



With delegated responsibility from the
EDITH STEIN
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

**MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE
AGAINST STAFF POLICY**

APPROVED BY DIRECTORS	FEBRUARY 2026
DATE LAST REVIEWED	NEW POLICY
MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE	CEO
STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY	STATUTORY



DEFINITIONS:

In this Policy and Procedure, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

1. 'Academy or Trust' means the Academy named at the beginning of this Policy and Procedure and includes all sites upon which the Academy undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
2. 'Headteacher' means the most senior teacher in the school who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Headteacher, Principal, or Head of School.
3. 'Local Governing Body' means (if appropriate to the context) the Governors appointed to carry out specified functions in relation to the Academy as delegated by the Academy Trust Company.

1.0 Introduction

As a Catholic Academy Trust, we recognise the personal dignity and rights of children and the special responsibility and a duty of care that our staff have to ensure schools are a safe place. Unfortunately, there are occasions where allegations are made against staff within the Trust. In the interests of fairness and probity it is important that such matters are managed correctly.

2.0 Legal framework

2.1 This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 2011
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010

2.2 This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version) [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

3.0 Initial allegation made to the school

3.1 Any allegation of abuse, whereby a member of staff is accused of abusing or harming a student, must be reported to the Headteacher at the relevant school. Should the initial allegation first be made to any other member of staff, then that member of staff must either request the person raising the allegation to report it to the Headteacher or, if that is not possible, to pass details of the allegation on immediately.

3.2 Should the allegation be made against the Headteacher, this should be brought to the attention of the Executive Headteacher or Chair of Governors immediately.

- 3.3 Should the allegation meet any of the following criteria then the Headteacher or designated member of staff should report the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the same day that the allegation is received.
- 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.
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they pose/may pose a risk of harm to children.

4.0 Initial consideration

- 4.1 The Headteacher will review the allegation against school policy, including managing low level concerns. If required, the matter will be discussed with the LADO to provide any further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The Headteacher should not investigate the allegation at this stage. The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.
- 4.2 If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the LADO will immediately refer it to children's social care and ask for a strategy discussion in accordance with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' to be convened straight away. In those circumstances, the strategy discussion should include the LADO and the Headteacher.
- 4.3 If there is not cause to suspect that "significant harm" is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the LADO should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion will also involve the school and any other agencies involved with the child.

5.0 Action following initial consideration

- 5.1 Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it will be for the Headteacher to deal with it. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Headteacher should institute appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be in accordance with the disciplinary policy.
- 5.2 Where further investigation is required, the Headteacher should discuss who will undertake that with the LADO.
- 5.3 The investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the Headteacher within 10 working days.
- 5.4 On receipt of the report of the investigation, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors should consult the LADO and decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed within two working days. If a hearing is needed, it should be held within 15 working days.
- 5.5 In any case in which children's social care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children are in need of protection, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors should take account of any relevant information obtained in the course of those enquiries when considering disciplinary action.

- 5.6 The LADO should continue to liaise with the school to monitor progress of the case and provide advice or support when required or requested.

6.0 Cases where crimes may have been committed

- 6.1 If there is no cause to suspect that significant harm is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the school will work with the LADO who may be determining with the police if an investigation is required.
- 6.2 If the police and/or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decide not to charge the individual with an offence, decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a court, the police should pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the school without delay. In those circumstances, the Headteacher should deal with the case in consultation with the LADO.
- 6.3 If the person is convicted of an offence the school should work with the police and LADO so that the appropriate action can be taken.

7.0 Allegations which are likely to necessitate an immediate referral to child protection

- 7.1 The following situations will require immediate referral to child protection:
- Where the student has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant or serious harm
 - Where the student alleges that a criminal offence has been committed
 - Any allegation of a sexual nature
- 7.2 The Headteacher should be aware that some other complaints may also be regarded as child protection issues and, therefore, each complaint should be carefully considered in consultation with the LADO before taking any action.

