Managing Allegations Policy

Approved by the Headteacher and Governing Body on 21.09.2026
Reviewed: 09.26
To be reviewed: 09.28

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against any employee or visitor who works with children at St. Vincent's, in any setting, is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, and in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who may be the subject of an allegation.

This policy complies with the framework guidance about managing cases of allegations of abuse, against people who work with children, as set out in "Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children".

This guidance should also be used when allegations are made against a person who works with children and their own family has been subject to child protection investigations or criminal prosecution.

The framework for managing allegations set out in this guidance applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. It also caters for cases of allegations that might indicate a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children 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 towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

There may be up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- enquiries and assessment by Children's Services about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services;
- consideration by the Headteacher of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Procedure

Some cases may need to be reported to Ofsted, DfE or DBS about possible sanctions against an individual.

- All allegations should be reported immediately, to the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is unavailable the Deputy Headteacher should be informed.
- The Chair of Governors or Chief Executive, in a case where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation or concern.
- The Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Chief Executive will alert anybody else who must be notified e.g. the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Supporting those involved

- Parents or carers of the child/children involved will be informed about the allegation as soon as possible. They will also be kept informed regarding progress of the case, and outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution.
- This includes the outcome of any disciplinary process.

  (NB. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, will not normally be disclosed, but those concerned should be told the outcome.)
- In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, Children's Services, or the police as appropriate, will consider what support the child involved may need.
- The Headteacher will keep the person, who is the subject of the allegations, informed of the progress of the case, and arrange to provide appropriate support to the individual whilst the case is ongoing if the person is suspended; the Headteacher will also make arrangements to keep the individual informed about developments in the workplace. If the

person is a member of a union or professional association he/she should be advised to contact that body at the outset.

Confidentiality

At all times every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality.

Resignations and "Compromise agreements"

The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, takes early retirement, or ceases to provide their services, will not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with procedures.

Every effort will be made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible, the person will be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it, but the process of recording the allegation, any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated, on the basis of all the information available, will continue, even if the person does not co-operate.

By the same token, so called "compromise agreements" by which a person agrees to resign or retire, the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, will not be used in these cases. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where appropriate.

The Headteacher has a statutory duty to make a referral to ISA.

Record keeping

- A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and details of any action taken and decisions reached, will be recorded and placed on a person's confidential personnel file. A copy will be given to the individual.
- In accordance with DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) Information should be retained on file for the time specified.

Timescales

- It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. Every effort will be made to manage cases to avoid any unnecessary delay. However, the time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness, and complexity of the allegation.

Oversight and Monitoring

- The LA named senior officer has overall responsibility for dealing with allegations; resolving any inter-agency issues, and liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), police and other agencies. The senior officer will also monitor the progress and ensure that the allegation is dealt with as quickly as possible, consistently and fairly.
- Procedures and policies within school identify the Chief Executive or the Chair of Governors as a designated alternative person to whom reports should be made in the absence of the Headteacher or in cases where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation or concern.

Initial Considerations

- Procedures will be applied with common sense and judgement.
- Serious allegations may require immediate referral to Children's Services and the police for investigation. However, the school recognises the need to ensure that less serious allegations are equally seen to be followed up. The home LADO should be informed of all serious allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to meet the criteria outlined within the framework. This includes allegations made within the persons own family.

The LADO will also be informed of any allegations that are made directly to the police.

- If the allegation is about physical contact, the fact that some people who work with children, are entitled to use reasonable force to control children as outlined in physical intervention procedures in certain circumstances, will be considered.
- If the complaint or allegation is such that it is clear that investigation by police and/or enquiries by Children's Services are not necessary, the LADO will discuss next steps with

the Headteacher. The nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available will determine which of the possible options is most appropriate.

Suspension

- The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person will be effectively evaluated and managed; in some cases that may require the Headteacher to consider suspending the person, until the case is resolved.
- Suspension will be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect that a child is at risk of harm, that the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or that it is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person will not be suspended automatically.

