Christ Church NW1

Guidance for schools on dealing with allegations against staff members

September 2026

Vision and Values

**The Christian faith is at the heart of our school community.
At Christ Church we all care, learn and work together for God and others.**

'For we are all God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do'. Ephesians 2:10

Our Christian Values are
Creation, Community, Endurance, Thankfulness, Reconciliation, Wisdom

The distinctive nature of our approach to education can be found in our explicit Christian values, our collective worship, our grounded Christian ethos, our carefully crafted curriculum and in our Religious Education.

We aim to provide ambitious learning opportunities, promoting achievement in every area and nurturing social, emotional and spiritual well-being.

We actively promote the children's cultural capital (defined as the acquisition of skills and knowledge, which an individual can draw on to give them an advantage in life). We will introduce them to strong role models who will impart their knowledge and wisdom to help the children engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement and to be become responsible local and global citizens.

Character and resilience are the qualities we promote within our children, developing the inner resources that we call on to help us in life. We instil these qualities in our children to make sure that they are ready to make their way in the world as robust, confident and inquisitive individuals.

We know that confidence, knowledge and skills will help them to become compassionate and well-balanced young people. We want them to take their place in society as active citizens, economically independent, exemplifying the British values of equality, mutual respect, democracy, individual liberty and rule of law.

We use our six Christian values, Creation, Wisdom, Thankfulness, Community Endurance and Reconciliation, to reinforce and enrich our teaching wherever applicable.

- **Creation**
  For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Hebrews 3:4

- **Wisdom**
  For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 2:6

- **Thankfulness**
  Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. 1 Chronicles 16:34

- **Community**
  My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. John 15:12

- **Endurance**
  Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

- **Reconciliation**
  Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

Our vision is inclusive and seeks to promote the whole child thrive within our Christ Church family.

Each member of our Christ Church family; children, parents and staff are valued as God's creation. We believe in full inclusion and acceptance of all and that this allows every individual to flourish.

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1 Introduction

Schools have a duty to safeguard pupils and create a safe learning environment by ensuring that only staff who are suitable to work with children are employed, so it is crucial that there is a robust process in place for dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse by a staff member or volunteer against a pupil.

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed by head teachers and governors when dealing with allegations and concerns raised against a member of staff or a volunteer.

2 Legal framework

All schools must have procedures in place to deal adequately with any allegations that a member of staff or a volunteer has:

- 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 he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, for example behaviour in their private life that raises concerns (a *transferrable risk)*.

The procedures must comply with the guidance set out in *Working together to safeguard children* and the statutory guidance *Keeping children safe in education.*

Camden follows the London Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (section 7) and schools should be aware of their role under these procedures.

CP7. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers (People in Positions of Trust), who Work with Children (londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk)

For help in deciding whether an incident meets the harm threshold, agencies can refer to the National LADO network thresholds guidance.
LADO Threshold Document – national-lado-network.co.uk

Low level concerns that do not involve harm

Low level concerns about a member of staff that do not involve harm to a child but raise concerns about the staff member's professional behaviour are not within the remit of this policy and schools/colleges should deal with these concerns under the school/college's own staff conduct policies.

However, if schools/colleges are unclear whether a concern meets the threshold of harm, the designated safeguarding lead may contact the LADO for advice on a "no names" basis. Further information is available in the *Safe recruitment and staff conduct* model policy available on the CSCP schools safeguarding webpage.

3 Scope of this policy

As well as covering the four categories of harm and abuse, allegations involving inappropriate relationships with pupils, grooming behaviour on-line, possession of indecent photographs or images of children and other offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and activities and behaviour taking place outside school that involve a transferrable risk, should also be dealt with under this policy.

The policy applies to all school governors, head teachers and staff members within the school, including permanent and temporary staff, supply teachers and volunteers who are currently working at the school even if the allegation involves an incident that happened at another school. Allegations against staff that have since left the school are not dealt with under this policy and should be referred to the police.

