



## Managing Allegations and Whistleblowing Policy

### Persons responsible

The person responsible for day-to-day management of allegations and whistleblowing is Richard Blagden (RB). Taleblazers does not currently have a director responsible for safeguarding independent of Richard; Kevin Johns (KJ) performs the roles usually associated with a safeguarding governor and provides an independent voice to LADO and external organisations.

In the event of concerns (allegations or whistleblowing) being raised about RB, KJ is nominated to manage the relevant process.

### Managing Allegations Procedure

The following procedure should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff or a volunteer 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
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse i.e. physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, and include concerns relating to conduct at or outside work, and inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people.

Note that not all complaints will meet the above criteria and some allegations may be more appropriately treated under complaints or disciplinary procedures.

#### Step 1: Reporting

All allegations must be reported to RB immediately, unless the allegation concerns RB in which case it must be reported to KJ.

A written record of the allegations should be made within the first 24 hours and ideally as soon as possible.

Torbay Council Local Authority Designated Officer, Ivan Sullivan, should be informed on 01803 208541. If an allegation requires immediate attention, but is received outside normal office hours, the designated senior manager should consult the Children's Social Care emergency duty team or local police and inform the LADO as soon as possible.

#### Step 2: Informing relevant parties

The staff member concerned should be informed after contact has been made with LADO. The LADO will advise on contact with parents and Children's Services/Social Care team. The designated senior manager will also inform the DSL at the on-roll school (or LA SEN caseworker) of the allegation at this stage.

### **Step 3: Evaluation**

Taleblazers will treat allegations seriously and be guided by the LADO in investigations and evidence gathering. RB will remain available to consult with and take direction from the LADO throughout the process. It should be noted that there remains a duty of care to the employee from the employer, and the employee may require support with the additional stress.

### **Step 4: Conclusion**

The outcome of the investigation can be that the allegation was substantiated (proven), malicious (deliberate act to harm the accused), false (allegation disproved), unsubstantiated (neither proven nor unproven), unfounded (no evidence of basis to allegation).

The LADO will advise on actions to be taken in respect of the child and employee as a result of the allegation.

## **Low Level Concerns**

Low level concerns are those that do not meet the threshold for reporting to LADO and include incidents such as:

- Being over friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Breaches of staff codes of conduct are also included in this.

Any low level concerns should be reported to RB for professional discussion with the staff member. Actions that do not meet the threshold for reporting can still be treated as complaints or disciplinary matters.

## **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- a) Criminal activity
- b) Miscarriages of justice
- c) Danger to health and safety
- d) Damage to the environment
- e) Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
- f) Bribery
- g) Financial fraud or mismanagement
- h) Negligence
- i) Breach of internal policies and procedures
- j) Conduct likely to damage Taleblazers' reputation, e.g. behaving inappropriately in a public place observed by a member of the local community

k) Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information

Whistleblowers' concerns will be treated with confidentiality and respect. All concerns raised will be managed at the level of directors who will decide on the appropriate course of action and, as far as is practical under confidentiality rules, keep the whistleblower informed of progress.