



Allegations against Staff, Volunteers and Other Adults Policy

Policy Statement

Pavilion Preschool (Aigburth) CIO is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child in our care.

We recognise that children are particularly vulnerable and that any allegation or concern about the behaviour of an adult who works or volunteers with children must be taken seriously, responded to promptly and managed fairly.

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed when an allegation or concern is made about a member of staff, volunteer, student, trustee, agency worker, contractor, manager, safeguarding lead or any other adult who works with or has contact with children at Pavilion Preschool or the Breakfast & After School Clubs.

Our priority is always the safety and welfare of children. At the same time, we will ensure that any adult who is the subject of an allegation is treated fairly, respectfully and in accordance with employment law, safeguarding procedures and the principles of natural justice.

The setting will not attempt to investigate allegations independently where they meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Social Care or the Police.

Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to all adults working with children at Pavilion Preschool and Breakfast & After School Clubs, including:

- Permanent employees
- Temporary employees
- Managers and senior staff
- Designated Safeguarding Leads and deputies
- Bank staff
- Supply and agency workers
- Volunteers
- Students and trainees
- Apprentices



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- Contractors
- Visitors where concerns arise regarding their behaviour towards children
- Trustees and committee members
- Other professionals working within the setting
- Adults providing services to the setting
- Any person living or working on the premises where relevant to safeguarding

The procedure applies regardless of whether the concern relates to conduct during working hours, outside work or through online activity.

What Is an Allegation?

An allegation is a concern about an adult's behaviour which may indicate that they:

1. Have behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
2. May have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
3. Have behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
4. Have behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

These criteria are based on the current Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.

An allegation may relate to a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Examples could include:

- Physical harm or inappropriate physical contact
- Rough handling of a child
- Shouting, threatening or intimidating a child
- Humiliating, belittling or degrading a child
- Inappropriate restraint
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or sexualised comments
- Inappropriate communication with children
- Sending or receiving inappropriate messages, images or content



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- Inappropriate use of social media
- Failing to protect a child from harm
- Serious neglect of a child's needs
- Serious breaches of safeguarding procedures
- Inappropriate favouritism
- Discriminatory or abusive behaviour
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while responsible for children
- Conduct outside work which raises concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- Any other behaviour which raises a safeguarding concern.

Low-Level Concerns

Not every concern about an adult will meet the threshold for a formal allegation or LADO referral.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, about an adult working with children which does not meet the threshold for referral but may indicate that the adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the setting's Staff Code of Conduct or professional expectations.

Examples may include:

- Being overly familiar with children
- Using inappropriate language
- Failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- Showing favouritism
- Excessive physical contact which is not appropriate
- Using personal mobile phones inappropriately
- Communicating with children outside agreed channels
- Frequently failing to follow safeguarding procedures
- Conduct which is unprofessional but does not meet the harm threshold.

Low-level concerns must not be ignored.



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They should be reported to the Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded appropriately.

The setting will consider whether:

- The concern can be addressed through supervision
- Additional training is required
- Professional boundaries need to be reinforced
- The Staff Code of Conduct has been breached
- A pattern of concerns is emerging
- The concern should be escalated to a formal safeguarding allegation.

A number of low-level concerns about the same individual may, when considered together, indicate a more serious safeguarding concern.

Reporting an Allegation

Any person who has a concern or receives an allegation about a member of staff or another adult working with children must report it immediately.

The concern should normally be reported to:

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Suzanne MacGregor

Deputy Safeguarding Leads - Delyth Corry, Anne Marie Bilsborough, Nadezhda Knox, Laura Turner

Staff must not delay reporting a concern because they are unsure whether it constitutes an allegation.

It is the responsibility of the DSL/Manager, with appropriate advice, to determine the appropriate course of action.



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If a Child Makes an Allegation

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure about an adult, the person receiving the disclosure must:

- Remain calm
- Listen carefully
- Take the child seriously
- Allow the child to speak freely
- Avoid asking leading questions
- Avoid investigating the allegation
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking
- Explain that the information must be shared with people who can help keep them safe
- Record the child's words as accurately as possible
- Record the date, time and circumstances
- Report the concern immediately to the DSL or Manager.

