

Disciplinary Policy

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FURTHER INFORMATION / GUIDANCE	

1. Policy statement

- 1.1. The aims of this Disciplinary Procedure and its associated Disciplinary Rules are to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide a framework within which The Redhill Trust can work with employees to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and to encourage improvement where necessary.
- 1.2. It is the Trust's policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts and to give employees the opportunity to respond before taking any formal action.
- 1.3. This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation with the relevant Trade Unions. The policy has been implemented following consultation with staff and recognised trade unions. It has been formally adopted by the Trust.

2. Scope and purpose of policy

- 2.1. The procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service excluding those in their probationary period where separate arrangements apply. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.
- 2.2. This procedure is used to deal with misconduct. It does not apply to cases involving genuine sickness absence, proposed redundancies or poor performance. In those cases reference should be made to the appropriate policy or procedure available in each academy office.
- 2.3. Minor conduct issues can often be resolved informally between employees and their line manager. These discussions should be held in private and without undue delay whenever there is cause for concern. Where appropriate, a note of any such informal discussions may be placed on the employee's personnel file. In some cases an informal verbal warning or instruction may be given, which will not form part of the disciplinary records. Formal steps will be taken under this procedure if the matter is not resolved, or if informal discussion is not appropriate (for example, because of the seriousness of the allegation).
- 2.4. Employees will not normally be dismissed for a first act of misconduct, unless the Trust decides that the conduct amounts to gross misconduct.
- 2.5. As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff in the Trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore, conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment (see disciplinary rules).

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1. It is the aim of the Trust to deal with disciplinary matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or disciplinary matter.

- 3.2. Employees, and anyone accompanying them (including witnesses), must not make covert electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure. Recording equipment should only be used with prior mutual agreement.
- 3.3. Employees will normally be told the names of any witnesses whose evidence is relevant to disciplinary proceedings against them, unless there is good reason that a witness's identity should remain confidential.

4. Allegations

- 4.1. In the case of allegations made against the CEO the Chair of the Board will be responsible for the management of the procedure and determining an appropriate investigating officer, either internally or externally.
- 4.2. Allegations may be brought to the Trust's attention in a number of ways and through a variety of sources. Appendix 1 sets out the disciplinary rules. As with disclosures made by children and young people, adults need to be aware that in making an allegation it is not always possible to keep the matter confidential. The Head Teacher, Head of School or Regional Director will need to decide upon the most appropriate course of action and may choose to proceed with an investigation even if the person making the allegation does not want them to.
- 4.3. The CEO or Service Director will act as the Head Teacher regarding allegations against Trust employees.
- 4.4. Allegations which involve issues of child protection and/or abuse of children by staff will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). See Appendix 2 for further guidance on the management of this type of allegation.

5. Investigations

- 5.1. Upon receiving any allegations against employees, it is likely that further information will be required to establish what the next course of action should be. The Head Teacher or Head of School should seek to establish the basic facts of the situation; this may involve looking at records, speaking to witnesses, reviewing CCTV etc.

5.2. Preliminary Investigation meeting

An informal investigation meeting may be held with the employee to establish the basic facts of the circumstance and to enable the Head of School or Head Teacher to determine whether further investigation is required. Such a meeting can sometimes give a reasonable explanation in response to allegations which then enables the matter to be concluded. A preliminary meeting will not be required in all cases, and it is for the Head of School or Head Teacher to decide if this is appropriate.

5.3. Investigating Officer

After an informal investigation where it is determined that there is a need for a formal investigation, or if the concerns are serious enough to warrant a full investigation immediately, the Head of School or Head Teacher will appoint an Investigating Officer to carry out the investigation. This will be an appropriate person to the nature of the allegations and the role of the employee. In the case of allegations made against a Head of School or Head Teacher the Chair of Governors, Regional Director or CEO

will be responsible for the management of the procedure and determining an appropriate investigating officer, either internally or externally.

