



Procedure in the Event of an Allegation Made Against a Member of Staff

Children can be subjected to abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a staff member, another professional or volunteer must therefore be taken seriously and treated in accordance with consistent procedures and in accordance with Legislation and guidance including;

- Working Together to Safeguard Children, (HMG 2026) People in Positions of Trust.
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG 2015).

When an allegation of abuse is made by a child, a colleague, parent or member of the public, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and report it by informing the Setting Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation is against the Setting Manager, the Chair of the Parent Management Committee should be informed. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

If an allegation is made against an employee of Toddington Childcare & Forest School, the Setting Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead, Rachel Turner, should be immediately informed and in her absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Marisa Perrini and/or Josh Turner and the following action will be taken:

Immediate contact must be made with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at **Central Bedfordshire Integrated Front Door on 0300 300 8585 (during office hours). Office hours are:**

08.45 until 17.20 Monday to Thursday
08.45 until 16.20 on a Friday

If you urgently need help outside office hours, use the above number and it will be routed automatically.

Bedfordshire Police on 101 or in an emergency 999.

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Ofsted should be notified immediately (Tel: 0300 123 4666)

The Chair of the Parent Management Committee should be informed that an allegation has been made;

- No discussions should be made at this stage with the member of staff concerned;
- Suspension is a neutral act and therefore not automatic. Any decision to suspend must take into account the seriousness of the allegation and the initial weight of the presenting evidence.

The LADO and Ofsted can advise further on the action that Toddington Childcare and Forest School should now take with regard to the member of staff, specifically with regard to safeguarding children.

The decision as to whether to suspend the member of staff will be decided jointly by the Setting Manager and Chair of the Parent Management Committee and will be based on risk and safety as far as possible at the time of the allegation.

If the allegation relates to the Setting Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead then the next most senior member of staff must follow the procedure listed above.

Deciding to suspend

Although suspension is not automatic, the member of staff may be asked to refrain from some or all duties until further assessment has occurred to determine the nature and level of risk. This does not imply innocence or guilt.

The staff member may have questions as to why this has been requested. If asked, the Setting Manager will inform the staff member that a safeguarding concern has been brought to their attention. This cannot be discussed any further but there will be a formal opportunity to respond at a later date.

The setting must not question the staff member or investigate the matter. Confidentiality should be maintained throughout this matter, in order that any subsequent investigation is not prejudiced.

Guidance for Setting Staff receiving an allegation:

1. Do not promise total confidentiality to children since they must inform the Setting Manager;
2. Make written notes of the allegation/concerns including a note of anyone else witnessing the incident. Witnesses should also make a record, these will be signed and dated;

3. Only establish what the child is saying and do not interview the child about the allegation.
4. If they have any reasons to suspect that a child may have been abused by another member of staff, the Chair must be immediately informed.

When suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child attending Toddington Childcare and Forest School involving a member of the staff are received by a person outside the organisation e.g. social worker, police, parent, relative or family friend, then the Setting Manager should be informed as soon as possible and immediately follow the above procedure. The person to whom the allegation has been made may already have contacted Ofsted and/or the LADO.

In the event of a third party hearing the allegation Toddington Childcare and Forest School will:

Inform and call Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer who will advise further on the action that the setting should now take with regard to the member of staff.

The setting may talk to the member of staff concerned but should not interview the child until Ofsted and the (LADO) give the go-ahead. Depending upon the outcome of these investigations, Disciplinary Procedures will be followed.

If the allegation relates to the Setting Manager or Chair of the Parent Management Committee, then the next most senior member of staff must follow the procedure listed above.

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout this matter, in order that any subsequent investigation is not prejudiced.

Following completion of the investigation by Ofsted and the LADO, there will be four possible courses of action:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Criminal | Ofsted and (LADO) will decide if there is sufficient evidence to carry forward a prosecution of the member of staff and if so will involve the police directly. |
| Disciplinary | Ofsted and the (LADO) may determine that there is not sufficient evidence to move forward with a prosecution, but there may nevertheless be issues which require disciplinary action is taken via the setting's disciplinary procedures. |
| Training | The investigations may indicate that the allegation was unfounded. However, the case may have highlighted gaps in training. |

Safeguarding Children

There may be other outstanding Safeguarding Children issues highlighted which do not involve the member of staff concerned, however, Ofsted and the (LADO) may deem necessary actions to be taken by the Setting to address these.

Where the allegation has been found to be without basis, Ofsted and the (LADO) will write to the setting summarising the outcome of the investigation.

Records

Where an allegation has been found to be unfounded, a summary of the allegation and subsequent investigation should be kept on the setting's confidential Safeguarding Children's File. Where disciplinary action has been taken however, documents relating to the investigation should be retained, together with a written record of the investigation on the staff members personnel file.

This policy was revised and accepted at a Committee Meeting of Toddington Childcare and Forest School held in January 2025 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed and signed on behalf of Toddington Childcare & Forest School January 2026

Sarah Malcolm

Chair to the Committee of Toddington Childcare & Forest School