



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY TRUST

St Mary's Academy Trust
Dealing with Allegation of Abuse
Against Staff, Supply Staff,
Volunteers and Contractors

Date agreed by HR Committee: 27th February 2023

Date to be reviewed: 27th February 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure sets out St Mary's Academy Trust's procedure for managing allegations of abuse made against any member of school staff, supply staff, volunteers, or contractors. It should be followed wherever an allegation of abuse is made, and it should be noted that a member of staff could be subject to an allegation even if they have not harmed a child or intended to harm a child. It is sufficient that the staff member's conduct could pose a risk to the child.
- 1.2 This procedure applies to ALL staff both in our schools and in the Business Centre. It also applies to volunteers and governors who, only for the purpose of this policy, will also come under the definition "staff".
- 1.3 Any investigation of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff must follow the objective, professional standards and routines described here.
- 1.4 This policy is produced in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.

2. The Law

- 2.1 The framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children is set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' (July 2018) which provides an overview of how allegations should be handled and Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 2.2 Other legislation:
 - The Children Act 1989
 - Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (local authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools and institutions in the further education sector)
 - Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010
 - The Children Act 2004
 - Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (other agencies)

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff is set out in the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022).
- 3.2 This procedure MUST be read alongside the statutory guidance KCSIE September 2022 Part one for all staff and the full document for Headteachers, in addition to SMAT's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children under 18 years of age (either paid /unpaid/self-employed/contracted) 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
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or to a particular child

An allegation against a member of staff may arise from a number of sources e.g.

- A report from a child victim
- A concern raised by another child/adult in the school/organisation/agency
- A concern raised by a parent or carer

It is essential that any Safeguarding issue, concern, or allegation made against staff, volunteers or other professionals in a school is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time support the person who is the subject of the concern or allegation.

An overview of how allegations must be handled is relevant for the purposes of Section 175/157 of the Education Act 2002.

4. Initial Consideration

- 4.1 In the first instance whenever an allegation is made against a member of staff, or, another professional or volunteer that meets any of the above criteria, the Headteacher must be informed immediately. It is the Headteacher's responsibility to immediately consult the LADO and CEO.
- 4.2 The Headteacher and CEO will discuss the matter with the LADO and provide any further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The Headteacher should not investigate the allegation at this stage. The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.
- 4.3 If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the LADO will immediately refer to Children's Social Care and ask for a strategy discussion in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children, to be convened straight away. In those circumstances the strategy discussion should include the LADO, the Headteacher and the CEO.
- 4.4 If there is no cause to suspect that "significant harm" is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the LADO should immediately inform the Police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a Police investigation is needed. That discussion will also involve the school and, or Trust and any other agencies involved with the child.

5. Actions Following Initial Consideration

- 5.1 Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the Headteacher/CEO to deal with. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Headteacher/CEO will liaise with HR to produce an appropriate action within three working days.
- 5.2 Where further investigation is required the CEO will determine who will carry out the investigation and who from HR will support the Investigating Officer.
- 5.3 Any investigation will be conducted in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. The Investigating Officer, supported by HR will thoroughly investigate the case and will produce a report of the findings within 10 working days and discuss this with the CEO.
- 5.4 On receipt of the report of the investigation, the CEO will consult the LADO and decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed. This decision will be made within 2 working days and, if a hearing is needed, it should be held within a further 10 working days.
- 5.5 In any case in which Children's Social Care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children need protection, the Headteacher/CEO should take account of any relevant information obtained during those enquiries when considering disciplinary action.
- 5.6 The LADO should continue to liaise with the Trust to monitor progress of the case and provide advice or support when required or requested.

