



Managing Allegations Made by a Child Policy

Updated September 2025

1. Purpose

Children at Tree of Life must always feel listened to, respected, and safe.

When a child makes an allegation — whether about an adult, another child or someone outside the setting — it must be handled sensitively, professionally and in accordance with safeguarding law.

This policy supports:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures

2. When This Policy Applies

This policy covers allegations made by a child concerning:

- A member of staff, volunteer, contractor, therapist or supply worker
- Another child (child-on-child abuse)
- A family member or person outside the setting
- The proprietor/governance

3. Key Principles When a Child Shares a Concern

- A child will always be taken seriously
- Children are never blamed for speaking up
- Children are always protected from further harm
- Information is kept confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only
- Professionals must act immediately

4. Immediate Response by Any Adult

If a child shares something concerning, the adult must:

- ✓ Stay calm and supportive
- ✓ Listen carefully — do not question repeatedly
- ✓ Reassure the child they have done the right thing
- ✓ Make brief, factual notes (not opinions or assumptions)
- ✓ Report immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL

The adult **must not**:

- X Promise confidentiality
- X Investigate
- X Ask leading questions
- X Confront anyone involved

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Responsibilities

When the DSL receives an allegation from a child, they must:

- Listen to initial information (without probing)
- Record key facts (time, date, people involved)
- Assess whether immediate protection is needed
- Contact statutory services where required:
 - Children's Social Care
 - LADO (if allegation against adult)
 - Police (if criminal concern)
- Ensure the child's wishes and feelings are considered
- Provide emotional support and reassurance to the child

6. Allegations Made About an Adult

If a child says an adult has harmed or may harm them, the DSL must follow:

KCSIE Part 4 — Allegations Against Staff Procedure, including:

- Contacting LADO within 1 working day
- Ensuring the child is safe
- Keeping detailed records
- Ensuring the adult is treated fairly

The child is never asked to confront the adult.

7. Allegations Made About Another Child (Child-on-Child Abuse)

Tree of Life recognises:

- Harm can be caused by other children
- Children of any gender can experience abuse

- Allegations must be treated with the same seriousness

The DSL will:

- Support both children
- Contact children's social care if required
- Consider police involvement where relevant
- Put safety plans in place (supervision, separation, risk reduction)
- Record all decisions

No child will be labelled as an "abuser" — the focus is on safety and support.

8. Allegations by a Child About Someone Outside School

If a child discloses harm by someone outside Tree of Life:

- DSL contacts children's social care
- DSL contacts police if criminal offence suspected
- DSL supports the child and family
- School does **not** investigate directly

9. Listening to the Child – What Happens Next

The child will be:

- 💡 Listened to (not interrogated)
- 🤝 Reassured that they were right to tell
- ❤️ Supported emotionally
- 🛡️ Protected from further harm

The DSL will explain (in age-appropriate terms):

- What will happen next
- Who may need to be told and why
- How they will be supported throughout

10. Confidentiality

- Information is shared only where necessary for safeguarding
- Child's name and details are not discussed with unconnected staff or pupils
- Data protection laws are followed

11. Records & Agreement with the Child

The DSL keeps accurate safeguarding records that include:

- Child's own words (where possible)
- Timeline of actions
- Decisions and reasons
- External agencies involved

Children will NEVER be asked to write statements.

12. Support for the Child

Support may include:

- 1-to-1 pastoral care
- Therapy/counselling referral
- Meetings with DSL
- Help understanding processes
- Support with emotions (fear, guilt, embarrassment, anxiety)

Support continues as long as the child needs it.

13. False or Malicious Allegations Made by a Child

Tree of Life understands:

- Children may express distress, trauma or unmet needs through untrue statements
- They must still be supported, not punished

Where professionals conclude an allegation was deliberately malicious:

- The DSL will work with family and support services
- Behaviour consequences may be considered in context, never as punishment for speaking up

14. Inclusion & Additional Needs

When a child with SEND or communication challenges makes an allegation:

- We use specialist communication approaches
- Advocate/independent support may be used
- Information is presented at appropriate pace and complexity

Their voice will never be dismissed because they communicate differently.

15. Cultural Sensitivity

Tree of Life respects:

- Cultural beliefs
- Family context
- Faith and identity

Safeguarding always takes priority while maintaining dignity and respect.

16. Review and Monitoring

This policy is:

- Reviewed annually
- Shared with all staff
- Promoted to pupils through safeguarding lessons
- Accessible in child-friendly versions on request

17. Safeguarding Training Requirements Linked to This Policy

- DSL/deputy DSL trained every 2 years, annually refreshed
- Staff complete annual safeguarding training
- Staff read KCSIE Part 1 annually and sign
- Staff trained in:
 - Child-on-child abuse
 - Managing disclosures
 - Recording concerns accurately
 - Prevent duty

18. Policy Summary – Child-Friendly Version

Tree of Life promises:

- **We will listen to you**
- **We will take you seriously**
- **It is ALWAYS right to tell us**
- **We will keep you safe**
- **You will not be blamed**
- **We will explain what happens next**