



Managing allegations including low level concerns

Adopted by (body): CELT Trustees
Review date: July 2025

PROTECTION PARTNERSHIP
ACCOUNTABILITY
CARE SAFEGUARDING EMPOWER
STRENGTHEN IMPROVE
ENABLE EVERYONE VULNERABLE
RESPONSIBILITY

- Collaborate** Ability to work effectively as a team
- Empower** Ability to take initiative and problem solve in order to improve performance
- Lead** To lead by example and achieve shared goals
- Transformation** Ability to recognise a need for change and adapt accordingly



CELT Vision

Our vision is for our trust to be a learning organisation in the truest sense.

At the heart of our vision for education is a self-improving school-led system which has the best evidence-led practice and in which every child fulfils their potential. This is a learning community in which:

- Our leaders are driven by moral purpose. They are outwards focused and not afraid to take risks to achieve system transformation. The focus of policy is on continually improving the quality of teaching.
- Our teachers strive to be outstanding. They work across organisational boundaries to promote a collective sharing of knowledge, skills, expertise and experience in order to deepen pupil learning.
- The individual talents and strengths of our pupils are recognised and nurtured. A passion and curiosity for learning is sustained in every child from the moment they join us. A CELT pupil leaves our family of academies with a purpose, and the confidence to fulfil that purpose.
- Our parents are engaged in our learning community and actively work in partnership with us to raise the level of attainment and aspiration of every child.

CELT Mission

“Learning together to help every child achieve more.”

We believe there is no limit to what every child can achieve, and that every child deserves the chance to fulfil their potential.

As a learning community we are on an ambitious journey. We want to deliver a model for education in the 21st century which instils curiosity and a love for learning in every child so that they develop into young adults who contribute to humanity, follow their passions, and think for themselves.

By learning and improving together – as part of a global learning community – we create much richer and more sustainable opportunities for rigorous transformation than can be provided by any one of our academies alone.

**COLLABORATE
EMPOWER
LEAD
TRANSFORM**

Should you require further information, please contact
The Governance Officer.
Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), Atlantic Centre,
Trenance Leisure Park, Newquay, Cornwall TR7 2LZ

Telephone: 01637 800293
www.celtrust.org

Email: ccarter@gov.celtrust.org

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“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all Trustees, Governors, staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy is to ensure that all children with medical conditions, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

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Introduction

- 1.1 Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) takes the safeguarding of its pupils very seriously and we recognise that it is extremely important that any allegation made against a member of staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteer is managed quickly and effectively. It is also important that low safeguarding concerns are recognised and reported so behaviours can be appropriately managed.
- 1.2 This policy sets out how CELT will manage allegations and low-level concerns raised in relation to a member of staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers at our academy, together with allegations relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using CELT premises for the purposes of running activities for children. It meets the requirements of the Department for Education statutory guidance for managing allegations set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- 1.3 This policy is set out in two parts. The first part deals with allegations made against members of staff, including supply staff, contractors or volunteers, together with allegations relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using CELT's premises for the purpose of running activities for children that may meet the harm threshold. The second part deals with low level concerns raised in relation to members of staff, including supply staff, contractors or volunteers.

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Part One: Managing allegations made against members of staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers that may meet the harm threshold

- 2.1 This part of the policy will be followed when managing such allegations and may be adapted to each case as required. Whilst it will be used in all cases, Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 requires that it is followed in any case where it is suspected or alleged that a member of staff, including agency staff, a volunteer or contractor has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child (see our child protection and safeguarding policy for what we mean by 'harm');
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children and/or:
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- 2.2 The fourth bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of CELT that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children. This is known as transferable risk.
- 2.3 This policy will also be used where allegations are made relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using CELT premises for the purposes of running activities for children
- 2.4 This policy will be used alongside our complaints policy and CELT Safeguarding suite of policies, all of which can be accessed on CELT website.

