



**LONDON VOCATIONAL
BALLET SCHOOL**

Managing Allegations about Staff, Trustees or Volunteers

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&**

Safeguarding Network

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**safeguarding
network**

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Managing allegations about staff, including supply staff, trainee teachers, trustees, volunteers and contractors

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Date: September 2026 Review date: September 2027 or at new guidance

This policy is to be used for every safeguarding concern or allegation, no matter how small, about anyone working in or on behalf of the school in a paid or unpaid capacity, including staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, trustees, volunteers and contractors.

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This should be read in conjunction with the school's Whistleblowing, the Staff Handbook, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, all of the school's safeguarding policies and the Persistent or Vexatious Complaints and Harassment Policy.

The background

1. Young people can be at risk from those who care for or work with them. We recognise the particular risks when teaching dance in our Safeguarding Policy. This policy ensures that concerns about the conduct of staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, trustees, volunteers and contractors are taken seriously and that children's safety and welfare are the paramount consideration.
2. Caring for young people can be a challenging job and the academy has a duty of care to keep staff safe, particularly when an allegation is made or a concern is raised. This policy helps to ensure they receive support, that the concern is dealt with promptly, and that decisions are fair.
3. This policy covers low-level concerns and allegations relating to any adult working in or on behalf of the school, including supply staff, trainee teachers, trustees, volunteers, contractors and individuals or organisations using school premises to run activities for children. A non-recent allegation made by an adult should be reported to the police. A non-recent allegation made by a child must be reported to the LADO in accordance with local procedures.
4. We want any concern, however small, to be shared with the school to create an open and transparent culture, minimise the risk of abuse, and respond early to issues that could later become allegations. Low level concerns can be shared directly with the safeguarding team.
5. Concerns can be raised by staff confidentially. In the most serious cases their anonymity may be waived for evidence at a court or tribunal.

Reporting concerns

6. All staff, trustees and volunteers must report without delay every safeguarding concern or allegation about an adult working in or on behalf of the school, including supply staff, trainee teachers and contractors, to the Academic Director/headteacher. The Academic Director/headteacher will consider whether an onward referral to the LADO is

required. Information about the outcome will be shared only where appropriate, but the person reporting the concern should be satisfied that it has been taken seriously and that children are safe.

7. Where the concern or allegation is about the Academic Director/headteacher, it must be reported without delay to the Chair of Trustees, as the proprietor's representative, without first informing the Academic Director/headteacher.
8. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting to the Academic Director/headteacher, the concern must be reported directly to the LADO. Staff may also use the Whistleblowing Policy where appropriate.

Contact details for the Hammersmith and Fulham LADO:

Call 020 8753 5125 and ask to speak to the Duty Child Protection Adviser

More details & threshold guide on their [Managing Allegations webpage](#)

Email lado@lbhf.gov.uk

Timescales

9. Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, **immediately** call the police on 999
10. The initial assessment, including any immediate safeguarding action and consultation with the LADO, must be undertaken without delay.
11. The case manager will monitor progress so that every case is handled as quickly as possible through a thorough and fair process. Wherever possible, the first formal review will take place no later than four weeks after the initial assessment.
12. If the investigation continues, dates for subsequent reviews will be set at the first review, ideally at fortnightly and no longer than monthly intervals.
13. Any disciplinary or other action will be progressed without unnecessary delay, while protecting the integrity of police or local-authority enquiries and ensuring a thorough and fair process.

Initial concerns

Consideration of initial concern

If this concern or allegation is accurate, does it suggest the subject **may** have:

behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; YES/NO

possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; YES/NO

behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they 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, including behaviour outside school that creates transferable risk

YES/NO

Reasons:

Action:

Your name & post:

Date:

14. Before contacting the LADO, the case manager may conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts and whether there is any foundation to the allegation, without investigating it or jeopardising any future police investigation. This may include checking whether the individual was present, whether contact with the child was possible, whether there were witnesses and whether CCTV is available. If any harm-threshold criterion may be met, including transferable risk, the LADO must be consulted.
15. The case manager will open a confidential safeguarding record when the concern is received and record the concern, date, basic enquiries, decisions, reasons and actions taken. Where no further action is agreed, the decision and its

justification must be recorded and the case manager and LADO will agree what will be confirmed in writing to the individual.

