



## Managing Allegations Policy

Updated Sept 2025

### 1. Policy Statement

Tree of Life is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All concerns regarding adults working with children will be taken seriously and handled strictly in accordance with statutory guidance, including:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Part 4**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children**
- **Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) procedures**

This policy applies to all:

- Full- and part-time staff
- Supply staff
- Agency workers
- Volunteers
- Therapists and external professionals
- Contractors
- Governance/management committee members
- Proprietor

### 2. Scope

This document outlines procedures for:

1. Allegations which may meet the harm threshold (KCSIE Part 4, Section 1)
2. Low-level concerns (KCSIE Part 4, Section 2)

### 3. What is an “Allegation”? (Harm Threshold)

An allegation is where it is alleged that an adult working at Tree of Life has:

- Harmed a child
- 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 to children
- Behaved in a way (in or outside of work) that may pose a risk of harm to children

This includes concerns arising outside the workplace, online or in private settings.

#### **4. Reporting Allegations – ALL STAFF**

- Any allegation must be reported immediately to the Headteacher (or proprietor if allegation relates to Headteacher).
- If neither can be contacted, report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Staff must not investigate themselves.

If allegation relates to the Headteacher/Proprietor:

- Report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The DSL will record:

- Time/date of concern
- Reporting person
- Nature of allegation
- Factual account (no assumptions)

#### **5. DSL Responsibilities**

On receipt of an allegation, the DSL must:

- Ensure child's immediate safety
- Obtain brief written details (no questioning)
- Discuss with Headteacher
- Inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day
- Follow LADO advice regarding:
  - Initial assessment
  - Possible strategy meeting
  - Police involvement

The DSL must not investigate before LADO advice is received.

#### **6. Headteacher / Proprietor Responsibilities**

The Headteacher/Proprietor must:

- Take all allegations seriously

- Contact LADO within 1 working day
- Attend strategy meetings as required
- Ensure child protection is prioritised
- Make decisions regarding suspension after LADO consultation
- Maintain confidentiality and record keeping
- Ensure support is available to all involved
- Ensure communication with agencies is timely and accurate

## 7. Contacting the LADO

Tree of Life will contact the LADO within 1 working day where allegations meet the harm threshold.

No internal action (such as suspension, investigation or disciplinary) will take place without LADO direction.

## 8. Suspension

Suspension is not automatic and will only be considered if:

- A child is at risk of harm
- The allegation is serious enough to justify removal from duties
- Not suspending could hinder the investigation

Alternative measures will be considered first (e.g., supervised duties).

Decisions on suspension will be made in consultation with LADO.

## 9. Contractors, Agency Workers and Therapy Providers

Where allegations are made against an external worker (e.g. agency staff, contractors, tutors, therapists):

- Tree of Life will report the allegation to:
  - The LADO
  - The employing agency/organisation
- Tree of Life retains responsibility for safeguarding procedures.

## 10. Malicious, Unfounded or Unsubstantiated Allegations

After investigation:

- **Malicious allegations** – no disciplinary action against the accused; incident may be referred to children's services regarding the accuser.
- **Unsubstantiated** – no evidence one way or the other.
- **Unfounded** – no evidence to support allegation.

Records will reflect the factual conclusion.

## 11. Record Keeping and Retention

- Detailed records will be kept of all allegations, actions and outcomes.
- Records relating to allegations will be retained until accused person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years - whichever is longer (statutory requirement).
- All records are confidential and stored securely.
- Children's records will note only that an allegation was made and concluded; no identifying detail of the adult will be included.

## 12. Supporting the Adult Subject to an Allegation

Tree of Life will:

- Inform the adult about the allegation and process (after LADO advice)
- Provide a named contact person for support
- Offer wellbeing and occupational support
- Record agreed communication plans regarding colleagues and parents

## 13. Low-Level Concerns (KCSIE 2022+)

### Definition

A low-level concern is any behaviour that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct and:

- Does not meet the harm threshold, but
- Raises concern about professional boundaries

Examples:

- Overly personal comments or contact
- Being alone with pupils without justification
- Sharing personal contact information
- Inappropriate joking
- Boundary-blurring outside work

### Reporting Low-Level Concerns

- All staff are duty-bound to report low-level concerns to the DSL.
- Reports can be made verbally or in writing.
- The DSL will record low-level concerns in a dedicated log.

### Recording and Monitoring

The DSL will:

- Analyse patterns/themes
- Consider whether repeated low-level concerns meet the harm threshold
- Seek LADO advice if escalation occurs

Low-level concerns help build and maintain a safer culture.

## **14. Training and Compliance (KCSIE Requirement)**

### **DSL Training**

- DSL and Deputy DSL receive appropriate training every 2 years
- Annual safeguarding refreshers undertaken
- DSL completes Prevent awareness training and disseminates learning

### **Staff Training**

- All staff receive induction safeguarding training
- Annual safeguarding training updates take place
- Records of safeguarding training and certificates are retained
- Staff read KCSIE Part 1 annually and sign to confirm understanding
- Training includes:
  - Child-on-child abuse
  - Neglect
  - Online safety
  - Prevent awareness
  - Low-level concerns procedure

Evidence of compliance is retained in the Single Central Record (SCR) and training log.

## **15. Conclusion**

Tree of Life has robust systems for managing allegations and low-level concerns. Our procedures prioritise:

- Child safety
- Transparency and accountability
- Fair treatment
- Due process under KCSIE Part 4