

Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Adults

19 October 2026

About This Document

Annual Policy Period	2026 - 2027
Policy Adopted by Governors	
Last Policy Review	19 October 2026
Next Policy Review	September 2027

History

Version	Date	Name	Description
0.1	Oct 2026	René Esterhuizen, Headteacher	First release. DRAFT

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1. Purpose and Legal Framework

1.1. These procedures set out how The Vine Christian School will respond to safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults who work with children. They are intended to ensure that concerns are acted upon promptly, children are protected, allegations are dealt with fairly and consistently, and the rights of the person who is the subject of an allegation are respected.

1.2. These procedures have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026), particularly Part four, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. They should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy, Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Whistleblowing Policy and Complaints Procedure, together with the local safeguarding partnership procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children.

1.3. For the purposes of these procedures, "adult" includes employees, supply teachers, trainee teachers, agency staff, volunteers, contractors, self-employed persons working on behalf of the school and other adults working with or on behalf of the school.

2. Key Principle

2.1. All safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults, no matter how small they may initially appear, must be taken seriously and reported without delay. Staff must not investigate the matter themselves, interview witnesses or seek to establish whether an allegation is true before it is reported to the appropriate person.

2.2. The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. At the same time, the school will ensure that the adult who is the subject of an allegation is treated fairly and that information is shared only with those who need to know.

3. The Harm Threshold

3.1. Part Four of KCSIE 2026 applies where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

i. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child

ii. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child

iii. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, or

iv. behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

3.2. The final criterion may relate to behaviour outside school and may involve no child directly. Such behaviour can nevertheless raise a question of transferable risk and whether the individual remains suitable to work with children.

4. Concerns that Do Not Meet The Harm Threshold

4.1. A concern which does not meet the harm threshold must not be ignored. It must be dealt with under the school's Low-Level Concerns Policy and Part Four, section two of KCSIE 2026. If there is any doubt about whether the harm threshold may be met, the Headteacher should seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

5. Who Must Be Informed

5.1. Any allegation or safeguarding concern about an adult working with children at or on behalf of the school must be reported immediately as follows:

Situation	**Report to**
Concern about a member of staff, supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor	Report to the Headteacher without delay.
Concern about the Headteacher	Report to the Chair or nominated proprietor representative without informing the Headteacher first.
Headteacher is also the sole proprietor, or there is no unconflicted senior person available	Report directly to the LADO.
Concern about the proprietor or a member of the proprietor body	Report directly to the LADO and follow local authority advice on the appropriate case-management arrangements.
Immediate risk to a child or suspected crime	Take immediate safeguarding action and contact children's social care and/or the police as appropriate, alongside contacting the LADO.

5.2. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0118 974 6141

6. The Case Manager

6.1. The person responsible for managing the school's response is referred to in KCSIE as the case manager. This will normally be the Headteacher. Where the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the case manager will normally be the Chair or another suitably independent person determined in consultation with the LADO.

6.2. The case manager must keep a written record of decisions, actions, advice received and the reasons for decisions throughout the process.

7. Immedate Action On Receiving An Allegation

7.1. The person receiving the concern must:

i. listen carefully and take the matter seriously

ii. make a factual written record as soon as possible, including the date, time, persons present, what was said and any immediate action taken

iii. avoid asking leading questions or carrying out an investigation

iv. not promise confidentiality to the person raising the concern

v. take immediate action to protect any child who may be at risk, and

vi. pass the information without delay to the appropriate case manager or, where required, directly to the LADO.

8. Initial Consideration An LADO Consultation

8.1. The case manager will consider the nature, content and context of the allegation. The school will not conduct a substantive internal investigation before consulting the LADO where the harm threshold may be met.

8.2. The LADO must be informed within one working day of all allegations that appear to meet, or may meet, the harm threshold. Earlier contact should be made wherever practicable, particularly where there may be an immediate safeguarding risk or criminal offence.

8.3. The initial discussion with the LADO will consider what action is required, which agencies need to be involved, how the child will be supported, what information may be shared with the adult who is the subject of the allegation, whether any employment action is required, and who will undertake any investigation.

9. Safeguarding The Child

9.1. The school will ensure that appropriate steps are taken without delay to safeguard and support the child or children concerned. This may include involvement of the DSL, children's social care, police or other agencies. The school will consider the wishes and feelings of the child, their age and understanding, and any communication or additional needs.

9.2. Parents or carers of the child will normally be informed as soon as appropriate, subject to advice from the LADO, children's social care or police. Information will not be shared where doing so may place a child at increased risk or prejudice an investigation.

10. Informing And Supporting The Adult Who Is The Subject Of The Allegation

10.1. The case manager will, in consultation with the LADO and, where relevant, the police or children's social care, decide when and what the adult should be told. The individual should be informed of the allegation as soon as it is appropriate to do so, given as much information as can properly be disclosed, and kept informed of the progress of the case.

10.2. The school will identify a named person to provide appropriate support to the individual. The individual will be reminded of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and of any restrictions on discussing the matter.

11. Confidentiality And Reporting Restrictions

11.1. The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being considered or investigated. Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection law.

11.2. Where the allegation concerns a teacher, the school will have regard to the statutory restrictions on publication of information that may identify a teacher who is the subject of an allegation of a criminal offence made by or on behalf of a pupil, until the relevant restrictions cease to apply.

12. Suspension And Alternative Arrangements

12.1. Suspension is not an automatic response to an allegation and must not be used as a default. The case manager will consider, with advice from the LADO and appropriate employment/HR advice, whether the circumstances justify suspension or whether the risk can be managed through less restrictive arrangements.

12.2. Alternatives may include temporary redeployment, changing duties, removing direct contact with particular pupils, additional supervision, working from another location, or other proportionate safeguards. Any decision to suspend will be kept under review and recorded with reasons.

13. Supply Teachers, Trainee Teachers And Contracted Staff

13.1. Where an allegation concerns a person who is not directly employed by the school, including a supply teacher, trainee teacher or contracted staff member, the school will not simply cease to use the person's services without managing the safeguarding concern. The school and the employing agency, training provider or business share safeguarding responsibilities and must work together, with the LADO, to gather the facts and manage the safeguarding process.

13.2. The school will take the lead in safeguarding pupils and in gathering relevant school-based information. The agency, provider or business remains responsible for any employment or disciplinary process for its worker. The school will ensure that the person is given an opportunity to respond to the allegation and that relevant information is shared appropriately with the agency/provider.

14. Organisations Or Individuals Using School Premises

14.1. Where an allegation relates to an incident that occurred while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures, including informing the LADO as appropriate. The school will cooperate with the organisation or individual concerned and any relevant statutory agencies so that the allegation is managed properly and children are safeguarded.

15. Investigation And Coordination With Other Processes

15.1. The LADO will advise whether the matter requires police investigation, children's social care enquiries, an employer investigation or a combination of these. The school will not take action that could compromise a criminal or child protection investigation.

15.2. Where a police or social care investigation is not required, or once those agencies advise that an internal process may proceed, the school will decide whether an internal investigation, disciplinary process or other action is necessary. Any investigation will be fair, impartial, proportionate and completed as promptly as reasonably practicable.

16. Outcome of An Allegation

16.1. At the conclusion of the process, the school will use the KCSIE outcome definitions:

Outcome	**Meaning**
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 or cause harm to the person who is the subject of the allegation.
False	There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
Unsubstantiated	There is insufficient evidence either to prove or disprove the allegation. This does not imply guilt or innocence.
Unfounded	There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

17. Action Following The Outcome

17.1. The action taken will depend on the circumstances and may include no further action, management guidance, additional training or supervision, disciplinary action, dismissal, termination of services, or a decision not to use the person's services in future.

17.2. If an allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or removed from regulated activity or would have been removed, had they not resigned or otherwise ceased to provide services, the school will, where the legal conditions are met, make the required referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

17.3. Where the individual is a teacher, the case manager will also consider whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) is appropriate.

17.4. The school will liaise with the LADO about the conclusion of the case and any learning, safeguarding actions or referrals required.

18. Resignations and Settlement Agreements

18.1. The fact that an individual resigns, ceases to provide services or agrees to leave does not prevent the school from continuing to follow safeguarding procedures. The school will not use a settlement agreement or other arrangement to prevent a safeguarding referral, DBS referral, TRA referral or the proper conclusion of an allegation process where one is required.

19. Records

19.1. The school will maintain a clear and comprehensive summary of each allegation, how it was followed up and resolved, the decisions reached, and the actions taken. Records will be retained securely and in accordance with KCSIE 2026, data protection requirements and the school's records-retention arrangements.

19.2. Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious or false will be removed from personnel records unless there is another lawful reason for retaining relevant information. Information included in references will comply with KCSIE 2026: allegations that are false, malicious, unsubstantiated or unfounded will not be included in employment references.

20. Returning To Work

20.1. Where an adult returns to work following suspension or another temporary safeguarding arrangement, the school will consider how best to support the individual and manage their return. This may include a return-to-work plan, additional supervision, support and communication with relevant staff, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

21. Allegations Against Former Staff And Historical Allegations

21.1. Allegations against former staff or historical allegations will be referred to the police and/or relevant local authority safeguarding services where appropriate. The school will cooperate with any investigation and will preserve and provide records lawfully required for that purpose.

22. Whistleblowing

22.1. If a member of staff feels unable to raise a safeguarding concern internally or believes that a concern is not being dealt with properly, they should use the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Staff must not be prevented or discouraged from making a protected disclosure or from contacting the LADO, children's social care, police or another appropriate safeguarding authority.

23. Review And Learning

23.1. At the conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, or where the process identifies weaknesses in safeguarding practice, the school will review the circumstances with the LADO where

appropriate. The review will consider whether policies, procedures, staff training, supervision, safer working practice or risk management need to be improved.