

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A PROFESSIONAL



Purpose

Edstart is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise that concerns or allegations may sometimes be made about adults who work with children.

This policy sets out the procedure for responding to allegations or concerns about any adult working on behalf of Edstart in a fair, consistent and timely manner, while prioritising the safety and welfare of children.

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Coaches
- Volunteers
- Apprentices
- Students on placement
- Contractors
- Agency staff
- Visitors working with children
- Anyone representing Edstart in a child-facing role

What Is an Allegation?

An allegation or concern must be taken seriously where it is believed that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, 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 may pose a risk of harm
- Behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- Behaved in their personal life in a way that may impact their suitability to work with children

Immediate Action for Staff

If any member of staff receives an allegation or has a concern, they must:

Where an allegation is made, Edstart will follow this process:

- **Safeguard Children Immediately**
Take immediate action to protect any child involved and seek emergency support where required.
- **Report Without Delay**
Report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and senior management.
- **Do Not Investigate Internally**
No internal investigation or wider discussion will take place before advice is received.
- **Contact the LADO**
The relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted promptly for guidance.
- **Maintain Confidentiality**
Information will only be shared with those who need to know.
- **Follow Agreed Actions**
Edstart will follow advice from the LADO, police, children's social care or other agencies.
- **Consider Interim Measures**
Where necessary, temporary redeployment, increased supervision or suspension may be considered.
- **Record and Review**
Accurate records will be kept and appropriate disciplinary, safeguarding or learning actions completed.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact **999** immediately.

Internal Reporting Contacts

Concerns must be reported immediately to:

- **Edstart Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Adam Rowles
- **Head Office:** 0330 043 3542
- Relevant school Designated Safeguarding Lead (where applicable)

If the allegation concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it must be reported directly to senior leadership or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Referral to the LADO

Where the threshold is met, Edstart will refer the matter to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** within one working day.

The LADO oversees allegations against adults who work with children and will advise on:

- Whether the allegation meets the threshold
- Police involvement
- Children's Social Care involvement
- Employer action
- Managing risk during enquiries
- Next steps and timescales

Bury LADO Contact Details

- **Email:** lado@bury.gov.uk
- **Telephone:** 0161 253 6168
- **Mobile:** 07583 877250

Other Agencies

If concerns relate to a child's welfare, referrals may also be made to:

Bury MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

- **Telephone:** 0161 253 5678

Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)

- **Telephone:** 0161 253 6606

Police

- **Emergency:** 999
- **Non-Emergency:** 101

Suspension / Alternative Duties

Suspension is not automatic and will only be considered where necessary to:

- Protect children
- Prevent interference with evidence
- Manage serious risk
- Allow a fair investigation

Alternatives may include:

- Temporary redeployment
- Increased supervision
- Removal from child-facing duties

Confidentiality

All allegations must be handled confidentially.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to safeguard children and manage the process appropriately.

Staff must not discuss allegations with colleagues, parents or on social media.

Support for Those Involved

Edstart will provide appropriate support to:

The Child

- Safety and reassurance
- Appropriate communication with parents/carers
- External support where required

The Adult Subject to the Allegation

- Fair treatment
- Named point of contact
- Welfare support during the process

Staff Team

- Guidance where needed
- Reinforcement of confidentiality expectations

Outcomes

Following investigation, outcomes may include:

- Substantiated
- Unsubstantiated
- False
- Malicious
- Unfounded

Appropriate action may include:

- No further action
- Training or supervision
- Disciplinary action
- Referral to DBS
- Referral to professional bodies

Record Keeping

Edstart will keep secure and confidential records of:

- Allegation details
- Actions taken
- Decisions made
- Outcome
- Agencies involved

Records will be stored in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

False or Malicious Allegations

Where an allegation is found to be deliberately false or malicious, Edstart will consider appropriate action while continuing to safeguard all involved.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner following legislative changes or safeguarding updates.