8.0 Suspension

- 8.1 The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations. In some cases, that will require the school to consider suspending the person until the case is resolved.
- 8.2 Suspension must not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. If the school is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the teacher's family, those concerns should be reported to the LADO or police, but suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.
- 8.3 Suspension should only be considered in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school is or are at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal; however, a person should not

be suspended automatically, or without careful thought being given to the particular circumstances of the case.

- 8.4 The school must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at the school until the allegation is resolved, and may wish to seek advice from the ESCAT HR Manager.
- 8.5 The school should also consider whether the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. For example, redeployment so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child concerned, or providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children. This allows time for an informed decision regarding the suspension and possibly reducing the initial impact of the allegation. This will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation.
- 8.6 The school should consider the potential permanent, professional and reputational damage to teachers that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or maliciously intended.
- 8.7 Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within one working day, giving the reasons for the suspension. The person should be informed at that point who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.
- 8.8 LA children's social care services or the police cannot require the school to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although the school should give appropriate weight to their advice.
- 8.9 The power to suspend is vested in the Headteacher, Executive Headteacher, or the Governing Body who have delegated responsibility from the Trust.
- 8.10 In certain circumstances, where a strategy discussion or initial evaluation concludes that there should be enquiries by the LA children's social care services and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should canvass police and the LA children's social care services for views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children to inform the school consideration of suspension.
- 8.11 A risk assessment should be carried out for each individual case to determine whether the member of staff should be suspended. The assessment should take into account the context of the allegation, background information in relation to the member of staff, and any outcome following the strategy meeting. It should also take into account whether a temporary transfer or period of paid leave is appropriate as an alternative to suspension. The assessment must be recorded and a copy kept on file.

9.0 Monitoring progress

- 9.1 The school should regularly contact the LADO regarding the progress of cases, and to be updated on any external strategy meetings pertinent to the individuals or case, or by liaising with the police and/or children's social work services colleagues or the school, as appropriate.
- 9.2 Reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals, depending on the complexity of the case.

10.0 Referral to DBS and the Trust

- 10.1 If, on conclusion of the case, the school ceases to use the person's services against whom the allegation was made, or the person ceases to provide his or her services, the school should consult the LADO about whether a referral to the DBS is required. If a referral is appropriate, the report should be made within one month.
- 10.2 Should the school believe that on the conclusion of the case there is risk of reputational damage to the school, then the Headteacher or Chair of the LGB must refer the matter to the CEO at ESCAT.

11.0 Keeping records

- 11.1 It is important that a clear and comprehensive record of any allegation is made even if police/disciplinary action is not taken or proven. This should include details of the allegation, how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken, including any sanctions imposed.
- 11.2 The record should be kept on the member of staff's personal file.
- 11.3 The purpose of this record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future reference request if the individual leaves the school.
- 11.4 It is also important that accurate and detailed information is held in the event that the DBS makes requests for further information. This information is given to the DBS, if requested, due to the nature of the allegation. A comprehensive record of all allegations will provide clarification in cases where a future DBS disclosure reveals information from the police about an allegation which did not result in a criminal conviction.

12.0 Confidentiality

- 12.1 Confidentiality should be maintained whenever an allegation is made; however, there may be a need to share information with relevant agencies or other staff as a result of an investigation.
- 12.2 On no account during a discussion with a student should suggestions be made to children as to alternative explanations for their worries. The school will follow the principles of confidentiality, reporting, and anonymity introduced in the Education Act 2011.
- 12.3 The pupil should be reassured that support will be made available to them. This will normally be from the Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding in the school.
- 12.4 Any enquiries from the press should be directed to the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher, unless it is a freedom of information or data protection request, in which case the school legal representative should be contacted.

13.0 Support for those Involved

- 13.1 The school recognises that it has a duty of care to their employees and therefore will ensure any employee against whom an allegation is made is supported. A case manager will be appointed, this may be the Head, a member of the senior team or another person appointed by the

Headteacher or the Governing Body. The case manager should not be the person investigating the case.

