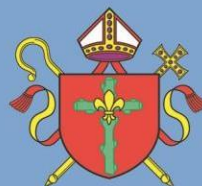




OUR LADY OF LOURDES

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Protocol for dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a member of staff November 2024



Contents

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust Mission Statement	3
Section one: Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold (Linked to KCSIE 2024)	5
1.1 Introduction.....	5
2.0 Initial Response to an allegation.....	5
2.1 There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:.....	6
2.2 No Further Action (see KCSIE Pg. 95).....	6
2.3 Supply Teachers and all contracted staff.....	6
2.4 Organisations or Individuals using school premises	7
2.5 Governors.	7
3.0 Suspension	7
3.1 Duty of Care	8
3.2 OLoL CMAT will:	8
3.3 Procedure for dealing with allegations.	9
4.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing (see also KCSIE 2024, para. 397).....	9
4.1 Allegations Outcomes.....	10
4.2 Following a criminal investigation or a prosecution:	10
4.3 Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations.....	10
4.4 Returning to work.....	11
4.5 Resignations & Agreement Settlements:	11
5.0 Record Keeping	12
6.0 References:.....	12
7.0 Learning lessons	12
8.0 Non recent allegations	13
9.0 Timescales:.....	13
Section two: Concerns or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold.....	14
1.0 Low-level concerns	14
1.1 What a low-level concern is.....	14
1.2 Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:.....	14
1.3 Staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies	15
2.0 Sharing low-level concerns.....	16
3.0 Recording low-level concerns	16
Appendix A.....	18
Appendix B Flow chart:	19

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust Mission Statement

We are a partnership of Catholic schools.

Our aim is to provide the very best Catholic education for all in our community and so improve life chances through spiritual, academic and social development.

By placing the person and teachings of Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do, we will:

- Follow the example of Our Lady of Lourdes by nurturing everyone in a spirit of compassion, service and healing.
- Working together so that we can all achieve our full potential, deepen our faith and realise our God-given talents.
- Make the world a better place, especially for the most vulnerable in our society by doing 'little things with great love'. (*St Therese of Lisieux*)

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Section one: Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold (Linked to KCSIE 2024)

Schools will always contact the DPS team and the DCEO for advice regarding allegations.

1.1 Introduction

This section is based on ‘**Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**’ in **part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024**. It should be read alongside the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust (OLoL CMAT) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024-25 and the Whistleblowing Policy.

2.0 Initial Response to an allegation

The guidance should be followed where it is alleged that any current member of OLoL CMAT staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor 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 he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school.

If the school is in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, the DPS team will advise to consult with the local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A ‘**case manager**’ will lead any investigation and be appointed at the earliest opportunity.

Case Manager	Allegation against
Person/s appointed by the DCEO and DPS normally the Headteacher.	A member of staff
Person appointed by the CEO.	Headteacher

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement. If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

The protocols apply regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

OLoL CMAT will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

2.1 There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

- **Looking after the welfare of the child** - the designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as described in Part one of this guidance.
- **Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation** - the case manager should discuss with the LADO, the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, our school will:

- apply common sense and judgement;
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently; and
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation

Our school ensures that we understand the local authority arrangements for managing allegations, including the contact details and what information the LADO will require when an allegation is made. Before contacting the LADO, our school will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts and to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

For example whether:

- the individual was in the school at the time of the allegations.
- did the individual, or could they have, come into contact with the child
- are there any witnesses? and,
- was there any CCTV footage?

These are just a sample of example questions. Schools and colleges should be familiar with what initial information the LADO will require. This information can be found in local policy and procedural guidance provided by the LADO service.

When to inform the individual of the allegation should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, with guidance as required from the LADO, and if appropriate local authority children's social care and the police.

2.2 No Further Action (see KCSIE Pg. 95)

Where the initial discussion leads to no further action, the case manager and the LADO should:

- record the decision and justification for it; and,
- agree on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom.