If allegations about a staff member's treatment of their own child are raised, the police or local children's social care department where the staff member lives should notify the Camden LADO who will contact the school and the

CAIT to explore whether the information raises questions about the person's suitability to work with children.

Any incidents and allegations arising in a Camden school will be dealt with by the Camden LADO under these procedures even if the pupil lives in another borough. However, if there are concerns about the safety and welfare of other children with whom the staff member is in contact with in other boroughs, the designated safeguarding lead should consider making a referral to children's social care in that borough.

4 Principles

- The welfare of pupils is paramount; all staff members and volunteers have a duty to take any necessary action to safeguard and promote the pupil's welfare.

- The pupil's welfare must be taken into account throughout the duration of any investigation and appropriate services provided where needed.

- Allegations should be dealt with fairly and quickly and generally resolved within 1-3 months. Only in exceptional circumstances, for example where criminal proceedings are taking place, should allegations take more than 12 months to resolve.

- Allegations should be dealt with by the most efficient method and at an appropriate level, involving agencies such as the police and CSFH only where there is a clear need.

- Parents, pupils and staff should be made aware of this policy so that everyone is clear about how concerns can be raised and what actions are likely to happen when an allegation is made. Pupils should be taught how to protect themselves and who they should approach for help.

- Information should be shared in a timely way but only for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- Those staff members wishing to raise concerns anonymously will be supported through Camden's whistle-blowing procedures.

- All responses should be fair, transparent and balanced and should ensure the safety of children whilst supporting those adults who are the subject of allegations.

5 Roles

Every school must have a named person who is responsible for the management of allegations against staff and to whom allegations and concerns should be reported in the first instance. This will normally be the head teacher, a designated governor or the designated safeguarding lead.

Schools should also appoint a deputy to deal with allegations in the named person's absence or in the event that the named person has an allegation made against them. Allegations against head teachers should be referred to the Chair of governors.

Camden has a named Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose role is to oversee the management of all cases involving allegations against staff. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) based in the Children's Quality Assurance Unit will deputise for the LADO in their absence.

The LADO will provide advice to schools on individual cases, liaise with Children's Safeguarding and Family Help (CSFH) and the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) where required and monitor and review the progress of cases, ensuring that an appropriate investigation is carried out by the school/college.

Camden's LADO is: Jacqueline Fearon
Children's Quality Assurance Service
Children's Safeguarding and Family Help (CSFH)
5 Pancras Square
London N1(C) 4AG
Tel: 020 7974 4556
Email: LADO@camden.gov.uk

The LADO will review all cases involving allegations against staff members on a fortnightly basis where the case is complex or on a monthly basis for more straightforward cases. This is to ensure that cases are dealt with efficiently and within prescribed timescales.

Camden Borough Police CAIT will appoint a responsible officer to oversee police responses for managing allegations, liaising with the LADO on individual cases and ensuring police attendance at meetings and monitoring and reviewing the progress of cases.

Camden Borough Police senior officer is: Detective Superintendent John Kirby
Head of Public Protection
Central North Basic Command Unit
Holborn Police Station
10 Lambs Conduit Street
London WC1N 3NR
Mobile: 07342 096872
Email: john.kirby@met.ppn.police.uk

The responsible police officer in CAIT will review all cases in criminal proceedings that involve allegations against staff members and will pass on information to schools/colleges and the LADO regarding progress of investigations and prosecutions. Cases will be reviewed within 4 weeks of any decision to refer the matter to the police and then at fortnightly intervals.

6 Procedures

6.1 Notification and referral

Allegations may arise following a complaint from a parent or pupil or through concerns raised by other staff members. All allegations must be reported to the responsible person within the school immediately.

A written note of the details of the allegation, including times, dates, locations and the nature of the concern must be agreed with the responsible person. Pupils should not be promised confidentiality.

The responsible person should carry out preliminary enquiries to establish the facts and whether there is any evidential basis to the allegation before making a referral to the LADO.

