



Tudor Grange Academies Trust

Abuse Allegations Procedures

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Sept 2020	2.2	
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02.09.22	3.0	Updated following release of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 • new para 2.5 (& subsequent renumbering); • new para 3.2-3.4; • new para 4.1 & 4.8, updated para 4.7; • updated para 7.1, new para 7.2-7.3.
13.08.24	3.1	Biennial review. Link updated to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Annex A updated. Update to paragraphs 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 7.2, 8.2, 10.2
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1. Definitions

“Board”	The Trust Board which is made up of the Trustees who together are responsible for the delivery of the core functions and hold the Chief Executive Officer to account.
“Chief Executive Officer”	The person with the overall responsibility for the day to day running of the Trust.
“Executive Director of Standards”	The person with the overall responsibility for the day to day running of a number of schools within the Trust. The Executive Directors of Standards are accountable to the Chief Executive Officer.
“Investigating Officer”	A member of the senior leadership team, who is unconnected with the incident and will lead the investigations of the allegation
“LADO”	Local Authority Designated Officers
“Manager”	Any person who provides directions to other more junior Trust Persons and whom the same Trust Persons report to.
“Principal”	The person responsible for the day to day running of a particular school within the Trust. The Principals are accountable to the Executive Director of Standards (either Primary or Secondary)
“the Trust”	Tudor Grange Academies Trust (company number: 07365748) whose registered office is at Tudor Grange Academy Solihull, Dingle Lane, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3PD.
“Trust Person”	All staff, trustees and governors engaged by or associated with the Trust, including volunteers, supply staff and contractors.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This document describes the procedure to be followed where an allegation is made that a Trust Person has physically, emotionally or sexually abused a pupil of the Trust. This will include allegations involving any type of abuse or neglect, including inappropriate relationships with pupils, grooming behaviour of any kind, possession of indecent photographs or images of children and other offences under the sexual offences act 2003.
- 2.2. The Trust recognises that any allegation of abuse is serious and this procedure should be invoked without delay whilst ensuring that it is dealt with in a sensitive, efficient manner since all parties involved may be very distressed. The allegation should not be discussed within the earshot of a pupil or with any member of staff not directly involved in dealing with the allegation or referred to in it.
- 2.3. No pupil making or thought to be about to make a disclosure of abuse by a Trust Person may be assured of absolute confidentiality since the law may require details of an allegation to be passed to others irrespective of the wishes of the complainant.

- 2.4. The Department for Education's statutory guidance for schools on Keeping Children Safe in Education (the "Statutory Guidance") should be referred to in any cases where a person is alleged to have:
- 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; or
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated he or she would pose a risk of harm if they worked regularly or closely with children.

The most recent draft of Statutory Guidance is available here: [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/626232/Keeping-children-safe-in-education-2019.pdf)

- 2.5. It will also be used where low-level concerns are raised. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:
- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct,
 - including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
 - does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
 - having favourites;
 - taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
 - engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
 - using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.
- 2.6. This policy relates to any current Trust Persons, regardless of the establishment where the alleged abuse took place. Any allegations against a Trust Person who is no longer engaged at the Trust will be referred to the Police. Historical allegations of abuse will also be referred to the police.

3. Communicating the Procedures

- 3.1. The Principal will designate a member of staff to act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in its school.
- 3.2. All members of the senior management team and the designated safeguarding lead with responsibility for child protection have a responsibility to ensure that all employees know about and understand paragraph 3 below.
- 3.3. In accordance with the DfE Statutory Guidance, all employees should also read at least Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education, which contains safeguarding information for all employees.
- 3.4. All members of the senior management team and the designated safeguarding lead have a responsibility to be familiar with the Statutory Guidance in its entirety.

