



**Brentford School for Girls**

## **Allegations of Abuse against Staff Policy**

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## ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the School's Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Brentford School for Girls believes that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in our education setting should be dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed alongside the school's complaints procedure and child protection policy.

All staff and volunteers should understand what to do if they receive an allegation against another member of staff or they themselves have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff.

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer 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 which indicates he or she may or pose a risk of harm to children

This part of the guidance relates to members of staff and volunteers who are currently working in Brentford School for Girls regardless of whether the school or college is where the alleged abuse took place. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the police.

Brentford School for Girls has a duty of care to their employees. We will ensure that we provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in a school is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time supports the person who is subject of the allegation.

## INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out above, or may do so without warranting consideration of either a police investigation or enquiries by local authority children's social care services. In these cases, local arrangements should be followed to resolve cases without delay.

Some rare allegations will be so serious they require immediate intervention by children's social care services and/or police. The designated officer(s)/LADDO should be informed of any allegations that require consultation due to their serious nature and appears to meet the LA criteria so that they can consult police and children's social care as appropriate.

The following definitions 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.
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which support the allegations being made.

The headteacher (where the headteacher is the subject of an allegation and this meets the threshold) or the chair of governors, should discuss the allegation immediately with the designated officer(s)/LADDO. The purpose of an initial discussion is for the designated officer(s)/LADDO and the headteacher/chair of governors/case manager to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. The designated officer(s)/LADDO may ask the case manager to provide or obtain relevant additional information, such as previous history, whether the child or their family have made similar allegations previously and about the individual's current contact with children. There may be situations when the head teacher/chair of governors/case manager may want to involve the police immediately, for example if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children, or if there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. Where there is no such evidence, the case manager should discuss the allegations with the designated officer(s) /LADDO in order to help determine whether police involvement is necessary.

The initial sharing of information and evaluation may lead to a decision that no further action is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern, in which case this decision and a justification should be recorded by the headteacher if the concern meets the LA threshold then with the designated officer(s)/LADDO decide what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the allegation.

The headteacher should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting the designated officer(s)/LADDO. It is extremely important that the headteacher provides them with as much information as possible at that time. However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or police or children's social care services need to be involved, the headteacher should not do that until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the accuse. Employers must consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at the school or whether alternative arrangements can be put in place until the allegation or concern is resolved. All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step.

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion should be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance (working together to safeguard children). If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the police should take into account that teachers and other schools staff are entitled to use reasonable force to restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or children's social care services is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial evaluation decides that this is the case, the designated officer(s)/LADDO should discuss the next steps with the headteacher. In those circumstances, the options open to the school depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available. This will range from taking no further action to dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in future. Suspension should not be the default position: an individual should be suspended only if there is no reasonable alternative.

In some cases, further enquires will be needed to enable a decision about how to proceed. If so, the designated officer(s)/LADDO should discuss with the headteacher how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. In straightforward cases, the investigation should normally be undertaken by a senior member of the schools staff.

## **PROCEDURE IF A DISCLOSURE IS MADE**

- The person to whom an allegation is first reported, should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification, it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

- A written record of the allegation should be made, using the informant's words – including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and if anyone else was present. This record should be signed and dated and immediately passed on to the Head teacher.
- In the absence of the Headteacher the record should be passed to the Deputy Head who is Acting up
- If the concerns are about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors should be contacted. In the absence of the Chair of Governors, the Vice Chair should be contacted. The contact details can be obtained from the Head teacher's PA.
- The recipient of an allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter
- The Headteacher/ Governor (in the case of the HT) will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to social care in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer
- If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for further action through the HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Student Procedures, the Head teacher must immediately make a referral to Social Care 0208 583 2000
- If it is decided that the allegation does not meet the threshold for referral to Social Care, the Headteacher and the Local Authority Designated Officer will consider the appropriate course of action e.g. joint evaluation meeting, internal investigation.
- The Headteacher should, as soon as possible, following briefing from the Local Authority Designated Officer and inform the subject of the allegation
- If the person is a member of a union or professional association s/he will be advised to contact that body at the outset.
- Historical allegations should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. It is important to ascertain if the person is currently working with children and if that is the case, to consider whether the current employer should be informed.
- All staff should be aware of the school's whistle-blowing policy and feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.
- If a member of staff believes that a reported allegation or concern is not being dealt with appropriately by the school, they should report the matter to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

## **SUSPENSION**

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person should be evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations. In some rare cases that will require the Headteacher/chair of governors to consider suspending the accused until the case is resolved.

Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported; all options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. If the Headteacher/chair of governors is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the teacher's family, those concerns should be reported to the LADO or police. But suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.

Suspension should be considered only in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school or college is/are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person should not be suspended automatically: the Headteacher/chair of governors must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school or college or until the allegation is resolved, and may wish to seek advice from their personnel adviser and the LADO. In cases where the school or college is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual at the school or college it will be necessary to immediately suspend that person from teaching pending the findings of the NCTL's investigation.

The Headteacher/chair of governors should also consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. In many cases an investigation can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. If the LADO, police and children's social care services have no objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation, the Headteacher/chair of governors should be as

inventive as possible to avoid suspension. Based on assessment of risk, the following alternatives should be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

- redeployment within the school or college so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;
- redeploying to alternative work in the school or college so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children;
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted; or
- temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or college or work for the local authority or academy trust.

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension and possibly reduce the initial impact of the allegation. This will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The Headteacher/chair of governors should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated or maliciously intended.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification for such a course of action should be agreed and recorded by both the case manager and the LADO. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.

Children's social care services or the police cannot require the Headteacher/chair of governors to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although they should give appropriate weight to their advice. The power to suspend is vested in the proprietor of the school, or governing bodies of the school or college who are the employers of staff at the school or college. However, where a strategy discussion or initial evaluation concludes that there should be enquiries by the children's social care services and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should canvass police and children's social care services for views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children in order to inform the schools consideration of suspension. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision should be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment.

Only the employer has the power to suspend an accused employee and they cannot be required to do so by a local authority or police.

If a suspended person is to return to work, the employer should consider what help and support might be appropriate (e.g. a phased return to work and/or provision of a mentor), and also how best to manage the member of staff's contact with the child concerned, if still in the workplace.

## **SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED**

Brentford School for Girls has a duty of care to its employees. They will act to manage and minimize the stress inherent in the allegations process. Support of the individual is vital to fulfilling this duty. Individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the children's social care services or the police. The individual will be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support. They will also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is provided by the employer.

The headteacher should appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. Particular care needs to be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work related issues. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or children's social care services need to be involved, the headteacher should not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents or carers. Parents or carers should also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing. And the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed but the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome in confidence.

Parents and carers should also be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers while investigations are ongoing as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002. If parents or carers wish to apply to the court to have reporting restrictions removed, they should be told to seek legal advice.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children's social care services, or the police as appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is extremely important that when all allegation is made, the school makes every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2002 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the secretary of state publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation. The reporting restrictions are disapplied if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so. The provisions commenced on 1 October 2012.

The legislation imposing restrictions make clear that "publication" of material that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation is prohibited. "Publication" includes "any speech writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public". This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site could be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the teacher by members of the public).

In accordance with the Authorised Professional Practice published by the college of Policing in May 2017, the police will not normally provide any information to the press or media that might identify an individual who is under investigation, unless and until the person is charged with a criminal offence. (In exceptional cases where the police would like to depart from that rule, for example an appeal to trace a suspect, they must apply to a magistrates court to request that reporting restrictions be lifted).

The headteacher should take advice from the designated officer(s), police and children's social care services to agree the following:

- Who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared;
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it should arise.

## **RESIGNATIONS AND COMPROMISE AGREEMENTS**

If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with this guidance. A referral to the DBS must be made, if the criteria are met. Schools must also consider a referral to the TRA if appropriate. If the accused person resigns or their services cease to be used and the criteria are met, it will not be appropriate to reach a settlement/compromise agreement. Any settlement/compromise agreement that would prevent a school from making a DBS referral even though the criteria for referral are met, is likely to result in a criminal offence being committed. This is because the school would not be complying with its legal duty to make the referral.

It is important that every effort is 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 accused should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. But the process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be substantiated on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if that cannot be done or the accused does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

'Settlement agreements' (sometimes referred to as compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign if the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, should not be used in cases of refusal to cooperate or resignation before the person's notice period expires. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate.

## **REFERENCES**

Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should also not be included in any reference.

## **RECORD KEEPING**



Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. The record should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The Information Commissioner has published guidance on employment records in its Employment Practices Code and supplementary guidance, which provides some practical advice on record retention.

## **TIMESCALES**

It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible and is consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. All allegations should be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay. Target timescales are shown below: the time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation, but these targets should be achieved in all but truly exceptional cases. It is expected that 80 per cent of these cases should be resolved within one month, 90 per cent within three months, and all but the most exceptional cases should be completed within 12 months.

