



POLICY ON MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF, VOLUNTEERS OR SUPPLY TEACHERS, INCLUDING LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

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Person responsible for policy: JIL



1. Introduction

Droitwich Spa High School promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about any adult working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. In doing this we aim to:

- identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
- minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within them, in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

The school will respond if an adult has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they 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

2. Raising Concerns

If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made about an adult posing a risk of harm to children this should be referred to the headteacher. Concerns/allegations about the headteacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors. Students' allegations or concerns about staff conduct will be taken seriously and followed up in a transparent and timely way.

3. Response to an Allegation

Following an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or supply teacher the headteacher will make an urgent and immediate assessment of the allegation. At this stage it is not an investigation into the incident. He/she will look into –

- Who made the allegation and whether it was properly recorded
- The general nature of the allegation
- When and where the incident is alleged to have occurred
- Who was involved in the incident
- Whether there any witnesses/CCTV footage

If the allegation appears to meet the criteria above then the headteacher will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the procedures listed below will ensue.

The school will investigate allegations even where there is no direct employment relationship with the individual for example in the case of a supply teacher or contractor.

The School will follow a procedure that is consistent with Government statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” which can be found by using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Key points of this statutory guidance include:

- If an allegation is made against a teacher, other member of staff volunteer or supply teacher the quick resolution of that allegation should be a clear priority as it is to the benefit of all concerned.



- Any allegation of this nature will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. This includes supply teachers who, whilst they are not directly employed by the school, and not therefore subject to its disciplinary procedures, will be dealt with properly, consistently and fairly.
- In no circumstances will the school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. The school will liaise with the supply agency to discuss whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher or redeploy them to another part of the school whilst they carry out their investigation.
- In response to an allegation, all other options should be considered before suspending a member of staff: suspension should not be the default option. An individual should be suspended only if there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification should be recorded by the School and the individual notified of the reasons.
- Allegations that are found to be malicious should be removed from personnel records; and any that are unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious should not be referred to in employer references.
- Students who are found to have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached school behaviour policies. The school will therefore consider whether to apply an appropriate sanction, which could include temporary or permanent exclusion (as well as referral to the police if there are grounds for believing a criminal offence may have been committed).
- If an allegation is made against one of the School's Governors or Members, the school will follow the procedure laid down by the Local Authority and should an allegation be substantiated, consideration will be given to removing them from office in accordance with these procedures.

There may be up to four strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care about whether a child is in need of specialised services
- consideration of disciplinary action using the school's disciplinary procedures
- consideration of terminating volunteer agreements in line with the volunteer agreement set up by the school

Allegations of historical abuse which may come to light after adults report abuse that they experienced as children will be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns or referred to the police if appropriate.

Those undertaking investigations should be alert to any sign or pattern that suggests that the abuse is more widespread or organised than appears at first sight, or that it involves other perpetrators or institutions. It is important not to assume that initial signs are necessarily related directly to abuse, and to consider occasions where boundaries have been blurred, inappropriate behaviour has taken place, and matters such as fraud, deception or pornography have been involved.

In some cases the DBS will be informed so that they may consider including the individual on the Children's Barred List. In the case of a member of the teaching staff a referral may be made to the TRA for consideration of possible sanctions.

Support for Victims and their Families

The child or children concerned should receive appropriate support. They and their parents or carers should be helped to understand the process, told the result of any enquiry or disciplinary process and, where necessary, helped to understand the outcomes reached. In deciding what information to disclose, careful consideration should be given to duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR Regulations 2018, and, where

relevant, the Human Right Act 1998. The provision of information and advice must take place in a manner that does not impede the proper exercise of enquiry, disciplinary and investigative processes. **The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.**

Staff, volunteers and other individuals about whom there are concerns will be treated fairly and honestly, and will be provided with support throughout the investigation process, as will others who are involved. They will be helped to understand the concerns expressed and the processes being operated, and be clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes. However, the police and other relevant agencies should always be consulted before informing a person who is the subject of allegations that may possibly require a criminal investigation.

If staff have any concerns about the procedures that are being followed, the LADO responsible for providing advice and monitoring cases should be contacted on 01905 846221.

Organisations or Individuals using School Premises

Any allegation received by the school relating to an incident that has happened when an individual or organisation has been using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example but not restricted to community groups, sports associations) will be referred to the appropriate agency (including the LADO) as well as the safeguarding lead of the organisation concerned. The school will also make appropriate referrals when required (for example to Family Front Door).

Contractors

The service level agreement with contractors using the school site should provide evidence of their safeguarding processes and procedures. Should an allegation be made against a contractor, the school will inform the employer and provide relevant information.

Supply teachers

Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the Governing Body when working at DSHS. The school will ensure allegations are dealt with in line with this policy.

Governors

If an allegation is made against a governor, the school will follow this policy. Should an allegation be substantiated, the school will follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

4. Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns are those that do not meet the threshold for referral to the LADO or the police (as stated in the KCSIE Document, Section 4). However, everyone is encouraged to report low-level concerns, even by way of self-referral, so that inappropriate or concerning behaviours are dealt with early and professional boundaries maintained.

A low-level concern may arise if a member of staff has behaved in a way inconsistent with the code of conduct but the matter is not sufficiently serious to refer to the LADO. Examples could include (but are not limited to):



- using inappropriate language
- being over friendly with children
- favouring a particular child
- picking on a child
- making inappropriate social media posts
- making fun of a child in front of other children
- accompanying a child home alone from an event (albeit with parental consent)

Reporting a low-level concern

It may be possible that a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contactor acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern of this nature should inform the headteacher as soon as possible, either directly or by contacting the HR Manager who will ensure the headteacher is told at the earliest opportunity. If the headteacher is not available then the deputy headteacher can be contacted.

If the concerns are with regard to the headteacher, the Chair of Governors should be contacted.

Low level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour may be identified.

Process for dealing with low-level concerns

Low level concerns will be dealt with efficiently and appropriately in line with the school's code of conduct and any other relevant school policy e.g. Data Protection.

In the event of a low-level concern being raised, the headteacher will:

- Collect evidence from witnesses and from the person concerned
- Collate the information and advise what action should be taken, this could range from a conversation with the person to a warning or formal disciplinary procedure
- Keep a record of concerns and outcomes

All information will be held in confidence and securely in line with the school's Data Protection Policy and relevant legislation i.e. DPA 2018 and UK GDPR.

The headteacher will consult with the HR Manager and/or the DSL and/or any relevant agency should further guidance be needed.

Records will be reviewed to identify patterns or systematic issues. Patterns of staff behaviour could result in an investigation and disciplinary action,

Records will be maintained in line with the school's data retention and disposal procedures.



Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre takes its responsibilities as a data controller and data processor seriously and are committed to using any personal data collected and held in accordance with the law. The schools policies, privacy notices and forms in relation to personal data are available for you to view on our web site at www.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk or by using the <https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/communications/information-management-and-data-protection/>

The School's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre, Briar Mill, Droitwich, WR9 0AA or by email at privacy@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk