

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers Policy



“Doing our best for God”

Local Authority Designated Officer (Allegations/Issues of Concern)

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1. Introduction

As the lead agency for this aspect of safeguarding Blackpool Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area in all aspects of their lives. To achieve this, Blackpool Council expects all agencies providing services for children to ensure a safe environment and have policies in place to:

- Ensure safe recruitment of permanent and temporary members of staff and volunteers
- Manage allegations against members of staff where they are raised
- Respond to concerns that are raised that the person may not be suitable to work with children.

This document provides a procedural framework for organisations to follow when developing their own policy for the management of allegations against staff and responding to concerns regarding suitability and includes all matters that will need to be covered in organisations own safeguarding and allegations management procedures.

The Safeguarding Partners, through the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership will monitor the effectiveness of such agency policies through regular assurance reporting to the Board, Tactical groups and its Subgroups. The schedule of assurance reporting will be determined by the Safeguarding Partners.

The term work is used as a generic reference in this document and is intended to cover paid employment, volunteering and other positions of trust otherwise engaged in contact with children.

The term, person of concern will be used to identify the person against whom a concern or allegation has been raised.

The term organisation is used as a generic reference in this document and is intended to cover all sectors whether or not they are formally partnered with the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership.

2. Legal framework

All agencies providing services for children have a duty under the statutory guidance

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#) by ensuring procedures are in place to deal with any allegations that a member of staff or volunteer 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 are unsuitable to work with children

As well as covering the categories of harm and abuse, policies should also cover any concerns about an individual's behaviour in their private life that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children including allegations involving inappropriate relationships with young people, grooming behaviour on-line, possession of indecent photographs or images of children and other offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

If allegations about a worker's treatment of their own child are raised, the police or local children's social care (CSC) where the staff member lives should notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) when they work in Blackpool. The LADO will take the decision whether to contact the person of concern's place of work, to explore whether the information raises questions about the person's current suitability and safety to be working with children.

In all cases the LADO will ask first whether the person of concern has made a self disclosure about these concerns, in some circumstances the person of concern will not be asked for consent to share the relevant information with their place of work.

Specific guidance on **information sharing** and safeguarding can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding>

In these cases it can be expected that the Police or Local Authority CSC Children Assessment Team may approach agencies in order to assess any risk the individual poses to children they work with. The CSC Practitioner may then refer the matter to the LADO following discussion with their Senior Manager or Manager. It will often be the case that the Police or CSC practitioner/manager can be invited to any meeting called by the LADO in accordance with these procedures.

Blackpool Council works to the [Pan Lancashire Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children](#) and agencies should be familiar with these procedures. Specific Blackpool guidance is embedded within these on line procedures.

Concerns that are shared regarding workers and the presence of mental illness, domestic abuse or substance abuse, where there is no immediacy regarding child safety outside of work, should be responded to in terms of the organisation's own procedures in these matters. However, it is recognised that in some instances such cases may fall within scope of this guidance and where there is uncertainty such concerns can be discussed with a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Senior Practitioner or the LADO directly prior to a referral being considered necessary.

In taking forward their understanding of this guidance all agencies should be clear in their understanding and identification of what can be deemed an allegation of significant harm and what can be deemed a concern about worker suitability, a complaint or a quality of care issue.

3. Principles

- The welfare of children and young people will be a paramount consideration. All workers and volunteers have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and should take action to ensure their safety.
- Organisations will ensure that good internal policies are in force and are compliant with Working Together to Safeguard children and the Pan Lancashire Tri X procedures for protecting children.
- Organisations will ensure that staff members receive suitable training and induction and are aware of expected standards of conduct and behaviour inside and outside of work.
- Organisations will ensure that parents and children are aware of their policy on managing allegations and know who to contact if they wish to raise an allegation.
- Children who are the subject of allegations will receive suitable support throughout the duration of any investigation and appropriate services provided if required.
- Allegations will be dealt with fairly and quickly and generally resolved within 1-3 months. Only in exceptional circumstances, for example where criminal proceedings are taking place, should allegations take more than 12 months to resolve.
- Allegations will be dealt with by the most efficient method and at an appropriate level, involving agencies such as the Police and CSC only where there is a clear need in the specific circumstances of the matter.
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times and information shared only in accordance with this policy and associated authoritative guidance.
- Workers wishing to raise concerns anonymously or otherwise will be supported through individual organisations whistle-blowing procedures.
- All responses will be fair, transparent and balanced and should ensure the safety of children whilst supporting those adults who are the subject of allegations.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Local Authority Designated Officer