5.4. Further investigation

The purpose of an investigation is to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegations made against an employee, before deciding whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing. The level of detail required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. The investigation is a neutral act, does not imply the guilt of an employee; and does not form part of the formal disciplinary procedure. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents and other information.

- 5.5. If there is a specific allegation being made against an employee, he/she should be made fully aware of the allegation in writing prior to the investigation interview in order that he/she may prepare a response to the allegation.

5.6. Interviewing witnesses

It may be necessary to interview witnesses who may have information that is relevant to the allegations. A record of the meeting will be made, and the witness will have the opportunity to review the record, make amendments for clarification purposes and then be required to sign and date the record. The Trust recognises that some employees may find this difficult or worrying, and support will be provided if necessary, however all employees have a duty to co-operate with any such investigation. In certain circumstances, you may wish to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative.

5.7. Interviewing the employee who is subject to the allegation(s).

Investigation meetings are solely for the purpose of fact-finding and no decision on disciplinary action will be taken until after a disciplinary hearing has been held. The employee subject to the allegation(s) will receive a formal letter confirming informing them of the nature of the events being investigated, including the date/time/venue of the meeting, giving 5 working days' notice of the investigation meeting. Although not an automatic right, employees may bring a trade union representative or work colleague to the investigation meeting if they are available. If your chosen companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled, you may propose an alternative time for the meeting to take place and so long as the alternative time is reasonable, within five working days after the original scheduled date, and does not cause undue delay. If your chosen companion will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask you to choose someone else. A record of the meeting will be made, and the employee will have the opportunity to review the record, make amendments for clarification purposes and sign and date the record.

- 5.8. Employees must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This will include providing the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents or information and attending investigative interviews if required. As each investigation will vary in length and complexity it will be completed in as short a time frame as possible.

- 5.9. The investigating officer may choose to bring a note taker to the meeting to support them with ensuring an accurate record of the meeting is taken.

6. Criminal charges

- 6.1. Where conduct is the subject of a criminal investigation, charge or conviction the facts will be investigated before deciding whether to take formal disciplinary action. Disciplinary action will not be automatic and will depend upon the circumstances. Employees should inform their Head of School, Head Teacher, Service Director or the CEO immediately if they are involved in a criminal investigation or are subject to a charge or conviction.
- 6.2. The Trust may wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take. Where employees are unable or have been advised not to attend an investigation meeting or disciplinary hearing or say anything about a pending criminal matter, a decision may have to be made based on the available evidence.
- 6.3. A criminal investigation, charge or conviction relating to conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment.
- 6.4. Where a criminal investigation relates to allegations of abuse of children or young people the individual academy and the Trust will co-operate and share information about the employee with other relevant agencies as appropriate in accordance with its safeguarding obligations.

7. Suspension

- 7.1. In some circumstances it may be necessary to suspend the employee from work. The employee will be informed in person of the suspension, which will be for no longer than is necessary to investigate the allegations and conclude the disciplinary process. The arrangements will be confirmed to the employee in writing as soon as possible.
- 7.2. Suspension of this kind is not a disciplinary penalty and does not imply that any decision has already been made about the allegations. Employees will continue to receive full salary and benefits during the period of suspension.
- 7.3. Alternatives to suspension, for example re-organisation of duties, work location; temporary redeployment to another role etc will be explored where relevant before a decision to suspend is made. The nature and severity of the allegations will need to be considered as will the employee's role within the Trust.
- 7.4. Where allegations are made that involve the protection of children suspension will not be considered to be automatic. A reasoned decision will be made based on all available information. Additional information on the management of these allegations is available in Appendix 2.
- 7.5. The suspension will be kept under review, as the investigation progresses. As information is gathered, it may become appropriate to lift the suspension during the course of the investigation or prior to any disciplinary hearing. Reviews will take place between the academy and employee.

The decision to suspend an employee can be made by a Head of School, Head Teacher, Regional Director, Service Director, CEO, the Local Governing Body or the Trustees.

