

3.3 The harm threshold refers to allegations of abuse that may relate to a person who works/volunteers with children who has:

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

Where allegations of abuse are made or safeguarding concerns are raised, which meet the harm threshold, schools and trusts should follow the procedure highlighted above in para 2.1

3.4 Safeguarding concerns that do not meet the harm threshold are considered 'low-level' concerns. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the thresholds as stated above at 3.3.

3.5 In Norfolk the 'low level' concern process is to consult with the Local Authority Education Duty Desk on 01603 307797. Schools and trusts should endeavour to promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or trust (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. This includes clarifying when staff should self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards. Staff should report all low-level concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or to the Headteacher**.** If reported to the DSL then the DSL should inform the Headteacher of the concern in a timely fashion. The Headteacher will always be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns

3.6 It is important to record low-level concerns and the actions taken in light of these being reported. Records relating to low-level concerns are confidential and should be stored securely. Records should be regularly reviewed to identify potential patterns and take action. Please note, where a child, parent/carer or staff member makes an allegation of harm, this will not be considered as a 'low level' concern without consultation with the Local Authority Education Duty Desk or the LADO service directly.

3.7 Low level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor

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performance. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

4. HR support

4.1 At appropriate stages in the process for dealing with allegations of abuse, support should be obtained from the HR provider. Particularly during any internal investigation stage and, if there appears to be foundation to the allegations, through the disciplinary process, schools are strongly advised to involve their HR provider to ensure that the various procedures are adhered to and that the rights of employees are recognised and met.

Designated Governor: Harry Hamilton
Name/Signature of Headteacher: Simon Minter
Date: Dec 2025
Review date: Dec 2026

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Appendix 1 – Table of changes

Date of change	Paragraphs affected	Summary of update
22/04/2024	4.1	Review of whole document and terminology to ensure consistency across all policies and procedures.
06/07/2023	1.2	Additional paragraph to include KCSE 2023 requirement to follow usual safeguarding procedures when an allegation is made relating to an incident that occurred when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children.

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