



Allegations Against Staff Policy (2019-2020)

Date agreed: December 2019.

Date of next review: July 2020.

Approved by: Elena Vlasenko (School Director)

Pushkin's School is committed to providing the highest level of care for both its pupils and its staff. It is extremely important that any allegations of abuse against a teacher, any other member of staff or volunteer 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. This policy is in line with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education.

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

Purpose

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

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff or volunteer may have:

- behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child in a way which indicates that they would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Timescale

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

- minimise the risk to the child;
- minimise the impact on the child's learning progress; and
- ensure a fair and thorough investigation for everyone involved.

Procedure

Reporting an allegation:

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by a staff member should be reported immediately to the School Director or the School Manager. Concerns about the School Manager should be reported to the School Director, and concerns about the School Director should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). LADO contact details are provided at the end of this policy document.

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 a colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and must report their concerns immediately. The school's Whistleblowing Policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations against their colleagues in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

The LADO will immediately be contacted by the School Director and a discussion will take place to decide whether:

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

Pushkin's School will share available information with the LADO about the allegation, the child, and the person against whom the allegation has been made and consider whether a police investigation or a strategy meeting is needed. Representatives from other agencies (such as health, social care, the GP and police) may be invited into the discussion.

Investigation:

An investigation into the allegations would normally be carried out by the children's social services or by the school (only with the approval of the LADO). This will be agreed at the initial evaluation stage. Where Pushkin's School is not conducting the investigation, it will cooperate with investigative agencies.

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

Supporting Those Involved

The person who made the allegation and their parents:

Parents and carers will be notified if their child makes or is involved in an allegation against staff if they do not already know. However, if the police or social services are to be involved, they will be contacted first and will advise as to what information may or may not be disclosed to the parents or carers. The School Director will liaise with the parents/carers and child about the case, ensuring that they are fully informed as far as is possible. Parents and carers will be made aware of any progress in the investigation, and where there is no criminal prosecution, the outcome will be explained to them. This may be a disciplinary outcome.

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 staff member/volunteer:

Pushkin's School has a duty of care towards its staff and volunteers and will do everything to minimise the stress of any allegations and the disciplinary process. The person who is the subject of the investigation will be informed as soon as the allegation has been made, and the person 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 School Director will keep the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and any other work-related issues. The employee may need additional support and the School Director will consider what might be appropriate to best accommodate this. Additional support may be provided by the police if it is a criminal investigation.

Confidentiality

Pushkin's 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 on an allegation before they are charged or summoned.

Suspensions

The School Director will not suspend a member of staff without serious consideration and will not do it automatically once an allegation has been made. Depending on the nature of the case, it may be possible that alternative arrangements are made so that the individual can continue working but is removed from the pupil making the allegation.

Where there is a chance of suspension, the employee will receive confirmation within one day and will be informed of the reason for the suspension. A suspension may be decided upon if it is deemed that the child or other children may be at risk of harm, or the nature of the case warrants a criminal investigation. The School Director holds the power to suspend an employee but will be advised by the LADO, police and/or social care whether a suspension is necessary.

Resignations

If an employee hands in their resignation when the allegation is made against them or during an investigation, the investigation will continue until an outcome has been reached, with or without the person's cooperation. They will be given full opportunity to answer the allegation.

Record Keeping

Detailed records of allegations made, investigations and outcomes will be kept on the individual's Personnel File. This person will be given a copy of the same information. Record keeping will enable the school to:

- provide all the necessary information for future employers if they require a reference;
- prevent unnecessary re-investigation in the future if an allegation re-surfaces; and
- provide all the necessary information to the Disclosure and Barring Service. Records of incidents of allegations that did not result in criminal charges need to show exactly what happened, what action was taken during and after the investigation, and how the result of the investigation was reached.

The records will be kept by the School Director until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that will be longer, from the date of the allegation. This includes former staff who have resigned from Pushkin's School. Details of any allegation made by a pupil will be kept in the confidential section of the record. Allegations that are proven to be malicious will not be kept on employment records or used in employee references.

Conclusion of the Case

If the investigation results in the dismissal or resignation of an employee, and that person has been charged with a criminal offence, a referral will be made immediately by the School Director to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The School Director 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 to ensure that the transmission is as smooth as possible. If a child who made the allegation is still attending the school, the School Director will consider what needs to be done to manage the contact between the employee and the child.

False Allegations

Where an allegation is proven to be false, the School Director may refer to social services to determine whether the child needs special care, or to help to understand if they are being abused elsewhere. If an allegation is found to be intentionally fictitious and malicious, the School Director will decide on what disciplinary action will be taken. The school has the power to expel pupils who make false claims and will refer the case to the police if a criminal offence has been committed.

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

After the Case

No matter what the outcome of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff is, the School Director will review the case to see if there are any improvements that can be made to the school's practice and policies that may help to prevent similar cases in the future.

Relevant Contact Information

Elena Vlasenko (School Director): 07881764892, elena@pushkinsschool.co.uk

Olga Kisil (School Manager): 07713132600, chela06@mail.ru

Any allegations against a member of staff can be made directly to the LADO, although Pushkin's School highly recommends to first contact the School Director, who will follow the appropriate procedure and contact the LADO themselves. The LADO contact information for every school branch is provided below:

- Buckinghamshire Local Authority Designated Officer (High Wycombe school branch):
 - 01296 382070
- Hertfordshire Local Authority Designated Officer (Hemel Hempstead school branch):
 - 01992 555420
- Berkshire Local Authority Designated Officer (Bracknell school branch):
 - 01344 352005
- Essex Local Authority Designated Officer (Chelmsford and Southend-on-Sea school branches):
 - 03330 139797