- 7.6. An appropriate member of staff will be appointed as a point of contact to support the employee.

8. Disciplinary hearing

- 8.1. Following any investigation, if there are grounds for disciplinary action, the employee will be required to attend a disciplinary hearing. The employee will be informed in writing of the allegations against them, the basis for those allegations, and what the likely range of consequences will be if it is decided at the hearing that the allegations are true. The following will also be included where appropriate:
- 8.1.1. An investigation report of relevant information gathered during the investigation.
 - 8.1.2. A copy of any relevant documents which will be used at the disciplinary hearing; and
 - 8.1.3. a copy of any relevant witness statements, except where a witness's identity is to be kept confidential, in which case as much information as possible will be provided while maintaining confidentiality.
- 8.2. Five working days written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing will be given to provide the employee with a reasonable amount of time to prepare their case based on the information that they have been provided with.
- 8.3. The Investigating Officer will be responsible for ensuring that all of the arrangements for the hearing are made and that the employee and his/her representative receives the appropriate paperwork and notice of the hearing.

9. Role of Companion at Meetings and Hearings

- 9.1. An employee may bring a companion to meetings under this policy. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a work colleague. The employee must inform the Investigating Officer or the Chair of any meeting who their chosen companion is, 48 hours before the relevant meeting or hearing.
- 9.2. Should the employee choose to bring a companion to the hearing they will be responsible for making these arrangements. Companions should not also be witnesses to the investigation or have a conflict of interest.
- 9.3. Acting as a companion is voluntary and your colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.
- 9.4. If the choice of companion is not available at the time a meeting is scheduled, the employee may propose an alternative time for the meeting to take place and so long as the alternative time is reasonable and within five working days after the original scheduled date, we will postpone the meeting. If the employee's chosen companion

will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask the employee to choose someone else.

- 9.5. A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up the employee's position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on the employee's behalf. The employee may confer privately with their companion at any time during a hearing.
- 9.6. We may, at our discretion, allow the employee to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of family) as a reasonable adjustment if the employee has a disability, or if they have difficulty understanding English.

10. Procedure at disciplinary hearings

- 10.1. If the employee and/or their companion cannot attend the hearing they should inform the Chair of the Disciplinary Panel immediately and consideration will be given to arranging an alternative time. Employees must make every effort to attend the hearing and failure to attend without good reason may be treated as misconduct in itself. Failure to attend without good reason, or persistent inability to do so, may lead to a decision being taken based on the available evidence.
- 10.2. If the employee chooses not to attend the hearing they may choose to send a written statement for consideration at the hearing.
- 10.3. The hearing will be chaired by either a Head of School, Head Teacher, Regional Director, Service Director, CEO, Governor or Director. The Investigating Officer along with a representative from HR will also be present (see appendix 3, procedure for hearings/appeals).
- 10.4. At the disciplinary hearing the Investigating Officer will go through the allegations against the employee and the evidence that has been gathered. The employee will be able to respond and present any evidence of their own. The companion may make representations and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf. The employee may confer privately with the companion at any time during the hearing.
- 10.5. Relevant witnesses may be asked by the Investigating Officer or the employee to appear at the hearing. The employee must give sufficient advance notice if they wish to call witnesses to ensure that there is time to arrange their attendance. The employee will be given the opportunity to respond to any information given by a witness (see appendix 3).
- 10.6. The Chair may adjourn the disciplinary hearing if there is a need to carry out any further investigations such as re-interviewing witnesses in the light of any new points that have been raised at the hearing. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.
- 10.7. Where possible, the employee will be informed of the verbal decision and confirmed in writing of the decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the disciplinary hearing.

