

All Saints CE Junior Academy



A member of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust



Procedure for managing allegations of abuse against staff

Reviewed by M Schembri	October 2025
DCAT Policy	October 2025
Next review date	October 2026

This policy is taken directly from the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which can be found [here](#).

Raising concerns about a member of staff or adult in the school

These procedures apply to employed staff, supply teachers, volunteers, contractors, visitors and adults working in organisations that provide activities for children which use the school premises.

The [DCAT HR Key Policies](#) sets out the policy and procedures, that align to those set out in KCSIE part 4, for managing cases of allegations against employees. This includes both:

- Allegations that may meet the harm threshold.
- Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low-level concerns'.

Please see DCAT Managing Allegations Safeguarding Procedure Appendix A

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This applies where it is alleged that anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers, contractors, supply teachers and individuals involved with organisations that work with children on the school's premises) posing a risk of harm to children, this should be referred to the individual school's Headteacher. Where there are concerns/allegations about the Headteacher, this should be referred to the Chair of Local Governing Body.

Employees can also contact the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285 or DCAT centre team or DCAT Trustees all of whom are named on the DCAT website. See also contact details in on page 2/3.

Concerns about agency and contracted staff

All Saints CE Junior Academy may have to consider an allegation against someone not directly employed by the school and where the usual disciplinary procedures don't fully apply, such as supply staff provided by an agency. The school may not decide to stop using the supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome.

The Headteacher, in collaboration with the Trust Heads of HR, should discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while they carry out their investigation.

Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries, but the school will usually take the lead as the agency won't be able to collect the necessary information. The agency will be informed of the process for managing allegations, including inviting the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about the school's policies.

Allegations are reported by the DSL to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Sam Efde	Website: Children's LADO referral form East Sussex County Council Contact numbers: 07825 782793 and 01323 466606
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Low level concerns

This applies to concerns which **do not** meet the harm threshold, referred to as 'low-level' concerns. DCAT and All Saints CE Junior Academy actively promotes an open and transparent culture in which **all** concerns about all adults (members of staff, governors, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) working in or on behalf of the school are dealt with promptly and appropriately. This should enable early identification of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour, minimise the risk of abuse, and ensure that adults working at All Saints CE Junior Academy are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the DCAT ethos and values set out at the start of this policy.

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 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.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating pupils.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

Staff should remember that sharing a concern may mean that early identification of any issues can lead to support for this colleague and the prevention of more serious incidents.

DCAT and All Saints CE Junior Academy will ensure that:

- staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour, in themselves and others
- staff feel able to share any low-level safeguarding concerns.
- any unprofessional behaviour is addressed at an early stage
- support is provided to the individual an early stage
- any concerns will be handled sensitively and proportionately.
- records will be regularly reviewed to identify any concerning patterns of behaviour. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified the DCAT Managing Allegations Safeguarding Procedure Appendix A will be followed and
- any identified weakness in the school's safeguarding systems will be addressed.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can and do happen. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, it is accepted that some adults do pose a serious risk to children's welfare and safety and that schools must act on every allegation made.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. The school will follow the procedures set out in the DCAT HR Handbook.

Non recent allegations

Where an adult makes an allegation that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police.

Non-recent allegations made by a child should be reported to the LADO in line with the Local Authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with Local Authority child social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened. The Trust Head of HR must also be informed if such an allegation is made.

Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service

If the outcome of an investigation is the evidence supports the allegation, the DCAT Head of Safeguarding will meet the legal requirement to make the necessary referral to the DBS. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. The referral will be made as soon as possible when an individual is removed from regulated activity. This could include when an individual is suspended, redeployed to work that is not regulated activity, dismissed or when they have resigned.

Duty to consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency

If the school, including an agency, dismisses or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, the DCAT Head of Safeguarding **will** consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections 141D and 141E of the [Education Act 2002](#). The Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if there is a case to answer, **must** then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person.

DCAT Protocol - Allegation against a member of staff, including low level concerns

This protocol covers allegations about any adult working in a school; this includes substantive and temporary members of staff, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

Points to consider:

Allegations about adults should be made to the Headteacher (or deputy in their absence).

The allegation may have occurred inside or outside school.

The guidance set out in KCSIE part 4 covers two levels of concerns and allegations:

1. **Concerns / allegations that may meet the harm threshold.** This covers adults that may have:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
2. **Concerns / allegations that do not meet the harm threshold** – referred to in KCSIE as 'low-level concerns'. KCSIE states:

'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:

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

Examples of such behaviour could include but are not limited to: being over friendly with children, having favourites, taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy, engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or humiliating children.

Paramount to the handling of the allegation report initially and each stage:

5. Looking after the welfare of the child
6. Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation

An allegation may be a non-recent one – the school should still contact the LADO and follow local procedures for the management of non-recent allegations.

