



Statement of procedures dealing with allegations

ALLEN EDWARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Statement of Procedures of Dealing with Allegations

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children at our school. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children. We work to the thresholds for harm as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2023) below. An allegation 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
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The 4th bullet point above recognises circumstances where a member of staff (including supply teachers) or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school/college which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children; this is known as transferrable risk.

At Allen Edwards Primary School, we recognise our responsibility to report / refer allegations or behaviours of concern and / or harm to children by adults in positions of trust who are not employed by the School to the LADO service directly at lado@lambeth.gcsx.gov.uk These are adults such as those in the voluntary sector, taxi drivers, escorts, and fosters carers

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our school are safe to work with children. When concerns arise, we will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2023) are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice. The first point of contact for schools regarding concerns and/ or allegation issues (including for supply teachers) is via the Local Authority Designated Officer on 02079264679. Following advice, the LADO referral form should be completed and sent to lado@lambeth.gov.uk

If an allegation is made or information is received about any adult who works/ volunteer in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work / volunteer with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. This includes concerns relating to agency and supply staff and volunteers. Should an allegation be made against the Headteacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event that neither the Headteacher nor Chair of Governors is not contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Headteacher or the Vice Chair of Governors.

If an allegation is received 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 member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. Where concerns are raised about an individual and the school is not their employer, we recognise that we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In order to achieve this, we will liaise with relevant parties including the LADO to determine a suitable outcome.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will seek advice from the LADO within one working day. No member of staff or the governing body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

When using a supply agency, we inform the agency of our process for managing allegations against staff and keep them up to date with any policy developments. Where concerns are raised about an individual and the school is not their employer, we recognise that we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In order to achieve this, we will liaise with relevant parties including the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Whilst the supply agency should be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's services, we recognise that the School will usually take the lead in conducting an investigation as we have direct access to any affected children and other school staff to collect the facts.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should contact the LADO directly via email to lado@lambeth.gcsx.gov.uk

Further information and guidance, forms, leaflets and the Allegations against Persons Who Work/Volunteer with Children Procedures are found on the Lambeth Safeguarding Children Partnership Website. Further national guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or via e-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk.

The School has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR. The School must also consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State (via the Teaching Regulation Agency) if a teacher is dismissed or the setting ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first.

Any positive DBS checks are risk assessed by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the School Business Manager to assess whether the individual poses a current risk to children and vulnerable adults. We use the LSCB format to record this assessment

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

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.

These are any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

Examples of low-level concerns could include:

- Being over friendly with children.
- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone that is not in line with our acceptable use policy.
- Engaging with a child one-to-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.
- Humiliating a child

In Lambeth the 'low level' concern process is to consult with the Senior Safeguarding Manager on 020 7926 4679 or mbentil@lambeth.gov.uk. At Allen Edwards Primary School, we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

We follow the guidance in KCSIE 2023 for what low level concerns are, the importance of sharing these appropriately, how the setting addresses unprofessional behaviour and supports the individual to correct it at an early stage. This includes 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.

At Allen Edwards Primary School, we understand the importance of recording low-level concerns and the actions taken in light of these being reported. The records are kept confidential and stored securely. We will review the records we hold to identify potential patterns and take action (see Low-Level Concerns Policy for more information).

We recognise that 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 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.

To help prevent low-level concerns, staff codes of conduct, low level concern policies and safeguarding policies and procedures should be implemented effectively and appropriate action should be taken to deal with any concern.

Low-level concerns should be reported to the DSL or a deputy. If there are concerns about a DSL, these should be reported to the chair of governor at Allen Edwards. At Allen Edwards, we endeavour to create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer if they have found themselves in a situation which might be misinterpreted or they have behaved in a way that falls below professional standards.

Recording concerns:

All low-level concerns should be recorded on the low-level concerns form (see Low-Level Concerns Policy). Records should include the details of the concern, how the concern arose and the actions taken. Records should be reviewed so that patterns of concerning behaviour can be recognised and appropriate action can be taken.

Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy (See Policy) but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- › Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- › Could put pupils in the school at risk

- › Is violent
- › Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- › Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

See appendix 4 for more information about child-on-child abuse.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil where the significant harm threshold is met:

- › You must record the allegation and tell the DSL but do not investigate it
- › The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- › The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
- › The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

All incidences will be recorded on CPOMS and dealt with in accordance to our Behaviour Policy and multi-agency advice. Support will be offered to both victim and perpetrator.