

Managing Allegations Policy

The safety and wellbeing of students is paramount at Stride 360. To protect children and young people, it is essential to have a clear process for managing allegations made against staff, volunteers, or anyone working in or connected with the provision. This policy ensures that all allegations are handled in a fair, consistent, and timely manner, while also safeguarding the rights of the individual involved.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Protect students from harm by ensuring that allegations against staff are taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- Provide a clear and consistent framework for managing allegations.
- Safeguard staff and others by ensuring that any allegations are dealt with fairly, sensitively, and with due regard to privacy.
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance and employment laws.

Threshold

This policy applies when it is alleged that a staff member, volunteer, or other individual working with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way outside of work that could indicate they may not be suitable to work with children (for example, domestic abuse or other concerning behaviour).

This policy refers to allegations against all staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The DSL will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and coordinate investigations of allegations, ensuring that procedures are followed. Ensures that the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and procedures, including for managing allegations, and that these are reviewed regularly.
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** The LADO oversees and manages allegations against individuals who work with children. The LADO provides advice, ensures a fair process, and monitors the progress of cases.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** Must report any concerns or allegations immediately to the headteacher or DSL. Staff must cooperate fully with any investigation if they are the subject of an allegation.

Underlying Principles

The key principles guiding the handling of allegations include:

- **Child Protection:** The welfare of the child is the primary concern.
- **Fairness and Confidentiality:** Allegations will be treated fairly, ensuring confidentiality for both the child and the staff member involved.
- **Timeliness:** Allegations will be investigated promptly to avoid unnecessary delay.
- **Transparency:** Clear communication will be maintained with all parties involved throughout the process.

Responding to Allegations or Concerns

When an allegation is made:

1. **Immediate Reporting:** Any allegation or concern must be reported immediately to the DSL. If the DSL is the subject of the allegation, it should be reported to the Local Authority.
2. **Initial Action:** The DSL will ensure that the child is safeguarded and that the staff member does not have unsupervised access to children.
3. **Referral to LADO:** The DSL will contact the LADO within one working day of receiving the allegation. The LADO will advise on the next steps, which may include an investigation.
4. **Consideration of Suspension:** In some cases, suspension may be considered, but this should not be an automatic response. The need for suspension will be assessed based on the nature of the allegation and the risk posed.
5. **Investigation:** An investigation will be conducted, either internally by the school, in conjunction with the LADO, or through external agencies such as the police or children's services.

Record Keeping

- A clear and comprehensive record of all allegations, concerns, decisions, and actions taken will be maintained securely.
- Records will include details of how allegations were followed up, the outcomes, and any decisions made, including whether or not any actions were taken against the individual.
- These records will be kept on file for a minimum of 10 years or until the individual reaches normal retirement age, whichever is longer, in accordance with safeguarding requirements.

Outcomes of Allegation Investigations

Upon conclusion of the investigation, the following outcomes may apply:

- **Substantiated:** Sufficient evidence is found to support the allegation. Appropriate action will be taken, which may include disciplinary action, dismissal, or referral to relevant authorities such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- **Unsubstantiated:** There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. No further action may be taken, but steps may be taken to ensure ongoing safety and support.

- **Unfounded:** The allegation is found to be false or mistaken.
- **Malicious:** The allegation is found to have been deliberately invented or exaggerated. The provision will consider appropriate action against the person making the allegation if it is a student or member of staff.

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.**
- **Whistleblowing Policy.**
- **Staff Disciplinary Policy.**
- **Staff Behaviour Policy.**

This policy is adopted by Stride 360	Date: 25/10/24
To be reviewed by 25/10/26	Written by: Simone Lyons