6. Cases Where a Crime may have been Committed

- 6.1 If there is no cause to suspect that significant harm is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the LADO should immediately inform the Police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion should also involve the school and Trust.
- 6.2 Where the involvement of Children's Social Work Services is not required as the child is not assessed to be at risk of Significant Harm, but a Police investigation continues, the LADO should agree with the Police, the Trust, and any other agency involved with the child the nature of the allegation and how this must be addressed.
- 6.3 This Joint Evaluation Discussion must take place within one working day of the referral and must consider how to progress enquiries e.g., a criminal process parallel with a disciplinary process or whether disciplinary action needs to be suspended until Police enquiries/prosecution are completed.
- 6.4 These investigations must be reviewed by the Police no later than 4 weeks after the Joint Evaluation Discussion and thereafter at fortnightly or monthly intervals.

- 6.5 If the Police and/or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a Court, the Police should pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the Trust without delay. In those circumstances, the Headteacher/CEO should deal with the case in consultation with the Designated Officer.
- 6.6 If the person is convicted of an offence, the Police should also inform the employer straight away so that appropriate action can be taken.

7. Allegations Which are Likely to Necessitate an Immediate Referral for Child Protection

- 7.1 The following situations will require immediate referral to child protection:
- Where the child has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant or serious harm
 - Where the child alleges that a criminal offence has been committed
 - Any allegation of a sexual nature
- 7.2 The Headteacher/CEO should be aware that some other complaints may also be regarded as child protection issues and therefore each complaint should be carefully considered in consultation with the DO before taking any action.
- 7.3 Where allegations of the above are referred to Children's Services, subsequent action will be in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

8. Suspension

- 8.1 The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations. In some cases that will require the Trust to consider suspending the person until the case is resolved. Suspension must not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. If the Trust is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the employee's family, those concerns should be reported to the LADO or police, but suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.
- 8.2 Suspension should only be considered in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school is or are at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person should not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought being given to the particular circumstances of the case.

- 8.3 The CEO must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at the school until the allegation is resolved, and should seek advice from HR. The CEO should also consider whether the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. For example, redeployment so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child concerned or providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children. This allows time for an informed decision regarding the suspension and possibly reducing the initial impact of the allegation. This will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The CEO should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, or maliciously intended.
- 8.4 Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be sent by HR within one working day, giving the reasons for the suspension.
- 8.5 Local authority children's social care services or the police cannot require the Trust to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although the Trust should give appropriate weight to their advice. The power to suspend is vested in the CEO following discussions with HR. However, where a strategy discussion or initial evaluation concludes that there should be enquiries by the local authority social care services and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should canvass police and the local authority children's social care services for views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children to inform the Trust consideration of suspension.
- 8.6 A risk assessment should be carried out for each individual case to determine whether the member of staff should be suspended. The assessment should consider the context of the allegation, background information in relation to the member of staff, and any outcome following the strategy meeting. It should also consider whether a temporary transfer or period of paid leave is appropriate as an alternative to suspension. The assessment must be recorded, and a copy provided to HR for the electronic personal file.

9. Strategy Meeting

9.1 A Strategy Meeting will be convened within one working day of the referral being made and chaired by the Child Protection and Review Unit. The LADO and all relevant personnel including, where appropriate, the Headteacher/CEO and HR, should attend this meeting to share information and participate in the planning of any enquiries. The strategy meeting will be conducted in accordance with LSCB procedures.

9.2 The Purpose:

- Consider the risk to the child and other children.
- Share all relevant information about the person who is the subject of the allegation and about the alleged victim.
- Determine the need for investigation and by whom.
- Plan the investigation/enquiries and set timescales for tasks to be undertaken.

- Consider whether any other children are affected by the allegations e.g. the persons own children, grandchildren or other children in the agency setting such as children placed with foster carers, childminders, a youth club.
- Ensure that the person who is the subject of the allegation is kept informed and supported.
- Decide how regular information and support will be provided to the child and family and by whom.
- Plan all interviews and agree who should undertake them so that there is no confusion between a criminal investigation (Section 47 Enquiry) and disciplinary processes.
- Consider the need to inform relevant parties.
- Jointly consider how to manage any media interest.
- Consider whether the circumstances require the person who is subject to the allegation to be suspended from contact with pupils, though this may change as the investigation progresses and should be reviewed regularly.
- If the allegation is against a governor, a temporary member of staff or a supply teacher, the appropriate course of action needs to be considered.