For those cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, they should be resolved within one week. Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the employer to deal with it, although if there are concerns about child protection, the employer should discuss them with the designated officer(s). In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the employer should instigate appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

## **OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING**

The designated officer(s) has overall responsibility for oversight of the procedures for resolving any inter-agency issues, and for liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board on the subject. The designated officer(s) will provide advice and guidance of the case manager, in addition to liaising with the police and other agencies, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process. Reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals, depending on the complexity of the case.

Police forces should also identify offices who will be responsible for:

- Liaising with the designated officer(s);
- Taking part in the strategy discussion or initial evaluation;
- Subsequently reviewing the progress of those cases in which there is a police investigation; and
- Sharing information on completion of the investigation or any prosecution

If the strategy discussion or initial assessment decides that a police investigation is required, the police should also set a target date for reviewing the progress of the investigation and consulting Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) about whether to: charge the individual; continue to investigate; or close the investigation. Wherever possible,

that review should take place no later than four weeks after the initial evaluation. Dates for subsequent reviews, ideally at fortnightly intervals, should be set at the meeting if the investigation continues.

## **SUSPENSION**

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person should be evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations. In some rare cases that will require the case manager to consider suspending the accused until the case is resolved. Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported: all options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. If the headteacher is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the teacher's family, those concerns should be reported to the designated officer(s), children's social care or the police as required. But suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.

Suspension should be considered only in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person should not be suspended automatically: the headteacher must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school or college or until the allegation is resolved, and may wish to seek advice from their personnel adviser and the designated officer(s). In cases where the school or sixth form college is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual who works at the school or sixth form college, immediate action should be taken to ensure the individual does not carry out work in contravention of the order, i.e. pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the individual must not carry out teaching work.

The headteacher should also consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. In many cases an investigation can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. If the designated officer(s), police and children's social care services have no objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation, the case manager should be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension. Based on assessment of risk, the following alternatives should be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

- redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;
- redeploying to alternative work in the school so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children;
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted; or
- temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or work for the local authority.

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension and possibly reduce the initial impact of the allegation. This will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The case manager should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated or maliciously intended.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification for such a course of action should be agreed and recorded by both the case manager and the designated officer(s)/LADDO. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the

point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.

Children’s social care services or the police cannot require the headteacher to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although they should give appropriate weight to their advice. The power to suspend is vested in the proprietor of the school, or governing bodies of the school who are the employers of staff at the school. However, where a strategy discussion or initial evaluation concludes that there should be enquiries by the children’s social care services and/or an investigation by the police, the designated officer(s)/LADDO should canvass police and children’s social care services for views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children in order to inform the school consideration of suspension. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision should be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment.

## **INFORMATION SHARING**

In a strategy discussion or the initial evaluation of the case, the agencies involved should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the employer should ask the police to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer disciplinary process. This should be done as their investigation proceeds and will enable the police to share relevant information without delay at the conclusion of their investigation or any court case.

Children’s social care services should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the child or children named in the allegation are in need of protection or services, so that any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case can be passed to the employer without delay.

## **SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

### **FOLLOWING A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION OR A PROSECUTION**

The police should inform the employer and designated officer(s)/LADDO immediately when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or if it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or not to continue to prosecute the case after the person has been charged. In those circumstances, the designated officer(s)/LADDO should discuss with the case manager whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or children’s social care services should inform that decision. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration will need to take into account the result of the police investigation or the trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

### **ON CONCLUSION OF A CASE**

If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the employer ceases to use the person’s services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, the designated officer(s)/LADDO should discuss with the headteacher and their personnel adviser whether the school will decide to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required; and, in the case of a member of teaching staff at a school, whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child. See paragraph 153.

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the headteacher should consider how best to facilitate that. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a stressful experience. Depending on 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 or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still a pupil at the school.

## **IN RESPECT OF MALICIOUS OR UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS**.....

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the designated officer(s)/LADDO should refer the matter to the children's social care services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the headteacher, principal or proprietor should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil who made it; or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible, even if he or she were not a pupil.

## **LEARNING LESSONS**.....

At the conclusion of a case in which an allegation *is* substantiated, the designated officer(s)/LADDO should review the circumstances of the case with the headteacher to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This should include issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether or not suspension was justified. Lessons should also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The designated officer(s) /LADDO and headteacher should consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.