



MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This policy should be read alongside the DFE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Local Safeguarding Children Board's policy and procedures.

The CEO is the designated case manager for allegations against all staff and volunteers.

A nominated trustee (chair of trustees) is the case manager for managing allegations against the CEO.

The Local Authority Designated Officer in Liverpool for other Local Authorities they can be contacted via Children's Services (MASH) on 01512333700.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all staff and volunteers in relation to the processes for managing allegations against adults working with children.

Key principles

- Any concerns about an adult's behaviour towards a child or concerns about someone's suitability to work with children, or behaviours that are inconsistent with Rotunda's code of conduct and guidance for safer working practices for working with children must be reported without delay in order to protect children. Rotunda will not delay in seeking advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer or making a referral to Children's Services or contacting the police.
- Rotunda will work in partnership with other agencies to ensure any allegation is resolved in a timely way.
- Rotunda is aware of its statutory responsibility to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or the National College for Teaching and Leadership when the outcome of a case requires this.
- In keeping with the DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education any reference, including an agreed reference as part of a settlement agreement, will always include any substantiated allegations, safeguarding concerns and a statement about someone's suitability to work with young people.
- The person should be given full opportunity to respond to the allegation and to participate in any investigation. The DfE is clear that compromise agreements where the person resigns and leaves with an agreed reference and the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action must not be used in cases of refusal to co-operate or resignation before the person's notice period expires. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate. Rotunda also has to investigate the matter in order to provide information to support any referral to the DBS or NCTL.
- Consideration will be given as to how best to support all parties.

- Careful consideration will be given to alternatives to suspending the member of staff.
- Rotunda is aware of its responsibility to maintain confidentiality and abide by the Education Act 2011 which places reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that might lead to the identification of a teacher until the person is charged or reporting restrictions are lifted. Rotunda should make parents aware of their responsibilities in respect of confidentiality. Once the matter is concluded, careful consideration will be given to any lessons that can be learnt in particular induction, ongoing training, supervision, policies and procedures.

Key procedures

- Any concerns about the behaviour of any adult working for Rotunda towards a child should be brought to the attention of the CEO and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. Concerns about the CEO should be directed to the nominated trustee (chair of trustees).
- Initial consideration should consider if the person may have:
 - 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; or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children.

Equally initial consideration may determine the concerns do not meet the above criteria and do not warrant a police investigation or enquires by Children's Services. There may be clear evidence from the outset the allegation is false, malicious or unfounded.

- Consideration should be given to immediately protecting the child and the need to contact the police.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer is the linchpin in the process and should be contacted without delay to discuss allegations against staff and volunteers. The L.A.D.O. will hold a strategy discussion with police and relevant agencies. The strategy discussion and subsequent strategy meetings will consider:
 - the case for suspension or alternatives to suspension
 - any investigation undertaken by police
 - any assessment being undertaken by Children's Services
 - the basis for when the employer can begin a disciplinary investigation
 - managing, sharing information and confidentiality issues
 - well-being and support needed for all parties
- All referrals to Children's Service should be made drawing upon the L.A.D.O. referral form.

- The Case Manager should seek advice from their HR Provider and the Senior School Improvement Officer for Safeguarding.
- When an allegation arises in an Early Years setting the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework may require the allegation to be reported to Ofsted (normally within 14 days).
- The L.A.D.O. will advise if the parents and member of staff can be informed of the allegation and exactly what information can be shared.
- At the point at which the member of staff is notified of the allegation they should be given information about the Managing Allegations Against Adults and Volunteers procedures and also a nominated member of staff to support them. They should be advised to seek Trade Union support and consideration should be given to their wellbeing and continued support. They should be given guidance about the process.
- The L.A.D.O. will advise how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip and whether it would be prudent to contact the Local Authority Press Office, and any information which might be reasonably given to the community to reduce speculation. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, staff and the child's family will be advised about the legislation on imposing restrictions which makes clear that the 'publication' of material that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation is prohibited.
- Rotunda will only begin a disciplinary investigation when advised by the L.A.D.O. and police that these processes can begin.
- Suspension is always a neutral act and should not be an automatic response. The decision to suspend a member of staff is the employer's only. However, the school will need to draw upon the advice of the L.A.D.O. and Police and, in keeping with the DFE guidance, record the reasons why suspension was chosen over other alternatives.
- The case manager (CEO or nominated trustee) will record all actions, discussions and decisions taken in respect of the allegation. They will need to attend strategy meetings chaired by the L.A.D.O. They may wish to be accompanied by their HR Provider.
- The DFE sets out the following definitions which should be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:
 - **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
 - **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
 - **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
 - **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

The DFE also state:

'Schools may wish to use the additional definition of 'unfounded' to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.'

- Rotunda will only include in references substantiated allegations.
- Rotunda will retain information about substantiated, false, unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations on personnel files.
- The record of the allegation will be retained until the member of staff's normal retirement age or for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.
- Rotunda will consider what support the member of staff, child and family need throughout the process. In cases of malicious allegations the school will consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate against the child or a referral to the police or Children's Services is required.
- On conclusion of the case the member of the staff will be given a copy of the outcome of the investigation and, where required, supported to return to work. The school has a legal duty to refer to the DBS in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. Rotunda will not enter into compromise/settlement agreements if a member of staff faces an allegation against them and the agreement prevents sharing concerns about someone's suitability to work with children and/or the member of staff refuses to cooperate with the investigation (refer to detail of DFE guidance). Rotunda would also still need to conclude its investigation and when required refer to the DBS for consideration of 'barring from working with children'.
- Rotunda has a responsibility to refer to the Secretary of State (National College for Teaching and Leadership) any teacher because of serious misconduct in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Consideration should also be given to how practices or procedures should be reviewed to help prevent similar events in the future, including the decision to suspend and the length of suspension.

Rotunda Policy Review Record

Reviewed by:	Approval date:	Review frequency:	Review date:	Signed:
Maxine Ennis	1 st March 2024	Annual	28 th February 2025	