Staff must not confront the adult who is the subject of the allegation.

Immediate Safeguarding Action

The welfare of the child is the first priority.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, the setting will take immediate action to protect the child.

This may include:

- Separating the adult and child
- Increasing supervision
- Removing the adult from contact with children
- Contacting Children's Social Care
- Contacting the Police
- Seeking emergency medical assistance



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- Contacting the child's parents/carers where appropriate and advised
- Contacting the LADO.

If a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 999.

The setting will not delay protective action while waiting for advice.

Contacting the LADO

Where an allegation meets the relevant threshold, the setting will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and within one working day.

The LADO should be contacted where there is an allegation that an adult working with children has:

- Harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way which indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way which indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The LADO provides oversight and coordinates the management of allegations; the LADO does not ordinarily conduct the investigation personally.

The setting will follow the LADO arrangements and procedures for the local authority in which the setting is located.

Local Authority LADO contact details:

Catherine Ballans 07716 702 034

Paula Trubshaw 079841727309

Email: lado@liverpool.gov.uk



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Allegations Against the Manager

If an allegation is made against a Manager, the concern must not be dealt with by the Manager.

The concern must be reported directly to the DSL, Trustee Board/Chair of Trustees or another appropriate senior person.

Where appropriate, the LADO will be contacted directly.

Allegations Against the DSL

If the allegation concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- The DSL must not investigate the concern.
- The concern must be reported to the Chair of Trustees.
- The LADO should be contacted where the threshold is met.
- Children's Social Care and/or Police should be contacted where appropriate.
- Appropriate safeguarding arrangements must be put in place for the child.

Allegations Against a Trustee

If an allegation is made against a Trustee:

- The Trustee must not be involved in managing or investigating the allegation.
- The Chair of Trustees or another independent Trustee should be informed, where appropriate.
- The LADO should be contacted where the threshold is met.
- The setting will ensure there is no conflict of interest.
- Where the allegation concerns the Chair of Trustees, another appropriate senior Trustee or external person should take responsibility.

The setting will ensure that safeguarding concerns are never compromised because of an individual's position within the organisation.



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Allegations Against the Registered Provider or Person with Overall Responsibility

Where the allegation concerns the registered provider, proprietor, person with overall responsibility or another individual with significant authority, the setting will seek advice from the LADO and/or relevant safeguarding authority.

The individual who is the subject of the allegation must not be allowed to influence the handling, investigation or outcome of the concern.

Police Involvement

The Police will be contacted where there is a reasonable belief that a criminal offence may have been committed.

The setting will follow the advice of the Police regarding any investigation.

Staff must not:

- Interview witnesses unnecessarily
- Question the child repeatedly
- Confront the person accused
- Destroy or alter records
- Attempt to establish guilt or innocence.

This is important because an internal investigation could interfere with a criminal or child protection investigation.

Children's Social Care

Where there are concerns that a child has suffered, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm, the setting will make an appropriate referral to Children's Social Care in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

The setting will cooperate fully with Children's Social Care and other safeguarding partners.



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Ofsted Notifications

The setting will comply with its statutory duty to notify Ofsted of relevant safeguarding incidents and allegations.

Under the EYFS requirements currently in force, providers must notify Ofsted of allegations of harm by anyone living, working or looking after children on the premises.

The Operations Manager/Registered Provider will ensure that any required notification is made within the applicable timescale.

Ofsted notification does not replace the requirement to contact:

- The LADO
- Children's Social Care
- The Police
- Other relevant safeguarding agencies.

Suspension

Suspension will not be automatic when an allegation is made.

The decision to suspend an employee will be considered carefully, taking account of:

- The seriousness of the allegation
- The potential risk to children
- Whether children can be safeguarded through alternative arrangements
- Whether the presence of the employee could interfere with an investigation
- Advice from the LADO, Police or Children's Social Care
- Employment law and the setting's disciplinary procedures.

Alternative measures may be considered where appropriate.



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Suspension is a neutral act and must not be treated as evidence that an allegation has been substantiated.

