



MULTI
ACADEMY
TRUST

The Queen Katherine School Multi Academy Trust

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it from time to time.

Committee	MAT Board
Date of adoption:	July 2016
Date of next review:	October 2023

Document control sheet

Version	Amended by	Purpose	Approved by Trustees (date)
1	Tracy Houlden	Policy introduced after TU consultation	2 July 2016
2	Tracy Houlden	Reviewed – no amendments	4 July 2018
3	Tracy Houlden	Reviewed. Addition of new GHS Headteacher.	October 2021

Allegations Against Staff

This procedure applies to all employees and volunteers working at The Queen Katherine School Multi Academy Trust ("the Trust") and forms part of our policy on Safeguarding of Young People.

I. INTRODUCTION

Why procedures are needed.

- The majority of people who work with children and young people do so from a position of care and concern. However, it is a fact that an extremely small number of people do seek access to children and young people, to cause them harm either physically, sexually or emotionally. Research has shown that these people are extremely skilled in identifying vulnerable young people and forming relationships with colleagues which often ensures that they are not challenged or distrusted and use the system to their own advantage. Procedures need to ensure young people have as much protection as possible from such adults.
- Students may misinterpret actions of professionals, which, when reported to their parents could lead to complaints.
- Small proportions of students lie about allegations to create difficulties for teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Under times of stress or provocation, some professionals react inappropriately to students and may behave in an unacceptable manner.

When an allegation has been made concerning any employee within education they should have the case against them dealt with quickly, professionally and impartially. The document recognises the responsibility and vulnerability of education employees.

The child's welfare is paramount. (Children's Act 1989)

Research shows that some "institutions" fail to protect their students because of over emphasis on the protection of staff and the natural reaction to believe a colleague rather than a student (some of whom may have been presenting difficult behaviours).

The system for dealing with allegations within the Trust ensures that all allegations are dealt with in a clear structured manner using a system that is professional and impartial.

2. ALLEGATIONS/SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

Allegations are received in a variety of ways. Usually these are:

- Direct complaint by student to another staff member/Headteacher.
- Direct complaint of a parent/carer to another staff member/teacher.
- Concerns raised by parties who may have been told about or witnessed behaviour of concern.
- Direct contact by parent/carer to a Trustee or an academy's governor.

Whilst it may seem quite natural for a colleague/Headteacher to speak to the alleged perpetrator this should not happen. This could seriously hinder any further investigation and reduces professional impartiality.

If an employee is informed about a possible allegation, they should immediately notify the Headteacher.

If the allegation is made against the Headteacher or CEO it should be reported to the appropriate person on the Trust Board.

The Headteacher or the appropriate person on the Trust Board should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day, if they receive an allegation which suggests that the person may:

- Have behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- Have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child

There should be no time delay and care should be taken to maintain confidentiality as in child protection procedures. **The Trust will not commence any investigation until appropriate advice is received from the LADO, particularly in the light of any potential investigation by the police.**

The Trust will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant the employee being suspended or whether alternative arrangements can be put in place until the allegation or concern is resolved. No action should be taken without consulting the Trust HR Manager.

3. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED.

The Headteacher/the Trust Board should ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times. The Trust will make all reasonable efforts to guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The alleged victim/witness contact etc. should not be interviewed.

4. SUPPORT FOR MEMBER OF STAFF

Obviously, any allegation can cause distress to the alleged perpetrator and indeed to the Trust/community. The Trust will provide effective support to anyone facing an allegation and provide a named contact if the employee is suspended. A letter will be sent to the employee outlining the procedure in these circumstances and detailing who they may contact and how to access support. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will advise the Headteacher where appropriate, if it is felt necessary to find external support for the employee. Employees are advised to seek advice from their professional association.

5. ALLEGATION AGAINST HEADTEACHER OR CEO

When the allegation is made about the Headteacher or CEO, contact should be made with the appropriate person on the Trust Board:

- That person will contact the Headteacher or CEO to inform them of the allegation.
- If the allegation is deemed to be linked to inappropriate behaviour the Chair of the Trust Board will undertake the investigation in conjunction with an appropriate person from the Trust or an external body/person if thought appropriate by the Trust.
- If the allegation is deemed to be Child Protection the normal procedures will apply.

- The appropriate person on the Trust Board will consider the need for suspension in consultation with HR and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

6. THE ROLE OF THE TRUST BOARD

Issues relating to allegations are of a confidential nature in accordance with the Trust's Child Protection Procedures. Therefore, information should only be shared on a "need to know" basis.

For example, it may be appropriate for the Headteacher to share some issues about suspension /impact on the school community with the Chair of the Board. Other members of the Board should not become involved in, nor have details linked to the allegations. Any such knowledge may prejudice their possible involvement in any future appropriate action, which the Board may be advised to take. In addition, the Board has to be clear that it is not taking any action that would prejudice the position of the individual under investigation.

When the allegation refers to the Headteacher or CEO, the appropriate person on the Board will be involved, as outlined above in Section 2.10. When the outcomes of the investigation are known and it is appropriate for the Board to deal with the matter, the Chair of the Board will then decide the course of action to be taken. This will be within the Trust's procedures. No other members of the Board should be involved in any proceedings before this stage. In the event of the Chair being unavailable for whatever reasons, the Vice Chair would be expected to act on behalf of the Board.

7. GUIDANCE FOR SAFER WORKING PRACTICE FOR ADULTS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

To assist those who work with students at the Trust to help set appropriate boundaries in their dealings with students they are referred to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education 2019.

Other useful Guidance is available
 Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018
 Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021

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