This should help the responsible person decide whether the incident meets the threshold for referral as set out in section 2 of this guidance or if the matter should be dealt with as a low-level incident under the school's staff conduct policies. Where the responsible person is unclear as to which process to follow, the LADO can be contacted for a "no names" discussion so that advice can be given.

The responsible person should not speak to the staff member at this stage but should only do so once they have established that a LADO referral will not be needed or after taking initial advice from the LADO.

The responsible person must notify the Camden LADO within 1 working day of all allegations made against members of staff. The responsible officer should complete the *LADO Agency reporting form* and email this to the LADO mailbox LADO@camden.gov.uk. The referral form is available at: LADO-referral-form-Oct-22.docx (live.com)

The LADO will contact the referrer as soon as possible for a consultation regarding the need for a referral on a "no names" basis" and to decide what action to take.
However, it is recognised that in some emergency situations, schools may have to take immediate action to protect pupils and may contact the LADO by telephone to discuss the matter to agree urgent action.

6.2 Initial consultation and action

Following notification, initial discussions between the school representative and the LADO should look at all the available information about the incident or allegation, the staff member and the child involved (including details of any previous allegations made by the child and their family) and decide if the allegation reaches the threshold of harm and should be dealt with under this policy.

Consideration should also be given to the safety and welfare of other children at the school and the staff member's own children and a decision made about taking any action to safeguard them.

As a result of this initial consultation, the school representative and the LADO should agree what action to take, which may be:

- referral to the police for consideration of whether the threshold for a criminal investigation has been reached or for additional information;
- referral to CSFH for assessment and possible child protection investigation where a child may be eligible for services;
- initiation of disciplinary proceedings against the member of staff by the school/college; if the case does not involve harm to the child, agreement will be made for the school/college to deal with the matter as a low level concern under their staff conduct policies (see section 2);
- no further action to be taken as the allegation has proved to be unfounded or malicious.

Some cases may not involve harm to pupils and will not require an immediate response from the police or CSFH; in these cases, agreement will be made for the school to deal with the matter under local school policy as a professional standards matter. If following the school's own investigations there are concerns, the school should refer the matter back to the LADO for action to be taken under this policy.

If the case raises serious concerns immediate action will be taken under this policy.
See note

Where action will be taken, the LADO will liaise with the police and CSFH to ensure appropriate referrals are made and that all relevant information is passed on. The LADO and responsible person should also consider:

- if any further information is needed to assist the investigation
- whether any immediate action needs to be taken to protect pupils or other children including the staff members own children
- whether parents should be notified of the allegations (although in some cases this will be unavoidable, for example if the child requires medical treatment)
- how the child and their parents will be supported during the process
- whether any regulatory body such as Ofsted needs to be informed of the allegation.

Consideration should also be given to whether the seriousness of the allegations warrants the member of staff being suspended or whether they should continue to have contact with the child involved or any other pupil. See section 7.2 for further guidance on this.

The member of staff should be informed of the allegation and given as much information as possible, unless there are good reasons for not doing so. In cases where a criminal or child protection investigation is possible, the LADO should seek the advice of the police and CSFH regarding what information can be shared.

The school and the LADO should both make a written note of discussions and decisions should be agreed and the reasons for taking any particular course of action noted. ***This is particularly important in cases where no further action will be taken.***

6.3 Allegation against staff and volunteers (ASV) meeting

If the LADO believes that the pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm, an ASV meeting will be convened to share information and agree on further action.

The meeting will be chaired by the LADO and should be attended by the responsible person from the school, a representative from the police CAIT and any other relevant person or agency, for example a representative from the employment agency supplying a temporary staff member.

