

Policy Regarding Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff

Date approved:	28 June 2023
Review cycle/date:	Every 3 years: June 2026
Party responsible:	Headteacher and Staffing Committee
Linked policies:	Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The policy is part of our overall strategy to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Their welfare is paramount. We also believe that it is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in the school is dealt with very quickly, 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.

Roles and responsibilities of headteacher, other staff, governors

The Headteacher will

- ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare (including through induction and ongoing training);
- maintain a code of conduct for staff based on Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children in Education Settings;
- ensure that parents and carers are aware of relevant responsibilities placed on staff through their code of conduct for staff – for example, not giving children their personal mobile numbers, not giving children gifts or lifts home and ensure that parents and carers know who to go to if they have concerns. At The Swanage School this is the Headteacher;
- ensure that children know who to go to if they have any concerns about their personal safety and well-being and that they understand the importance of not making unfounded allegations. At The Swanage School this is the Deputy Headteacher;
- agree with the governing body what behaviours to address through the school's complaints or disciplinary procedures and in what circumstances they should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and review the decisions at least annually;
- always contact the LADO and follow their advice when there is reason to believe that 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; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she or he is unsuitable to work with children;
- contact the LADO and follow their advice when an employee's behaviour is a matter of concern because it compromises or may be seen to compromise the reputation and ability of the school to safeguard children and young people;

- only use suspension when there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or the allegation is so serious it might be grounds for dismissal;
- ensure that any bar on contact between an accused teacher and other staff should apply on school premises only;
- safeguard the confidentiality of all concerned as far as possible;
- follow the current Department for Education (DfE) guidance about record-keeping;
- facilitate the re-integration of staff following suspension or the conclusion of a case, by counselling, guidance, support, reassurance and confidence building.

Staff will

- put the welfare and well-being of children first at all times;
- familiarise themselves with the staff handbook /code of conduct and follow the guidance therein;
- make every effort not to expose themselves to risk of an allegation being made;
- advise their line manager if anything happens which they believe might be misconstrued and/or lead to a complaint or allegation of abuse;
- ask for advice from their line manager if they are in any doubt about how to behave in a specific situation;
- report any incident that they suspect indicates 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; or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.
- ensure that they access available training, guidance, support and supervision to fulfil their responsibilities to safeguard children.

The Governing Body will

- ensure that the school's values explicitly promote the safeguarding and well-being of children;
- identify a governor to lead on child protection. In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the headteacher this governor, in consultation with the chair of governors, will take responsibility for liaising with the LADO. The same governor will decide with the headteacher how to secure an independent, objective investigation when information is to be gathered to inform disciplinary hearings;
- agree with the headteacher what behaviours to address through the school's complaints or disciplinary procedures and in what circumstances they should contact the LADO;
- ensure that at least one governor undertakes the Safer Recruitment training programme;
- ensure that any members who could be called to sit on disciplinary hearings are appropriately trained;
- ensure that at least once each year the governing body receives a full report on the school's arrangements for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Governing Body will schedule into agendas for meetings a full report on safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school. This will be compiled by the headteacher, senior designated teacher and the governor(s) with responsibility for safeguarding.

It will seek evidence that the induction of staff and ongoing training includes familiarisation with the Staff Handbook/Code of Conduct including through exit interviews.

A governing body panel will review each decision to suspend a member of staff once proceedings have run their course, including judging whether the procedure, and the length of it, was justified. It will also review the handling of each allegation to assess whether it was handled expeditiously and whether the accused received appropriate support.

Monitoring evaluation and review

The policy regarding allegation of abuse will be reviewed every three years by the Governing Body.