10. Attendance at the Strategy Meeting

10.1 Attendance will be determined by Trust procedures but will usually include representatives from Children's Services. The member of staff who is the subject of the allegation will not be invited to attend the meeting; however, the strategy meeting will agree when and how the member of staff will be informed. The confidential minutes of the strategy meeting will be circulated by the Chair of the meeting to relevant parties.

11. Communication Following the Strategy Meeting

11.1 The following should be informed of the outcome of the investigation:

- The child making the allegation with their parent/carer of the likely course of action. Also informing them that the matter is confidential and must not be discussed.
- The member of staff against whom the allegation has been made. This should include the likely course of action. A record should be kept on the individual's electronic personal file.
- The Headteacher/CEO should be informed of the likely course of action.

11.2 Subsequent Strategy Meetings should be held fortnightly, or at a maximum, monthly to review progress.

12. Monitoring Progress

12.1 The LADO should regularly monitor the progress of cases, either via review Strategy Meetings, or by liaising with the Police and/or Children's Social Work Services colleagues or the Trust, as appropriate. Reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals depending on the complexity of the case.

13. Referral to DFE

- 13.1 If on conclusion of the case the Trust ceases to use the person's services, or the person ceases to provide his or her services, the Trust should consult the LADO about whether a referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) is required. If a referral is appropriate the report should be made within one month.

14. Low Level Concerns

Sharing

- 14.1 It is the responsibility of ALL STAFF to share low-level concerns initially with the Headteacher in a timely fashion according to the nature of each low-level concern.
- 14.2 The Headteacher should make the ultimate decision in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in some schools, the Headteacher may wish to consult with the CEO and Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead and take a more collaborative decision making approach.
- 14.3 Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
- 14.4 If the Headteacher is in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they should consult with their LADO

Recording

- 14.5 All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns and any witnesses should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.
- 14.6 The Headteacher should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously, and to the individual involved and any witnesses. This must be provided to HR to ensure it is filed appropriately in line with GDPR requirements.
- 14.7 Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic, or concerning behaviour can be identified. The information collected will help the Headteacher to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. This information needs to be recorded in writing along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken.

14.8 The CEO should give consideration to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

References

14.9 Low-level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance.

14.10 It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference.

15. Keeping Records

15.1 It is important that a clear and comprehensive record of any allegation is made even if police/disciplinary action is not taken or proven. This should include details of the allegation, how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken, including any sanctions imposed. The record must be provided to HR who will ensure that it is kept on the member of staff's electronic personal file for the duration of their employment with the Trust and for 6 years thereafter. The data will be destroyed at this time using a confidential shredding service.

15.2 The purpose of this record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future reference request if the individual leaves the Trust. It is also important that accurate and detailed information is held if the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) makes requests for further information. This information is given to the DBS due to the nature of the allegation. A comprehensive record of all allegations will provide clarification in cases where a future DBS disclosure reveals information from the police about an allegation which did not result in a criminal conviction.

16. Confidentiality

16.1 Confidentiality should be maintained when an allegation is made. However, there may be a need to share information with relevant agencies, for example at a strategy meeting on a need to know basis. Any enquiries from the press should be directed to the CEO including Freedom of Information requests. Subject access requests should be directed to the Data Protection Officer.

17. Action to be Taken in Respect of False Allegations

17.1 If an allegation made by a pupil is proved to be false and/or malicious, action should be taken to determine whether the person who made the allegation needs support or may have been abused by someone else. In the case of a pupil deliberately inventing or making a malicious allegation, the Headteacher should consider talking action in accordance with the Management of Behaviour Policy.

17.2 If it is clear to the CEO, Headteacher and the LADO that the allegation is demonstrably false or unfounded the member of staff should be informed orally and in writing of the

allegation, that it is without foundation and that no further action will be taken. Where appropriate, and if requested, support should be offered, which could include Occupational Health and counselling services.

