St. Nicholas
Nursery & Preschool

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF, VOLUNTEERS OR AGENCY STAFF POLICY

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures

Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff

Concerns may come from a parent, child, colleague or member of the public. Allegations or concerns must be referred to the designated person without delay - even if the person making the allegation later withdraws it.

Identifying

An allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or agency staff constitutes serious harm or abuse if they:

- 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 in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

Informing

- All staff report allegations to the designated person.

  The designated person alerts the designated officer. If the designated officer is unavailable the designated person contacts their equivalent until they get a response- which should be within 3-4 hours of the event. Together they should form a view about what immediate actions are taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff in the setting, and what is acceptable in terms of fact-finding.

It is essential that no investigation occurs until and unless the LADO has expressly given consent for this to occur, however, the person responding to the allegation does need to have an understanding of what explicitly is being alleged.

The designated person must take steps to ensure the immediate safety of children, parents, and staff on that day within the setting.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is contacted as soon as possible and within one working day. If the LADO is on leave or cannot be contacted the LADO team manager is contacted and/or advice sought from the point of entry safeguarding team/mash/point of contact, according to local arrangements.

A child protection referral is made by the designated person if required. The LADO, line managers and local safeguarding children's services can advise on whether a child protection referral is required.

The designated person asks for clarification from the LADO on the following areas:

what actions the designated person must take next and when and how the parents of the child are informed of the allegation

whether or not the LADO thinks a criminal offence may have occurred and whether the police should be informed and if so who will inform them

whether the LADO is happy for the setting to pursue an internal investigation without input from the LADO, or how the LADO wants to proceed

whether the LADO thinks the person concerned should be suspended, and whether they have any other suggestions about the actions the designated person has taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff attending the setting

The designated person records details of discussions and liaison with the LADO including dates, type of contact, advice given, actions agreed and updates on the child's case file.

Parents are not normally informed until discussion with the LADO has taken place, however in some circumstances the designated person may need to advise parents of an incident

involving their child straight away, for example if the child has been injured and requires medical treatment.

Staff do not investigate the matter unless the LADO has specifically advised them to investigate internally. Guidance should also be sought from the LADO regarding whether or not suspension should be considered. The person dealing with the allegation must take steps to ensure that the immediate safety of children, parents and staff is assured. It may be that in the short-term measures other than suspension, such as requiring a staff member to be office based for a day, or ensuring they do not work unsupervised, can be employed until contact is made with the LADO and advice given.

The designated person ensures staff fill in a Safeguarding incident reporting form.

If after discussion with the designated person, the LADO decides that the allegation is not obviously false, and there is cause to suspect that the child/ren is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, then the LADO will normally refer the allegation to children's social care.

If notification to Ofsted is required the designated person will inform Ofsted as soon as possible, but no later than 14 days after the event has occurred. The designated person will liaise with the designated officer about notifying Ofsted.

The designated person ensures that the Confidential safeguarding incident report form is completed and sent to the designated officer. If the designated officer is unavailable their equivalent must be contacted.

Avenues such as performance management or coaching and supervision of staff will also be used instead of disciplinary procedures where these are appropriate and proportionate. If an allegation is ultimately upheld the LADO may also offer a view about what would be a proportionate response in relation to the accused person.

The designated person must consider revising or writing a new risk assessment where appropriate, for example if the incident related to an instance where a member of staff has physically intervened to ensure a child's safety, or if an incident relates to a difficulty with the environment such as where parents and staff are coming and going and doors are left open.

All allegations are investigated even if the person involved resigns or ceases to be a volunteer.

Allegations against agency staff

Any allegations against agency staff must be responded to as detailed in this procedure. In addition, the designated person must contact the agency following advice from the LADO

Allegations against the designated person

If a member of staff has concerns that the designated person has behaved in a way that indicates they are not suitable to work with children as listed above, this is reported to the designated officer who will investigate further.

During the investigation, the designated officer will identify another suitably experienced person to take on the role of designated person.

If an allegation is made against the designated officer, then the owners/directors/trustees are informed.

Recording

A record is made of an allegation/concern, along with supporting information, using 'Safeguarding incident reporting form'; normally by the practitioner who has observed the incident. This is then entered on the file of the child, and the 'Child welfare and protection summary' is completed and placed in the front of the child's file.

If the allegation refers to more than one child, this is recorded in each child's file

If relevant, a child protection referral is made, with details held on the child's file.

Disclosure and Barring Service

If a member of staff is dismissed because of a proven or strong likelihood of child abuse, inappropriate behaviour towards a child, or other behaviour that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children such as drug or alcohol abuse, or other concerns raised during supervision when the staff suitability checks are done, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service is made.

Escalating concerns

If a member of staff believes at any time that children may be in danger due to the actions or otherwise of a member of staff or volunteer, they must discuss their concerns immediately with the designated person.

If after discussions with the designated person, they still believe that appropriate action to protect children has not been taken they must speak to the designated officer.

If there are still concerns then the whistle blowing procedure must be followed, as set out in 'Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns'.

This policy was reviewed by Anjana Shah in September 2026. Date of next review will be in September 2027.