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Reporting an allegation

- 3.1 The safety and welfare of our pupils is of paramount importance and so all staff must report their allegations immediately.
- 3.2 Allegations made against a member of staff, supply staff, contractors or a volunteer should be reported to:
 - 3.2.1 the Headteacher/Service Lead.
 - 3.2.2 Allegations involving the Headteacher/Service Lead should be reported to Amy Daniels, Trust Safeguarding Lead.
 - 3.2.3 If you do not feel your concerns have been heard or unable to contact Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead, please contact Clare Ridehalgh, Deputy Trust Lead.
 - 3.2.4 If you are not able to contact Clare Ridehalgh, please contact Lisa Mannall, Trust Lead.
 - 3.2.5 If a concern is about the Deputy Trust Lead or Trust Lead, you should contact the Chair of Trustees.
 - 3.2.6 If it is believed that trustees of CELT are involved, you individual should approach the Members.

The Headteacher or Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will then contact the local authority designated officer (LADO). The Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead will then act as the case manager.

- 3.3 When an allegation is made the Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead will consider two aspects:
 - 3.3.1 looking after the welfare of the child; and
 - 3.3.2 investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation
- 3.4 In each case, the Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead will:
 - 3.4.1 apply common sense and judgement;
 - 3.4.2 deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently; and
 - 3.4.3 provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.
- 3.5 Before contacting the LADO, the Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead will conduct basic enquiries to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation. The Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead will contact the LADO and an initial discussion will take place to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. The Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead may also be involved in this discussion. This discussion may include that:
 - no further action is required; or
 - more information is required to determine a course of action; or
 - a strategy discussion should take place; or
 - police or social care should be involved.

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- 3.6 The school will share relevant information with the LADO about the allegation, the child, and the person against whom the allegation has been made. If it is decided that a strategy discussion should take place, then the school will always attend that meeting. Representatives from other agencies such as health, social care and police may also be invited to the meeting.
- 3.7 Where an allegation is made or becomes known to CELT relating to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using CELT's premises for the purposes of running activities for children the Headteacher will inform the LADO in accordance with paragraph 3.6 of this policy.

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Investigating an allegation

- 4.1 If the police are involved, then they will complete their own investigation and school staff will cooperate with their enquiries.
- 4.2 Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or local authority children's social care is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion decides there is no external involvement, an investigation into the allegation would normally be undertaken by a senior member of CELT staff. Where no suitable staff are available or the nature or complexity of the allegation requires it, CELT may appoint an independent investigator.
- 4.3 When determining the outcome of an investigation Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that the following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of the investigation:
 - 4.3.1 **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
 - 4.3.2 **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject to the allegation
 - 4.3.3 **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
 - 4.3.4 **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence
 - 4.3.5 **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made
- 4.4 In no circumstances would CELT cease to use a member of supply staff due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Whilst CELT is not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly and involve the supply staff agency in the process.

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Supporting those involved

5.1 Parents/carers of the child(ren) involved

- 5.1.1 Parents or carers of the child involved will be told about the allegation if they do not already know of it. Where a strategy discussion is required, or police or children's social care need to be involved, the academy will not tell the parents or carers until it has been agreed with those agencies what information can be shared.
- 5.1.2 The school will keep parents or carers informed about the progress of the investigation. Where there is no criminal prosecution the school will tell parents or carers the outcome of the investigation. The deliberations of any disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, will not normally be disclosed but the parents or carers of the child will usually be told the outcome in confidence.

5.2 The member of staff or volunteer

- 5.2.1 CELT has a duty of care to its employees and will act to minimise the stress inherent in the investigation process.
- 5.2.2 The person who is the subject of the allegation will be informed as soon as possible, usually after the initial discussion with the LADO. The person will be advised of the likely course of action unless the police or children's social care raise an objection. In those circumstances the school will work with children's social care and the police to agree what information can be disclosed and when.
- 5.2.3 The Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and up to date on other school related matters. The Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will also consider what other support may be appropriate for the individual. The school will advise the individual to contact their trade union representative or a colleague for support. They may also be given access to support services provided by CELT.
- 5.2.4 The person who is the subject of the allegation will be advised to contact their trade union representative, or a colleague for support.
- 5.2.5 Where an allegation is made against a member of supply staff, the supply agency should provide an additional support to that member of supply staff.

