ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF POLICY – 2025/26

This policy was approved by Governors on 24th September 2025 and will be reviewed annually in line with the school's policy review cycle.

Introduction

Navenby CE Primary School is committed to providing the highest level of care for both its pupils and its staff. As our Christian vision states: '*Our school family promotes values, models positive interactions and delivers unfaltering care to instil healthy well-being, confidence, independence and ultimately a* ***sense of belonging'***. 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. *Through positive actions,* ***every person feels part of our family,*** *every person is loved, just as He is and He wishes.*

Our policy is in line with statutory guidance from the Department of Education set out in the following documents:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (HM Government Dec 2023)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department of Education Sept 2025)*

This policy is designed to ensure that all staff, students 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. We hope that having a clear policy outlined will help pupils to feel comfortable that they can voice concerns about any member of staff. Allegations will be reported to the Headteacher immediately or, where the Headteacher is the subject of concern, to the Chair of Governors. All allegations will be taken seriously and investigated immediately.

This policy only applies to adults currently working at Navenby CE Primary. Allegations concerning someone who is no longer at the school should be reported directly to the police.

1. Purpose

The procedure for dealing with allegations against staff depends on the situation and circumstances surrounding the allegation. This policy aims to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers for false or unfounded allegations. It must be followed when dealing with allegations, but may be adapted to 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 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 if they work regularly or closely with children.

Our **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** outlines what it means to harm a child. Cases which are not covered by above will be dealt with under the staff disciplinary arrangements.

2. 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 students should be aware of the procedures set out in this policy.

3. Procedure

The procedure for managing allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff follows statutory guidance set out in **'Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025)'.**

a. Reporting an allegation

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by staff should be reported **immediately** to the Headteacher, or in their absence the Deputy Head. Complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of the School's Governing Body.

The Headteacher (or Chair) will then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice. The Local Authority Designated Officers are: *See appendix A.* 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 will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and must report their concerns immediately. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be immediately informed of all allegations that come to the School's attention and appear to meet the criteria so they can consult police and children's social care services as appropriate.

The LADO and the Headteacher/Deputy Head will discuss the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action to decide whether:

- no further actions are needed;
- a strategy discussion 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; the LADO will consider whether a police investigation or a strategy discussion is needed. Other agencies may be invited into the discussion and could include representatives from Health, Social Care or Police.

4. Investigation

An investigation into the allegation 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.

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

There are 4 possible outcomes to the first steps of the investigation:

a. **There is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm** - In this event a referral to children's services must be made. They will undertake an initial assessment (in line with Sec C of LSCP Code of Practice) and if there remains concerns that the child is at risk of suffering significant harm, Step 2 strategy meeting should be arranged.

b. **The threshold of significant harm is not considered to be reached, but there is cause to suspect that a criminal offence has been committed and a police investigation is necessary.** In this case the LADO should have further discussions with the police, the employer and any other agency involved to evaluate the allegation and decide how it should be dealt with. This can be face to face or discussion. It should share available information about the allegation and the person against whom the allegation has been made, consider whether a Police investigation is needed and if so, agree the timing and conduct of that. In cases where a police investigation is necessary the initial evaluation should also consider whether there are matters which can be taken forward in a disciplinary process in parallel with the criminal process, or whether any disciplinary action will need to wait completion of the police enquiries and/or prosecution. It will be normal for these cases to be led by the Public Protection Unit. If the initial evaluation identifies concerns about the welfare of a child a referral should be made to Children's Services with parental consent (Refer to LSCP Procedures Section C). Children's Services will conduct an initial assessment.

c. **The threshold of significant harm is not considered to be reached and a police investigation is not necessary, but the employer may wish to take disciplinary action in respect of the individual**. This is a matter for the employer and employee with advice from the LADO.

d. No further action is required.

Second Steps - Initial Assessment / Strategy Meeting

Consequently, if there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, CSC must obtain the following information as a minimum in addition to the current required dataset:

- Adult's name who the allegation is made against
- Adult's address
- Adult's date of birth
- Employer
- Employer's address
- Date of incident and date allegation made
- Nature of allegation
- If the adult who the allegation is made against has children residing with them

The LADO will be responsible for providing monitoring information to LSCP and for tracking outcomes of cases. On receipt of a referral of an allegation, the FAST Team / Child's Social worker (where relevant) will liaise with the Police and make enquiries using the initial assessment / core assessment

Experience has shown that the strategy meeting is crucial to the effective planning, co-ordination and carrying out of enquiries. Particular attention needs to be given to the following issues in the Strategy meeting:

- Who will provide support to the staff member / volunteer. This includes the need to keep the accused person informed of the process and decisions relating to the allegation. It is good practice for the accused person to be provided with the substance of the allegation within 3 days. Review meetings relating to the investigation should be conducted at least weekly with the person being updated on the outcome. This will normally be the responsibility of the employer.