Blackpool Council has in place arrangements, set out in this document, to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations on how to deal with allegations against people who work with children. The LADO, referred to in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018* as the Designated Officer, as part of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, will also be involved in the oversight of the management of allegations against people who work with children. Blackpool Council ensures the LADO has in place appropriate arrangements to liaise effectively with the Police and other organisations and agencies in order to monitor the progress of cases and ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair, thorough and structured process. In Blackpool this is achieved by the integration of the LADO within the Safeguarding Quality and Review Unit.

4.2 Safeguarding partners, relevant agencies and Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprises (CVSE)

Organisations where people work with children must ensure that they individually have clear policies in place setting out the process for allegations management, including timescales for investigation and what support and advice will be available to individuals against whom allegations have been made.

Organisations must have designated a Senior Manager for child safeguarding who can act for the purpose of allegations management. Any allegation against a worker should be reported immediately to this Senior Manager within the organisation.

Organisations can refer to guidance produced by the safeguarding partners on writing a child protection policy and may take advice from the LADO or MASH on specific issues and newly emergent themes such as Child Criminal Exploitation but the following must be contained in the policy:

- What steps will be taken at the point of recruitment to ensure only suitable staff are employed.
- What standards of professional behaviour and practice are expected and what disciplinary action could be taken for breach of these.
- How allegations against members of staff and volunteers will be dealt with including what support to be provided to children and the person against whom allegations have been raised.
- The name of the Senior Manager responsible for dealing with allegations.
- The name of the officer who will deputise in the absence of the Senior Manager or in the event that an allegation is made against the Senior Manager.

- Which workers/volunteers are covered by the policy beyond those identified as working in regulated activity E.g. drivers, maintenance workers or technicians in schools or hospitals?

Agencies should be aware that allegations may arise from a variety of sources, for example following a complaint by parents or a child or concerns being raised by other members of staff.

All allegations need to be considered in context for the activity carried out by the agency; for example, physical contact may be unavoidable for some professionals but may be misinterpreted by children. For this reason, it is important that workers are given guidance on acceptable behaviour and safe working practice in order to protect them from misunderstood, misguided or malicious allegations.

4.3 Education and early year's settings

Specific guidance exists for those working in educational settings and this can be found at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

That guidance is not a substitute for the procedures described in this local document and those working in educational settings, particularly Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), will need to be fully conversant with part four of the above guidance.

The same criteria for allegations management is used in Keeping Children Safe in Education as is used in part 2 of these procedures.

The Local Authority has appointed a Schools' Safeguarding Advisor who can be contacted for advice and guidance as to whether a referral to the LADO may be necessary. This additional resource will help school DSL's approach the particular concerns with the required reasoned discernment before a referral is made to the LADO. If there remains any doubt about whether a referral should be submitted then the DSL should contact the LADO directly for a definitive response.

5. Dealing with allegations, the referral to outcome process

All organisations in Blackpool that work with or provide services for children and young people must have a safeguarding children policy in place and must appoint a Senior Manager and have set out a policy in relation to safeguarding children and allegations management.

Agencies should be aware that allegations may arise from a variety of sources, for example following a complaint by parents or a child or concerns being raised by other members of staff.

5.1 Initial action

Where there is injury to a child requiring immediate medical attention this should be sought. If there are safeguarding aspects to that injury, NHS practitioners need to be advised so they can engage their own safeguarding protocols. The action below must then be followed.

Where a child appears to have been harmed or there is an allegation a child has been harmed then the organisation must act without delay in engaging multi-agency safeguarding partners via the MASH and in cases where it is deemed necessary the Police by contacting 999. If the Police are not contacted in this way the MASH police can consider the allegation.

