

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL



MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF POLICY

Date agreed	October 2025
Next review date	October 2026

Holy Family Catholic School
Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff Policy
(Reviewed October 2025 – In line with KCSIE 2025)

1. Introduction

Holy Family Catholic School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and expects all staff, volunteers, and visitors to share this commitment. This policy sets out how the school manages and responds to allegations or concerns raised about individuals who work with children in any capacity, including staff, supply teachers, volunteers, governors, contractors, or anyone working on behalf of the school. Procedures are consistent with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025) Part 4* and local safeguarding partnership guidance. All allegations and concerns will be handled fairly, consistently, and with transparency, ensuring that the welfare of the child remains the paramount consideration.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of the school (permanent, temporary, and supply).
- Volunteers, contractors, and visitors working on behalf of the school.
- Governors and anyone acting in a professional capacity on school premises.

It covers:

- Allegations that may meet the **harm threshold**; and
- **Low-level concerns** that do not meet that threshold but may indicate inappropriate, unprofessional, or unsafe conduct.
-

3. Reporting Allegations

All staff, volunteers, and contractors must immediately report any allegation or concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the 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.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside of school – “transferable risk”).
-

Reporting procedure:

- Allegations about a member of staff, volunteer, or contractor must be reported **immediately to the Headteacher**.
- Allegations about the **Headteacher** must be reported to the **Chair of Governors**.
- The person receiving the concern must not investigate but must record the details accurately and report without delay.
-

The **Headteacher (or Chair of Governors)** acts as the **case manager** and will contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** within one working day to discuss the allegation and agree next steps.

Section One: Allegations that May Meet the Harm Threshold

4. Initial Response

The Headteacher (case manager) will:

- Obtain a written record of the allegation and any relevant details.
- Take steps to ensure the safety of the child or children involved.
- Inform the LADO immediately.
- Not discuss the allegation with the individual concerned until advice is received from the LADO.

No one within the school will make their own decision about whether an allegation meets the harm threshold; this will be done in consultation with the LADO.

5. No Further Action

If, following initial discussions with the LADO, it is agreed that the allegation does not meet the threshold for formal investigation, the case manager will record this decision and the rationale, and take appropriate internal action if required (e.g. training or supervision).

6. Further Enquiries

If the LADO determines that the allegation requires further investigation, a **strategy meeting** will be convened with relevant agencies to plan how the investigation will proceed. The case manager will participate and follow the multi-agency plan.

7. Supply Teachers and Contractors

If the person subject to the allegation is a supply teacher or contractor:

- The Headteacher will liaise with the LADO and the employer or agency.
- The school will take responsibility for ensuring that investigations are handled properly and that the individual is not used again pending the outcome.
- Agencies and schools must cooperate fully to ensure all information is shared.

8. Individuals and Organisations Using School Premises

If an allegation is made against an individual not employed by the school but using school premises (e.g. community group or lettings user), the Headteacher will ensure the allegation is referred to the LADO and to the individual's employer or organisation.

9. Governors

If the allegation concerns a governor, it will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who will liaise with the LADO. If it concerns the Chair, the matter will be referred directly to the LADO.

10. Suspension

Suspension will not be automatic and will only be considered if:

- There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of harm;

- The allegation warrants police investigation; or
- It is likely that the allegation, if substantiated, would lead to dismissal.

Suspension decisions will be made following discussion with the LADO and, where appropriate, the local authority HR adviser.

11. Supporting Those Involved

The school has a duty of care to all involved.

- The employee will be informed of the allegation as soon as advised by the LADO.
- Support will be provided through the school's HR service or other suitable means.
- Children and families involved will be offered appropriate pastoral support.

12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All information will be treated confidentially and shared only with those who need to know. Breaches of confidentiality may prejudice investigations and will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

13. Allegation Outcomes

Following investigation, outcomes will be classified as:

- **Substantiated** – sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- **Malicious** – sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and deliberate intent to cause harm.
- **False** – sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated** – insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation.
- **Unfounded** – no evidence or proper basis to support the allegation.

If the allegation is substantiated, the case manager will consider referral to the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** and, if applicable, the **Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)**.

14. Following a Substantiated Allegation

The school will work with the LADO and other agencies to review what actions are necessary to ensure the ongoing safety of children.

15. Following a Criminal Investigation or Prosecution

The case manager will continue to work with the LADO and the police to ensure appropriate internal action is taken after criminal proceedings conclude.

16. Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, False, or Malicious Allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately false or malicious, the school will consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made the allegation, in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy.

17. Returning to Work

Where an individual is cleared to return to work, the Headteacher will ensure support and reintegration measures are in place, such as a phased return and regular supervision.

18. Managing Resignations and Settlement Agreements

If an individual resigns during an investigation, the process will continue to completion. “Settlement” or “compromise” agreements that prevent full consideration of the allegation or referral to the DBS/TRA will not be used.

19. Record Keeping

Records will be kept of all allegations, investigations, decisions, and outcomes. These will be retained on the individual’s confidential personnel file in line with data protection requirements.

20. References

Only substantiated allegations that meet the harm threshold will be referred to in employment references.

21. Learning Lessons

After any case, the Headteacher and LADO will review procedures to ensure continued good practice and identify any training needs.

22. Non-Recent Allegations

All allegations relating to incidents which occurred in the past will be referred to the police and LADO, regardless of how long ago they occurred.

Section Two: Concerns That Do Not Meet the Harm Threshold (Low-Level Concerns)

23. Policy Statement

Holy Family Catholic School is committed to creating a culture of openness, trust, and professional accountability in which all concerns about adults working with children are shared responsibly, recorded, and dealt with appropriately.

Low-level concerns are concerns that do not meet the harm threshold but may indicate that an adult's conduct is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct or does not meet expected professional standards.

Examples may include:

- Inappropriate use of language, tone, or humour.
- Being over-familiar or having personal contact with pupils outside school.
- Minor breaches of confidentiality.
- Any behaviour that could be misinterpreted by others.

24. Sharing Low-Level Concerns

- All low-level concerns should be reported to the Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The Headteacher is the ultimate decision-maker on whether the concern meets the harm threshold and will consult with the DSL or LADO if uncertain.
- Low-level concerns about supply staff or contractors will be shared with their employer or agency to identify potential patterns of behaviour.

25. Recording Low-Level Concerns

All low-level concerns will be recorded confidentially and include:

- The details of the concern,
- Context and actions taken, and
- The rationale for decisions and next steps.

Records will be retained in accordance with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

26. Monitoring and Patterns

The Headteacher and DSL will review low-level concerns regularly to identify any patterns or emerging issues. Where a pattern suggests more serious misconduct, advice will be sought from the LADO.

27. References

Low-level concerns will not be referred to in employment references unless they are substantiated and meet the harm threshold.

28. Culture and Training

Holy Family Catholic School promotes a culture of vigilance and professional integrity through:

- Annual safeguarding and code of conduct training.
- Encouraging staff to share concerns early.

- Reinforcing that reporting a concern reflects professional responsibility and not disloyalty.

29. Review and Oversight

This policy is reviewed annually and whenever new safeguarding guidance is issued. The Headteacher and Governing Body ensure all staff understand and implement the policy effectively.

Date: October 2025

Next Review: October 2026