

ALLEGATIONS POLICY

Heart Teaching LTD – Allegations Policy

Policy Date: 10 February 2025

Latest Revision: 12 January 2026

Next Review: 12 January 2027 (or sooner if guidance changes)

Policy Reviewed by: Faith Ashby

1. Introduction

Heart Teaching LTD is committed to the highest professional and ethical standards. This policy sets out how we will respond to **allegations or concerns about adults** (staff, directors, volunteers and candidates) who work with children and adults at risk, ensuring compliance with statutory safeguarding guidance including *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*.

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy**
- **Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy**
- **Safer Recruitment Policy**
- **Complaints Policy**
- **Whistleblowing Policy**
- **Data Protection and Confidentiality Policies**

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All directors and employees of Heart Teaching LTD;
- All candidates registered with or supplied by Heart Teaching LTD;
- Volunteers, contractors or anyone representing the organisation.

It covers concerns that **meet** or do **not meet** the harm threshold (see sections 3 and 4). Allegations will be handled lawfully, fairly and in accordance with statutory guidance.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by (but not limited to):

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025** — statutory guidance for those working with children.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** — multi-agency statutory guidance on safeguarding.
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) referral guidance** — obligation to refer barred individuals.
- Relevant sections of:
Children Acts 1989 and 2004,
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006,
Childcare Act 2006.

4. Types of Concern

a) Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is **any concern**, no matter how small, that an adult's behaviour towards a child or adult at risk:

- Is inconsistent with Heart Teaching's Code of Conduct (including outside work); and
- Does *not* meet the harms threshold detailed below.

Examples may include breach of professional boundaries, inappropriate language, or behaviour that raises a nagging doubt.

Responding to Low-Level Concerns

- Report concerns to **Justin Brown, Director**.
- Director will gather **basic information** and may speak with the person who raised the concern and the subject of the concern (unless anonymous).
- Records will include:
 - Details of concern and context;
 - Any action taken;
 - Identity of the person raising the concern (unless anonymous).
- Records retained securely and reviewed for patterns of behaviour.

5. Harms Threshold (Allegations)

A concern meets the *harms threshold* where evidence suggests an adult may:

- Have **harmed or possibly harmed a child**;
- **Possibly committed a criminal offence** against/related to a child;
- Behaved in a way indicating **risk of harm to children**;
- Behaved or may have behaved such that they **may not be suitable** to work with children.

This threshold aligns with LADO criteria and statutory guidance.

6. Duty to Report and Referral Process

a) Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Where the allegation meets the harms threshold, **report to the LADO without delay (within one working day)**. The LADO oversees management and oversight of individual cases.

b) Police & Children's Social Care

If there is suspicion a criminal act has occurred, the police must be contacted promptly. If there is risk of significant harm, referral to Children's Social Care must be made.

c) Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

If a person is dismissed or removed (or would have been if they had not left) because they harmed or posed a risk to a child or adult at risk, Heart Teaching LTD must **refer to the DBS**. Failing to make a referral without good reason is an offence.

d) Regulatory Bodies

Where appropriate, referrals should also be made to relevant regulators (e.g. Teaching Regulation Authority, Social Work England).

7. Investigation and Actions

a) Initial Fact-Finding

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- Director gathers information to establish if allegation is credible before notifying the accused.
- Written details of allegation should be obtained, countersigned and dated.

b) Multi-Agency Strategy

Strategy discussions or meetings will be convened involving LADO, police, social care as required. Decisions include:

- Whether a **Section 47 enquiry** is needed;
- Whether a **criminal investigation** is needed;
- Whether **internal disciplinary action** should proceed.

c) Internal Discipline

Where necessary, internal disciplinary procedure will be followed **separately** from statutory investigations.

8. Support

a) For Children/Adults at Risk

Heart Teaching will support and provide updates to families within the constraints of confidentiality and legal restrictions.

b) For Accused Persons

Support includes welfare check-ins, union/professional association contact and appropriate adjustments (e.g., restricted duties), while ensuring the safety of children/adults at risk.

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and only with those who need to know. Consent should be sought where possible unless this increases risk. Decisions on sharing must be recorded.

Confidentiality must be upheld; discussing details outside formal channels or on social media may lead to disciplinary action.

10. Suspension

Suspension is **not automatic**. It may be considered if:

- Child or adult at risk is in immediate danger;
- Police investigation is underway;
- Allegation is serious enough to justify suspension.
Only a director may suspend; external agencies cannot compel suspension.

11. Record Keeping

Full records of allegations, investigations, decisions and actions must be kept securely for **10 years or until normal retirement age, whichever is longer**. Only substantiated outcomes remain on record; malicious allegations should be removed.

12. Outcomes

Definitions to be used:

- **Substantiated:** evidence supports the allegation.
- **False:** evidence proves allegation is untrue.
- **Malicious:** deliberate deception.
- **Unsubstantiated:** insufficient evidence to prove or disprove.
- **Unfounded:** no basis for the allegation.

13. Learning and Policy Review

All allegations should be reviewed with relevant partners to identify lessons and policy/practice improvements. Changes must be communicated to staff.

14. Policy References

This policy supports the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk, in line with:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025* (statutory guidance)
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* (statutory guidance)

Heart Teaching is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in line with statutory guidance. In managing allegations against staff, we adhere to the principles set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*. This includes ensuring that all concerns are taken seriously, investigated promptly, and handled in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner. We work in partnership with local safeguarding authorities, following the necessary procedures to protect children while supporting staff through the process