The ASV meeting will:

- decide whether or not the pupil has or is likely to suffer significant harm and whether to instigate a child protection and/or criminal investigation which may be jointly conducted between the police and CSFH;
- look at what disciplinary processes should be put in place by the school/college;
- consider the allegation in the light of any previous allegations or concerns and whether the staff member was acting reasonably in line with the school's behaviour policy (see section 7.1);
- make a decision about suspending the staff member where this is a proportionate response (see section 7.2);
- consider what action should be taken to ensure the safety of the pupil involved and all other pupils;
- agree the plan for investigating the allegation and providing support to the staff member and the child whilst the investigation is on-going;
- agree what information should be shared between agencies and how issues relating to media reporting or containing speculation will be dealt with
- identify key contacts within each agency
- review the school/college policies and procedures in the light of the incident and consider whether any changes need to be made.

The ASV meeting may consider suspending the member of staff but other alternative arrangements to ensure the member of staff has no contact with the child involved should be considered in the first instance before suspending the staff member.

It is a school decision as to whether or not to suspend the staff member and this should be based on a clear risk assessment and be in accordance with the school's own policies on staff conduct.

However, in cases where there are serious allegations and clear evidence of abuse, the police and CSFH may take alternative action if schools do not follow a recommendation to suspend a staff member.

6.4 Review ASV meeting

A review ASV meeting should be held within a reasonable timescale in order to review the actions agreed at the initial strategy meeting and agree what further action should be taken.
The review should consider the outcome of any investigations carried out by the police and CSFH and whether there is enough evidence to pursue the allegation further or take action under child protection procedures.

If no further action will be taken by CSFH or the police, the meeting should agree what further steps the school should take to ensure the safety of pupils, for example what further investigation should be carried out by the school or what action to take with regard to the member of staff involved.

6.5 Final outcome of investigations

Following the (review) ASV meeting once investigations are completed and final actions decided the possible outcomes are:

- The allegation is substantiated as there is sufficient evidence to pursue the allegation.

- The allegation is malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive.

- The allegation is false: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

- The allegation is unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to **either prove or disprove** the allegation.

- The allegation is unfounded: these will be cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

6.6 Police action and criminal proceedings

The police CAIT should keep the school and the LADO informed of all progress in investigations and proceedings, including any decision to charge or the outcome of trials. These should be discussed with the LADO to decide on any action needed by the school in relation to disciplinary proceedings or decisions on continued employment.

6.7 Disciplinary proceedings

Decisions to follow disciplinary proceedings lies with the school/college but must be considered in all cases where a criminal or child protection investigation has not been considered necessary or on completion of any criminal proceedings. The school representative should discuss any disciplinary proceedings with the LADO and look at what options are available to deal with the matter.

If a further investigation is required, CSFH and Camden Learning will be able to advise schools on how to undertake the investigation and may be able to provide a suitable council officer to carry out the task if necessary.

The school representative should discuss any disciplinary proceedings with the LADO taking into account any information raised by child protection enquiries, criminal proceedings or the outcome of any trial. This discussion should also look at whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

If the staff member concerned is an agency worker or volunteer where disciplinary proceedings are not possible, the school and the LADO should work jointly with the employer or individual to resolve the matter.

If formal disciplinary action will not be required, the head teacher should take any appropriate action within 3 working days. Full disciplinary hearings should be held within 15 working days if no further investigation is needed.

If a disciplinary investigation uncovers evidence of significant harm to a child, a referral must be made to CSFH and the disciplinary proceedings suspended until the outcome of any child protection investigation.

6.8 Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

There is a legal duty on employers to refer any individual to the DBS if it is thought that they pose a risk to children or have harmed a child. The DBS will

then make a decision as to whether or not to bar the person from working with children in a regulated activity such as teaching.

As cases move towards conclusion and all information is available, the school and the LADO should discuss whether a referral needs to be made to the DBS***. A referral must be made if the allegation is proved and the person has been removed from their post or has resigned prior to being removed.***

Where the member of staff is a teacher, the ASV meeting should consider whether a referral should be made to the TRA to consider a prohibition from teaching. However the final decision on whether or not to make the referral rests with the school.

6.9 Monitoring and oversight of cases

The LADO will review all cases involving allegations against staff members on a fortnightly basis where the case is complex or on a monthly basis for more straightforward cases. This is to ensure that cases are dealt with efficiently and within prescribed timescales.

