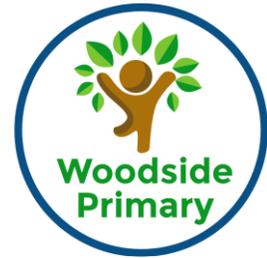


# Woodside Primary School

## Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy



### **Introduction**

Woodside Primary School takes its responsibility of care for its pupils seriously and fully endorses the principles and practice of Every Child Matters. We recognise that any possibility that a member of staff may have hurt a student must be investigated thoroughly, but in a way that does not prejudice either the student or the member of staff. Any investigation of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff must follow the objective, professional standards and routines described here.

### **Initial Allegation made to the School**

Any allegation of abuse by a teacher on a student must be reported to the Headteacher/Designated Person. Should the initial allegation first be made to any other member of staff then that member of staff must either request the person raising the allegation to report it to the Headteacher or if that is not possible to pass details of the allegation to the Headteacher immediately.

Should the allegation be made against the Headteacher than this should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Governors, Mike Nelson, immediately which the CoG will report to the Link Officer. Should the allegation meet any of the following criteria then the Headteacher should report the allegation to the local authority designated officer the same day that the allegation is received: Allegations may include:

A teacher or member of staff (including a volunteer) in a 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 s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

### **Initial Consideration**

The Headteacher will discuss the matter with the local authority designated officer and provide any further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The Headteacher should not investigate the allegation at this stage.

The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the local authority designated officer will immediately refer to children's social care and ask for a strategy discussion in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children to be convened straight away.

In those circumstances the strategy discussion should include the local authority designated officer and the Headteacher. If there is not cause to suspect that "significant harm" is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the local authority designated officer should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed.

That discussion will also involve the school and any other agencies involved with the child.

### **Action following initial consideration**

Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the Headteacher to deal with it. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Headteacher should institute appropriate action within three working days.

If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days. Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action the Headteacher should discuss who will undertake that with the local authority designated officer. The investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the employer within 10 working days.

On receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Headteacher and chair of governors should consult the local authority designated officer, and decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed within two working days. If a hearing is needed it should be held within 15 working days.

In any case in which children's social care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children are in need of protection, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors should take account of any relevant information obtained in the course of those enquiries when considering disciplinary action.

The local authority designated officer should continue to liaise with the school to monitor progress of the case and provide advice or support when required or requested.

In some cases it may be that the accused party needs support. We will always endeavor to give this due consideration. Anonymity will be preserved wherever appropriate and possible. It may that a member of staff is placed on paid leave while an investigation is underway but the school will adopt the ethos of 'innocent until proven guilty'.

#### **Case subject to police investigation**

If the police and/or CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a Court, the police should wherever possible aim to pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the Headteacher within three working days of the decision. In those circumstances the Headteacher and the local authority designated officer should proceed as described above.

In any case in which children's social care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children are in need of protection, any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case should also be passed to the school and the Headteacher should request this information.

#### **Referral to DCFS**

If on conclusion of the case the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person ceases to provide his or her services, the school should consult the local authority designated officer about whether a referral to DCFS is required. If a referral is appropriate the report should be made within one month.

This policy has been updated in line with the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*.

Contact details for Chair of Governors: Mike Nelson: [Mike.Nelson@woodside.halton.sch.uk](mailto:Mike.Nelson@woodside.halton.sch.uk)