Monitoring progress

- The home LADO will regularly monitor the progress of cases via review strategy meetings with the LSCB Monitoring Group, or by liaising with the police and/or Children's Services colleagues, or the employer, as appropriate. **Reviews will be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals depending on the complexity of the case.**
- If a police investigation is required, the police should also set a target date for reviewing the progress of the investigation and consulting the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), to consider whether to charge the individual, continue to investigate or to close the investigation. Wherever possible that review should take place **no later than 4 weeks** after the initial action meeting. Dates for subsequent reviews, at fortnightly or monthly intervals, should be set at the meeting, if the investigation continues.

Action following a criminal investigation or a prosecution

- The police or the CPS will inform the Principal and LADO immediately when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial are complete, or if it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or not to prosecute after the person has been charged. In those circumstances the Principal and the LADO will discuss whether any further action is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or Children's Services will inform that decision. The range of options open will depend upon the circumstances of the case and consideration will need to take account of the result of

the police investigation or trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

Action on conclusion of a case

- If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed, the employer ceases to use the person's services or the person resigns/retires, the Headteacher and the Chief Executive will discuss with the LADO whether referral to DBS is required and the form and content of a referral.
- Also, if the person is subject to registration or regulation by a professional body or regulator, the designated officer will advise on whether a referral to that body is appropriate.
- If it is decided, on the conclusion of the case, that a person who has been suspended can return to work the Headteacher will consider how best to support and facilitate that. Depending upon the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor, to provide assistance and support, in the short term, may be appropriate. The Headteacher should also consider how the person's contact with the child/children or staff who made the allegation, can best be managed if they are still in the workplace.

Summary of Process

Allegation made to Headteacher

- The allegation should be reported to the Headteacher immediately, unless that person is the subject of the allegation, in which case it should be reported to the Chair of Governors or Chief Executive.
- If the allegation meets any of the criteria set out within the framework, the Headteacher will report it to the LADO within 1 working day.

Allegation made to the Police or Children's Services

- If an allegation is made directly to the police, the officer who receives it should report it to the force designated liaison officer without delay and the designated liaison officer should, in turn, inform the LADO straight away.
- Similarly if the allegation is made directly to Children's Services the person who receives it should report it to the LADO without delay.

Initial consideration

- The LADO will discuss the matter with the Headteacher and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence/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 LADO will immediately refer to Children's Services and ask for a strategy discussion to be convened straight away. In those circumstances, the strategy discussion should include the LADO and the Headteacher or his/her representative.
- If there is not cause to suspect that "harm" is an issue, but that a criminal offence might have been committed, the LADO should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion, should also involve the Headteacher and any other agency involved with the child.