Fair Treatment of the Person Subject to an Allegation

Pavilion Preschool, Breakfast & After School Clubs recognise that allegations can be extremely stressful for the person involved.

The setting will:

- Treat allegations seriously
- Maintain confidentiality as far as possible
- Avoid prejudging the outcome
- Follow a fair and proportionate process
- Keep the individual appropriately informed, subject to safeguarding and investigation requirements
- Provide appropriate support
- Follow employment and disciplinary procedures where applicable
- Ensure that decisions are based on evidence rather than assumptions.

The setting will not disclose confidential information to staff, parents or other individuals who do not have a legitimate need to know.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to an allegation must be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

Staff must not discuss allegations with:

- Other members of staff who are not involved
- Parents or carers who do not need the information
- Other families
- Friends
- Social media contacts
- Members of the community.



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Information may be shared with safeguarding partners where this is necessary to protect a child.

Data protection legislation must not be used as a reason to prevent necessary safeguarding information sharing.

Records

A written record will be made of every allegation and significant concern.

Records should include:

- Date and time the concern was received
- Name of the person making the allegation
- Name of the child
- Name and role of the adult concerned
- Exact words used where possible
- Factual description of what was reported
- Actions taken
- Who was informed
- Advice received
- LADO contact and outcome
- Children's Social Care contact
- Police contact
- Ofsted notification, where applicable
- Decisions made and reasons for those decisions
- Outcome of the investigation
- Any further action required.

Records must be factual, objective and free from assumptions or personal opinions.



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Anonymous Allegations

Anonymous allegations will be taken seriously.

The setting will consider:

- The information provided
- The potential risk to children
- Whether the allegation meets the LADO threshold
- Whether further information can be obtained
- Whether Children's Social Care or the Police should be contacted.

The fact that a person does not provide their name does not mean that the allegation can be disregarded.

Allegations Made Maliciously or Knowingly Falsely

The setting recognises that an allegation may ultimately be found to be false or malicious.

An allegation must not be described as malicious simply because it is not substantiated.

Any decision regarding deliberately false or malicious allegations will be made only after appropriate safeguarding and investigative processes have been completed.

Where appropriate, disciplinary action may be considered in relation to an employee who deliberately makes a false or malicious allegation.

Allegations Made by Parents or Carers

Parents and carers are entitled to raise concerns about the treatment of their child.

Where a parent/carer raises an allegation against a member of staff:

1. The concern will be listened to and recorded.



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2. The DSL/Manager will assess the concern.
3. Immediate safeguarding action will be taken where necessary.
4. The LADO will be contacted where the allegation meets the threshold.
5. The Police and/or Children's Social Care will be contacted where appropriate.
6. The complaints procedure may also apply where the concern does not meet the safeguarding allegation threshold.

Parents will be kept appropriately informed, subject to confidentiality and advice from safeguarding agencies.

Concerns About Staff Conduct That Do Not Meet the Allegation Threshold

Where a concern does not meet the LADO threshold, the setting may manage the matter through:

- Supervision
- Training
- Performance management
- Professional development
- A formal or informal management process
- The disciplinary procedure
- The complaints procedure
- The low-level concerns process.

The decision and rationale will be recorded.

Pattern of Concerns

The setting will monitor concerns about individual staff members to identify patterns.

A series of apparently minor concerns may indicate:

- Poor professional practice
- Poor understanding of safeguarding responsibilities



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- Poor boundaries
- A developing safeguarding risk
- A need for additional training or supervision
- A concern that should be escalated to the LADO.

Records of low-level concerns will therefore be reviewed appropriately by the Manager/DSL.

Allegations Relating to Conduct Outside Work

An allegation does not need to have occurred at the setting to raise safeguarding concerns.

The setting will consider concerns about an individual's behaviour outside work where the behaviour may:

- Indicate that the person poses a risk to children
- Affect their suitability to work with children
- Involve a child
- Raise concerns about their professional conduct.

The LADO will be consulted where appropriate.

Online and Social Media Concerns

The same procedures apply to concerns involving:

- Social media
- Messaging applications
- Email
- Online gaming
- Images or videos
- Personal devices
- Communication with children online
- Sharing inappropriate content
- Contact with children outside agreed professional channels.