11. Disciplinary penalties

- 11.1. The decision maker(s) may find that there is no case to answer and may refer the case back to an informal process.
- 11.2. The usual penalties for misconduct are set out below. No sanction should be imposed without a hearing. The Trust aims to treat all employees fairly and consistently, and a penalty imposed on another employee for similar misconduct will usually be taken into account but should not be treated as a precedent. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.
- 11.3. First written warning. A first written warning may be authorised by a Head of School, Head Teacher, Regional Director, Service Director, CEO, Governor or Director. It will usually be appropriate for a first act of misconduct where there are no other active written warnings on the employee's disciplinary record.
- 11.4. Final written warning. A final written warning may be authorised by Head of School, Head Teacher, Regional Director, Service Director, CEO, Governor or Director. It will usually be appropriate for:
- 11.4.1. misconduct where there is already an active written warning on the employee's record; or
 - 11.4.2. misconduct that is considered sufficiently serious to warrant a final written warning even though there are no other active warnings on the record.
- 11.5. Dismissal. Dismissal may be authorised by the CEO, Directors, Headteacher and/or a panel of Governors. It will usually only be appropriate for:
- 11.5.1. further misconduct where there is an active final written warning on the record, in which case it will be with notice; or
 - 11.5.2. any gross misconduct regardless of whether there are active warnings on the record. Gross misconduct will usually result in immediate dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice (summary dismissal).
- 11.6. Alternatives to dismissal. In some cases, the Headteacher and/or a panel of Governors, CEO or panel of Governors and/or Directors may, at their discretion consider alternatives to dismissal. These will usually be accompanied by a final written warning. Examples include:
- 11.6.1. Demotion;
 - 11.6.2. Transfer to another department or job;
 - 11.6.3. Loss of seniority; or
 - 11.6.4. Reduction in pay.

12. The effect of a warning

- 12.1. Written warnings will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required, the period for which the warning will remain active, and the likely consequences of further misconduct in that active period.
- 12.2. A first written warning/final written warning will usually remain active for twelve months at which point it will be reviewed.

- 12.3. After the active period, the warning will remain permanently on the employee's personnel file but will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of future disciplinary proceedings and reference requests.

13. Appeals against disciplinary action

- 13.1. The employee has the right to appeal against the disciplinary action taken against them. This must be in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal and sent to the Head of School or Head Teacher within 10 working days of the date on which the employee was informed of the decision.
- 13.2. Appeals may be submitted on the following grounds:
- 13.2.1. A failure to follow procedure which thereby led to an unjust outcome.
 - 13.2.2. The imposition of an inappropriate penalty considering the facts of the misconduct and mitigating circumstances.
 - 13.2.3. A perverse finding by the disciplinary panel.
 - 13.2.4. New evidence which was not available to the employee at the disciplinary hearing has become available.
- 13.3. In the proceedings of the appeal the employee will not be entitled, except with leave of the Chair, to rely on any grounds of appeal not specified in the letter of appeal.
- 13.4. If the employee is appealing against dismissal, the date on which dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of the appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, they will be reinstated with no loss of continuity or pay.
- 13.5. The Chair may adjourn the appeal hearing if there is a need to carry out any further investigations such as re-interviewing witnesses in the light of any new points that have been raised at the hearing. If any new information comes to light this will be provided to the employee with a summary including, where appropriate, copies of additional relevant documents and witness statements. The employee will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing is reconvened.
- 13.6. The employee must be given written notice of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing. This will normally be no less than five working days. The employee may bring a companion to the appeal hearing (see paragraph 9).
- 13.7. Where possible, the appeal hearing will be conducted by either a more senior manager or a panel of Governors and/or Directors not been previously involved in the case. The appeal will be dealt with as impartially as possible.
- 13.8. Following the appeal hearing the more senior manager or panel may:
- 13.8.1. confirm the original decision;
 - 13.8.2. revoke the original decision;

- 13.9. The employee will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for it, usually within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. Where possible this information will also be explained to the employee in person. There is no further right to appeal.

14. Referrals to external bodies

- 14.1. In cases where employees are dismissed or resign during a disciplinary process a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Secretary of State will be made where the thresholds for referral are met.