Written records must be kept of all reports, communications, discussions and actions.

Protocol - Concerns / allegations that may meet the harm threshold:

7. Gather as much detail as possible, together with possible sources of evidence such as witnesses, CCTV footage, time and place of allegation(s). Also check if the adult the allegation has been made against did or could have come into contact with the child.
8. Consider the level of concern – advice of the LADO must be sought, and their advice recorded on the DCAT LLC/Allegation recording system on the landing page.
9. The allegation must also be reported to DCAT DSL, who will provide guidance and support to all parties.
10. **Assessing the issue and risk** – apply common sense, deal with issues quickly and fairly, provide effective protection for the child and support of the adult subject to the allegation.
11. Inform the member of staff concerned – arrangements may need to be made to cover their lessons or for a safe place for them to be while decisions are made. Careful consideration should be given to the timing of this and advice sought of the LADO.
12. **Making the decision of the school's response to the allegation** – usually taken after discussion with the LADO
13. **No further action required:**
Record made of the decision and the justification for it. Decision will need to be made on degree of record keeping and what should be put in writing to the individual involved.
14. **Actions required** – allegation requires further investigation:
 - whether to inform the police or children's services
 - possible convening of a strategy meeting – dependent on seriousness of the allegation and degree of harm to a child
 - appoint a case manager, if required to manage the case
 - arrange for investigations to take place – either undertaken by a senior member of staff (not the headteacher) or an independent person if the school lacks capacity – see guidance set out in KCSIE
 - consider suspension of the person subject to the allegation – see guidance set out in KCSIE
 - inform the Chair of Governors
 - if the allegation is against a supply or agency placed adult, the teaching supply or other agency must be informed. In the case of contractors, the employer should be informed. Discuss/agree if the person is to return to school the next day.
 - Make a record on the Allegation and Low Level Concern Record keeping of the alleged harm to the pupil(s) and the actions taken.
15. **Duty of care** - agree how the school will provide support to those involved:
 16. The pupil or pupils concerned/named
 17. The member of staff the allegation is made against
 18. Any other staff involved, such as witnesses or close colleagues
 19. Inform the parents of the pupil.

Confidentiality is paramount but details of a concern may be rumoured around school or wider afield. Consider how staff and/or pupils may need to be informed and if a press statement may be necessary.

If the report is found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious then consideration should be given to the support of the pupil making the allegation.

Ongoing response should follow the procedures set out in KCSIE and carried out in conjunction with advice/guidance from the LADO, children's social services and any other agencies involved, alongside the wishes and needs of the pupil(s) involved.

Protocol - low level Concerns / allegations that do not meet the harm threshold:

20. The DCAT Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of staff behaviour and professionalism. It is important to deal with any unprofessional or inappropriate behaviour at an early stage. This may prevent more serious inappropriate behaviour in the future, and so safeguard pupils and protect staff.
21. A low-level concern may be raised as suspicion, complaint or disclosure. It may be raised many ways, such as in person, by email or in writing. Sources may also vary, for example from a member of staff, a volunteer, a member of the public, a parent, a pupil(s) or as part of the vetting checks. On no account may the person raising the concern be made to feel uncomfortable or penalised in any way.
22. Low-level concerns may be made to any adult in the school and should be passed to the DSL and/or Headteacher. The Headteacher and DSL may work together in handling the concern but ultimately the Headteacher is the decision maker.
23. The Headteacher (or nominated person, such as the DSL) should speak with:
24. The person who raised the concern (unless this was made anonymously)
25. The individual involved
26. Any witnesses or person involved (staff and pupils.)
27. All low-level concerns must be recorded in writing on the online Low-Level Concerns recording system on the DCAT Landing Page. This should include details of the concern, date concern was raised, who by, who to and the names of individual(s) concerned. If the individual wishes to remain anonymous, those should be respected – if reasonably possible.
28. In line with DCAT policy, records of all low-level concerns must be kept so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern is identified, the Headteacher in consultation with DCAT, should decide on the course of action. This could be either disciplinary procedures, LADO referral and/or tailored training for cultural change at individual or school level.
29. Consider if support for any of the individuals concerned, including the person the concern was raised about is needed. If this is needed, then agree the support required and how it will be provided and who by.
30. If the low-level concern is relating to a supply teacher of contractor, then their employer should be informed – it is for them to consider the issue and look for potential patterns of inappropriate conduct. A record of the referral must be kept.

Post case review - both levels of concerns and allegations

31. A reflection on the issue and/or the how the issue was dealt with should be undertaken so lessons can be learned and adjustments made to school policies and procedures
32. Review of staff training:
33. individual or whole school level in dealing with allegations against staff members reports/disclosures
34. safeguarding team (as a whole or individually) knowledge and confidence if dealing with the report/disclosure