- 17.3 If an allegation made by another member of staff is proved to be false and/or malicious, an investigation should take place in accordance with the Trust Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. The Police may also consider taking action against the individual making the allegation.

18. Learning Lessons

- 18.1 Throughout the process in handling allegations and at conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, the LADO should review the circumstances of the case with the CEO to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the Trust's procedures to help prevent similar events in the future. This should include issues arising from any decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether or not suspension was justified.
- 18.2 Lessons should also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The LADO and the CEO should consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.
- 18.3 For all other cases, where the allegation concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious, or unsubstantiated the CEO (and if they have been involved the LADO) should consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if improvements can be made.

19. Information Sharing

- 19.1 In a strategy meeting or initial evaluation of the case the agencies concerned must share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of an allegation, and about the alleged victim, staff attending the strategy meeting should be prepared with the appropriate information – e.g. full name, address, when DBS check was completed, start date, involvement in youth activities, children of their own and any other information that could be helpful. As per procedures the police should obtain consent from the individuals concerned to share the statements and evidence they obtain with the Trust for disciplinary purposes. This should be done as their investigation proceeds rather than after it has concluded. This will enable the police to share relevant information without delay at the conclusion of their investigation or any court case. Children's Social Care Services should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the pupil named in the allegation needs protection or services so that any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case can be passed to the Trust without delay.

20. Resignations and 'Settlement Agreements'

20.1 The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations concerning the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible the person should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it, but the process of recording the allegation(s) and any supporting evidence and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available should continue even if the person does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible. By the same token 'settlement agreements', must not be used in these cases.

21. Supporting Those Involved

Supporting the Employee

- 21.1 The Trust has a duty of care to their employees. They should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations and disciplinary process. Support for the individual is key to fulfilling this duty. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the local authority social care services or the police.
- 21.2 The individual should be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support. They could also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice.
- 21.3 The Trust should appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. That may include support from occupational health. Particular care needs to be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work related issues.
- 21.4 Social contact with colleagues and friends must not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Supporting the Parents

- 21.5 Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or local authority children's social care services need to be involved, the Headteacher should not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents. They should also be kept informed about the progress of the case and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.
- 21.6 The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, however the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome in confidence. In deciding what information to disclose, careful consideration should be given to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, the law of confidence and, where relevant, the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 21.7 In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, local authority social care services, or the police as appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.

22. Data Impact Assessment

- 22.1 At all stages of this procedure data obtained will be used only for the purpose for which it is intended and will be stored securely with restricted access to those involved in the process. Following the process data will be stored on the electronic personal file for the duration of the employee's employment with the Trust in accordance with the Trust's Retention Schedule. The data will be destroyed at this time using a confidential shredding service.

23. Equality and Diversity

- 23.1 This policy has been impact assessed by the HR Committee, if on reading this policy you feel there are any equality and diversity issues, please contact HR who will, if necessary, ensure the policy is reviewed.

Definitions – Appendix 1 Significant Harm

This is the threshold where compulsory Social Care intervention must take place. This was introduced by the Children Act 1989 and is defined by the Law Commission as: "Harm as a concept should be taken to include not only ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical) but also the impairment of physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behaviour development"

Abuse

Abuse can consist of physical, sexual, neglect and emotional. The definitions of abuse are below.

Types of abuse:

- 1. Physical abuse.** This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- 2. Sexual abuse.** This includes rape, sexual activities to which a child has not/could not consent or was pressurised into consenting. Sexual activities could include physical contact or non-physical contact. Non-physical contact could be encouraging children/young people to watch sexual activities or behave in a sexually inappropriate way.
- 3. Neglect.** This is the persistent failure to meet a child/young person's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child/young person's health or development. It includes a failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services or withholding the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, and heating.
- 4. Emotional abuse.** Emotional is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child/young person. This could have a severe and adverse effect on a child's/young person's development. This may involve conveying to the child/young person that they are worthless, or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It also includes humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child/young person, although it may occur alone.