- 13.2 Parents or carers of the child should be involved as soon as possible. However, there may be circumstances where the policies of social care services agree that information should not be disclosed to the parents or carers.

14.0 Action to be taken in respect of false allegations

- 14.1 If an allegation made by a student is proved to be false and/or malicious, action should be taken to determine whether the person who made the allegation is in need of services or may have been abused by someone else.
- 14.2 In the case of a student deliberately inventing or making a malicious allegation, the Headteacher should consider taking action in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. The parents/carers of the student will be written to informing them of the false allegation and the seriousness of this. The letter will remain on the student's file.
- 14.3 If it is clear to the Headteacher and the LADO that the allegation is demonstrably false or unfounded, the member of staff should be informed orally and in writing of the allegation, that it is without foundation and that no further action will be taken.
- 14.4 Where appropriate, and if requested, support should be offered, which could include occupational health and counselling services.
- 14.5 If an allegation made by a member of staff is proved to be false and/or malicious, an investigation should take place in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. The police may also consider taking action against the individual making the allegation.
- 14.6 Documentation should be retained on the employee's personal file to demonstrate that the allegation was malicious.

15.0 Learning lessons

- 15.1 Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, lessons can be learned, whether the allegations are proven or not. At the conclusion of a case, relevant parties should discuss what can be learned and, therefore, lead to improved practice, either to the school or Trust procedures or to help prevent similar events in the future. The LADO and the Headteacher should review the case.

16.0 Information Sharing

- 16.1 In an initial evaluation of the case, the agencies concerned must share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of an allegation, and about the alleged victim.
- 16.2 Staff attending any external strategy meeting should be prepared with the appropriate information, e.g. full name, address, when their latest Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check was completed, start date, involvement in youth activities, children of their own, and any other information that could be helpful.

17.0 Resignations and ‘Compromise Agreements’

- 17.1 The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures.
- 17.2 It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process.
- 17.3 Wherever possible, the person should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it.
- 17.4 The process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if representations cannot be given or the person does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person’s period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.
- 17.5 By the same token so called “compromise agreements” by which a person agrees to resign, the school agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, must not be used in these cases. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate. Nor can it override the statutory duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

18.0 Supporting those involved

18.1 Supporting the employee:

- The Trust has a duty of care to their employees. This is delegated to the schools. Schools should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations and disciplinary process. Support for the individual is vital to fulfilling this duty.
- Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the LA children’s social care services or the police.
- The individual should be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support. They could also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice.
- The school should appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual; this may include occupational health.
- Particular care needs to be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work-related issues.
- Social contact with colleagues and friends must not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

18.2 Supporting the parents:

- Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it; however, where a strategy discussion is required, or the police or LA children's social care services need to be involved, the Headteacher should not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents.
- They should also be kept informed about the progress of the case and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.
- The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed.
- In deciding what information to disclose, careful consideration should be given to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, the law of confidence and, where relevant, the Human Rights Act 1998.

19.0 Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by ESCAT and communicated to schools.

Appendix A: Definitions

A1.0 Significant Harm

A1.1 This is the threshold where compulsory social care intervention must take place. This was introduced by the Children Act 1989 and the Law Commission provided the following definition: "Harm as a concept should be taken to include not only ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical), but also the impairment of physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behaviour development".

A2.0 Abuse

A2.1 Abuse can be either physical, sexual, emotional harm, or a form of neglect. The definitions of different types of abuse can be found in the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#) and also the current version of our Child Protection Policy [Policies - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#)

A3.0 Position of Trust

A3.1 Those working with children and young people should understand that they are in positions of power and trust in relation to these groups. There is potential for exploitation and harm to children and young people, and employees have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Employees should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

Appendix B: Information Guide for Employees Facing Allegations

B1.0 Aim

B1.1 The aim of this information guide is to explain the processes involved, and the support and guidance available, if it is alleged that that you have:

- Harmed a student or put a child at risk of harm.
- Committed a criminal act towards a student.
- Behaved in a way that raises concern about the risk you may pose to children or young people.

B2.0 Initial Action

B2.1 As soon as possible after the allegation is made, the Headteacher should consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to discuss the next action points, taking advice from social care and the police as needed. The police may advise that you are not told about the allegation immediately.

- B2.2 The Headteacher's decision in consultation with the LADO will be one, or a combination of the following:
- a. The student is alleged to have suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm - which requires immediate referral to social care.
 - b. A criminal offence is alleged – this requires referral to social care and police.
 - c. The allegation represents poor or inappropriate behaviour – this should be considered under the school disciplinary and/or capability procedures, including referral, if appropriate, to the school occupational health advisor.
 - d. The allegation is clearly and demonstrably without foundation and no further action will be taken.
- B2.3 If the conclusions of the initial discussions are a. or b., a strategy discussion should take place involving police, social care, the Headteacher, LADO and the ESCAT HR Manager. You should not be present. The discussion will focus on the needs of the student(s) who may be at risk. It will determine what action should be taken regarding further investigation, but it is not part of any disciplinary procedures.
- B2.4 If the initial discussions conclude the situation is as outlined in c., an investigation will be initiated under ESCAT's disciplinary and/or capability procedures.
- B2.5 If the conclusion is as outlined in d., you should be told orally and in writing that the allegation is without foundation, and that no further action will be taken.

B3.0 Types of Possible Investigation

- B3.1 The types of investigation that may be undertaken are:
- Child protection inquiries by social care.
 - Criminal investigation by police.
 - Disciplinary/capability investigation.
- B3.2 A disciplinary investigation will usually be held in abeyance until external agency investigations are complete, unless prior agreement is reached. Whilst these investigations should be conducted as speedily as possible, they should also be balanced against the need to be thorough and fair, in line with natural justice. Statements taken in external investigations could be used in subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

B4.0 Suspension

- B4.1 Suspension is a neutral act and should not be automatic. Where possible, the decision to suspend should be informed by the strategy discussion, and should only occur when the known facts relating to the allegation indicate:
- A student may be at risk.
 - The allegations are so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct is possible.
 - Suspension is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded.
- B4.2 Alternatives to suspension will be considered, e.g. leave of absence, transfer of duties, additional supervision.

- B4.3 Where suspension is being considered, an interview with you will normally be arranged. You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a colleague. You are advised to seek the assistance of your union representative. If you are suspended, one of his/her roles will be to promote your interests and raise issues that may be of concern to you.
- B4.5 The interview is not an examination of the evidence, but an opportunity for you to make representations concerning possible suspension.
- B4.6 Other people, including other staff, should only be told about the allegation on a 'need-to-know basis'. Notification may be delayed if the police think this could prejudice an investigation.
- B4.7 Those who will be told of the allegation and likely course of action include you, the student concerned, his/her parent, the person making the allegation, your manager, the Headteacher, HR Manager, the LADO and the investigating agencies as above.
- B4.8 If you are suspended, those persons likely to be on a disciplinary panel, if convened, will be given limited information so any future disciplinary process is not prejudiced. If the matter becomes common knowledge, it may be necessary to issue a brief statement, agreed by the agencies concerned, to parents, students and the public.

B5.0 Support

- B5.1 You should expect to be:
- Advised to contact your union representative.
 - Given a support contact within the organisation who should keep you up-to-date with the progress of your case.
 - Given a team contact, if you are suspended, who will update you about normal organisation activities. Social contact with colleagues should not be precluded unless this would be detrimental to the investigation. The type of information and frequency of contact should be agreed, but colleagues should not comment on or discuss the investigation.
 - Offered staff counselling service and/or occupational health support.
- B5.2 This may be a stressful time, so in addition to contacting your union representative, you are advised to see your GP if you think your health may be affected.