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Suspension

- 6.1 Suspension is not an automatic response to an allegation being made. CELT will only suspend a member of staff following careful consideration of whether there is cause to suspect the child or other children is/are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In many cases, it may be possible for alternative arrangements to be made so that the individual can continue working.
- 6.2 CELT makes the decision whether or not to suspend a member of staff. Where the police or children's social care are involved in the case, the academy will listen to their views regarding suspension.
- 6.3 CELT has no authority or power to suspend a member of supply staff where an allegation is made against them. Instead, CELT immediately will cease to use the services of that member of supply staff.
- 6.4 Where the member of staff is suspended, they will receive written confirmation within one working day and will be informed of the reason for the suspension.
- 6.5 After the suspension, if it is decided that the employee can return to the trust, measures will be put in place to support their return to work. This could include a phased return or offering another member of staff as a support system.
- 6.6 The school will not prevent social contact with work colleagues and friends unless there is evidence to suggest such contact may prejudice the gathering of evidence.

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Resignation

- 7.1 If the individual resigns or the supply staff member, contractor or volunteer ceases to provide their service, the investigation into the allegation will be completed. The individual will be given the opportunity to engage with the investigation.

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Action on conclusion of the case

- 8.1 If the allegation is substantiated and:
 - 8.1.1 the employee is dismissed or resigns; or
 - 8.1.2 we cease to use the supply staff member's services as a result of the allegation;
 - 8.1.3 we cease to use the contractor's services as a result of the allegation; or
 - 8.1.4 we cease to use the volunteer's services as a result of the allegation;

In the case of a member of teaching staff at any school or sixth form college, CELT will consider whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider whether the individual should be prohibited from teaching.

There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they consider an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

- 8.2 Where an allegation is found to be false, CELT may refer the case to social services to determine whether the child needs support and/or to understand if there is a safeguarding reason why the false allegation was made.
- 8.3 CELT's behaviour policy sets out the action that may be taken against pupils who are found to have made malicious allegations.
- 8.4 Where an allegation is made against a member of supply staff the outcome of the investigation will be shared with the supply agency and the LADO.

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Post incident review

- 9.1 It is good safeguarding practice for CELT to review incidents upon their conclusion so they can learn from them and continue to improve standards of safeguarding. Where allegations are made against staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers, CELT may carry out a review at the conclusion of the case.

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Timescales

- 10.1 Investigations into allegations against staff, including agency staff or volunteers or contractors will be concluded as quickly and efficiently as possible to ensure that any risks to the child or other children and stress to the individual is minimised as far as possible.

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Record keeping

- 11.1 Allegations found to be false or malicious will be removed from the employment record of the individual. For all other allegations, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, how it was followed up and resolved, a note of actions taken and decisions reached and a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference will be retained on the employment file. A copy will also be provided to the individual.
- 11.2 The record will be kept, including for people who leave CELT at least until the person reaches normal pension age or for 10 years if that will be longer, from the date of the allegation.
- 11.3 Details of any allegation made by a pupil will be kept in the confidential section of their record.

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Confidentiality

- 12.1 CELT will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst an allegation is being investigated.
- 12.2 The Education Act 2002 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school. This applies to parents and carers as well as the press.

