

WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Managing allegations against staff

Policy statement:

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that, if an allegation is made against a member of the team or anyone volunteering with us, the allegation is dealt with fairly, effectively and within a reasonable timescale.

Types of allegations:

- Allegations may arise in a number of ways. For example, it could be a report from a child, a complaint from a parent, or a concern raised by another adult within the nursery. An allegation might concern someone's behaviour or actions either at the nursery or within their family or private life.

What to do if an allegation is made against someone working with children

- The person receiving the allegation should treat the matter seriously. It is important not to make assumptions or offer alternative explanations. It is essential to act quickly and effectively if an allegation is made.
- Any concerns should be considered within the context of the four types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect) and also in relation to inappropriate relationships between children and adults who are in a position of trust with them. No distinction should be made between paid or unpaid staff, volunteers or contractors.
- An accurate written record should be made of the allegation to include time, date, place and any witnesses and should include, as much as possible, the child's or adult's words.
- The matter should be reported to the head of school/Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in her absence to the principal or Advisory Chair) who should make a decision about whether or not the allegation indicates that someone 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, or
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.
- The DSL should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). (It is important that you do not do anything that might impede any investigation or disciplinary actions.)
- The DSL should also contact Ofsted within 24 to 48 hours. (Legally we are obliged to contact Ofsted within 14 days, but best practice dictates that we inform Ofsted more quickly.)

- The allegation might indicate the need for: a police investigation of a possible criminal offence; Children's Social Care enquiries and assessment to decide if a child is in need of protection or services; and employer consideration of standards of conduct or suitability following a disciplinary process.
- In general parents or carers should be told as soon as possible, especially if the child is injured or requires medical treatment. The child should be helped to understand the processes involved.
- The person against whom the allegation is made should be informed, provided the DSL has sought advice from the LADO beforehand that it is right to do so.
- Records of the events should be locked away in the lockable filing cabinet in the office and will be strictly limited to relevant staff and external professionals who need to know to protect the child, assist enquiries or manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.
- The member of staff or volunteer who is subject of the allegation should be treated fairly and honestly, helped to understand the concerns expressed, the process being followed and any outcomes of the process.
- While the investigation is ongoing, the Owners will make a judgement (with due reference to the LADO) to decide if the member of staff should be:
 - Suspended on full-pay
 - Moved to a different area in the nursery
 - Allowed to continue working as normal.
- At the end of the investigation, professional judgement usually indicates one of the following outcomes for the allegation:
 - Substantiated - supported by evidence or proof.
 - Unsubstantiated - insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation; this does not imply either guilt or innocence.
 - Unfounded - either a mistake or misinterpretation was made, or
 - Deliberately invented or malicious allegation - evidence is needed to prove this intention.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Safeguarding Lead must make a referral to the DBS as well as to any relevant regulatory body if the person has caused harm, or poses a future risk of harm, to vulnerable groups, including children. The LADO should be contacted for advice before referral to the DBS.

This policy was adopted on dated: 11th September 2025

Date last reviewed: 11th March 2026

Date to be reviewed: 12th September 2026