The responsible police officer in CAIT will review all cases in criminal proceedings that involve allegations against staff members and will pass on information to the school and the LADO regarding progress of investigations and prosecutions. Cases must be reviewed within 4 weeks of any decision to refer the matter to the police and then at fortnightly intervals.

Once cases have been resolved, the responsible person should review the events in order to identify any issues and decide whether school procedures or practices need to be updated or improved so that similar incidents can be prevented or responses improved in the future.

7 Practice issues

7.1 Allegations involving physical contact

Head teachers and governors will be aware that for some teachers, for example music and PE teachers, physical contact with a pupil is unavoidable and necessary in order to teach the subject. Guidance on this is available in the schools safeguarding and child protection model policy available on the CSCP schools safeguarding webpage.

Further, teachers can use reasonable force in order to control or restrain a pupil in specific circumstances. Schools should refer to Camden's guidance on restrictive restraint and reasonable force available on the CSCP schools safeguarding webpage.

These factors must be taken into account at all stages of the process, from initial consideration and strategy discussion. In particular, it must be demonstrated that any contact that has taken place is within the boundaries set out by local safe working practices and agreed procedures for the use of physical restraint.

It is important that staff are provided with and follow school guidance on acceptable behaviour and safe working practice in order to protect them from misplaced or malicious allegations.

7.2 Suspension

Suspension should not be an automatic outcome of any allegation but used only where there is no alternative following a risk assessment and having considered other alternative ways of reducing harm.

Schools/colleges should consider the effect of suspension on the member of staff and be mindful that suspension will normally only be justified where there is a risk of significant harm to pupils, a police investigation is likely to be carried out or the allegation is so serious it would normally warrant immediate dismissal if proved true.

Even in these cases, schools/colleges should first consider other ways of managing risk, such as arranging for the member of staff to have limited contact with pupils or ensuring they are constantly supervised.

Decisions on suspension should be based on a robust risk assessment and discussed with the LADO in the first instance. CSFH and the police will be able to advise schools on possible courses of action to safeguard pupils and may make a recommendation on suspension but the final decision will rest with the school/college. All decisions on suspension should continue to be reviewed as new information becomes available during investigation.

If suspension is to be used, the member of staff must be given written confirmation of the decision within 1 working day detailing the reasons and giving the name of the person at the school whom the member of staff can contact for support and information.

Any decision to suspend a member of staff should be recorded by the school/college and the LADO with reasons given and details of what alternative ways of managing risk other than suspension were considered and why they were rejected.

Where an interim prohibition order is in place for teaching staff following an allegation and the TRA are carrying out an investigation, the member of staff must not carry out any teaching duties until the matter is resolved. Schools/colleges should put in place policies in relation to pay during this period.

7.3 Resignations

Full investigations into allegations must proceed even if the person involved resigns as it is important that the matter is properly dealt with and that a resolution or conclusion is reached and appropriate action taken.
It is important to decide whether allegations are substantiated and what further action may have to be taken to safeguard children through referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulations Agency even if the staff member involved has left the school/college.

Schools/colleges should not use compromise or settlement agreements that allow a person to resign with a reference in return for not initiating disciplinary proceedings in cases where allegations of abuse of children are involved. As stated above, it is crucial that all allegations are fully investigated and failure to refer to the DBS or TRA when the criteria for doing so are met would be a criminal offence on the part of the school/college.

7.4 Unfounded or malicious allegations

If an allegation is proved to be unfounded or malicious, the LADO may decide to refer the child to CSFH for assessment as a child in need. Malicious allegations made by pupils may also be dealt with under the school's behaviour policies if this is more appropriate.

7.5 Return to work

Where a member of staff returns to work following suspension, schools/colleges should consider how best to facilitate this and take advice

from the LADO. The staff member should be offered support to help them with their return, as should parents and children. Consideration should be given to how to manage contact between the pupil and staff member in the light of the allegation.

