

Statement of procedures for dealing with allegation of abuse against staff 2026

At Link Academy Trust, our vision is clear:

Flourishing schools for all at the heart of our communities.

Inspired by, *“Life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)*, we strive to create environments where every individual can thrive.

Our mission is underpinned by three core values that guide everything we do:

- **Belonging** – Every interaction matters; we nurture relationships and ensure everyone feels valued and included.
- **Curiosity** – We embrace ambition, creativity, and innovation to inspire lifelong learning.
- **Collaboration** – We foster an open culture of accountability and shared success, working together for the benefit of all.

These principles shape our approach to equality and diversity, ensuring that every policy, decision, and action reflects our commitment to inclusion and excellence.

Statement of procedures for dealing with allegation of abuse against staff 2026

The Link Academy Trust (the Trust) is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Department for Education (DfE). All Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term *Trustee* used in this policy also means *Director*. This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers of the Trust. As a general guideline, business gifts and hospitality should not be accepted by any member of staff, except as provided for below.

The Trust recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils and expects all staff, trustees, local boards and volunteers to share this commitment. We recognise that all children, regardless of age, disability, SEND, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us, children are aware of the adults they can talk to if they have a concern. When there are concerns for a child's welfare, we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies. We will ensure concerns are discussed with parents/carers first unless we have reason to believe that by doing so would be contrary to the child's welfare.

Allegations about the safeguarding and protection of children must be handled in accordance with statutory guidance. The relevant statutory guidance can be found in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025' (Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges), 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' and Guidance for Safe Working Practice.

These documents can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

Linked Policies:

- The Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2025 – these procedures are outlined on page 15.
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy

This statement is related to:

Any allegation that a member of staff has violated any part of the Code of Conduct including:

- behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children

The Link Academy Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead and Chief Executive Officer is:

Rachael Sharpe Rachael.Sharpe@thelink.academy 01803 762113

The Link Academy Trust Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Director of Safeguarding is:

Alex Waterman Alex.Waterman@thelink.academy 01647 440482

The Link Academy Trustee responsible for Safeguarding is:

Graeme Scott Graeme.Scott@thelink.academy

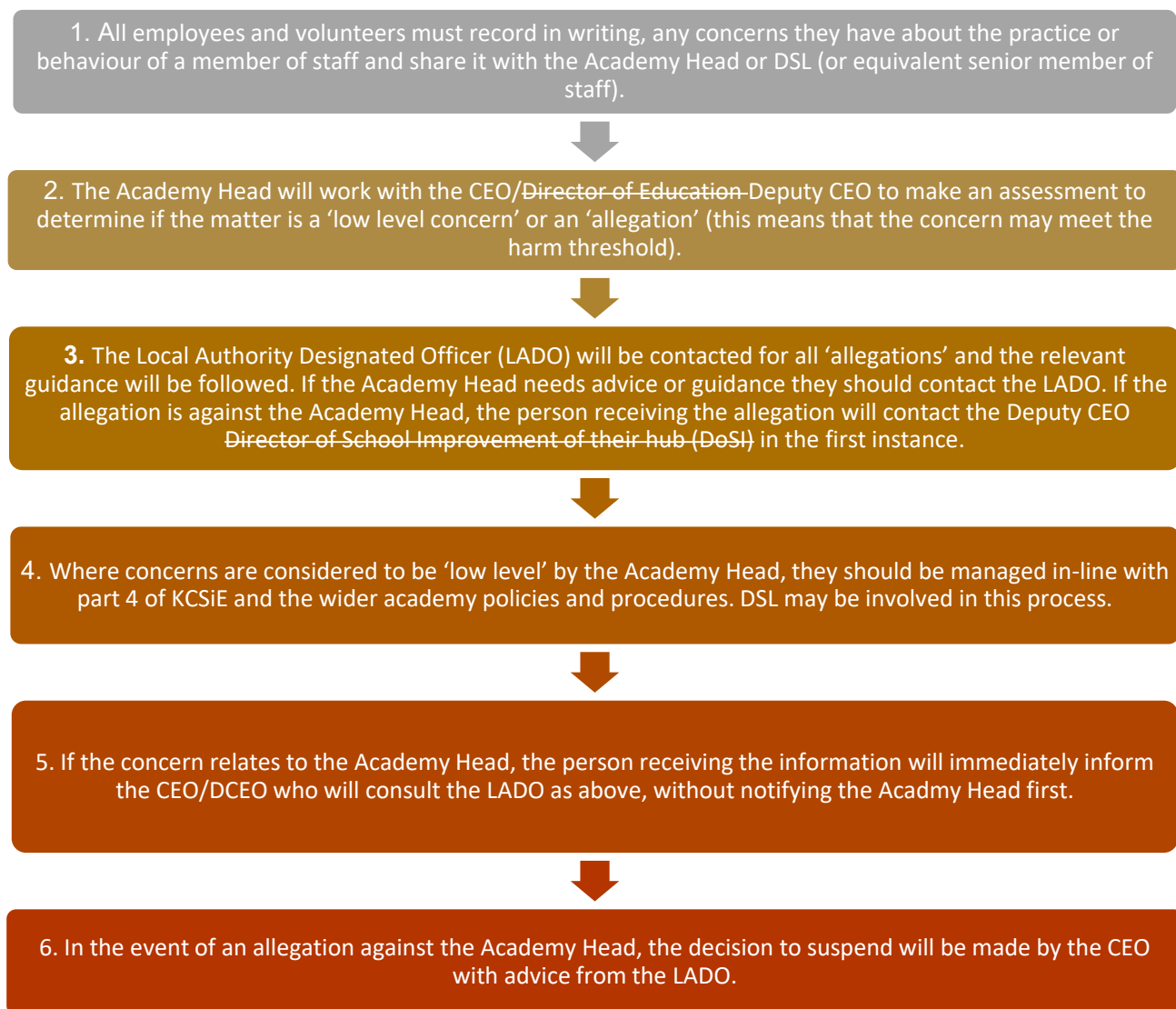
Academies should appoint a designated safeguarding lead (DSL), also known as 'designated senior person' (DSP) from the academy's senior leadership team who has appropriate authority and is given the time or

training and resources in order to provide support and advice to other staff on child protection matters. There should always be cover for this role should the DSL be away for any reason.

Academies should ensure they are familiar with their Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) from the Local Authority who handles child protection/safeguarding allegations. The LADO has a statutory duty to ensure that allegations about safeguarding are handled properly and expeditiously.

All staff/volunteers/visitors are mandatory reporters and should notify the DSL of any safeguarding concerns. The DSLs (typically the Director of Safeguarding (DoS) and DSL) must follow the following procedure when made aware of a safeguarding allegation:

All Trust staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction¹. In line with KCSiE part 4 guidelines,



Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Academy Head, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Academy Head will seek the advice of the LADO, CEO/Deputy CEO and the HR Operations Manager in making this decision.

Staff, parents, local advisory committee members and trustees are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing including content placed on social media sites.

Reviewed by HR and the Remuneration & People Committee: 20th March 2026

Approved by Board of Trustees: 30th March 2026

Next Review: Spring 2027