



The Cowplain School

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Procedures for Dealing with Allegations Against Staff

Adopted: Spring 2017

Review date: Spring 2021

Section 1

The school has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow the guidance in chapter 5 of *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* and the DfE guidance *Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff* (DFE-00061-2011) and should be used where a member of staff or 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; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Section 2

2.1 Allegations against Staff: Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Designated Person or any other member of staff or a volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Where appropriate, the Headteacher will consult with the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person and all allegations will be discussed with the **Referral & Assessment Team (R&A)** or the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** (Barbara Piddington 01962 876265 Mob: 07903649503) before further action is taken. The accused person will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible after the R&A Team or the LADO has been consulted. Appropriate support will be provided and a representative will be appointed to keep the accused person informed of the progress of the case as appropriate.

2.2 Allegations against the Headteacher or Chair of Governors: Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Headteacher, the person receiving the

allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, or in her absence the Vice Chair, without first notifying the Headteacher. Similarly, if an allegation is made against the Chair of Governors, the allegation should be reported to the Headteacher. Again, any such allegations will be discussed with the R&A Team or the LADO before further action is taken.

2.3 Suspension: Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. The LADO will be consulted as to the appropriate action to take and full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the child or young persons concerned; and
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

2.4 Timescales: Where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unfounded or malicious, the case should be resolved within one week. It is expected that most cases of allegations of abuse against staff will be resolved within one month, with exceptional cases being completed within twelve months.

2.5 Unfounded or malicious allegations: Where an allegation by a student is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Headteacher will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the school's behaviour and discipline policy.

Whether or not the person making the allegation is a child / young person or a parent (or other member of the public), the school reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

2.6 Record keeping: Details of an allegation will be recorded on the employee's file and retained at least until the employee reaches the normal retirement age or for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation, if this is longer, unless the allegation was found to have been malicious, in which case it will be removed from the employee's records.

2.7 Criminal proceedings: The school will consult with the LADO following the conclusion of a criminal investigation or prosecution as to whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and if so, how to proceed.

2.8 Ceasing to use staff: If the school ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children, a compromise agreement will not be used and there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the school, with a report being presented to the Governors without delay.

2.9 Resignation: If a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the school. Resignation will not prevent a prompt and detailed report being made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority in appropriate circumstances.

2.10 Staff Guidance: Detailed guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student. This guidance (Working together to Safeguard Children) is issued to staff on arrival and at the start of each academic year, and can be found on the school network.

2.11 Allegations against a child or young person: A child or young person against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school during the investigation and the school's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply. The school will take advice from the LADO on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the school will ensure that, subject to the advice of the LADO and the police, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the student is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

2.12 Suspected harm from outside the School: A member of staff who suspects that a child or young person is suffering harm from outside the school should seek information from the child or young person with tact and sympathy using "open" and not leading questions. A sufficient record (using the disclosure framework) should be made of the conversation and if the member of staff continues to be concerned he or she should refer the matter to the Designated Person.

2.13 Informing parents: Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the Designated Person will need to consult the R&A Team, the LADO, the police, and / or the Headteacher before discussing details with parents.

Date Reviewed and	Spring 2017	Reviewed by:	NBT	Next Review:	Spring 2021
Summary of changes made:	New format				