



# QUANTOCK

## EDUCATION TRUST

# **Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers**

LINKS: Complaints Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Code of Conduct

DATE: November 2023

POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE: CEO

DATE RATIFIED BY PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE, PAY & RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE: November 2023

AUDIENCE: All Trust Staff

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## 1. Principles

- 1.1. Quantock Education Trust (QET) takes its responsibility of care for its students and staff extremely seriously. QET recognises that any possibility that any safeguarding concerns or allegations made against a member of staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers is managed quickly and effectively. It is also important that low-level safeguarding concerns are recognised and reported so behaviours can be appropriately managed.
- 1.2. The DfE Statutory Guidance for managing cases of allegations is set out in “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023: Part Four (Sections 1 and 2) Allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors” and provides the framework for this policy.
- 1.3. This policy applies to all employees at QET and sets out how the Trust will manage safeguarding concerns and allegations made about a member of staff, together with allegations relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the Trust premises for the purposes of running activities for children. For the purposes of the policy a ‘staff member’ is a person whose work brings them into contact with children in an education setting. It applies to all staff, paid or working in a voluntary capacity (including supply teachers) on or off QET premises and sites or carrying out any activity on behalf of QET.
- 1.4. This policy is set out in two parts. The first part deals with allegations made against members of staff, including supply staff contractors or volunteers, together with allegations relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the Trust premises for the purposes of running activities for children. The second part deals with low-level concerns raised in relation to members of staff, including supply staff, contractors or volunteers.
- 1.5. Definitions:
  - Chief Executive means the Chief Executive (CEO) of QET.
  - Headteacher refers to all or any of the Headteachers at all or any of the schools within QET.
  - Local Governance Committee (LGC) is a key mechanism for local accountability for each school.
  - Case Manager will manage the allegations/concerns raised and will be the Headteacher, a member of the Executive Team or the Chair of the Trust Board as appropriate
  - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is the Designated Officer for Managing Allegations within the academy’s Local Authority.

## 2. Important Contacts

	Position	Name	Contact Details
<b>Trust Details</b>	Chair of Trustees	Rob Brown	<a href="mailto:rbrown@quantockedtrust.co.uk">rbrown@quantockedtrust.co.uk</a>
	Designated Trustee for Safeguarding (DTS)	Anna Hammond	<a href="mailto:ahammond@quantockedtrust.co.uk">ahammond@quantockedtrust.co.uk</a>
	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Anthony Goble	Somerset Direct - 0300 123 2224
	CEO	Chrysta Garnett	01278 455531
	Trust HR Manager	Julie North	01278 455531
<b>School Details</b>	<i>Headteacher:</i> Haygrove School Spaxton Primary School Stogursey Primary School Sexey's School	Aaron Reid Rachel Rood Gary Tucker Helen Cullen	01278 455531 / <a href="mailto:office@haygrove.somerset.sch.uk">office@haygrove.somerset.sch.uk</a> 01278 671409 / <a href="mailto:office@spaxton-get.co.uk">office@spaxton-get.co.uk</a> 01278 732389 / <a href="mailto:stogurseyschool@Quantockedtrust.co.uk">stogurseyschool@Quantockedtrust.co.uk</a> 01749 813393 / <a href="mailto:reception@sexseys.somerset.sch.uk">reception@sexseys.somerset.sch.uk</a>
	<i>LGC Chairs:</i> Haygrove School Spaxton Primary School Stogursey Primary School  Sexey's School	Jenny Ashworth Andrew Watston Bernie Maskell & Jodie Burghes Revd Jonathan Evans	01278 455531 / <a href="mailto:office@haygrove.somerset.sch.uk">office@haygrove.somerset.sch.uk</a> 01278 671409 <a href="mailto:office@spaxton-get.co.uk">office@spaxton-get.co.uk</a> 01278 732389 / <a href="mailto:stogurseyschool@Quantockedtrust.co.uk">stogurseyschool@Quantockedtrust.co.uk</a>  01749 813393 / <a href="mailto:reception@sexseys.somerset.sch.uk">reception@sexseys.somerset.sch.uk</a>

## 3. Part One: Managing allegations made against members of staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers

- 3.1. This part of the policy will be followed when managing such allegations and may be adapted to each case as required. Whilst it will be used in all cases, Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 requires that it is followed in any case where it is alleged that a member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor 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; or
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children;
  - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates he or she may not be a suitable to work with children (this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of schools).
- 3.2. This will include allegations involving any type of abuse or neglect, including inappropriate relationships with students, grooming behaviour of any kind, possession of indecent photographs or images of children and other offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- 3.3. This policy will also be used where allegations are made relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the Trust premises for the purposes of running activities for children.
- 3.4. This policy will be used alongside our complaints policy and child protection and safeguarding policy.
- 3.5. Where required, child/adult protection and criminal investigation procedures will take precedence over this policy. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for a statutory investigation and a QET internal investigation to run concurrently.