5.2 What to do if an allegation is made by a child or young person

The person to whom the allegation is reported must:

- Treat the matter seriously.
- Ensure that, where necessary, the child receives appropriate medical attention.
- Make a written record of the information (using the child's own words) including when the alleged incident took place, who was present and what is understood to have happened.
- Sign and date the written record.
- Report the matter immediately to the Senior Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead in the organisation.
- Notify the parents or those with parental responsibility if harm to the child is suspected. This applies to Our Children where the Local Authority has parental responsibility.
- Maintain a level of confidentiality to preserve the integrity of both the child and person of concern where it is safe and reasonable to do so.

5.3 Initial Action by the Senior Manager

- Obtain written details of the allegation, signed and dated by the person receiving the allegation.
- Countersign and date the first account recorded.

- Secure any other source of information such as CCTV, computer or mobile phone data; where there is a legitimate purpose to do so.
- Record details of any observers to the incident take statements and draft a basic chronology.
- Recall any relevant contextual safeguarding information in relation to the child and person of concern.

The Senior Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead must then apply structured judgement and reasoned discernment of the information with a view to then take the concern forward with the LADO.

5.4 Next step

The LADO must then be informed within one working day of an allegation that has come to the Senior Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead's attention or that has been directly reported to the Police.

Initial discussions between the Senior Manager/referrer and the LADO are encouraged. This will focus on whether the allegation should be dealt with under this policy or whether another course of action is more appropriate.

Some concerns may require advice and guidance from the LADO and other allegations may require a formal response in terms of active oversight and involvement in the management of the allegations. A decision will be taken by the LADO in discussion with the organisation's Senior Manager or DSL whether a formal referral should be made.

As a result of the initial discussion, the LADO and the Senior Manager may agree the following actions are appropriate and proportionate.

- Referral to the police for a criminal investigation.
- Referral to MASH for assessment and possible child protection investigation, in cases where significant harm is suspected.
- Initiation of an internal investigation and or disciplinary proceedings against the member of staff.
- No further action to be taken as the concern is not within the scope of the LADO.
- The organisation should refer to another external body as the concern relates to quality of care e.g. Local Authority Commissioners or Ofsted.
- Engagement of the organisations customer care or complaints protocol.

If a decision is reached by the Senior Manager and the LADO that a referral is necessary a standard form is available for this purpose attached at Appendix 1. If a formal referral is advised this should be quality assured by the Senior Manager within the referring organisation, if it is not completed by them but by another member of the organisation's staff.

It is the responsibility of the referring organisation to refer the allegations to the Police and or children's services where it is assessed as necessary to do so. The LADO will continue to liaise with the Police and Children's Services at key points subsequently.

5.5 The LADO and Senior Manager of the referring organisation will consider:

- What further information is needed to assist the investigation?
- What immediate action needs to be taken to protect children (as above).
- How parents or carers should be notified of the allegations, although in some cases this will be unavoidable if the child requires medical treatment.
- How the child and their parents will be supported during the process.
- Whether any regulatory body need to be informed of the allegation without delay, this could include for example Ofsted, HCPC, GMC, NMC and Teaching Regulation Agency. In some circumstances it will be necessary to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service without delay.

Consideration should also be given to whether the seriousness of the allegations warrants the member of staff being suspended, given other duties short of suspension and not in contact with children or whether they should continue to have some level of supervision for their contact with children.

The Senior Manager and the LADO should both make a written note of discussions and decisions should be agreed and the reasons for taking any particular course of action recorded. This is particularly important in cases where no further action will be taken.

Where a referral is received and it is progressed to the formal involvement of the LADO an electronic record will be created in the name of the person of concern. This record will be created on the Councils MOSAIC database used within social care services. This will be a restricted record for viewing by the LADO and Senior Managers only. A privacy notice setting out the relevance of the **General Data Protection Rules 2018** has been drafted for this purpose and is included at Appendix 2 of this document.