15. Review of policy

- 15.1. This policy is reviewed and amended every two years by the Trust in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix 1 - Disciplinary rules

1. Policy statement

- 1.1. The aim of the Disciplinary Rules and Disciplinary Procedure is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide a framework within which the Trust and line managers can work with staff to maintain those standards and encourage improvement where necessary.
- 1.2. If any employee is in any doubt as to their responsibilities or the standards of conduct expected they should speak to their line manager.

2. Rules of conduct

- 2.1. While working for Trust you should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct. In particular you should:
 - 2.1.1. observe the terms and conditions of your contract, particularly with regard to:
 - 2.1.1.1. hours of work;
 - 2.1.1.2. confidentiality;
 - 2.1.2. ensure that you understand and follow our Code of Conduct;
 - 2.1.3. observe all of the Trust's policies, procedures and regulations which are or notified to you from time to time by means of notice boards, e-mail, the intranet or otherwise;
 - 2.1.4. take reasonable care in respect of the health and safety of colleagues, pupils and third parties [and comply with our Health and Safety Policy];
 - 2.1.5. comply with all reasonable instructions given by the Head of School or Head Teacher, CEO and managers; and
 - 2.1.6. act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of the Trust and those of our students and staff
- 2.2. Failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.

3. Misconduct

- 3.1. The following are examples of matters that will normally be regarded as misconduct and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure:
 - 3.1.1. Minor breaches of the Trust's policies;
 - 3.1.2. Minor breaches of an employee's contract of employment;
 - 3.1.3. Damage to, or unauthorised use of, the Trust's property;
 - 3.1.4. Poor timekeeping or time wasting;
 - 3.1.5. Unauthorised absence from work;
 - 3.1.6. Refusal to follow reasonable instructions;
 - 3.1.7. Excessive use of the Trust's telephones, email or internet usage for personal reasons;
 - 3.1.8. Inappropriate use of social media, see policy;
 - 3.1.9. Inappropriate or other offensive behaviour, including using obscene language, victimisation or harassment of other members of staff;
 - 3.1.10. Negligence in the performance of duties;

3.1.11. Smoking in no-smoking areas, which applies to anything that can be smoked and includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, pipes (including water pipes such as shisha and hookah pipes), cigars and herbal cigarettes.

3.2. This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

4. Gross misconduct

4.1. Gross misconduct is a serious breach of contract and includes misconduct which, in the opinion of the Trust, is likely to prejudice its business or reputation or irreparably damage the working relationship and trust between the Trust and the employee. Gross misconduct will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure and may lead to dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice (summary dismissal).

4.2. The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- 4.2.1. Theft, or unauthorised removal of property or the property of a colleague, contractor, student, or member of the public;
- 4.2.2. Fraud, forgery or other dishonesty, including fabrication of expense claims and time sheets, pupil's work, examinations or assessments;
- 4.2.3. Actual or threatened violence, or behaviour which provokes violence;
- 4.2.4. Deliberate damage to the buildings, fittings, property or equipment of the Trust, or the property of a colleague, contractor, student or member of the public;
- 4.2.5. Inappropriate conduct with children or young people, including failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- 4.2.6. Serious failure to follow the Trust's child protection procedures;
- 4.2.7. Making a false declaration or failing to disclose information in relation to the disqualification from childcare requirements, or becoming disqualified from providing childcare;
- 4.2.8. Serious misuse of the Trust's property or name;
- 4.2.9. Deliberately accessing internet sites at work or at home, using the Trust's equipment, which contain pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- 4.2.10. Repeated or serious failure to follow instructions, or any other serious act of insubordination;
- 4.2.11. Bringing the Trust or any of its academies into serious disrepute;
- 4.2.12. Being under the influence of, or consuming alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances during working hours or not being capable of fulfilling your duties because of the effects of alcohol or illegal drugs or other substances.
- 4.2.13. Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- 4.2.14. Serious or repeated breach of health and safety rules or serious misuse of safety equipment.
- 4.2.15. Unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information or failure to ensure that confidential information in your possession is kept secure;
- 4.2.16. Acceptance of bribes or other secret payments or gifts;
- 4.2.17. Conviction or caution for a criminal offence that in the opinion of the Trust may affect our reputation or our relationships with our staff, students, parents or the public, or otherwise affects your suitability to continue to work for us;
- 4.2.18. Possession, use, supply or attempted supply of illegal drugs;