- 3.6. Any investigation undertaken as part of this policy may be used in other proceedings under other QET policies as deemed appropriate.
- 3.7. We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff, including a supply teacher or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.
- 3.8. A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the CEO where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.9. Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

#### **4. Suspension**

- 4.1. Suspension will not be an automatic response to the reporting of allegations. The case manager will consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. Based on the assessment of risk the following alternatives will be considered:
  - redeployment within the academy or across the Trust to remove direct contact with the child(ren) concerned;
  - providing a work colleague to be present when the member of staff has contact with children;
  - redeployment to alternative work within the academy or across the Trust which does not require unsupervised access to children;
  - moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted;
  - temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative site or other work for trust.
- 4.2. Suspension will only be considered where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school or Trust is or are at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. Advice **must** be sought from the Trust HR Director, Legal Advisors (Brown Jacobson), and CEO. in accordance with QET's Scheme of Delegation.
- 4.3. If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification will be recorded by the case manager. The member of staff will be informed at the point of their suspension of their named point of contact within QET and be provided with their contact details. Written confirmation of the suspension (on full pay) will be provided to the member of staff within one working day.
- 4.4. After the suspension, if it is decided that the employee can return to work, measures will be put in place to support their return. This could include a phased return or offering another member of staff as a support system.
- 4.5. The Trust will not prevent social contact with work colleagues and friends unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact may prejudice the gathering of evidence.

#### **5. Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations:**

- 5.1. An investigation into the allegation should normally be undertaken by a senior member of staff at our trust. Where no suitable staff are available or the nature or complexity of the allegation requires it, the Trust may appoint an independent investigator.

5.2. When determining the outcome of an investigation Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education states that the following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of the investigation:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

## 6. Procedure for dealing with allegations

6.1. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. If anyone has a concern that a person (as described in paragraph 3.1) may have behaved inappropriately or they receive information that may constitute an allegation they must report the facts to the case manager, (usually the Headteacher) as soon as possible. They should not withhold information however trivial it may seem and should not leave school without discussing their concerns with someone.

6.2. Should the allegation be made against the CEO, this should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Trustees immediately.

6.3. Should the allegation be made against the Headteacher, this should be brought to the attention of the CEO immediately in their role as case manager. The CEO will inform the Chair of the LGC, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and will liaise with the LADO.

6.4. Should the initial allegation first be made to any other member of staff then that member of staff must either request the person raising the allegation must report it to the case manager or, if that is not possible they must pass details of the allegation to the case manager immediately themselves.

6.5. In the absence of the case manager, staff must report the matter to the most senior person available who will carry out the case manager's duties in his/her absence. They should make a signed and dated written record of their concerns, observations or the information they have received and give it to the case manager straight away.

6.6. Allegations of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer who is no longer working for QET will be referred to the police.

### 6.7. STAFF MUST NOT:

- attempt to deal with the situation themselves
- make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish or embellish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents
- keep the information to themselves or promise confidentiality to staff/pupils involved.
- take any action that might undermine any investigation or disciplinary procedure such as disclosing confidential information, interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers.

6.8. Allegations which arise from external agencies (i.e. the police) via the Designated Officer will follow the procedure detailed in this policy.

## 7. Process

### 7.1. *In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria outlined in Part One, the case manager will take the following steps:*

- 7.1.1. Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below.
- 7.1.2. Discuss the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police).
- 7.1.3. Where an allegation is made or becomes known to the Trust relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the Trust premises for the purposes of running activities for children, the Headteacher will inform the LADO in accordance with paragraph 7.1.2 of this policy.
- 7.1.4. Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.
- 7.1.5. Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate.
- 7.1.6. Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care.
- 7.1.7. **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.
- 7.1.8. **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.
- 7.1.9. **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate. Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. At QET this could be the HR Director, a colleague, a union representative, or access to our employee assistance programme.
- 7.1.10. Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about

any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.