As principles of good practice, the member of staff and the child's parents should be notified of the allegation and given as much information as possible unless there are good reasons for not doing so. In cases where a criminal or child protection investigation is underway the Police and Children's social care will be the point of contact for enquiries about those actions. It will be the responsibility of the organisation where the person works or volunteers to keep the worker informed of case progression. The LADO has information leaflets available for the person of concern, the child and family and for the workers organisation. These can be provided to the employer for distribution to others.

The worker/person of concern must be advised not to contact the LADO directly.

The LADO can be contacted by telephone or email/secure email in the first instance. Referrals should be sent to lado@blackpool.gov.uk

Please note the telephone number is for the organisation's use only and is not for wider dissemination.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Allegations/Issues of Concern)
Blackpool Council
Tel 01253 477558
lado@blackpool.gov.uk

5.6 Referrals received without prior discussion with the LADO

It is recognised that not all sectors will be conversant with this guidance from the outset and some organisations will forward referrals without the kind of prior consideration described above. In these circumstances the LADO will contact the referrer to discuss the concerns in the manner set out above.

5.7 Cases that meet the Threshold for Initial consideration or allegation meetings

If the LADO is satisfied that the referral meets the criteria described in Section 2 of this guidance the LADO will decide whether an initial consideration or allegations meeting is required. The former having the objective of expanding on the concerns raised and the latter being a more deliberate meeting aimed at identifying key lines of investigation and other actions.

In some instances the LADO will waive the need for a round table meeting but the case will still progress with the same purpose. This applies to cases where there have already been discussions with relevant partners and the organisation and the key lines of enquiry are in motion. The recording of these steps will be the same as for when a meeting has occurred.

Where a meeting takes place it will chaired by the LADO and should be attended by the Senior Manager of the organisation or the Designated Safeguarding Lead who made the referral. Where they are involved, the Police

and Children's Social Care will also be in attendance. The LADO will invite whoever else is deemed necessary to contribute to the discussion and analysis. This could include, the Blackpool Council Head of School Improvement and Safeguarding or Officer for Early Years, Ofsted, Local Authority Commissioners, members of the Clinical Commissioning Group or NHS England Safeguarding Team.

5.8 The initial consideration/allegation meeting will:

- Ensure that arrangements are in place to protect the child/children involved and other children affected, including the children of the person of concern.
- Review that the criteria as set out in section 2 of this guidance remains applicable.
- Consider the current allegation in the light of any previous allegations or concerns regarding the person of concern.
- Identify what other primary actions have been undertaken or are required, specifically whether Police action and/or child protection enquiries (Section 47 child protection enquiries) are required.
- Exchange and analyse information held by those joined in the meeting and where appropriate to do so offer professional challenge in the analysis of that information. This will be done professionally as critical friends in a safe space.
- Ensure the employer or organisation has engaged its own relevant policies and procedures applicable to the current situation and assist in making recommendations regarding suspension or actions as an alternative to suspension.
- Agree the plan for investigating the allegation and providing support to the worker and the child whilst the investigation is on-going.
- Agree a shared position regarding communicating with outside agencies in high profile cases and cases where there is a genuine public interest.

It is for the organisation to decide whether or not to suspend the worker and this should be based on a clear risk assessment and be in accordance with the organisation's own policies on staff conduct. In some instances suspension can be accompanied by a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

However, in cases where there are serious allegations and clear evidence of harm to children, the LADO, Police and Children's Social Care may take alternative action if organisations do not follow a recommendation to suspend a staff member. This would include raising the concern with the organisation's regulator or inspector.

5.9 Review of case progression meeting

The LADO will regularly monitor the progress of the case through a review of allegations meeting/discussions and/or by either liaising with the Police and/or Children's Social Care, Senior Managers, Designated Safeguarding Leads or other organisations as appropriate. Reviews will usually be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals depending upon the complexity of the case. For those cases at trial in the higher courts reviews will be timetabled according to the court listings which will be made known to the LADO by the Police involved.

The LADO will be the point of contact for updating organisations on Police investigations where no other arrangements have been made between the Police and the workers organisation.

5.10 Final outcome of investigations

A final outcome meeting or discussions will be held at the end of enquiries to ensure that all tasks have been completed and where appropriate an action plan agreed in terms of both the person of concern and the child/children.

It is an expectation at this stage in the process that those agencies that have been involved in the management and progress of allegations will be able to feedback their conclusions. If the allegations have not been tested in court then the standard test used to find facts in the case will be the **civil test known as the balance of probability test**. This test is an evaluation of the overall preponderance of the evidence and information available.

It is for the Police, Children's Services or the employer/organisation to reach a conclusion using this test, it is not for the LADO to determine the facts. However at the conclusion of the process it is the responsibility of the LADO to record the consensus of findings of fact in the particular case. Five categories are used to record these findings.

- **Substantiated**
A substantiated allegation is one which is supported or established by evidence or proof on the 'balance of probability' rather than the criminal test of, 'beyond reasonable doubt'.
- **Unsubstantiated**
An unsubstantiated allegation is not the same as a false allegation. It simply means that there is insufficient supportive or identifiable evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded**
This indicates 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. For an allegation

to be classified as unfounded, it will be necessary to have evidence to disprove the allegation.

- **Deliberately Invented or Malicious**
This implies a deliberate intention to deceive. A malicious allegation may be made by a child following an altercation with a member of staff or a parent who is in dispute with the organisation. For an allegation to be classified as malicious, it will be necessary to have evidence which proves this intention.
- **False**
There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

The LADO will seek for the Employer to complete an Outcome form Appendix 3 which will provide the determined outcome and the reasoning for this.

The LADO will complete the electronic record held on MOSAIC and the case will then be closed on that system. The purpose for which the LADO records and holds information in relation to this activity is set out in the Privacy Statement drafted in compliance with the General Data Protection Rules 2018 attached at appendix 2. Subsequent actions and responsibilities of those involved are set out in the following sections.

6. Criminal or disciplinary proceedings and barring

Where the Police are involved in the case they are expected to keep the employer/organisation and the LADO informed of all progress in investigations and proceedings, including any decision to charge or the outcome of trials. These should be discussed with the LADO to decide on any action needed by the organisation in relation to disciplinary proceedings or decisions on continued employment.

Decisions to follow disciplinary proceedings lies with the organisation but must be considered in all cases where a criminal or child protection investigation has not been considered necessary or on completion of any criminal proceedings. The Senior Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead can discuss any disciplinary proceedings with the LADO and look at what options are available to deal with the matter. Outcomes of disciplinary hearings will be usually made known in review/final outcome meetings or discussions.

Disciplinary proceedings should take account of any information arising from any criminal or child protection investigation and the outcome of any trial.

See part 12 below regarding disputed outcomes.

Organisations can also discuss with the LADO whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). There is a legal duty on employers to refer any individual to the DBS if it is thought that they pose a risk to children or have harmed a child. The DBS will then make a decision as to

whether or not to bar the person from working with children in a regulated activity.

The Senior Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead within the organisation has a duty to refer if the allegation is proved and the person has been removed from their post or has resigned prior to being removed. It is an offence to fail to do so in these circumstances.

7. Resignations

Full investigations into allegations must proceed even if the person involved resigns as it is important that the matter is properly dealt with and that a resolution or conclusion is reached. It is important to decide whether allegations are substantiated or otherwise and what further action may have taken place to safeguard children including where necessary a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or a regulator of a professional person.

Organisations should not use settlement agreements that allow a person to resign with a reference in return for not initiating disciplinary proceedings and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference. Any such or similar actions are contrary to the safeguarding imperative to protect children. As stated above, it is crucial that all allegations are fully investigated and failure to refer to the DBS when the criteria for doing so are met would be a criminal offence on the part of the organisation.

8. Recording and references

A clear record of the allegation and how it was investigated and resolved, including actions taken and decisions reached, must be put on the person's personnel file. This is the case even where the allegation is unfounded. However, the exception to this is any allegation that is proved to be malicious; all references to these allegations should be removed from the personnel record.

It is important that records show clearly how a resolution to the allegation was reached and that this information is available when references are being written or information sought from future employers. Records should be retained until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer.

Allegations that prove to be malicious should be removed from the person's records, and unsubstantiated, unfounded and malicious allegations should not be referred to in references.