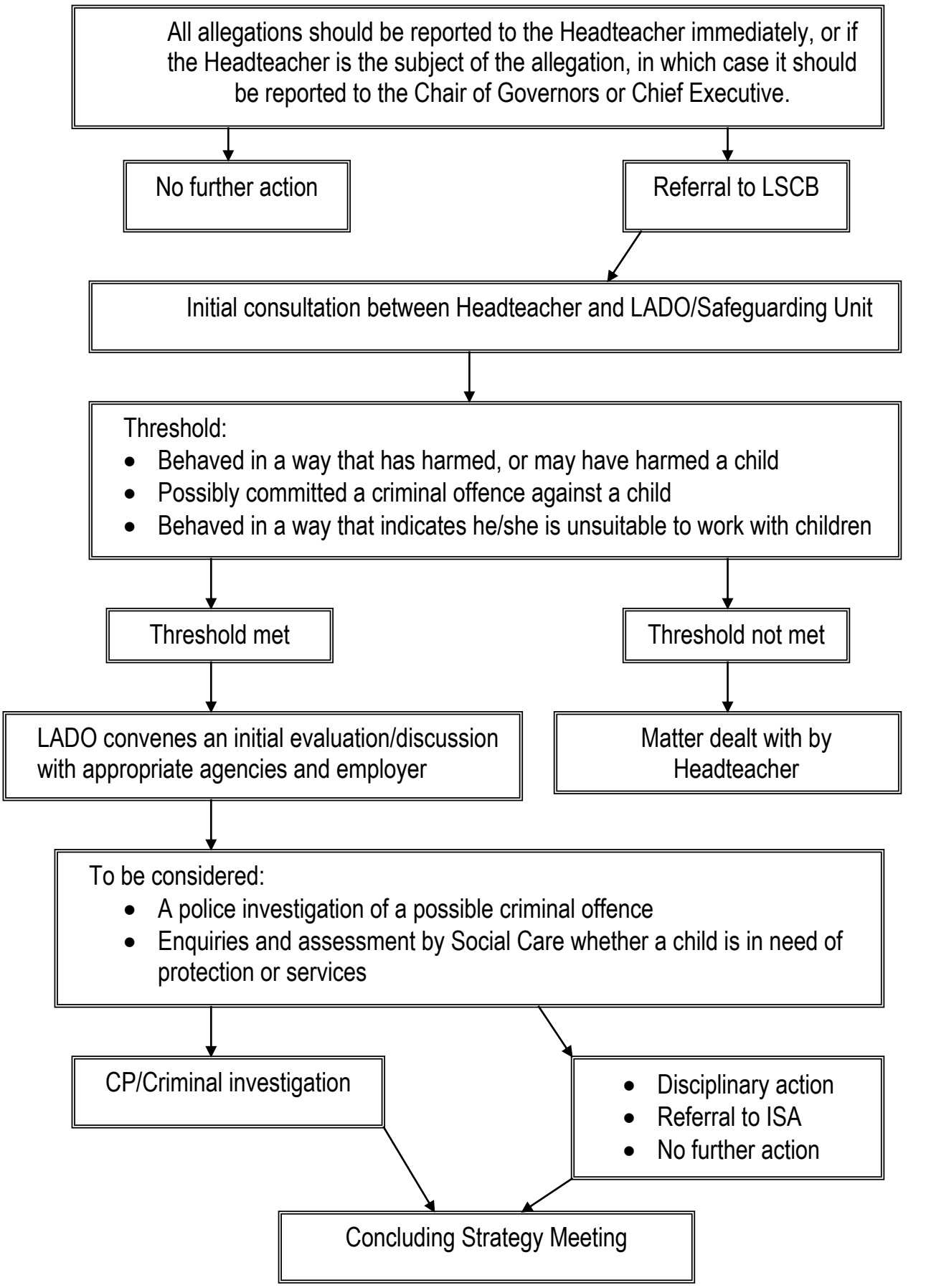
Action following initial consideration

- Where the initial evaluation decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it will be dealt with by the Headteacher. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be instituted **within 3 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 Principal will discuss who will undertake that, with the LADO. The investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the Headteacher **within 10 working days**.
- Upon receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Headteacher will decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed **within 2 working days,** and if a hearing is needed it will be held **within 15 working days**.
- For any case in which Children's Services has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child/children are in need of protection, the Headteacher will take account of any relevant information obtained, in the course of those enquiries, when considering disciplinary action.
- The Headteacher and the LADO will liaise to monitor progress of the case and provide advice /support when required/requested.

Case subject to police investigation

- If a criminal investigation is required, the police will aim to complete their enquiries as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation and will keep the progress of the case under review. They should, at the outset, set a target date for reviewing progress of the investigation and consulting the CPS about whether to proceed with the investigation, charge the individual with an offence, or close the case. Wherever possible that review should take place **no later than 4 weeks** after the initial evaluation and, if the decision is to continue to investigate the allegation, dates for subsequent reviews should be set at that point. (It is up to the police to consult the CPS about the evidence that will need to be obtained in order to charge a person with an offence at any stage.).
- If the police and/or CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence, decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a Court, the police should pass all the information they have, which may be relevant to a disciplinary case, to the employer without delay. In those circumstances the Catholic Blind Institute (CBI) and the LADO should proceed as described above.
- If the person is convicted of an offence the police should also inform the employer straight away, so that appropriate action can be taken.

Referral to ISA

- If the allegation is substantiated and on conclusion of the case the Headteacher dismisses the person, ceases to use the person's services, or the person ceases to provide his/her services, or if retirement is agreed, the Headteacher will consult the LADO about whether a referral to the DBS and/or to a professional or regulatory body is required. If a referral is appropriate the report should be made within one month.
- The Protection of Children Act 1999 ensures that any person included in the POCA List is also barred from working in a child care position in the education sector i.e. the persons name will also be included in List 99 - the list maintained by ISA which prevents individuals from carrying out work to which Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 applies.

Procedures for Managing Allegations against Professionals who work with Children