- 7.1.11. Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member).
- 7.1.12. Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.
- 7.1.13. We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- 7.1.14. If the school or the QET is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.
- 7.1.15. Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school/QET will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

## **7.2. *Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff:***

- 7.2.1. If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.
- 7.2.2. We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome.
- 7.2.3. The Headteacher/Chair of the LGC will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation.
- 7.2.4. We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required.
- 7.2.5. We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary).
- 7.2.6. When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR Manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

## **8. Timescales**

- 8.1. We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible.



## **9. Specific actions**

### **9.1. Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

- 9.1.1. The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

### **9.2. Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated**

- 9.2.1. If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.
- 9.2.2. If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

### **9.3. Individuals returning to work after suspension**

- 9.3.1. If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.
- 9.3.2. The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

### **9.4. Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports**

If a report is:

- 9.4.1. Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.
- 9.4.2. Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it.

### **9.5. Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is:

- 9.5.1. Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.
- 9.5.2. Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it.

## **10. Confidentiality and information sharing**

- 10.1. The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.
- 10.2. The Education Act 2022 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school. This applies to parents and carers as well.
- 10.3. The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:
  - Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
  - How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
  - What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
  - How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

## **11. Record-keeping**

- 11.1. The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.
- 11.2. The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).
- 11.3. For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:
  - A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
  - Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
  - Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
  - A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference
- 11.4. In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.
- 11.5. Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

## **12. Supporting those involved**

### **12.1. Staff**

- 12.1.1. The Trust has a duty of care to our employees and will endeavour to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process.

- 12.1.2. After speaking with the LADO, individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the Headteacher, DSL, CEO, children's social care services or the police.
- 12.1.3. The individual will be advised to contact their Trade Union Representative, if they have one, or a work colleague for support.
- 12.1.4. The case manager will appoint a named point of contact to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the investigation and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual.

## 12.2. **Parents/Carers**

- 12.2.1. Parents or carers of the child(ren) involved should be informed about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it (following agreement with the children's social care services and/or police on what information can be disclosed, if applicable).
- 12.2.2. Parents and carers should also be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against staff whilst investigations are ongoing as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002. If parents or carers wish to apply to the court to have reporting restrictions removed, they should be told to seek legal advice.

## 13. **References**

- 13.1. When providing employer references, we will:
- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
  - Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

## 14. **Learning Lessons**

- 14.1. After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.
- 14.2. This will include consideration of (as applicable):
- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
  - The duration of the suspension
  - Whether or not the suspension was justified
  - The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated
  - How future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

## 15. **Non-recent allegations**

- 15.1. Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

15.2. We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

15.3. Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

## **16. Confirmation of outcome**

16.1. Whatever the outcome of the investigations, the case manager must complete an outcome form (Appendix A) which should be sent to the LADO.

## **17. Part Two: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold**

17.1. This part of the policy will be followed when dealing with low-level concerns raised in relation to members of staff, including supply staff, contractors or volunteers and may be adapted to each case as required. It is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. It will be used alongside the Trust's complaints policy, child protection and safeguarding policy, code of conduct and disciplinary policy.

17.2. The QET promotes a culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the trust (including supply teachers, contractors and volunteers) are addressed appropriately.

17.3. This policy is designed to:

- promote and support a culture of openness and trust where staff are clear about the behaviours expected of themselves and their colleagues
- ensure staff are comfortable to raise low-level concerns; and
- provide for efficient and proportionate handling of those concerns

## **18. Definition of low-level concerns**

18.1. The term 'low-level' concern, defined in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 as any concern— no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the local authority designated officer.

18.2. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils; or

## **19. Sharing low-level concerns**

- 19.1. We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.
- 19.2. To minimise and hopefully eradicate the risk of those opportunities being missed, it is critical that staff understand their role in identifying and reporting low-level concerns
- 19.3. All staff are encouraged to immediately report low-level safeguarding concerns as defined in this policy so that the identified behaviours can be investigated and managed appropriately.
- 19.4. All low-level concerns in relation to staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers should be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Concerns about the Headteacher should be reported to the CEO.
- 19.5. The procedure for reporting low-level concerns is consistent with that for reporting allegations of abuse as set out in Part One of this policy. Staff do not need to determine whether their concern meets the threshold set out in Part One of this policy or is a low-level concern. The Headteacher or CEO (as appropriate) will make this determination once the staff member has reported the issue.

## **20. Responding to low-level concerns**

- 20.1. The Headteacher or CEO (as appropriate) will review the concern to confirm that it is not a more serious issue that should be dealt with under part one of this policy. An issue reported as a low-level concern would be dealt under Part One of this policy where it meets the threshold set out in Part One or there is a pattern of low-level concerns expressed about the individual or wider staff practices generally. If necessary, the Headteacher or CEO (as appropriate) will discuss the concern with the LADO to determine whether it should be dealt with under part one of this policy.
- 20.2. The Headteacher or CEO (as appropriate) will discuss the concern with the individual who raised it and will investigate it as appropriate.
- 20.3. Most low-level concerns are likely to be minor and can be dealt with by means of management support or additional training. Where necessary, action may be taken in accordance with the Trust's code of conduct and disciplinary policy.
- 20.4. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Headteacher or CEO (as appropriate) will collect evidence by speaking directly to the person who raised the concern (unless it has been raised anonymously), the individual involved and any witnesses.
- 20.5. Where a low-level concern is raised about a member of supply staff or a contractor, the concern will be shared with supply agency so they can take appropriate steps in accordance with their own policies and statutory guidance.

## **21. Record keeping**

- 21.1. All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.
- 21.2. Records will be:
  - Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR

- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in Part One of this policy, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the Trust

21.3. Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

## **22. References**

22.1. We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

## **23. Responsibilities**

23.1. The Trust Board will:

- monitor and review this policy. They will ensure safeguarding and child protection training is available to all staff and delegate to the CEO and Headteacher the necessary discretion to manage cases of allegations against staff
- appoint a Designated Trustee for Safeguarding (DTS) to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the Trust Board
- ensure that all allegations are dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection and support for the child and the member of staff who is subject of the allegation. The Chair of the Trust Board will manage any allegations against the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and assume the role of case manager. The CEO (or nominated member of the Executive Team) will manage any allegations against the Headteacher and assume the role of case manager.

23.2. Headteacher:

- will appoint an appropriate senior member of staff to the roles of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL
- is responsible for the immediate notification of the allegation to the LADO and will assume the role of the case manager, notifying the CEO when appropriate – specifically if the allegation is likely to lead to a suspension
- will ensure that the reporting procedure for raising concerns and the contact details of key personnel are clearly displayed within the school and communicated to all staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers as part of their induction
- will ensure that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and ensure this training is updated regularly
- If the Headteacher is absent, the role of 'case manager' will be delegated to a suitably experienced member of the senior team.

23.3. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- is responsible for raising awareness through providing advice and support to staff on child welfare and protection issues. They are to ensure that all staff and students are aware of the procedures for reporting concerns and are aware and understand the contents of this policy
- will refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care, where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or where a crime may have been committed to the Police
- will work with the case manager, Designated Officer and take part in strategy discussions and inter agency meetings as required
- will have a responsibility to be familiar with the Statutory Guidance in its entirety
- Complete at the end of the process an outcome form (see Appendix A) and send to LADO.

23.4. All Staff:

- will read and understand Part one and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually
- all members of the senior management team have a responsibility to be familiar with the Statutory Guidance in its entirety.

23.5. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

- The LADO's role is to provide advice and guidance to organisations dealing with allegations, to liaise with the police and other agencies and to monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process. All referrals should be made in the first instance by phone to Somerset Direct. Referrals should be followed up using the LADO Reporting Form available on the [Somerset Children Safeguarding Board](#) website.

## APPENDIX A - Outcome of Allegation Made Against Staff Member

### Explanatory Statement

This statement is made in accordance with the guidance provided in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) Dealing with Allegations of Abuse about Staff and Other Staff.

There is a requirement to keep clear and comprehensive summary of allegations, **how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decision reached**. This should be kept on an employee's confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

The purpose of this record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference if the person has moved on. It will also provide clarification in cases where a future DBS Disclosure reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction. It will also help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation, if, as sometimes happens, an allegation resurfaces after a period of time.

The record should be retained at least until the person has reached normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

**Name:**

**Academy/Service:**

**Date of Allegation:**

**Summary of Allegation made:**

**How Allegation was followed up:**

**Outcome of Management investigation:**

**Action taken and decision reached:**