

Experience shows that children can be subjected to abuse and harm by those who are supposed to be caring for them. It is essential that children do not feel inhibited from reporting abuse against them by any education staff. Children have a right to be treated properly and any incident where a child or adult feels that a person in a position of trust has crossed the boundary of acceptable behaviour, should be reported.

All individuals who work with children must ensure that the environment they work or live in encourages children to make truthful reports of unacceptable behaviour.

**This leaflet provides a brief guide to the process that should be followed, but if faced with an allegation against a staff member or volunteer, you are strongly advised to consult the LADO at the earliest opportunity.**

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**Local Authority's Designated Officers are contactable via:**

**Tel: 01472 326118**

## North East Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Board

### Safeguarding Children: Guidance for Teachers & Other Staff dealing with allegations against education staff

#### **Introduction**

All allegations should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Head unless that person is the subject of the allegation in which case it should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

DSL, Heads, and Chairs, have a key role to play should an allegation be made, that a teacher, staff member or volunteer 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 s/he may pose a risk of harm to children.

#### **Initial Action**

The person receiving the initial allegation should not promise total confidentiality to the child/ren who make allegations. The child/ren should be advised that the matter will be reported on to staff who can help. A written record of information should be made.

DSL, Heads, Chairs should obtain and countersign the record made by the person who first received the allegation, and then consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The subject of the allegation should not be informed unless this has been agreed with the LADO as the Police or Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) may need to be consulted first in order to safeguard the child or enable enquiries to be made safely

Details of the case should not be discussed with other governors or staff, as this might prejudice future criminal or disciplinary process. You should only share information on a need to know basis and in line with the Data Protection legislation

### **Out of Hours**

If the DSL, Head, Chair is told about a serious allegation outside normal working hours, and the LADO is not available, they should contact the Out of Hours Team and inform the LADO on the next working day and undertake an initial evaluation discussion to identify if further action is required.

### **Gathering Information**

The “Allegations Management Referral Form” has been designed to assist Heads/Chairs to collect and record information regarding allegations. It is the job of the Police and Families First Access Point investigate an allegation of harm. **Schools should not conduct their own investigations.**

The school’s Designated Person or deputy should be able to assist with details of the child and whether s/he made previous allegations.

### **Strategy Meeting/Allegations Management Meeting**

The LADO will record the decisions and actions agreed with the line manager and, if required, convene an allegations management meeting.

The LADO will coordinate and review future action as necessary and ensure all parties required are involved, informed and record information as required.

Unless the allegation is demonstrably false, a multi-agency strategy meeting/discussion should take place, either by phone or meeting, in order to share relevant information and determine whether an investigation needs to be undertaken, and if so by whom. Heads/Chairs are likely to be invited to take part, and the LADO can advise about what to expect and what information Heads/Chairs may be able to provide.

### **Suspension**

Suspension should only be considered in the most serious cases where:

- there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, and/or
- a police investigation is warranted, and/or
- the allegation is so serious, it might be grounds for dismissal

Suspension should not be an automatic response and alternatives may be appropriate. However, alternatives should always be considered and recorded even where automatic suspension follows.

### **Timescales**

Effort should be made to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity and cases will be reviewed at least monthly.

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity. However, where this cannot be avoided, the school/college should have an agreed media response.

### **Support**

Staff who are the subject of allegations will benefit from support and this should be identified at the earliest opportunity. This could be through Occupational Health, Employee Welfare Arrangements, Unions etc.

### **Record Keeping**

It is important that employers keep a summary of any allegations made, details of how these were followed up and resolved, and details of any action taken and decisions reached. Records should be kept on a person’s confidential personnel file. The summary should be made available to the staff member if requested in line with Data Protection legislation

### **Further Guidance**

More detailed guidance can be found on the Safer NEL Website:

<http://www.safernel.co.uk/>