- Any immediate issues of safeguarding children, if not already addressed.

- The police and other relevant agencies should agree jointly when to inform the accused person of allegations which are the subject of criminal proceedings. The general principle is that the person must be kept informed in a timely manner.

- What information will be shared with the child's parents/carers (or the parents/carers of other children affected) and when.

- Whether the strategy meeting should reconvene to review progress, and make further plans. If so, a time and venue should be set. This must be no later than 4 weeks from the initial meeting.

- If the child has been placed for adoption but no application for an adoption order has been filed with the court, the strategy meeting is legally able to decide where necessary to remove the child from the care of the prospective adopters.

- If an application has been made for an adoption order, then legal advice must be sought since it will usually be necessary to make application to the court before the child can be removed.

The strategy meeting must consider any risks to the alleged individual's own children.

- If the person is subject to registration or regulation by a professional body, the strategy meeting should discuss if informing the professional body is appropriate at this stage of the investigation. This includes the necessity of contacting related advisory bodies / agencies who hold a contact with the organisation concerned as appropriate.

5. Supporting those involved

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

Parents and carers will be notified by the Headteacher 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 as to what information may or may not be disclosed to the parents. 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.

Parents and carers should also be made aware of the prohibition on reporting or publishing allegations about teachers in section 141F of the Education Act 2002. 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.

b) The employee:

Navenby CE 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 School will provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in School is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. The person who is the subject of the investigation will be informed by the Headteacher as soon as the allegation has been made. 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 Headteacher 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, they may provide this additional support.

6. 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 that could lead to the identification of someone who is the subject of an allegation before they are charged or summonsed.

The Education Act 2011 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same School (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The legislation imposing restrictions makes clear that "publication" of material that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation is prohibited. "Publication" includes "any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public". This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site would be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the teacher by members of the public).

No information will be given to the media.

7. Suspensions

The School will not suspend a member of staff without serious consideration. The School will not suspend a member of staff automatically when allegation has been made. Typically, suspension will only be considered in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the School are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

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. This may take the following forms:

- redeployment within the School so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;
- redeploying to alternative work in the School so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children;
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted;
- temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative School or work for the local authority.

A suspension may be decided upon if it is deemed that the child or other children may be at significant risk of harm, or if the nature of the case warrants a criminal investigation, or where the concern is so serious that it would result in immediate dismissal. The Headteacher 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. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision should be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment.

The professional reputational damage that can arise from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious must be considered. It may be that the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements, for example, redeployment. Where it is deemed that a suspension is appropriate, the employee will receive written confirmation within one working day and will be informed of the reason for the suspension. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and be provided with their contact details.

8. 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.

It is not appropriate to use compromise agreements in situations which are relevant to these procedures. Schools have a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual.

9. Record keeping

Except in those cases which have been found to be malicious, 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 false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be kept on employment records or used in employee references. Details of any allegation made by a pupil will be kept in the confidential section of their record.

10. Action on conclusion of the case

The following definitions are 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;
- **False**: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- **Unsubstantiated**: there is insufficient evidence to either to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

If the investigation results 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 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). 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.

In respect of malicious or unsubstantiated allegations, if an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the LADO should refer the matter to the Children's Social Care Services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else. Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should also not be included in any reference.
Where an allegation is proven to be false, the Headteacher 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 factitious and malicious, the Headteacher will decide what the proper sanction will be for the pupil who made the false allegation. The Headteacher 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.

11. 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. In the initial consideration at a strategy discussion or initial evaluation the agencies concerned, including the employer, should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim. This should include any previous disciplinary investigation of a relevant nature and any soft information from the line manager / colleagues which may be relevant to the enquiry and that has occurred in relevant and appropriate timescales. If an allegation is substantiated, the managers or commissioners of the relevant service should think widely about the lessons of the case and how they should be acted upon. This should include whether there are features of the organisation which may have contributed to the abuse occurring, or failed to prevent the abuse occurring. In some circumstances, a serious case review may be appropriate.

12. Policy Review

Policy Approved: Full Governors meeting 24th September 2025; it will be reviewed in Autumn Term 2026

Signed:

Chair of Governors: …… Mr J Kirby

Head teacher …….. Mr C Elliott

APPENDIX A

Position	Current post holders	Contact number
Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)	The current LADO's are: Fiona Watters, Kim Murray, Julie Adams, Amy Beecham and Ildiko Kiss	01522 554674 LSCP lado @lincolnshire.gov.uk
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership	Customer Services for reporting any concerns	01522 782111 01522 782333 (out of hours – 6pm – 8am + BH and W/E) https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/lscp
Safeguarding Children Officer	Ruth Fox	01522 554695