

When An Allegation Is Made Against A Member Of Staff

1. Where an allegation (anonymous or otherwise) is made against a member of staff, there should be urgent consultation by the head teacher with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the education service as to how to take the matter forward. Where the allegation is against the head teacher, this consultation should be made by the chair of governors.
 - Julie Astall - East Staffs, Tamworth, Cannock & Lichfield 01785 278958 or 07773 791577
 - Josie Hulme – Newcastle and Moorlands - telephone 07813 909119
 - Diane May – Stafford and South Staffs - telephone 07773 791568

If the district Education LADO is not available, and the matter is urgent (e.g. alleged injury or criminal offence) the head teacher should refer the matter without delay to First Response and ask to speak to a LADO.

2. When such allegations are made, there are a number of possible outcomes of the initial discussion:
 - (i) Where the pupil has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, there should be an immediate referral under child protection procedures established by Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB). The Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will be advised to refer the matter to the First Response Team 0800 1313126, who will allocate the referral to the appropriate Safeguarding team to convene a strategy meeting / discussion with professionals to decide how to proceed.
 - (ii) Where there is an allegation or concern that a criminal offence may have been committed, this will be referred under child protection procedures (as above) and the police may carry out a criminal investigation. A strategy meeting is normally held prior to a criminal investigation being carried out.
 - (iii) The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by a member of staff (which does not fall within the above categories) that needs to be considered under local disciplinary procedures. This may be agreed by a telephone discussion or a Joint Evaluation Meeting may be convened to agree a way forward in more complex cases. These are chaired by the LADO and occur when there is no evidence of significant harm to a child that would meet the threshold for SCC Social Care Safeguarding team.
 - (iv) The concerns may have arisen over the behaviour of the adult which raises issues of suitability e.g. assault on another adult, person living with a registered sex offender, alcohol or drug dependency. In such cases the LADO may convene a Joint Evaluation Meeting which would involve HR and could include other agencies such as the police or adult social care to agree a way forward.
 - (v) That the allegation is apparently without foundation and further investigation is not required.
3. A head teacher (or chair of governors where the allegation is against the head teacher) should not investigate the allegation, or interview pupils, or discuss the allegation with the member of staff, but should consider, in consultation with the LADO, whether the allegation requires further investigation and if so by whom.

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4. There are three possible types of investigation:
 - (i) enquiries by Children's Social Care under local child protection procedures
 - (ii) related police investigations into possible criminal offences
 - (iii) the school's disciplinary procedures
5. Suspension should not be seen as an automatic response to an allegation. However it must be considered in the following circumstances
 - A child or children would be at risk
 - The allegation is so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct is possible
 - It is necessary to allow any investigation to continue unimpeded
7. Any investigation by police or child protection agencies will take priority over an internal disciplinary investigation by the school.

(These procedures are based on the [Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#) procedures updated 2010)