St Antony's Catholic Primary School

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS POLICY

Learning Together in God's Love

Reviewed by staff: Autumn 2026
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Review date: Autumn 2028

St Antony's Dealing With Allegations Policy



Our Mission Statement:

At St. Antony's Catholic Primary School, we celebrate our special talents as children of God:

We try to be like Jesus and always keep him in our hearts.

We work together in our homes, school and parish sharing our gifts and learning together.

We understand that we are all different and we respect each other.

We look after our world so that we may share it together in peace.

Dealing with Allegations Against Staff

Introduction

St Antony's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing the highest level of care for both its pupils and its staff. It is extremely important that any allegations of abuse against a teacher, any other member of staff, or volunteer in our school is dealt with thoroughly and efficiently, maintaining the highest level of protection for the child whilst also giving support to the person who is the subject of the allegation. Our policy is in line with statutory guidance from the Department of Education.

This policy is designed to ensure that all staff, children and parents or carers are aware of the procedure for the investigation of allegations of abuse in order that all complaints are dealt with consistently, and as efficiently as possible.

Purpose

The procedure for dealing with allegations against staff depends on the situation and circumstances surrounding the allegation. This policy must be followed when dealing with allegations but may be adapted to suit the nature of each case. This policy will be used alongside the school's Complaints Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

This policy will be used in any case where it is suspected or alleged that a member of staff, a teacher or a volunteer at the school has:

- behaved in such a way that may have harmed a child or may have intended to harm a child
- acted outside of the law in relation to dealings with a child
- behaved in any way that suggests they may be unsuitable to work with children

Timescale

It is imperative that allegations against staff are dealt with as efficiently as possible to:

- minimise the risk to the child
- minimise the impact on the child's academic progress
- ensure a fair and thorough investigation for all parties

To enable this to happen, all staff, parents, and children should be aware of the procedures set out in this policy.

Procedure

Reporting an allegation

- All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by staff, should be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors who will then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). If the Chair of Governors is not available, the LADO team can be contacted on the following number (Tel: **07929182262 / 07929399336**). The LADO Team will advise about action to be taken and may initiate internal referrals within children's social care to address the needs of children likely to have been affected.

- Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they may wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember however, that the welfare of the child is paramount in all situations and must report their concerns immediately.

The LADO will be contacted by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors and a discussion will take place to decide which of the following applies based on the facts surrounding the allegation:

- no further actions are needed
- an internal investigation should take place
- a strategy meeting should take place
- there should be immediate involvement of the police or social care

The school will share available information with the LADO about the allegation, the child, and the person against whom the allegation has been made and consider whether a police investigation or a strategy meeting is needed. Representatives from other agencies may be invited into the discussion and could include representatives from health, social care, the GP and police.

If a member of staff feels that allegations have not been dealt with, in line with policy and procedure, staff can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Investigation

An investigation into the allegations made is normally carried out by children's social services or by the school. This will be agreed at the initial evaluation stage. Where the school is not conducting the investigation it will cooperate with investigative agencies conducting the procedure.

Internal investigations must be second to any safeguarding investigation and may need to be delayed until the external investigation is complete.

Supporting those involved

The person(s) who makes the allegation and their parents/carers:

Parents and carers will be notified if their child makes or is involved in an allegation against staff, if they do not already know. However, if the police or social services are to be involved, they will be contacted first and will advise the school as to what information may or may not be disclosed to the parents.

There will be a staff member designated to the role of liaising with the parents and child about the case and ensuring that they are fully informed as far as possible. Parents and carers will be made aware of any progress in the investigation, and where there is no criminal prosecution, the outcome will be explained to them. This may be a disciplinary outcome. During a disciplinary hearing the deliberations and information used for making a decision are usually confidential, but parents will be told the outcome.

Social services and the police may be involved, depending on the severity of the case, and will provide the school with advice on what type of additional support the child may need.

The school's Whistleblowing Policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations against their colleagues in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

The employee:

St Antony's Catholic Primary School has a duty of care to its employees and will do everything to minimise the stress of any allegations and the disciplinary process.

The person who is the subject of the investigation will be informed as soon as the allegation has been made, but only after the Headteacher has spoken to the Chair of Governors. The governor responsible for safeguarding will also be informed by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The employee will then be advised on what the next course of action will be. However, if the police or social services are to be involved, they will be contacted before the employee and will advise as to what information may be disclosed to the person under investigation.