2.3 Supply Teachers and all contracted staff:

In some circumstances OLoL CMAT academies will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not apply, for example, supply teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business.

Whilst OLoL CMAT academies are not the employer of supply teachers, where there is an allegation about a supply teacher, OLoL CMAT academies will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will the school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services.

OLoL CMAT academies will usually take the lead in any investigation because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an

allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process.

The case manager will discuss with the supply agency whether it is appropriate for the supply agency to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation. The supply teacher will be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support.

Issues such as information sharing will be addressed at the allegations meeting set up by the LADO, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account during the investigation.

When using an agency, OLoL CMAT academies will inform them of their process for managing allegations. This will include inviting the agency's HR manager to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about policies.

2.4 Organisations or Individuals using school premises

Our school may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). As with any safeguarding allegation, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

2.5 Governors.

If an allegation is made against a governor, schools and college should follow their own local procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, they should follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

3.0 Suspension

Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

In such cases, OLoL CMAT will only suspend an individual, following advice from the Trust HR Team and if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, OLoL CMAT will consider alternatives such as:

- 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 the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do 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, but this decision should only be made if it is in the best interests of the child or children concerned and takes account of their views. It should be made clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted.
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the Academy Trust.

Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), the school will carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the LADO, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the appointed case manager will agree and record the rationale for this with the LADO. Information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected will be included in the record.

Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within one working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.

If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, details of all action taken and the justification for this decision will be recorded. The case manager will agree with the LADO and the DCEO, what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

If it is decided that further action is needed, the case manager will take steps as agreed with the LADO to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate.

3.1 Duty of Care

OLoL CMAT as the employer has a duty of care to their employees. They will ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide them with a named contact if they are suspended. OLoL CMAT academies are not the employer of an individual, however, they still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with appropriately and that they liaise with relevant parties (this includes supply teachers and volunteers, see paragraphs on supply teachers below). It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer 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 supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

3.2 OLoL CMAT will:

- manage and minimise the stress caused by the allegation
- inform the individual as soon as possible, explaining the likely course of action, guided by the LADO, and the police where necessary
- advise the individual to contact their trade union representative, or a colleague for support
- appoint a named representative to keep the person informed about the progress of the case
- provide access to counselling or medical advice where appropriate.
- not prevent social contact with work colleagues and friends, when staff are suspended, unless there is evidence to suggest this may prejudice the gathering of evidence.
 - They will also be given access to welfare counselling:
 - Contact Vivup confidential helpline 0330 3800658

Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be:

- formally told about the allegation as soon as possible. The case manager will advise from the DCEO will consult the LADO and where involved children's social care and/or the police on what information can be disclosed;
- kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child - no information can be shared regarding the staff member; and
- made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against teachers in schools whilst investigations are in progress as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002 (see paragraphs 394-396 KCSIE 2024).

Action staff members must take if they are concerned or receive an allegation that a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor poses a risk of harm to children.

- The staff member must report the concern or allegation in writing (signed and dated) to the Headteacher.
- If the concern/allegation is about the Headteacher, the staff member must report this in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust: James McGeachie, j.mcgeachie@ololcatholicmat.co.uk
- The Headteacher/CEO will then follow the procedures set out below, as appropriate.

3.3 Procedure for dealing with allegations.

The headteacher or principal or (where the headteacher or principal is the subject of an allegation) the CEO or as delegated by the CEO (the 'case manager'), should discuss the allegation immediately with the designated officer(s). The purpose of an initial discussion is for the designated officer(s) (usually a DSL or a member of SLT with appropriate Safeguarding training) and the case manager to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.

The initial sharing of information and evaluation may lead to a decision that no further action is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern, in which case this decision and a justification for it should be recorded by both the case manager and the designated officer(s), and agreement reached on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom. The case manager should then consider with the designated officer(s) what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

In the event of an allegation that meets the 'harm' criteria (page 1), the case manager (the Headteacher, DSL, or where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation, the CEO of the CMAT) will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services.
- The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the LADO – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the LADO as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police.
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the LADO (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.