- 4.2.19. Unauthorised use, processing or disclosure of personal data contrary to our Data Protection Policy;
- 4.2.20. Harassment of, or discrimination against, employees, students, parents or members of the public, related to any of the protected characteristics;
- 4.2.21. To wilfully obstruct or not disclose any of the information required in the performance of your duties;
- 4.2.22. Giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status);
- 4.2.23. Making a disclosure of false or misleading information under our Whistleblowing Policy maliciously, for personal gain, or otherwise in bad faith;
- 4.2.24. Making untrue allegations in bad faith against a colleague;
- 4.2.25. Victimising a colleague who has raised concerns, made a complaint or given evidence information under the Whistleblowing policy, Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure or otherwise;

Undertaking unauthorised paid or unpaid employment during your working hours;

- 4.3. This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.
- 4.4. In some instances, offences which would normally constitute gross misconduct may be considered as misconduct because of mitigating circumstances. Similarly, issues, which would normally be treated as misconduct may, in certain circumstances, be considered so serious that they constitute gross misconduct.

Appendix 2 - Managing allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff

In dealing with allegations of abuse against employees there is guidance that needs to be followed to ensure that children and young people are not at risk of harm as well as supporting employees through the relevant processes.

1. Scope

- 1.1. This guidance will be used alongside the Disciplinary Procedure where allegations have been made that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity.
- 1.2. It will be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that an employee has:
 - 1.2.1. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
 - 1.2.2. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
 - 1.2.3. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.
- 1.3. As with other conduct issues the behaviour of employees outside of work may impact on their role within the Trust. Therefore if concerns are brought to the Trust's attention about an employee's behaviour in regard to their own children or any other child/ children outside of the Trust, consideration will be given to any implications for children with whom the employee has contact with at work.

2. Initial considerations

- 2.1. Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead determines that the allegations meet the criteria above the Head of School or Head Teacher will immediately contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and provide them with all relevant information.
- 2.2. The Head of School or Head Teacher will fully cooperate with the LADO to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. The LADO may ask for further relevant information to be provided or obtained such as previous history, whether the child or their family have made similar allegations, and the individual's current contact with children.
- 2.3. Outcomes of initial considerations;
 - 2.3.1. No further action by external agencies or the Trust is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation. The decision and reasons for this will be recorded. The Head of School or Head Teacher will agree with the LADO what information should be put in writing to the employee. After consulting the LADO the Head of School or Head Teacher will inform the employee about the allegation and provide them with as much information as possible at the time.

OR

- 2.3.2. No further action by external agencies, but the Head of School or Head Teacher determines further action is required and will refer to the Disciplinary Procedure.

OR

- 2.3.3. The LADO determines that a strategy discussion is needed, or police or Local Authority's social care services need to be involved. The LADO will coordinate the appropriate arrangements and will inform the Head of School or Head Teacher. The Head of School or Head Teacher should not provide any further information to the employee. The strategy discussion will determine what action will be taken

and by whom. The point at which the Trust can continue with its own disciplinary procedures will be determined. No further investigation should be carried out until agreed through this process.

3. Suspension

- 3.1. Suspension will not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported and alternative arrangements will be considered. The risks of the employee remaining in the Trust or any of its academies during any process of investigation will be carefully evaluated. In cases where there is cause to suspect children within the Trust are at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal the employee will usually be suspended.
- 3.2. Suspension will be managed as per the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 3.3. The Head of School or Head Teacher will consider the advice of the Local Authority children's social care services or the police with regard to suspension, but will make their own informed decision with regard to the suspension of any employee.

