



Exeter Steiner School Procedure for dealing with allegations made against staff or volunteers

Exeter Steiner School will ensure that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or a volunteer is dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

1 Managing cases of allegations

The procedures outlined in this document should be used in cases of allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher, a member of staff or a volunteer has:

- 1 behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- 2 possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
- 3 behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

2 Specialist Roles

Local Authorities have a Designated Officer (LADO) who has overall responsibility for the oversight of the procedures for dealing with allegations. The LADO officer will provide advice and guidance, in addition to liaising with the police and other agencies, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

Police

A designated senior officer will be responsible for liaising with the designated LA officer.

Chair of Trustees

The Chair of Trustees will be the first person within the School to whom allegations should be reported. The chairperson will then follow the outlined procedures, liaising closely with the LA.

3 Procedures for dealing with allegations

Allegation made to school

The allegation should be reported to the Chair of Trustees immediately. If the allegation meets any of the criteria set out in the paragraph 1 above:– the Chairperson should report it to the LADO the same day.

Initial consideration

The LA officer will discuss the matter with the Chairperson and where necessary will obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The Chairperson **should not** investigate the allegation at this stage. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.

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 LA officer will immediately refer to children's social care and ask for a strategy discussion to be convened straight away. The strategy discussion should include the LA officer and the Chair of Trustees.

If there is not cause to suspect that "significant harm" is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the LA officer should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. This discussion should involve the school and any other agencies involved with the child.

Action following initial consideration

Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the employer (i.e. the Board of Trustees) to deal with. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Chair of Trustees should institute appropriate action within **3 working days**. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action, the Chair of Trustees and trustees should discuss who will undertake that with the LA designated officer. It may be more appropriate for the disciplinary investigation to be conducted by a person who is independent of the school. The investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the employer within 10 working days.

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 Chair of Trustees should take account of any relevant information obtained in the course of those enquiries when considering disciplinary action.

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The LA designated officer should continue to liaise with the school to monitor progress of the case and provide support/advice when required/requested.

Case subject to police investigation

If a criminal investigation is required, the police aim to complete enquiries as quickly as possible. Wherever possible a review should take place no later than 4 weeks after the initial action meeting and if the decision is to continue to investigate the allegation, dates for subsequent review should be set at that point.

If the police and/or the CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a court, the school would request that the police pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the Chair of Trustees within three working days of the decision.

If the person is convicted of an offence the police should also inform the Chair of Trustees straight away so that appropriate action can be taken.

If the school decides to cease to use the person's services or the person ceases to provide his/her services, the Chair of Trustees should consult the LA designated officer about whether a referral to the DCSF is required. If so the report should be written within one month.

For more detailed information regarding this process go to:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection

Policy approved (date)_____28.02.10

Signature of Chair of Trustees__Iain M. Jamieson

Date of next review 22nd February 2011