7.6 Records and references

All allegations made must be recorded on the individual's personnel file, giving details of the nature of the allegation, actions taken and decisions reached. This is the case even where the allegation is unfounded. However, the exception to this is any allegation that is proved to be malicious; all references to these allegations should be removed from the personnel record unless the staff member consents to the record remaining.

Records should contain the following:

- a summary of the allegation
- details of how the allegation was investigated and resolved
- a note of any actions taken and decisions and outcomes reached
- a statement as to whether the information will be included in any reference.

It is important that records show clearly how a resolution to the allegation was reached and that this information is available when references are being written or information sought from future employers. Information should be kept on the personnel file until the person reaches retirement age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

Allegations that have been found to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious should not be included in a reference, including any repeated concerns that have been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

Allegations that have been substantiated should be included in references and should contain only the facts of the case.

Schools can get further advice from the Information Commissioner guidance available at: https://ico.org.uk/

7.7 Confidentiality and information sharing

Information should be shared between all agencies at the initial discussion and ASV meetings in order to gather as much information as possible to make an informed judgement on what action to take.

At the initial discussion, the school representative and the LADO may wish to discuss what information will be shared with whom, and what action will be taken to manage any possible breaches of confidentiality or press interest.

Consent must be obtained to share information with third parties, for example police statements or child protection investigations being passed on to schools/colleges for the purposes of disciplinary proceedings.

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained whilst any investigation is on-going and the Police will not make public any details of criminal investigations unless and until the person involved is charged.

All those involved, including parents and pupils, must be made aware of the statutory reporting restrictions in place to ensure the identity of the staff member and the victim is not made public. This includes posting information about the allegation on social networking sites.

8 Support for those involved

8.1 Staff

As employers, schools must also ensure that all staff against whom an allegation has been made are treated fairly, that they are kept informed of the progress of any investigation or disciplinary process and that they receive support.

Schools have a duty to support staff members who are being investigated following an allegation in order to minimise stress. Staff should be informed as soon as possible about any allegation made and given all information available, subject to advice from the police and CSFH.

Staff should have a named person available to provide support and information, particularly if they have been suspended, and should be given advice on obtaining legal representation and counselling if needed. They should also be told about the process of any investigation and kept informed of the outcomes and progress of these.

A copy of the CSCP information leaflet "Allegations against staff – what happens next?" should be provided to the member of staff. The leaflet is available at https://cscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Allegations-against-staff- -happens-next.pdf

Schools should not insist that suspended staff members of staff have no contact with other staff unless there is good reason to believe such contact may interfere with investigations. This is a matter that schools may wish to discuss with the LADO and the Police CAIT.

8.2 Children and parents

The parents of the child should be notified of allegations and given all information available as soon as possible subject to advice from the police and CSFH if there will be an on-going investigation or further action. They should also be kept informed of progress and outcomes of investigations.

Consideration should be given to the impact of the allegation on the child and support put in place. If the child has suffered significant harm or is in need, a referral will be made to CSFH who will assess the child and provide appropriate services and support.

Parents should be informed of any referral to CSFH and their consent sought and should be reminded of the need to maintain confidentiality about the allegation while the matter is under investigation.

8.3 Supply teachers and other agency staff

Schools should be aware that supply teachers and others who are not directly employed by the school will still be subject to these procedures and any allegations made against these staff must be investigated in the same way, even if the school decides to end the staff member's contract of employment.

The school should take the lead in referring the matter and investigating the allegation in partnership with the LADO under these procedures, but employment agencies and others are expected to co-operate and should be invited to the strategy discussion to ensure their role is clarified.

Schools should ensure that supply teachers and others are aware of their right to support from a trade union or colleague during the investigation process.

Sometimes the individual working for an organisation may be working independently and self-employed and may not have an employer with whom matters can be taken up. In these cases, the LADO and the organisation will consider how to proceed and will look to involving any relevant professional

or trade associations or organisations to ensure that appropriate action can be taken to secure children's safety in the future.