4. Support for Staff

- 4.1. Where an employee is the subject of an allegation of abuse the Trust recognises that in most circumstances this will be a time of stress and anxiety. Employees are advised to seek support from their trade union representative or an appropriate colleague. If the employee feels it is beneficial a referral to the Trust's occupational health provider will be arranged.
- 4.2. The employee will be kept informed of the likely course of action as the case progresses unless there is an objection by the Local Authority social care services or the police.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1. The provisions in the Disciplinary Procedure regarding confidentiality apply to cases where allegations of abuse are made. The Trust will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity. During the process of managing these types of allegation the Trust will only release information to the wider Academy or Trust community for the purposes of reducing speculation.

6. Investigations

- 6.1. Investigations under the Disciplinary Procedure will not usually commence until agreement from the LADO and any other external agencies involved in dealing with the allegations have agreed that the Trust can proceed. The provisions in the Disciplinary Procedure regarding investigations apply where allegations of abuse are made. Those undertaking investigations into allegations of abuse should be alert to any sign or pattern which suggests that the abuse is more widespread or organised than it appears at first sight, or that it involves other perpetrators or institutions. It is important not to assume that initial signs will necessarily be related directly to abuse, and to consider occasions where boundaries have been blurred, inappropriate

behaviour has taken place, and matters such as fraud, deception or pornography have been involved.

- 6.2. Interviewing pupils. The Investigating Officer will avoid interviewing pupils unnecessarily. Information will be gathered from the Local Authority social services and the police where available and accessible.
- 6.3. Photographing pupils. The Investigating Officer or any other person at the Trust will not take photographs of students to support allegations of abuse. In cases where the Head of School or Head Teacher determines it appropriate to record injuries to a pupil they will use the appropriate procedure, eg body mapping, or refer to the LADO, the Local Authority social services or the police for advice. Photographs and other information provided by external agencies may be used as a part of the investigation process if appropriate and authorised by the relevant agency.

7. Possible outcomes

- 7.1. On the conclusion of the investigation one of the following five outcomes will be determined:
- 7.2. Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation (on the balance of probability)
- 7.3. Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- 7.4. False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- 7.5. Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence
- 7.6. Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

8. Malicious allegations

- 8.1. The Trust considers the making of malicious allegations to be unacceptable. Any allegations found to not have been made in good faith by an employee or any other person may result in action being taken. Any allegation that is found to be malicious will be removed from the file of the employee that has been accused.

9. Records and references

- 9.1. Details of allegations that are proven to be malicious, will be removed from personnel records not be referred to in any reference that the Trust provides for the employee concerned.
- 9.2. For all other allegations, a record of the allegations, any investigation and the outcome will be kept on the employee's file. The employee will be provided with copies of any records held. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate.
- 9.3. These records will remain on file until normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

Appendix 3 - Procedure for Hearing/Appeals

Order of Events - Hearing

1. Investigating Officer presents the case.
2. Questions from employee and/or employee representative.
3. Questions from the Disciplinary Panel/Manager.
4. Employee (or representative) presents their case.
5. Questions from Investigating Officer.
6. Questions from the Disciplinary Panel/Manager.
7. Investigating Officer sums up.
8. Employee (or representative) sums up.
9. Both parties withdraw.
10. Panel/Manager decision.
11. All parties reconvene. Decision given verbally.
12. Decision confirmed in writing by Manager/Head Teacher/Panel within 5 working days – including notice of right to lodge an appeal within 5 working days of receipt of the decision letter.

Order of Events - Appeal

1. Employee (or representative) presents the grounds for appeal.
2. Questions from management representative.
3. Questions from the Panel.
4. Management Representative responds.
5. Questions from employee.
6. Questions from panel.
7. Management Response sums up.
8. Employee (or representative) sums up.
9. Both parties withdraw.
10. Panel/Manager decision.
11. All parties reconvene. Decision given verbally.
12. Decision confirmed in writing by Panel within 5 working days.