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Staff must not communicate privately with children using personal social media accounts unless specifically authorised within the setting's procedures.

Whistleblowing

All staff have a responsibility to raise safeguarding concerns.

Staff should normally report concerns to the DSL or Manager.

Where a member of staff believes that their concern has not been appropriately addressed, they should escalate it to the appropriate senior person or use the setting's Whistleblowing Policy.

Staff must never be disadvantaged or victimised for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

Where appropriate, staff may seek advice from external safeguarding bodies.

If the Concern Is About the Person Receiving the Report

If a staff member believes that the person they would normally report to is involved in the concern, they must report the matter to another appropriate senior person.

For example:

Concern about staff member → DSL/Manager

Concern about DSL → Manager/Trustee

Concern about Manager → Chair of Trustees/appropriate independent senior person

Concern about Chair of Trustees → LADO/appropriate external safeguarding authority

No individual should be responsible for managing an allegation made against themselves.



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Support for Children

Children affected by an allegation will be supported throughout the process.

The setting will consider:

- The child's emotional wellbeing
- Whether additional pastoral support is required
- Whether a trusted adult should provide support
- Whether parents/carers should be informed
- Whether external support is required
- Whether the child's routine or care arrangements need to change.

The child's welfare will remain the central consideration throughout.

Support for Staff

The setting recognises that allegations can be distressing for everyone involved.

Appropriate support may include:

- Regular communication
- Access to the Manager or senior member of staff
- Occupational or employee support services, where available
- Signposting to appropriate professional support
- Clear information about the process
- Appropriate supervision.

Providing support does not imply that the setting has reached a conclusion about the allegation.

Outcome of an Allegation

At the conclusion of the relevant process, the allegation may be determined as:

- **Substantiated** – sufficient evidence to prove the allegation



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- Unsubstantiated – insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation
- Unfounded – no evidence that the allegation could possibly be true
- Malicious – evidence demonstrates that the allegation was deliberately invented with the intention of causing harm
- False – evidence demonstrates that the allegation was not true.

The appropriate outcome will be determined through the relevant safeguarding, disciplinary or investigative process.

Returning to Work

Where an employee has been suspended or removed from duties, the setting will carefully consider their return to work.

This may include:

- A return-to-work meeting
- Updated risk assessment
- Additional supervision
- Additional safeguarding training
- Clear expectations regarding professional conduct
- Adjustments to duties where appropriate.

The setting will follow advice from the LADO and other safeguarding agencies where applicable.

Learning and Review

Following an allegation or significant concern, the setting will consider whether there are lessons to be learned.

This may include reviewing:

- Staffing arrangements
- Safeguarding procedures
- Staff training



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- Supervision
- Risk assessments
- Staff behaviour expectations
- Professional boundaries
- Recruitment procedures
- Communication arrangements
- Physical environment
- Policies and procedures.

The purpose of the review is to strengthen safeguarding and prevent future concerns.

Training

All staff will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Staff will be made aware of:

- This policy
- The setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- Professional boundaries
- Low-level concerns
- Whistleblowing
- Reporting procedures
- The role of the DSL
- The role of the LADO.

Staff must understand that safeguarding concerns must be reported promptly and must never be ignored.

Monitoring and Review of This Policy

The Manager and DSL will monitor the implementation of this policy.



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Staff Declaration

All staff, volunteers and other adults working with children are expected to read and understand this policy.

Staff must understand that:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- All allegations and safeguarding concerns must be taken seriously.
- Concerns must be reported immediately.
- Staff must not investigate allegations themselves.
- Confidentiality must be maintained.
- Low-level concerns must also be reported.
- Professional boundaries must always be maintained.
- The welfare of children is the primary consideration.

The policy will be reviewed:

- At least annually
- Following significant safeguarding incidents
- Following changes to legislation or statutory guidance
- Following advice from the LADO or safeguarding partners
- Following changes to Ofsted or EYFS requirements.

Last updated: 08.10.26

Signed by Chair of Trustees:

Signed by Operations Manager: