

Learn with Confidence
5 King Court, Harwood Road, Horsham, RH13 5UR
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Learnwithconfidence.co.uk

Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

V1.3

To be read in conjunction with:

- LwC's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) guidance
- DfE Statutory Guidance: *Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government)

1. Introduction

Learn With Confidence (LwC) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in our care. We recognise that staff and volunteers occupy positions of trust and therefore must maintain the highest standards of conduct and integrity. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer is taken seriously, managed promptly, and investigated thoroughly in accordance with statutory and local guidance.

LwC has a dual duty of care:

- To protect children and young people from harm; and
- To ensure that staff who are the subject of an allegation are treated fairly, supported appropriately, and that investigations are conducted impartially and without delay.

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed when an allegation of abuse or harm is made against any member of LwC staff, agency worker, contractor, or volunteer.

2. Definition: What is an Allegation?

An allegation is information or a concern that suggests an adult working with children 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; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children if they were to work regularly or closely with them.

If any person sees, hears, suspects, or receives a report fitting one or more of the above criteria, they have a statutory duty to report this immediately.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by the following statutory documents and guidance:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2023)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2024)
- *Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff* (DfE)
- *West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) Procedures*

LwC also operates within the requirements of its insurance provider, which includes access to HR and legal support in managing allegations appropriately.

Insurance Provider:

Holden Insurance

3-5 Worthing Road, Horsham, RH12 1SQ

Tel: 01403 214800

Website: www.aplan.co.uk

4. Responsible Persons

- The Director, Kat Perry, is the Designated Senior Person responsible for managing allegations against staff.
- In cases where the allegation involves the Director, the responsibility transfers to the Assistant Manager, Heather Jones.

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- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed immediately of any allegations and will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

5. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

LwC follows the procedures outlined by the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) for managing allegations against staff.

The LADO is responsible for:

- Providing advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations;
- Liaising with the police and children's social care;
- Monitoring the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly and fairly as possible.

West Sussex LADO Contact Details:

- Named LADOs: *Miriam Williams* and *Donna Tomlinson*
- Consultation Line: 0330 222 6450 (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)
- LADO Service (via MASH): 01403 229900
- Email: LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk
- Web: West Sussex SCP – LADO Information

6. Procedures

6.1 Notification

Allegations may arise from:

- A pupil, parent, or carer;
- A colleague or other member of staff;
- External sources such as another agency, the police, or social care; or
- Observations of concerning behaviour.

Any person who becomes aware of an allegation must:

1. Report the concern immediately to the Director (or Assistant Manager if the Director is the subject of the allegation).
2. Record the details in writing, including date, time, place, persons involved, and a factual description of what was said or observed.
3. Avoid asking leading questions, making assumptions, or offering alternative explanations.
4. Not promise confidentiality, but ensure information is shared strictly on a "need-to-know" basis.

6.2 Immediate Action ("The First Five Minutes")

Upon receiving an allegation:

1. Ensure the immediate safety and welfare of any children involved.
2. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Manager immediately.
3. Do not question the alleged victim, perpetrator, or witnesses at this stage.
4. Contact the LADO within 24 hours of the allegation being made:
 - Email: LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk
 - Phone: 0330 222 6450
5. If there is immediate danger or risk of harm, contact:
 - Integrated Front Door (IFD): WSChildrenServices@westsussex.gov.uk or 01403 229900
 - Out of Hours / Emergency Duty Team: 0330 222 6664

6.3 Consultation and Next Steps

- Do not commence any internal investigation before consulting with the LADO.
- LwC may collect basic factual information only (e.g. staff attendance, potential witnesses, timing of incident).

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- The LADO will determine whether the allegation meets the threshold for further investigation by Children's Services and/or the Police.
- Following consultation, the LADO may recommend one of three courses of action:
 1. No further action required;
 2. Internal action by employer (e.g. disciplinary or HR process); or
 3. Initial Evaluation Meeting involving LwC, the LADO, and other relevant agencies.

If directed to conduct an internal investigation, LwC will do so with the guidance and oversight of the LADO and in consultation with its HR and legal advisors.

Referral forms and guidance are available at:
WSSCP LADO Information Page

7. Support for Staff

LwC recognises the stress and anxiety that allegations can cause. Staff subject to an allegation will:

- Be treated fairly and with respect;
- Be informed of the allegation as soon as possible (subject to advice from the LADO/police);
- Have access to support and welfare services through management and HR;
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcomes of investigations.

8. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- Accurate and detailed records of all allegations, decisions, and outcomes must be kept securely and separately from personnel files.
- Records will be retained in accordance with Data Protection legislation and LwC's Record Retention Policy.
- Information will be shared only where necessary for the protection of children or in line with legal requirements.

9. Learning and Review

Following any allegation, the Director (or Assistant Manager) will:

- Review the circumstances and outcomes;
- Identify any lessons learned to improve safeguarding practice and training; and
- Report outcomes (where appropriate) to the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership and LwC's governing/oversight structure.

10. Contact Information

Designated Senior Person for Allegations:
Kat Perry – Director
Email: kat.perry@learnwithconfidence.co.uk
Tel: 07508 188005

Deputy Responsible Person (if the allegation concerns the Director):
Gayle Voller
Email: gayle.voller@learnwithconfidence.co.uk
Tel: 01403 586029

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):
Email: LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk
Tel: 0330 222 6450

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9. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually by the LwC leadership team to ensure it remains up to date with current legislation and best practices in risk management. Any changes to the risk management process will be communicated to staff and other stakeholders as needed.

Version Control			
Version No.	Date	Author	Notes
1.0	15 th October 2024	K Perry	Initial Draft
1.1	Sept 2 nd 2025	KP	
1.3	5 September 2026	KP	