4. Receiving an allegation

- 4.1. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Any concern that a Trust person may have behaved inappropriately or allegation or a low-level concern **must** be dealt with as follows:
- 4.2. Any allegation of abuse of a pupil by a Trust Person should be reported to the relevant Principal.
- 4.3. The person to whom the allegation was made should inform the Principal of the allegation without delay and should not discuss the allegation with the alleged abuser prior to reporting the matter to the Principal.
- 4.4. The Trust uses a software package called Confide to safely and securely record and manage staff allegations and concerns. Staff should report any concern using this reporting system. If a concern is not able to be logged on Confide due to technical or other reasons, it must be recorded in writing using the paper template which is available from the Principal's PA and in Appendix A of this policy.
- 4.5. The Principal will take steps, where necessary to secure the immediate safety of pupils and any urgent medical needs.
- 4.6. In the event of the allegation being made against the Principal, the person to whom the allegation was made should inform the Chair of Local Governing Body (LGB) directly of the allegation. The Chair of the Board will inform the Director of Standards, who will decide who should be appointed as Investigating Officer.
- 4.7. If it is not possible to report to the Principal or Chair of the LGB, a report should be made immediately to the Director of Standards or the Director of Inclusion. If none of these are available, it should be reported to the school DSL. The person to whom the allegation or disclosure was made must not:
 - Attempt to deal with the situation yourself
 - Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish or embellish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents
 - Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality
 - Take any action that might undermine any investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as disclosing confidential information, interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers.
- 4.8. In the event that an adult has found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards the adult should self-refer this to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. The governing body is committed to creating an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer.

5. Initial action

- 5.1. The Trust will follow the Local Safeguarding Partners' Procedure for Dealing with Allegations against a Trust Person.
- 5.2. The Principal will immediately notify the LADO and take advice considering the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.

- 5.3. The Principal may appoint an Investigating Officer. The Investigating Officer, in consultation with the Principal, and following advice from the LADO and/or our HR Advisors, should undertake any initial enquiries that may be necessary in order to decide whether or not to refer the matter to the relevant Children's Services Department or to the Police. No pupil may be physically examined. Trust Persons or pupils may be invited, but not required, to write an account of their direct experience in relation to the allegation.
- 5.4. The Investigating Officer may seek advice from appropriate agencies, including the relevant Children's Services Department, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, HR and the Police.
- 5.5. The Principal will inform the Chair of the relevant LGB of any allegation.
- 5.6. The Investigating Officer and Principal will have regard to the most recent Department for Education's Statutory Guidance.
- 5.7. If after the initial sharing of information and evaluation, a decision is taken that no further action will be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern, the decision and a justification for it should be recorded by both the LADO and the Principal.
- 5.8. The Principal should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting with the LADO and HR. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or Police or Children's Services need to be involved, the Principal should not do that until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information should be disclosed.

6. Referral

- 6.1. Where the LADO or Principal decides to refer the matter to the relevant Children's Services Department for the school in which the issue arises on grounds of child protection and/or to the Police on grounds of a suspected criminal offence, the referral/s should be made without delay. From this point no further enquiries into the allegation should be made by Trust Persons unless and until the Children's Services Department and/or the Police indicate in writing that they do not intend to proceed further.
- 6.2. The Principal should discuss with the relevant officer of the Children's Services Department and/or Police what may and may not be said to the pupil, their parents or carers, the alleged abuser and to the informants.
- 6.3. The Principal should inform the Chair of the Board that an allegation relating to a member of staff has been made and referred to an external agency. The Principal should not describe the nature or details of the allegation to the Chair of the Board at this stage.
- 6.4. The Principal should prepare a statement to be used in response to queries by Trust parents and the media, following the Trust's Media Protocols. This should be approved by the Executive Director of Standards (Primary or Secondary as appropriate). The statement should indicate that:
 - i The matter is governed by procedures which the Principal is obliged to follow;
 - ii The matter is in the hands of the appropriate agencies and no further comment can be made;

- iii No names can be given for public use.
- 6.5. When inter-agency meetings take place, it is essential that the DSL, Investigating Officer or an alternative nominee attends.
- 6.6. When the external agencies have completed their procedures, the Principal may decide that an internal investigation should be carried out to establish whether or not the Trust's Disciplinary policy should be invoked. In this case, any further investigations conducted by the Trust shall follow those set out in the Disciplinary Policy.
- 7. Non-referral**
- 7.1. If the Principal is satisfied that no child is at risk of significant harm or that a reportable criminal offence has not been committed, the allegation need not be referred either to the Local Authority or to the Police. Instances such as these or low level concerns can be dealt with following an internal investigation and via the school policies and procedures.
- 7.2. All low-level concerns will be recorded on Confide. The record will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and any action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concern(s) will also usually be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.
- 7.3. Records of low-level concerns raised will be retained for 2 years after the individual leaves their employment.
- 8. Outcome**
- 8.1. The following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:
- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
 - **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation;
 - **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
 - **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
 - **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.
- 8.2. The Principal/Investigating Officer will make detailed written records on Confide including his/her decisions, and the reasons for these.
- 8.3. If the allegation is substantiated and the member of staff is dismissed or if they resign, the Principal should discuss the case with the LADO to decide whether to make a referral to the DBS to consider whether inclusion on the Barred List is required and/or to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibition from teaching.

- 8.4. There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.
- 8.5. If the accused person resigns or ceases to provide his/her services to the Trust, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up and a referral to the DBS **must** be made if the criteria in paragraph 2.4 are met.

9. Malicious accusation

- 9.1. If the accusation is found to be entirely groundless and is judged by the Investigating Officer to have been made with malicious intent, the Investigating Officer may advise the Principal to take disciplinary action against the pupil or pupils responsible provided this is proportionate to the gravity of the offence and intent. This will follow the school's Behaviour policy.
- 9.2. Details of malicious allegations should be removed from personnel records for the subject of the allegation.

10. Suspension of Staff

- 10.1. Suspension need not follow an allegation automatically but it may be an appropriate step at any stage, depending on the information available. Such a suspension would not constitute a disciplinary action.
- 10.2. A decision to suspend a member of staff may only be taken by the Principal, or member of the Executive Team, or in his or her absence the member of staff with delegated authority following consultation with external agencies where a referral has been made to them. Factors such as the seriousness of the allegation, the perceived risk to children, the existence or otherwise of previous complaints and the possible jeopardising of the conduct of any investigation should be taken into consideration.
- 10.3. Any member of staff who is suspended should be advised to contact their teacher association, trade union or other professional body for advice and representation.
- 10.4. A suspension risk assessment should be completed (see Annex B).
- 10.5. The Principal should appoint a named representative to keep the member of staff informed of the progress of the case.
- 10.6. Where it is decided that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the Principal should consider how best to facilitate this. Support is likely to be needed for the member of staff after a stressful experience.

11. Record keeping

- 11.1. The Investigating Officer will make detailed written records including his/her decisions, any action taken and the reasons for these. All records will be retained securely and subject to the Data Protection policy.
- 11.2. The Principal's PA is responsible for keeping and securely storing records in relation to any allegations except where the allegation relates to the DSL in which case the Principal has this responsibility, or where the allegation relates to the Principal, in

which case the Clerk to the Board has this responsibility. Where a person makes an oral statement, a written transcript or summary should be signed and dated by the person making the statement.

- 11.3. The Principal or Investigating Officer should record the process followed in handling the allegation.
- 11.4. With the exception of allegations found to be malicious, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached should be kept on the confidential personnel file for the member of staff accused, and a copy should also be provided to that person.
- 11.5. Schools have an obligation to preserve records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) for the term of the inquiry (see <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/> for further information).
- 11.6. All other records should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age, or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

12. Supporting those involved

- 12.1. The Trust will deal with any allegation of abuse made against a Trust Person in a quick, fair and consistent way to minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process and provide effective protection for the child and support the person against whom the allegation is made.
- 12.2. We recognise that other staff may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk with their trade union or to seek further support as appropriate.
- 12.3. 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. Where other agencies or the police are involved, these should be consulted first and it should be agreed with these agencies the information that can be disclosed.

13. Confidentiality

- 13.1. The Trust will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.



Report a Concern

Name(s) of Person(s)

Concern Summary (Describe the type of concern/incident.)

Concern Date/Time (Please enter the date/time when the concern/incident first came to your notice.)

Origin of Concern (Where applicable, e.g. general public, church, police, other.)

Details of Concern (If required, you can add more detail about the concern/incident, giving times, dates, location, who was present and a Person's actual words if relevant.)

Location of Incident (Please enter the location of the incident, where applicable.)

Action taken (Please describe any action(s) you have taken, or plan to take, in relation to this concern.)

Please attach any further information that is relevant to this concern and pass to the Principal.

Name of staff reporting concern

Signature and date

Annex B Managing Allegations of Misconduct

Considerations for the Suspension of an Employee

Suspending an employee may be an appropriate course of action to take if allegations against the employee involve gross misconduct where, if they were upheld at a disciplinary hearing, the employer would be entitled to dismiss the employee without notice. However, suspending an employee is a serious step to take and without due consideration it can amount to a breach of trust and confidence by the employer, entitling an employee to claim constructive dismissal. Therefore, thought needs to be given as to whether it can be avoided and an employee should only be suspended if it is reasonable to do so in the circumstances.

Careful consideration should be given to the facts, the seriousness of the allegation and any alternatives available, before suspending an employee. Suspension must not be a 'knee-jerk' reaction to an allegation and should not imply any assumption that the individual is guilty of any misconduct. Suspension does not constitute disciplinary action and, for employees, will be on full pay. A period of suspension should be kept under review and be as short as possible, while allowing the employer to carry out a reasonable investigation. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification should be recorded by the school and the individual notified in writing of the reasons.

Allegations of Abuse made Against Employees

If the allegation is one of abuse against an employee, in accordance with the statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part four: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff](#), an individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. When managing such allegations you must have regard to the statutory guidance.

The statutory guidance relates to all adults working with children and young people, whether in a paid or voluntary position. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff (including volunteers) in a school or college that provides education for children under 18 years of age 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; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children.

When managing any allegation of misconduct against an employee, you must have regard to the disciplinary procedure, any relevant code of conduct and allegation management procedure adopted by the school.

If a decision is taken to suspend an individual, then at the point of their suspension, they should be informed of who their named contact is within the school and provided with their contact details. Consider whether the employee should be escorted from the workplace, whether IT access and access to the workplace should be removed, and ensure the employee understands that communication with workplace colleagues is prohibited during the period of suspension. The support that will be available for the individual must also be considered, and they should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one. Where possible, the suspension and the reasons for suspension should be kept confidential. If necessary, discuss with the employee how they would like their absence to be explained to colleagues and the school community. A decision to suspend should be

communicated in writing as soon as practicable. For advice on suspension and for a suspension letter please contact your HR Adviser.

The following assessment will assist the relevant parties, both in making a decision regarding suspension, and keeping a record of that decision. The assessment should take account of the context of the allegation, background information in relation to the individual concerned and in cases concerning allegations of abuse, any strategy discussion outcomes. A copy of the assessment should be retained on file by the school.

Suspension Assessment

Part 1: Suspension should only be considered if one or more of the following apply:

Question	Yes	No	Notes/Considerations
If there is a strong likelihood that if the allegations are substantiated then the matter will amount to gross misconduct?			
Is there a threat or risk of harm to employees?			
Is it possible to fully investigate the allegation if the employee remains at work (e.g. is the employee likely to destroy evidence or attempt to influence/intimidate witnesses?)			
Have relationships at work broken down?			
Is there likely to be a detrimental effect on the employer/school if the employee remains in work or continues to interact with pupils, parents, or employees?			
Is there a risk of harm to pupil(s) or, is the allegation related to safeguarding?			If the answer is yes – please refer to Part 2 of the assessment below, which provides a table for completion with additional considerations in respect of allegations of abuse.
If the answer is yes to any of the above questions, please complete Part 3			

Part 2: Safeguarding

Additional considerations for allegations of abuse made against an employee

(Please refer to DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education Part Four)

Information About the Allegation	Notes/Considerations
– Nature of the allegation. – Duration and frequency of allegation. – Extent of pre-meditation. – Degree and nature of alleged harm or risk to pupils.	
Information About the Employee	
– Previous concerns. – Previous allegations. – Disciplinary record. – Length of service. – Contact with pupil(s) concerned.	
Health and Safety	
– Potential risks to the person's health and safety should they remain in school (impact of threats from parents/carers/ potential press interest etc.).	

Part 3: Alternatives to suspension and a record of the decision

Alternatives to Suspension:
Explore and assess any alternatives, e.g. redeployment, supervision, working from home etc.
Particular Views of Those Concerned:
(E.g. Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Designated Officer/HR Adviser etc.)
Decision to Suspend:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Date:
If the decision is to suspend, record your grounds for suspension:
The employee will need to be notified of the reason(s) for suspension in writing.

Name and job title of person responsible for the decision:	
Name and job title of person completing assessment:	
(If applicable) Name of person responsible for communicating decision to suspend the employee: This should be communicated in writing as soon as practicable. Please refer to the template suspension letter available from your HR Adviser:	
Name and job title of person nominated to keep suspension under review:	