

Woodside Academy



Procedure for Dealing with Safeguarding Allegations Against Adults in School

Approved by SLT: January 2026

1. Introduction

This procedure outlines how safeguarding concerns or allegations against any adult working in the school—paid or voluntary, including governors—will be managed. This includes incidents occurring on or off school premises.

These procedures comply with statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, DfE 2023/2024), the Education Act 2002, the Children Act 1989/2004, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations, and relevant employment legislation.

Key principles:

- All concerns or allegations are treated seriously.
- Allegations are handled promptly, fairly, and consistently, balancing the need to safeguard children and support the adult concerned.
- Cooperation with statutory agencies, third-party employers, and professional bodies is mandatory.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- All employees (including the Principal/CFO)
- Supply and agency staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Governors

Third-party cooperation: All agencies or employers providing staff to the school must be informed of this procedure and cooperate fully.

Exclusions: Allegations concerning former staff or historical allegations will be referred to the Police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All adults in the school share responsibility for safeguarding. This includes identifying concerns, sharing information promptly, and cooperating with statutory procedures. Staff should follow the school's Code of Conduct.

Reporting concerns:

- Report immediately to the Principal, DSL, or Deputy DSL.
- Concerns about the Principal/governor: report to Chair of Governors (or Vice Chair/Safeguarding Governor if unavailable).

Whistleblowing:

If staff feel unable to report internally, concerns can be raised via the Whistleblowing Policy, or externally:

- LADO (Essex): 03330 139797 / LADO@essex.gov.uk
- NSPCC: 0800 028 0285 / help@nspcc.org.uk (Mon–Fri, 8:00–20:00)

4. Initial Assessment and Investigation

4.1 Initial Assessment

- The Principal (or Chair of Governors if allegation involves Principal) and DSL assess concerns promptly.
- Low-level concerns may be addressed with support, training, or management guidance.
- Allegations meeting the statutory harm threshold proceed to formal investigation.

Harm Test (statutory, per KCSIE & DBS):

- Behaviour that has harmed, or may harm, a child
- Possible criminal offence against/related to a child
- Behaviour indicating risk of harm to children
- Behaviour suggesting unsuitability to work with children

4.2 Initial Investigation

- Case manager appointed (Principal or Chair of Governors)
- May seek advice from HR or independent investigator if necessary
- For third-party/agency staff, the employer is notified and involved in meetings
- Initial investigation focuses on establishing factual basis, without:
 - Leading questions or in-depth interviews
 - Assumptions or offering alternative explanations
 - Promises of confidentiality (information shared on a “need to know” basis only)

Initial steps:

- Written, signed, and dated record of concern
- Obtain written statement from the reporter
- Fact-check key elements (e.g., presence of accused and child)
- Parents informed if child is injured or requires medical attention

5. Suspension and Alternative Arrangements

Statutory guidance (KCSIE) requires a risk-based approach:

- Suspension only if necessary to protect children or investigation integrity
- Alternatives include redeployment, reassignment, or restricted duties
- Written rationale and documentation required

Application:

- Employees: formal risk assessment and written notification
- Volunteers: assessed case-by-case, may be asked to refrain from attendance
- Third-party/agency staff: liaise with employer before any removal from school
- Governors: may be asked to absent themselves or be suspended if regulations allow

DBS Referral:

- Mandatory if individual removed (or would have been removed) from regulated activity due to safeguarding concerns

6. Allegations Meeting the Harm Threshold

- Case manager reports to LADO within one working day (statutory requirement)
- LADO coordinates with Police and Children's Social Care
- School follows statutory guidance on:
 - Sharing information with parents/accused
 - Attending strategy or planning meetings
- Internal procedures paused until statutory investigations conclude
- Criminal case outcomes inform subsequent disciplinary or internal action

7. Internal Procedures (Harm Test Not Met or Statutory Agencies Concluded)

- Employees → Disciplinary Procedure applies
- Volunteers → School-led investigation, outcome recorded in child protection records
- Third-party/agency staff → Employer responsible, school provides evidence and support
- Governors → Complaints against Governors Procedure

Low-level concerns (statutory requirement):

- All low-level concerns are recorded in writing, stored securely, and reviewed regularly
- Reviewed to identify patterns of behaviour that may indicate risk
- Appropriate actions taken (training, mentoring, supervision)

8. Conclusion and Outcome Definitions

Investigations continue regardless of resignation or cessation of engagement. Settlement agreements must **not** be used to prevent safeguarding action.

Outcome categories (statutory):

- Substantiated: Sufficient evidence proves allegation
- Malicious: Deliberate attempt to deceive
- False: Sufficient evidence disproves allegation
- Unsubstantiated: Insufficient evidence to prove/disprove
- Unfounded: No evidence or basis for allegation

Records:

- Malicious/false allegations removed from personnel files
- Other allegations retained per retention schedule (10 years, normal pension age, IICSA)
- Relevant safeguarding matters disclosed in references (statutory)

Return to work:

- Phased return or mentoring considered
- Manage contact with children involved

9. Support for Those Involved

- Allegations handled fairly, promptly, and confidentially
- Updates provided throughout the process
- Employees may have union representation; others may seek professional advice
- Welfare counselling or medical advice provided if appropriate
- Named contact for ongoing communication during suspension or alternate duties

10. Confidentiality and Legal Compliance

- Strict confidentiality maintained at all times
- Information shared as required with statutory agencies (LADO, Police, Social Care, DBS, TRA)
- Reporting restrictions under Education Act 2002 apply until charge or official publication
- Breach of confidentiality may be considered a disciplinary matter