4.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing (see also KCSIE 2024, para. 397)

OLoL CMAT academies will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

In a strategy discussion or the initial evaluation of the case, the agencies involved should share all the relevant information they have about the person who is subject to the allegation, and about the alleged victim.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared,
- how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality,
- what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and

- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises.

4.1 Allegations Outcomes

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.

If the allegation is substantiated and:

- the person is dismissed; resigns, or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services; or
- the employer ceases to use the person's services.

The employer has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

In the case of a member of teaching staff, the case manager must consider whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching (paragraph 357-358 for further information).¹

here is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS² where they consider an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child (paragraph 353-356 for further information).

4.2 Following a criminal investigation or a prosecution:

The police should inform the LADO and the employer immediately when:

- a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial are complete
- it is decided to close an investigation without charge
- it is decided not to continue to prosecute after the person has been charged.

In those circumstances, during the joint assessment meeting the LADO should discuss with the DCEO whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or local authority children's social care should also inform that decision. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration should take into account the result of the police investigation or the trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

4.3 Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and the DCEO (or appointed case manager) should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this was a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate.

¹ Teacher Regulation Agency – [Report serious teacher misconduct - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614443/Report_serious_teacher_misconduct_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

² Disclosure and Barring Service – [DBS barring referral form - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614443/DBS_barring_referral_form_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, our school, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per our behaviour policy.

4.4 Returning to work

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the DCEO and case manager will consider how best to facilitate that. Guidance and advice will be provided via HR or the LADO. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The DCEO and case manager will also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still attending the school or college.

4.5 Resignations & Agreement Settlements:

'Settlement agreements' (sometimes referred to as compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign if the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, should not be used in cases of refusal to cooperate or resignation before the person's notice period expires. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate.

OLOL CMAT will not cease their investigations if the person leaves, resigns or ceases to provide their services. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations with a bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate.

Wherever possible, the accused will be given full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. The process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence and reaching a judgement about whether it can be substantiated or otherwise on the basis of all the information available, will continue even if the accused 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 an outcome wherever possible. The person concerned should be notified of the conclusion of the allegations and sanctions that might be posed.

Other than where allegations are false, malicious, unsubstantiated, or unfounded, the outcome should be made clear when providing references to prospective employers. This is particularly important where the person moves into another position involving working with children.

It is not appropriate to reach a settlement/compromise agreement if the person subject to the allegation resigns or their services cease to be used. However, in limited circumstances schools sometimes use settlement agreements to end the employment relationship on agreed terms, but not where there is an allegation that the individual poses a risk to children.

Where a settlement/compromise agreement is used, OLOL CMAT will not let it prevent them from:

- fulfilling their legal duty to refer cases to the DBS where the referral criteria are met – see paragraph 353 KCSIE 2024 ***Non-compliance of this duty is a criminal offence***,
- providing a reference to potential employers when requested,
- considering whether to make a referral to the TRA where the criteria are met - see paragraph 357 KCSIE 2024.

It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process.

5.0 Record Keeping:

These can be recorded either in Staff Safe (CPOMS) or within PowerApps (Trust online logging system)

Details of allegations following an investigation that are found to have been malicious or false should be removed from personnel records unless the individual gives their consent for retention of the information.

However, for all other allegations, i.e. substantiated, unfounded and unsubstantiated it is important that the following information is kept on the file of the person accused:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached, and the outcome i.e. substantiated, unfounded or unsubstantiated
- a copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by local authority children's social care or the police, and
- a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary reinvestigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time.

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.

6.0 References:

Cases in which an allegation was found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references. Any repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should also not be included in any reference. See paragraph 227, KCSIE 2024 for further information on references. Substantiated safeguarding allegations that meet the harm threshold should be included in references, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions.

