Houghton Primary School

*Working hard to achieve our best*

# Statement of Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse

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| Reviewed and adopted by: | FGB |
| Chair of governors | Sally Michaels |
| Headteacher | Andrew Spencer |
| Date of next review: | January 2025 |

**Statement of Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff and Volunteers**

1.1. This Statement of Procedure follows the DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education Part four: Allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers and other staff which is available from the school office.

It is about managing cases of allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It will be used in respect of all cases where it is alleged that an employee or volunteer, or a person with permission to be on the premises or carrying out any activity on behalf of the school has;

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, 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 they would pose a risk of harm to children, or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

This will include allegations involving any type of abuse or neglect, including inappropriate relationships with pupils, grooming behaviour of any kind, possession of indecent photographs or images of children and other offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

1.2. Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with as quickly as possible, in a fair, consistent and thorough way that provides effective protection for the child or children and at the same time deals fairly with the person who is the subject of the allegation.

1.3. It will also be used where low-level concerns are raised. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct,
- including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone contrary to school policy;

- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- Humiliating children.

## 2. Communicating the Procedures

2.1. All members of the senior management team and the designated safeguarding lead with responsibility for child protection have a responsibility to ensure that all employees know about and understand paragraph 3 below.

2.2. In accordance with the DfE Statutory Guidance, all employees should also read at least Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education, which contains safeguarding information for all employees.

2.3. All members of the senior management team and the designated safeguarding lead have a responsibility to be familiar with the Statutory Guidance in its entirety.

## 3. Immediately Reporting an Allegation

3.1. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. If you have a concern that a person (as described in paragraph 1.1 above) may have behaved inappropriately or you have received information that may constitute an allegation or a low-level concern you must:

- Report the facts to the Case Manager (Headteacher) as soon as possible. All concerns will be listened to and managed appropriately; do not withhold information however trivial it may seem
- In the absence of the Case Manager you must report the matter to the most senior person available who will carry out the Case Manager's duties in their absence. If the allegation concerns the Case Manager, then the matter must be reported to the Chair of Governors
- Make a signed and dated written record of your concerns, observations or the information you have received and give it to the Case Manager straight away
- Maintain strict confidentiality.

3.2. You must not:

- Attempt to deal with the situation yourself
- Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish or embellish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents

- Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality
- Take any action that might undermine any investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as disclosing confidential information, interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers.

3.3. In the event that an adult has found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards the adult should self-refer this to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. The governing body is committed to creating an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer.

## 4. Duties and Responsibilities of the Case Manager

4.1. The duties and responsibilities of the Case Manager are as described in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part four: Allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers and other staff.

4.2. The contact details for the Designated Officer for Safeguarding are:

head@houghton.cambs.sch.uk

## 5. Low-Level Concerns

5.1. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct,
- including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy;

- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- Humiliating children.

5.2. Low-level concerns will be dealt with in accordance with Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

5.3. All low-level concerns should initially be shared with the Headteacher.

5.4. Where concerns are raised the Headteacher will collect as much evidence as possible, this will usually involve speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- to the individual involved and any relevant witnesses.

5.5. The information collected will help to categorise the type of alleged behaviour and determine whether any further action needs to be taken.

5.6. All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. The record will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and any action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concern(s) will also usually be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

5.7. Records of low-level concerns raised will be retained until both the pupil and member of staff have left the school.