

Child Protection Policy / Procedure in case of Concerns or Allegations

Allegations against members of staff

1 Principles

- 1.1 This school takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people entrusted to its care.
- 1.2 In following this principle the school is committed to proper investigation into any allegation that a member of the school staff has been involved in any form of child abuse - including bullying, corporal punishment or sexual abuse.
- 1.3 Because of the situation of the school it is not possible to have easy access to social services or other welfare agencies. This does not diminish our commitment to dealing with any concerns.

2 Notification

- 2.1 When an allegation is made the Head of Department must be informed immediately.
- 2.2 If the parents are not present when the allegation is made the Head of Department will inform them in person giving them an outline of what has been said and what steps will be taken.
- 2.3 The Head of Department will inform the Director that an allegation has been made. The Director will prepare a letter giving the member of staff temporary leave on full pay with immediate effect. The letter will make it clear that the leave is without prejudice and is intended to be in the best interests of all parties while the allegation is investigated.
- 2.4 The letter will be handed to the member of staff by the Head of Department. In the event of a delay in producing the letter the Head of Department will give the teacher oral notice of temporary leave.

3 Initial investigation

- 3.1 As soon as possible after the allegation has been made, the Head of Department will speak informally to the member of staff, the child and the child's parents in an attempt to clarify the issues.
- 3.2 If the Head of Department feels that there is no case to answer he or she will inform the parents and the member of staff. He or she will report orally to the Director with a recommendation that the temporary leave be ended.
- 3.3 If the Head of Department feels that there is a case to answer or if the parents are not satisfied then a formal investigation will be launched.
- 3.4 If the member of staff admits to the truth of the allegation there is no need for further formal investigation. The Head of Department will report to the Director with a recommendation that disciplinary action be taken. In cases of child abuse the normal action will be termination of contract. (See Section 6, below)

4 Formal investigation

- 4.1 The formal investigation is conducted by a panel consisting of the Head of Department, deputy Head of Department and a representative of the Director.

- 4.2 The panel will interview the child, the parents, the member of staff and anyone else considered appropriate by the panel, the parents or the member of staff. The school will take best advice about conducting such interviews.
- 4.3 The panel will then report, with its recommendations, to the Director.
- 4.4 If the decision is that the alleged incident did not take place or did not constitute child abuse the Director will inform the parents and the member of staff.
- 4.5 Then, subject to any other disciplinary action, the Director will formally end the temporary leave.
- 4.6 If the decision is that there is still a case to answer then the formal investigation will continue with a second panel.

5 The Second Panel

- 5.1 The second panel will consist of two senior managers of the school and someone with relevant professional training and experience – preferably a child psychologist or medical doctor.
- 5.2 The second panel will consider the report from the first panel and conduct any further interviews it considers necessary.
- 5.3 The professional will interview the child.
- 5.4 The second panel will report to the Director with recommendations.
- 5.5 The Director will make a decision based on all the evidence and recommendations received.

6 The decision

- 6.1 If the decision is that the alleged incident did not take place or did not constitute child abuse the Director will inform the parents and the member of staff.
- 6.2 Then, subject to any other disciplinary action, the Director will formally end the temporary leave.
- 6.3 If the decision is that the allegation is justified and that the action can be regarded as child abuse then the Director will write to the member of staff to terminate his or her contract. The letter will set out the terms of this termination.
- 6.4 The letter of termination will normally be handed to the member of staff by the Head of Department, who will make it clear that he or she is unable to discuss the matter further.
- 6.5 If the decision is that the allegation is justified but that the action cannot be regarded as child abuse other disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's normal procedures.
- 6.6 The Director will inform the parents of the action taken.

7 Appeal

- 7.1 In the event of termination the member of staff has the right of appeal to the School Owner whose decision is final.

8 Confidentiality

- 8.1 It is important that all parties to the investigation, including the parents, recognise that they have a duty of confidentiality both during and after the investigation and the final decision. This is in the best interests of the child.
- 8.2 For the Head of Department and deputy Head of Department this is likely to cause a certain amount of difficulty particularly in relation to other parents and members of staff. Nevertheless it is essential that nothing is said about the investigation or about the reasons for any termination of contract.

9 Notes

- 9.1 The parents have a right to be present when their child is interviewed. It should be made clear to them, however, that if they opt for this right they are there to support their child and to observe proceedings rather than to take an active part.
- 9.2 The member of staff can choose to be accompanied at any interview by a nominated 'friend'. This person may not take part in the proceedings and cannot act as a representative.
- 9.3 Any reference written on a member of staff whose contract has been terminated following an allegation of child abuse will refer to that fact.
- 9.4 In the event of a teacher's contract being terminated following an allegation of child abuse the Head of Department, on behalf of the school, will write to the teacher's home country's education authority informing them of that fact.
- 9.5 The school will take any decision regarding reporting alleged incidents to the host country police
- 9.6 If an allegation is made against the Head of Department or deputy Head of Department the same procedure will apply except that there will be an expatriate senior manager as a second person on the first investigating panel.

Allegations against parents, guardians or family members

10 Principles

- 10.1 This school takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people entrusted to its care.
- 10.2 In following this principle the school is committed to investigate any cases of child abuse that are suspected.
- 10.3 Because of the situation of the school it is not possible to have easy access to social services or other welfare agencies. This does not diminish our commitment to dealing with any concerns.

11 Notification

- 11.1 When there is a suspect case of child abuse the Head of Department must be informed immediately.

12 Investigation

- 12.1 As soon as possible after the case has been identified the child should be taken to the school nurse for a general medical check-up.

- 12.2 Photographic evidence and a transcript of the child's account of how the injury occurred should be gathered as soon as possible. All this information will be filed in the child's individual file.
- 12.3 If the Head of Department feels that there is no case to answer he or she will keep the information on file in case of future occurrences.
- 12.4 If the Head of Department feels that there is a case to answer the parents will be contacted and informed about the school's concerns without any accusation being made.
- 12.5 The Director should be informed about the suspect case.

13 Confidentiality

- 13.1 It is important that all parties to the investigation recognise that they have a duty of confidentiality. This is in the best interests of the child.
- 13.2 For the Head of Department and deputy Head of Department this is likely to cause a certain amount of difficulty particularly in relation to other parents and members of staff. Nevertheless it is essential that nothing is said in a public forum about the investigation.

14 Review

- 14.1 This procedure works in conjunction with the "School Safeguarding Children Policy"