



# **ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE POLICY AGAINST TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF**

Autumn Term 2024

**RENEWAL DATE: AUTUMN TERM 2025**

## **CHANGES**

September 2015:

Policy implemented by Weston Mill Community Primary Academy

November 2016:

Adopted by Discovery Multi Academy Trust, with appropriate minor amendments.

June 2018:

Amendments made following Safeguarding Review by LA

March 2020:

Amendments made following the addition of Nightingale Daycare

July 2022:

Policy reviewed and the deletion of Nightingale Daycare

January 2023:

Policy reviewed, no changes

January 2024:

Policy reviewed, no changes

July 2024:

Policy reviewed, minor changes

## **CONTENTS**

- 1 Introduction
- 2 How concerns arise
- 3 Initial action
- 4 Consultation and referral
- 5 Initial consideration of the referral
- 6 Further procedures

## I INTRODUCTION

Discovery Multi Academy Trust is under an absolute duty to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children in each organisation in the MAT, and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State in doing so.

Discovery Multi Academy Trust takes this responsibility seriously and will therefore ensure that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in the MAT is dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently in accordance with the Statutory Guidance.

This procedure must be used in any case where it is alleged that a teacher, other member of staff, or a volunteer in any academy in the MAT:

- has behaved towards a child or children in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that s/he would pose a risk of harm to children;
- if there are concerns about the person's behaviour towards their own children, or children unrelated to their employment or voluntary work, and there has been a recommendation from a strategy discussion that consideration should be given to the risk posed to children they work with; and
- when an allegation is made about abuse that took place some time ago and the accused person may still be working or having contact with children.

This policy also has links to the following MAT policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code Of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

All members of staff in the MAT will be made aware of this policy during induction.

## 2 HOW CONCERNS ARISE

Concerns about the possible abuse of children by staff will usually arise in one of two ways, either:

- A direct allegation by a child/young person or a third party, for example a parent.
- An observation by a member of staff that the behaviour of a colleague is inappropriate or potentially/actually abusive.

In either case the concern **must** be recorded and reported to the Head of School and CEO immediately unless the allegation is about the Head of School, in which case it must be reported to the CEO. If the concern relates directly to the CEO, it must be reported to the Chair of Trustees, who can be contacted on the details available on our website. Employees who are unsure about reporting or do not feel at ease raising the concern through the above route is encouraged to seek advice from one of the following:

- Bishop Fleming (external auditors) Tel: 01752 262611
- Browne Jacobson (MAT solicitors) Tel. 01392 458800

If the Head of School is absent, the allegation must be reported to the Assistant Head of School.

As this is a statutory duty, all staff in the MAT are required, where they have concerns, to report them in accordance with this policy.

### **3 INITIAL ACTION**

The Head of School will make sure that they have a full understanding of what is being alleged (from the member of staff or third party) only speaking to the child if this is unavoidable or it is the child making the allegation.

**No one in the MAT may investigate the incident by interviewing either those directly involved or the witnesses; to do so could compromise a potential criminal or children's social care investigation and /or any future internal academy investigation**

The Head of School or CEO will simply establish that:

- An allegation has been made
- The general nature of the allegation
- When and where the allegation is alleged to have occurred
- Who was involved
- Any other persons present

**The matter will not be discussed with the person who is the subject of the allegation at this stage.**

### **4 CONSULTATION AND REFERRAL**

It is important to ensure that even allegations that appear to be less serious are seen to be followed up and taken seriously, and that they are examined objectively by someone independent of the school concerned.

If the allegation meets any of the criteria set out in paragraph 1 the Head of School or CEO must report it to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on the same day.

If it is not clear whether the threshold for referral has been reached, the Head of School or CEO can contact the local authority before a formal referral is made. Where it is evident that the child has suffered an injury as a result of the abuse, the matter must be immediately referred to the Plymouth Multi Agency Hub.

### **5 INITIAL CONSIDERATION OF THE REFERRAL**

The local authority's first step will be to discuss the allegations with the Head of School or CEO to confirm details of the allegations and whether or not there is evidence to suggest the allegation is false or malicious.

If the parents/carers are not already aware of the allegation, the local authority will also discuss how and by whom they should be informed.

In some instances the academy concerned may need to advise parents/carers of an incident straight away, for example if a child has been injured while at school or in a school related activity and requires medical treatment.

The Head of School will inform the accused person as soon as possible after consulting with the LADO.

However, where a strategy discussion is needed, this will be deferred until after consultation with the Police and Child Protection Teams, and there is an agreement about what information can be disclosed to the person.

If the accused person is a member of a union or professional association s/he will be advised to contact that organisation at the outset for support. The Trust will also provide the contact details of their provider of counselling and welfare support.

## **6 FURTHER PROCEDURES**

Once initial advice has been sought from the local authority the Head of School or CEO will proceed according to procedures dictated by the local authority and any other investigating bodies involved.