Position of Trust

Those working with children and young people should understand that they are in positions of power and trust in relation to these groups. There is potential for exploitation and harm to children and young people and employees have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Employees should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

Appendix 2 – Information Guide for Employees Facing Allegations

The aim of this information guide is to explain the processes involved, and the support and guidance available, if it is alleged that you have:

- Harmed a pupil or put a child at risk of harm, or
- Committed a criminal act toward a pupil, or
- Behaved in a way that raises concern about your suitability to work with children or young people.

1. Initial Action

As soon as possible after the allegation is made, the Headteacher should consult the Designated Officer (“DO”) to discuss the next action, taking advice from Social Care and Police as needed. Police may advise that you are not told about the allegation immediately.

The Headteacher’s decision in consultation with the DO will be one, or a combination of the following:

- A) The child is alleged to have suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm - which requires immediate referral to Children’s Social Care Services.
- B) A criminal offence is alleged - which requires referral to Children’s Social Care Services and the Police.
- C) The allegation represents poor or inappropriate behaviour - which should be considered under the Trust’s disciplinary and/or capability procedures, including referral if appropriate to the Trust’s Occupational Health Advisor.
- D) The allegation is clearly and demonstrably without foundation and no further action will be taken.
- E) If the conclusion of the initial discussions are a) or b) a Strategy Discussion should take place involving Police, Social Care, the Headteacher, DO and HR. You will not be invited. The discussion will focus on the needs of the child(ren) who may be at risk. It will determine what action should be taken regarding further investigation, but it is not part of any disciplinary procedures.
- F) If the initial discussions conclude the situation is as outlined in c): an investigation will be initiated under the Trust’s disciplinary and/or capability procedures.
- G) If the conclusion is as outlined in d) you should be told orally and in writing that the allegation is without foundation, and that no further action will be taken.

2. Types of Possible Investigation

- Child protection enquiries by Social Care
- Criminal Investigation by Police
- Disciplinary/capability investigation

A disciplinary investigation will usually be held in abeyance until external agency investigations are complete unless prior agreement is reached. Whilst these investigations should be conducted as speedily as possible, they should also be balanced against the

need to be thorough and fair, in line with natural justice. Statements taken in external investigations could be used in subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

3. Suspension

Suspension is a neutral act and should not be automatic. Where possible, the decision to suspend should be informed by the Strategy Discussion, and should only occur when the known facts relating to the allegation indicate:

- A pupil may be at risk.
- The allegations are so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct is possible.
- Suspension is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded.

Alternatives to suspension will be considered, e.g., leave of absence, transfer of duties, additional supervision.

Where suspension is being considered, an interview with you will normally be arranged. You have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a colleague. You are advised to seek the assistance of your Union representative. If you are suspended, one of his/her roles will be to promote your interests and raise issues that may be of concern to you.

The interview is not an examination of the evidence, but an opportunity for you to make representations concerning possible suspension.

Other people, including other staff, should only be told about the allegation on a 'need to know basis'. Notification may be delayed if Police think this could prejudice an investigation.

Those who will be told of the allegation and likely course of action include you, the pupil concerned, his/her parent/carer, the person making the allegation, your manager, the Headteacher, HR, the DO, and the investigating agencies as above.

If you are suspended, those persons likely to be on a disciplinary panel, if convened, will be given limited information so any future disciplinary process is not prejudiced. If the matter becomes common knowledge, it may be necessary to issue a brief statement, agreed by the agencies concerned, to parents, pupils, and the public.

4. Support

You should expect to be:

- Advised to contact your Union representative.
- Given a support contact within the organisation who should keep you up to date with progress of your case.
- Given a team contact, if you are suspended, who will update you about normal organisation activities. (Whilst suspended an employee should not contact colleagues to discuss either the case or other work issues).
- Offered Staff Counselling Service and/or Occupational Health support.

This may be a stressful time, so in addition to contacting your Union representative, you are advised to see your GP if you think your health may be affected.