



Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers including low-level concerns

1. Policy Statement

At Owl Tutors, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and young people we work with. This policy and procedure outline the steps to be taken when allegations are made against our staff or volunteers. Our approach is in compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and is designed to handle allegations sensitively, impartially, and in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

2. Definitions

2.1 Allegation: Any claim, accusation, or complaint made against a staff member or volunteer regarding their conduct, behavior, or actions that may pose a significant risk to the safety or well-being of a child or young person.

2.2 Low-level concern: The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 To provide clear guidance to all Owl Tutors staff on how to manage allegations made against staff members or volunteers.

3.2 To ensure that all allegations are taken seriously, promptly investigated, and appropriately addressed to safeguard the interests of children and young people.

3.3 To protect the rights and confidentiality of all parties involved in the allegation process.

4. Procedures

4.1 Reporting Allegations

4.1.1 Any person who receives an allegation against a staff member or volunteer must report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or their deputy.

4.1.2 The DSL will maintain accurate records of all allegations received, including the date, time, nature of the allegation, and the identity of the person making the allegation.

4.1.3 Staff members should not attempt to investigate or handle the allegation independently but should follow the reporting procedure outlined in this policy.

4.2 Initial Assessment

4.2.1 Upon receiving an allegation, the DSL will conduct an initial assessment to determine the nature and seriousness of the allegation.

4.2.2 If the allegation poses an immediate risk to a child or young person's safety, appropriate action will be taken immediately to ensure their protection.

4.2.3 The DSL may seek advice from the LADO (local area designated officer) or other relevant agencies to determine the appropriate course of action.

4.2.4 If the concern is found to be a 'low-level' concern, a record must be kept of this even if no disciplinary action is taken.

4.3 Investigating low-level concerns

4.3.1 In cases where a low-level concern requires further investigation, the DSL will initiate an investigation promptly, ensuring that it is conducted fairly, impartially, and in line with relevant legislation and guidance.

4.3.2 The investigation may involve gathering evidence, conducting interviews with relevant parties, and seeking external support or expertise, as necessary.

4.3.3 Throughout the investigation process, the rights and confidentiality of all parties involved will be respected and maintained.

4.3.4 The DSL will keep accurate and detailed records of the investigation, including actions taken, evidence collected, and decisions made. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified.

4.4 Suspension and Disciplinary Action

4.4.1 If an allegation is deemed serious and substantiated by the LADO, the DSL, in consultation with senior management and legal advice, may suspend the staff member or volunteer involved, pending further investigation and disciplinary proceedings.

4.4.2 The suspension will be conducted in accordance with employment law, and the staff member or volunteer will be informed of the reasons for their suspension.

4.4.3 The DSL will follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure in accordance with Owl Tutors' policies and contractual arrangements.

4.4.4 If the allegation is proven to be malicious, false or unsubstantiated, appropriate support will be provided to the staff member or volunteer, and steps will be taken to restore their reputation.

4.5 Support for the Child or Young Person

4.5.1 Throughout the investigation and disciplinary process, the welfare and well-being of the child or young person involved will be prioritized.

4.5.2 The DSL will ensure that appropriate support is provided to the child

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