7.0 Learning lessons

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 DCEO and the case manager to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to our OLOL CMAT 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. Lessons should also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The LADO, DCEO and case manager should consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

For all other cases, where the allegation concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated the DCEO and case manager (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.

8.0 Non recent allegations

Where an adult makes an allegation to our school that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non recent allegations made by a child, should be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with local authority children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

9.0 Timescales:

Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved...	within 1 week
If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the school will normally instigate appropriate action...	within 3 working days
If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, wherever possible the Trust will hold this...	within 15 working days

The time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation. It is expected that 80% of cases should be resolved within one month, 90% within 3 months and all but the most exceptional cases should be completed within 12 months.

Section two: Concerns or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold

LOLO CMAT has policies and processes to deal with any concerns or allegations which do not meet the harm threshold, referred to in this guidance as 'low-level' concerns. It is important that all our schools have appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children.

Our school will follow the Low-Level concerns policy as published by the HR service for the Diocese of Nottingham Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts (from this point called the NRCDES policy).

1.0 Low-level concerns

As part of their whole school or college approach to safeguarding, our school follows the NRCDES policy and ensures that we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Creating this clear culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

This will:

- enable schools and colleges to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
- minimise the risk of abuse,
- ensure adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of OLOL CMAT

1.1 What a low-level concern is

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. 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,
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

1.2 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, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating children.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

1.3 Staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies

OLOL CMAT sets out our low-level concerns policy (following the NRCDES policy) within their staff code of conduct and safeguarding and child protection policies as set out in Part two of this guidance. We make it clear what a low-level concern is and the importance of sharing low-level concerns, and an explanation of what the purpose of the policy is – i.e., to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school or college's values and expected behaviour set out in the staff code of conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff.

OLOL CMAT achieves the purpose of our low-level concerns policy by:

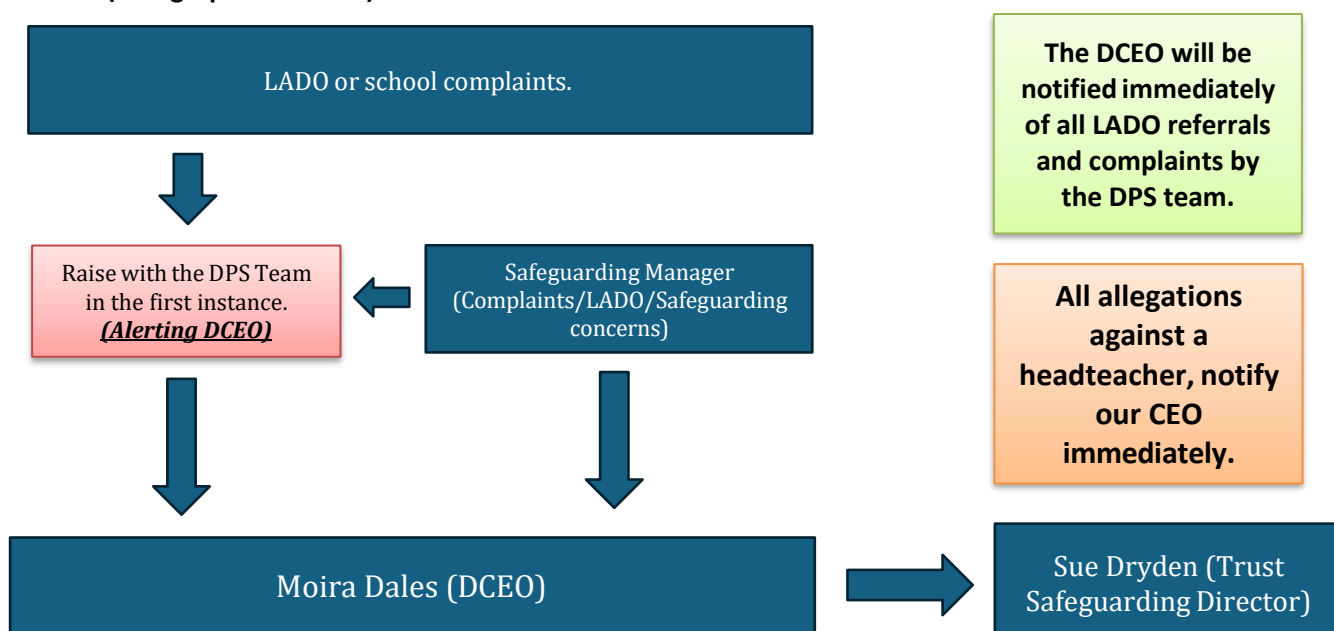
- ensuring our staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour, in themselves and others
- empowering staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns (see below)
- addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- handling and responding to such concerns sensitively and proportionately when they are raised, and
- helping identify any weakness in the school or colleges safeguarding system.