The Chair of Governors or a named representative will keep the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and any other work-related issues. If that person has been suspended, they will keep them informed of any developments from school.

If the employee is a member of a union or any other professional association, they should be advised to contact that body at the outset of the investigation.

The employee may need additional support and the school should consider what might be appropriate to best accommodate this. If it is a criminal investigation and the police are involved, the school may provide this additional support.

Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to guard the privacy of all parties during and after an investigation into an allegation. It is in everyone's best interest to maintain this confidentiality to ensure a fair investigation with minimum impact for all parties.

A breach of confidentiality will be taken seriously and may warrant its own investigation. It is a criminal offence to publish information in any way or on any platform (text, WhatsApp, email etc.) that could lead to the identification of someone who is the subject of an allegation before they are charged or summonsed.

Suspensions

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will contact their Human Resources Consultant to discuss the issue. The school will not suspend a member of staff without serious consideration, and will not do it automatically once an allegation has been made. Depending on the nature of the case, it may be possible that alternative arrangements are made so that the individual can continue working, but is removed from the pupil making the allegation. Suspension risk assessments are carried out to ensure that risks to children, staff and the school are completed alongside either HR and/or the LADO.

A suspension may be decided upon if it is deemed that the child or other children may be at risk of harm, or if the nature of the case warrants a criminal investigation. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors holds the power to suspend an employee but will be advised by the police and or social care whether or not a suspension is necessary.

Where there is a chance of suspension, the employee will receive confirmation within one working day and will be informed of the reason for the suspension.

Resignations

If an employee hands in their resignation when the allegation is made against them or during an investigation, the investigation will still continue until an outcome has been reached, with or without the person's cooperation. They will be given full opportunity to answer the allegation. Compromise agreements will not be used in situations which are relevant to these procedures.

Record keeping

Detailed records of all allegations made, investigations and outcomes should be kept in the personal file of the person who has been under investigation. This person should be given a copy of the same information.

This will enable the school to:

- provide all the necessary information for future schools if they require a reference
- where DBS checks highlight incidents of allegations that did not result in any criminal charges, records will need to show exactly what happened, what points of action were taken during and after the investigation, and how the result of the investigation was reached
- prevent unnecessary re-investigation in the future if an allegation re-surfaces

The record will be kept, including for people who leave the organisation, at least until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that will be longer, from the date of the allegation. Allegations that are proven to be malicious and vicious will not be kept on employment records or used in employee references.

The records will be kept by the Chair of Governors.

Details of any allegation made by a pupil will be kept in the confidential section of their record.

Action on conclusion of the case

If the investigation result in the dismissal or resignation of a person, and that person has been charged with a criminal offence, a referral must be made immediately by the school to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The school will be advised on this by the police and/or social services.

If it is decided that the employee may return to school (after a suspension) then provisions will be put in place by the school to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. This may involve a phased return for a trial period or the use of another member of staff as a support system in the short term. If the child who made the allegation is still at the school, the school will consider what needs to be done to manage the contact between employee and child.

Action in the case of false allegations

Where an allegation is proven to be false, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors may refer to social services to determine whether the child is in need of special care, or to help to understand if they are being abused elsewhere.

If an allegation is found to be intentionally fictitious and malicious, the Headteacher will decide what the proper sanction will be for the pupil who made the false allegation. The school's behaviour policy sets out the disciplinary action that will be taken against pupils who are found to have made malicious accusations against school staff.

The Headteacher may wish to include the school governors when considering what action to take. The school has the power to suspend or expel pupils who make false claims, or refer the case to the police if the school thinks a criminal offence has been committed.

If the claim has been made by a person who is not a pupil, the school will hand the information over to the police who may take further action against that person.

After the case

No matter what the outcome is, of an allegation of abuse against staff, the school will review the case to see if there are any improvements that can be made in its practice or policy that may help to prevent similar cases in the future.

Links to other policies

Safeguarding, Early Help & Child Protection
Complaints Policy
Grievance Policy
Discipline Policy Whistle Blowing Policy
Confidentiality Policy
Positive Handling Policy
Behaviour Policy
Intimate Care Policy
Vulnerable Children Policy Inclusion / SEND Policies
Safer Recruitment Policy
Staff Handbook
Staff Code of Conduct
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2024)