



# Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy

Signed by headteacher: *A Hughes*

Signed by Chair of Governors: *David Bradley*

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# Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy

## 1. Statement of Intent

Bitterne Manor Primary School takes its responsibility to safeguard pupils extremely seriously. Any allegation that an adult working in or on behalf of the school has harmed, or may pose a risk of harm to, a child will be dealt with swiftly, fairly, and in accordance with statutory guidance.

We will ensure that:

- Children are protected and supported
- Allegations are managed in line with **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025**
- Staff are treated fairly and offered appropriate welfare support
- All cases are referred to the **Southampton City Council LADO** without delay where required

This policy applies to concerns or allegations against adults working in or on behalf of the school in a paid or unpaid capacity.

## 2. Legal Framework

This policy is written in line with:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)**
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

It should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## 3. Scope of This Policy (Harm Threshold)

This policy covers **allegations that meet the harm threshold**, meaning it is alleged that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- Engaged in behaviour outside school that presents **transferable risk**

Where there is any doubt about threshold, advice will be sought from the LADO.

## 4. Low Level Concerns

Bitterne Manor Primary School recognises that not all concerns about adults working with children meet the harm threshold set out in this policy.

A low-level concern is any behaviour that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including conduct outside of school, but does not meet the criteria for an allegation requiring referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples may include:

- inappropriate or over-familiar communication with pupils
- minor boundary breaches
- behaviour that could be interpreted as favouritism
- failure to follow professional expectations

Any behaviour that is inconsistent with the school's Staff Code of Conduct, including minor boundary breaches, will be treated as a low-level concern and should be reported to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors where appropriate). Such concerns will be recorded and reviewed to identify any emerging patterns.

Where necessary, concerns may also be addressed through the school's disciplinary procedures, even where external agencies are not involved, in order to maintain the highest safeguarding and professional standards.

### 5. Adults Covered by This Policy

This includes allegations against:

- All school employees
- Supply teachers and agency staff
- Volunteers
- Governors
- Contractors, visitors and external providers

### 6. Local Southampton Safeguarding Contacts

Bitterne Manor Primary School follows the procedures of the **Southampton Children's Resource Service**.

#### Key Southampton contacts:

Service	Contact
Children's Resource Service (CRS)	02380 83 2300 / 02380 23 3344
Southampton City Council LADO	023 8091 5535 / 07500 952 037 E-mail: lado@southampton.gov.uk
Police Emergency	999
Police Non-Emergency	101
Children's Resource Service Guidance	<a href="https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/report-a-concern-about-a-child/childrens-resource-service/">https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/report-a-concern-about-a-child/childrens-resource-service/</a>
SCC LADO Guidance	<a href="https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/activities-and-support-for-families/safeguarding-children/">https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/activities-and-support-for-families/safeguarding-children/</a>

### 7. Roles and Responsibilities

#### Headteacher (Case Manager)

The Headteacher will lead all allegations unless:

- The allegation concerns the Headteacher
- There is a conflict of interest

#### Chair of Governors

The Chair will act as case manager where the allegation concerns the Headteacher.

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will ensure pupils are safeguarded and will liaise with CRS, police, SSP and the LADO.

## Southampton City Council LADO

The LADO provides advice and oversight and ensures appropriate investigation arrangements are in place. They do not investigate directly.

## 8. Reporting Allegations

All allegations must be reported immediately:

- Allegations against staff → Headteacher
- Allegations against Headteacher → Chair of Governors
- If conflict exists → report directly to Southampton LADO

No staff member should investigate or question pupils before referral.

## 9. Initial Response and Referral to LADO

If a child is in immediate danger:

- Call Police (999)
- Contact CRS immediately

The case manager will make a **basic factual enquiry** (without investigation) and contact the LADO **without delay**.

The case manager and LADO will decide whether:

- No further action is required
- A strategy discussion is needed
- Police/CRS investigation is required
- School disciplinary procedures should begin

If an adult resigns, ceases to provide their services, or withdraws from the role during the process, the school will continue to liaise with the LADO and complete the appropriate procedures, including making any necessary referrals.

## 10. Allegations Management Meetings

The Southampton LADO may arrange an **allegations management meeting**, which supports information sharing and coordinated planning across agencies.

## 11. Confidentiality and Reporting Restrictions

- Allegations will be handled on a strict need-to-know basis
- Reporting restrictions under Education Act 2002 apply
- Staff, parents and pupils must not publish information
- The school will not provide the media with details

Breaches may lead to disciplinary action.

## 12. Suspension

Suspension is **not automatic**.

It will only be considered if:

- A child is at risk
- The allegation may lead to dismissal
- The investigation cannot proceed fairly otherwise

Alternatives include redeployment or increased supervision.

Final suspension decisions rest with the Governing Board.

### 13. Supporting Those Involved

#### Pupils

Child welfare remains paramount.

#### Parents/Carers

Parents will be informed unless doing so increases risk or compromises investigations.

#### Staff Subject to Allegations

Staff will receive:

- Named school contact
- Union representation access
- Occupational health or counselling support

### 14. Outcomes

Outcomes will be classified as:

Outcome	Definition
Substantiated	Sufficient evidence proves allegation
Malicious	Deliberate attempt to deceive
False	Evidence proves allegation untrue
Unsubstantiated	Insufficient evidence either way
Unfounded	No evidence or basis

### 15. DBS and TRA Referrals

A referral must be made to DBS where:

- A member of staff is dismissed or resigns due to safeguarding concerns
- The school believes they pose a risk

Teaching staff may also be referred to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

### 16. Record Keeping and Retention

A record will include:

- Allegation details
- Decisions and actions
- Outcome classification
- Referral actions
- Reference disclosure requirement

False or malicious allegations will be removed from personnel records.

All other records retained until:

- Normal pension age OR
- 10 years from allegation date

## 17. References

Bitterne Manor Primary School will ensure that references are managed in line with **KCSIE 2025**.

Only **substantiated safeguarding allegations** that meet the harm threshold will be included in references.

Allegations that are found to be:

- False
- Malicious
- Unfounded
- Unsubstantiated

will not be referred to in employer references.

## 18. Non-Recent Allegations

Non-recent allegations by former pupils must still be reported to:

- Police
- Southampton LADO

Abuse can be disclosed regardless of when it occurred.

## 19. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Board in line with:

- KCSIE updates
- SSCP procedures
- Lessons learned from cases