2.0 Sharing low-level concerns

The NRCDES ensures that their low-level concerns policy contains a procedure for sharing confidentially such concerns which is clear, easy to understand and implement.

Our safeguarding policy is and follows the following:

1. **Allegation against a member of staff (inclusive of EYFS, supply/agency staff and 6th Form) report to the headteacher.**
 - Ensure all LADO allegations are discussed with the **DPS team first** (who will alert the DCEO) before referral, *unless the allegation is about the headteacher.*
2. **Allegation against the headteacher report to James McGeachie CEO.**
3. **Anyone can report any concern to their LADO.**
4. **When school receives an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using your school premises for running an activity for children, you should report it to the Head Teacher and inform the local authority designated officer (LADO) (Paragraph 384 KCSIE)**



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.

LOL CMAT ensures we create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have 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.

3.0 Recording low-level concerns

These can be recorded either in Staff Safe (CPOMS) or within PowerApps (Trust online logging system)

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 should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, OLOL CMAT will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO (as per Part four, Section one). Consideration should also be given 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.

We will retain all low-level concerns in line with the NRCDES policy.

Responding to low-level concerns

The NRCDES low-level concerns policy sets out the procedure for responding to reports of low-level concerns.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher (or nominated deputy) after contacting the DPS, should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help OLOL CMAT 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.

Appendix A:

The role of the LADO – national-lado-network.co.uk

The role of the LADO (or Designated Officer) is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) (Chapter 2 Paragraph 4) and is governed by the Local Authorities duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The Officer LADO is responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children. This involves working with police, children's social care, employers and other involved professionals. The LADO does not conduct investigations directly, but rather oversees and directs them to ensure thoroughness, timeliness and fairness. Ordinarily, to ensure impartiality, the LADO will not have direct contact with the adult against who the allegation has been made, or the family of the child/children involved but will, as part of their role ensure that these have information regarding outcomes.

This guidance outlines procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children who are paid, unpaid, volunteers, casual, agency or anyone self-employed.

The LADO must be contacted within one working day in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child; (Criminal Threshold)
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; (Harm Threshold)
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children. (Risk Threshold)
- Behaved in a way which raises concerns as to their suitability to work with children (Suitability Threshold)

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services;
- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

The LADO is responsible for:

- Providing advice, information and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations around allegations and concerns regarding paid and unpaid workers.
- Managing and overseeing individual cases from all partner agencies.
- Ensuring the child's voice is heard and that they are safeguarded.
- Ensuring there is a consistent, fair and thorough process for all adults working with children and young people against whom an allegation is made.
- Monitoring the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible.
- Recommending a referral and chairing the strategy meeting in cases where the allegation requires investigation by police and/or social care.

The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. The LADO is available to discuss any concerns and to assist you in deciding whether you need to make a referral and/or take any immediate management action to protect a child.

Appendix B Flow chart: Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

For further information, refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) Part Four.