Organisations can get further advice from the Information Commissioner website.

9. Confidentiality and information sharing

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained whilst any investigation is ongoing and the Police will not make public any details of criminal investigations unless the person involved is charged. All those involved, including parents and children, must be made aware of the statutory reporting restrictions in place to ensure the identity of the staff member and the victim is not made public. This includes posting information about the allegation on social networking sites.

At the initial discussion, the responsible officer and the LADO may wish to discuss what information will be shared with whom and what action will be taken to manage any possible breaches of confidentiality or press interest.

In general, information may be shared at the initial discussion and allegations management meetings in order to gather as much information as possible to make an informed judgement on what action to take.

Consent must be obtained to share information with third parties, for example police statements or child protection investigations being passed on to agencies for the purposes of disciplinary proceedings.

10. Supporting the person of concern/worker

Employers have a duty to ensure that members of staff against whom an allegation has been made are treated fairly and are supported throughout the process. They should be kept informed of the progress of any investigation or disciplinary process and where they have been suspended pending investigation, there should be a named member of staff responsible for keeping them informed of developments.

The staff member involved should be given advice on the allegations management process. They should also be told about the process of any internal investigation and be kept informed of the outcomes and progress of these, so far as it does not compromise the wellbeing or safety of children. Their support needs should also be considered when they are returning to work following suspension, particularly in unsubstantiated or malicious cases.

An information leaflet is available to be provided to the person of concern and these will be shared with employers/organisations when any form of allegation is being held.

11. Supporting the child and family

Parents and children should be notified of allegations made by their child or children and given all information available as soon as possible subject to advice from the police and CSC. Parents or those with parental responsibility must be kept informed of the progress and outcomes of investigations. However for cases that are progressed through to disciplinary hearings the details of those hearings will not normally be disclosed although the final outcome should be shared if this is sought by the parents.

If the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm the local authority will make or cause to be made such enquiries as they consider necessary to

enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard the child. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 sets out what actions may be taken. In these circumstances consent from the parent of person with parental responsibility may not be necessary.

If there is a concern for a child who may be in need, not solely due to the allegation raised, then consent should be sought from the parent or person with parental responsibility for a referral to be made to CSC.

The parent or person with parental responsibility must be reminded of the need to maintain confidentiality about the allegation while the matter is under investigation.

An information leaflet is available to be provided to the parent or person with parental responsibility and these will be shared with employers/organisations when any form of allegation meeting is being held.

12. Dispute Resolution

The Safeguarding Partners have responsibility to ensure that there are effective multi agency procedures in place for dealing with allegations against people who work with or on behalf of children and for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of those procedures.

In order to discharge the duties of the Board each member organisation should identify a Named Senior Officer (NSO). NSOs will have overall responsibility for;

- Ensuring that their organisation operates within the spirit and detail of these procedures for dealing with allegations
- Resolving any inter agency issues or disputes that may arise the operation of these procedures.
- Liaising and assurance reporting to the Safeguarding Partners regarding allegations management activity within their organisation and compliance with these procedures.
- Acting as the single point of contact for cases that are escalated to the Safeguarding Partners by the LADO as set out below

Where a dispute between the LADO and the organisation's Senior Manager regarding whether a referral falls within the scope of these procedures and may have foundation cannot be resolved the final decision will be taken by the LADO. Where an organisation declines to follow the course of action recommended by the LADO this matter will be escalated to the Safeguarding Partners.

Similarly the LADO and the Senior Manager should discuss and agree what action is appropriate in all cases where it is clear at the outset or following initial consideration or an allegations meeting that investigation by the Police or CSC is not necessary. While the final decision lies with the organisation/employer if the LADO disagrees with the decision or considers that the employer's decision

may leave a child at risk then the LADO will escalate the concern to the Safeguarding Partners.

13. Learning lessons and developing practice

At the conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated the employer should review the circumstances of the case to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the organisation's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This should include issues arising from any decision to suspend a 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 LADO and case manager should consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

Adapted from Blackpool Borough Council Policy

Signed: *Alexis Satterthwaite* (Headteacher)

Date: November 2020

Review date: October 2021