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Non recent allegations

- 13.1 Where an adult makes an allegation to CELT that they were abused as a child, that adult will be advised to report the allegation to the police.
- 13.2 Non recent allegations made by a child will be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

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Part Two: Managing low level concerns

- 14.1 This part of the policy will be followed when dealing with low level concerns raised in relation to members of staff, including supply staff, contractors or volunteers and may be adapted to each case as required. It will be used alongside CELT's complaints procedure, child protection and safeguarding policy, code of conduct and disciplinary procedure.
- 14.2 CELT promotes a culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of CELT (including supply teachers, contractors and volunteers) are addressed appropriately.
- 14.3 This policy is designed to:
 - 14.3.1 promote and support a culture of openness and trust where staff are clear about the behaviours expected of themselves and their colleagues
 - 14.3.2 ensure staff are comfortable to raise low-level concerns; and
 - 14.3.3 provide for efficient and proportionate handling of those concerns

Recognising low level

15.1 This policy will be used to manage 'low-level' concerns, defined in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 as any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

15.1.1 is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and

15.1.2 does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

15.2 Examples of such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- 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
- humiliating children

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Sharing low level concerns

- 16.1 At CELT we encourage all staff to speak up regarding concerns. We foster a safe environment where employees input is valued. It is critical that we can confidently identify and mitigate any risks and see speaking up as development opportunities.
- 16.2 For our culture of openness and trust to prevail, all staff should share any low level concerns they have. Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Practice Reviews have often evidenced how low level concerns felt and/or expressed by staff relating to individuals who were later found to have sexually abused children at a school were not recorded. When they are not recorded, they cannot be reviewed or studied for patterns of behaviour.
- 16.3 To minimise and hopefully eradicate the risk of those opportunities being missed, it is critical that staff understand their role in identifying and reporting low level concerns.
- 16.4 All staff are encouraged to immediately report low level safeguarding concerns as defined in this policy so that the identified behaviours can be investigated and managed appropriately.
- 16.5 All low level concerns in relation to staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead(DSL) or Headteacher. Concerns about the headteacher should be reported to the Trust Safeguarding Lead.
- 16.6 The procedure for reporting low level concerns is consistent with that for reporting allegations of abuse as set out in part one of this policy, should you not be able to report a concern to the Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead please see paragraph 3. Staff do not need to determine whether their concern meets the threshold set out in part one of this policy or is a low level concern. The Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will make this determination once the staff member has reported the issue.

Responding to low-level concerns

- 17.1 The Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will review the concern to confirm that it is not a more serious issue that should be dealt with under part one of this policy. An issue reported as a low level concern would be dealt under part one of this policy where it meets the threshold set out in part one or there is a pattern of low level concerns expressed about the individual or wider staff practices generally. If necessary, the Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will discuss the concern with the LADO to determine whether it should be dealt with under part one of this policy.
- 17.2 The Headteacher or Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will discuss the concern with the individual who raised it and will investigate it as appropriate.
- 17.3 Most low-level concerns are likely to be minor and can be dealt with by means of management support or additional training. Where necessary, action may be taken in accordance with the CELT code of conduct and disciplinary procedure.
- 17.4 If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) will collect evidence by speaking directly to the person who raised the concern (unless it has been raised anonymously), the individual involved and any witnesses.
- 17.5 Where a low level concern is raised about a member of supply staff or a contractor, the concern will be shared with supply agency or service provider so they can take appropriate steps in accordance with their own policies and statutory guidance.

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Recording low-level concerns

- 18.1 All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and will include details of the concern, the context and action taken. The records will be kept confidential and held securely on the Staff Safe platform, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.
- 18.2 Records of low-level concerns will be reviewed termly so potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If patterns are identified, CELT will decide on an appropriate course of action and will refer the matter to the LADO where the behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the threshold set out in the first part of this policy.
- 18.3 The record of the low-level concern will be kept at least until the person leaves CELT.

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References

- 19.1 Low level safeguarding concerns will not be included in references except where they have met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, in which case they should be referred to in references.

History of Changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
1.0	29.08.2023		Original Draft	
2.0	21.08.2024		Clarity of reporting	