16. Concerns that do not meet this threshold are still important but should follow the 'low level concerns' section below. If the response to any of the above questions is 'YES' follow the 'notify the LADO' section.

Low level concerns

17. A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted inconsistently with the Staff Code of Conduct, including outside work, but the behaviour does not meet the harm threshold or justify a LADO referral. Low-level concerns may reveal a pattern which cumulatively meets the harm threshold.

Analysis of low level concerns

- Are there previous low level concerns?
- Do these add together to meet threshold for referral to LADO (follow the notify the LADO section)?
- Does this constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct (if so consider disciplinary or capability process)?
- Why was the person raising the concern worried?
- What can we learn from the concern being raised?
- Is there anything the subject could do differently?

Actions:

Your name & post:

Date:

18. The Academic Director/headteacher is the ultimate decision-maker for low-level concerns and will review them with the DSL. Low-level concerns about supply staff, trainee teachers or contractors will be notified to their employer or training provider so that potential patterns can be identified. If there is any doubt about whether the harm threshold is met, the LADO will be consulted.
19. Every low-level concern will be recorded in writing, including the concern, its context, the name of the person sharing it where known, and action taken. A request for anonymity will be respected as far as reasonably possible. Records will be confidential, secure, compliant with data-protection law and reviewed for patterns, wider cultural issues, required policy changes or training.
20. For more guidance read Eastman & Rigg (2017) ['Safeguarding Children: dealing with low-level concerns about adults'](#)

Notify the LADO

21. The LADO's role is to co-ordinate the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them or could cause them harm. They provide guidance and liaison between services, monitor progress of referrals, resolve differences of view, disseminate learning and ensure measures are in place to reduce the risk of further harm. They do not, themselves, investigate concerns.
22. The Academic Director/headteacher, or the Chair of Trustees where the Academic Director/headteacher is the subject, will act as case manager and record this on the safeguarding file. The case manager will gather the information required by the LADO without delaying notification and will not inform the subject until the appropriate time has been agreed with the LADO and, where involved, the police and local authority children's social care.

Information about the concern

Subject

- Name & job title
- DOB & home address
- Any other employment roles they have and status of each post
- Whether they have any other access to children, for example in another post or living with them at home
- Time in post at the school
- Details of any previous concerns

Each child involved

- Name, gender, DOB
- Address
- Any social work involvement
- Any previous allegations made

Incident or cause of concern

- Where the incident occurred, including address & postcode
- Details of the allegation

23. The case manager should immediately discuss the allegation with the LADO and make a note of their discussion on the safeguarding file and email a copy of this to the LADO:

Discussion with LADO

- Nature, content and context of the allegation
- Is there an immediate risk to children or possible criminal offence? (notify Police)
- Is there cause to suspect a risk of significant harm? (strategy discussion required)
- Notes of discussion
- Do you agree with the outcome? If not, record of dissent/discussion

Outcome:

- Children's services safeguarding investigation?
- Police investigation?
- Internal investigation (and who will undertake this)?
- No Further Action – Refer to Low Level Concerns section

Risk assessment

- What could happen & the impact it could have
- The likelihood of this
- What actions are necessary to mitigate risk

Advising the subject

- If NFA, what should be put in writing to the subject and by whom
- What the case manager can share with the subject and when
- Any changes that need made to their work (see considering suspension section if this is a possibility)

Advising parents

- What can be shared with the parents, by who and by when

Where there may be press interest:

- Managing speculation, leaks & gossip
- Information that needs to be shared with the wider community
- How to manage press interest

Is there a requirement for notification of regulatory bodies (eg Ofsted, Charity Commission)?

Actions agreed:

Date/discussion principal updated:

Your name & post:

Date:

24. The discussion will determine how the safeguarding process and any police, social-care, internal or disciplinary investigation will proceed. Safeguarding children takes priority. Where the individual is supplied, placed or employed by an agency, teacher-training provider or other business, the school shares safeguarding responsibility with that

organisation. The school remains responsible for gathering the facts and managing the safeguarding process, working closely with the third party, which will usually lead any disciplinary action. The school will not simply cease to use the individual without establishing the facts and consulting the LADO.

Internal investigations

25. An internal investigation will be undertaken into allegations which do not require children's social care or Police involvement, or where such investigations have concluded and there remains a need to ascertain facts.
26. An internal investigation will not be undertaken where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a crime has been committed. If information arises during the course of an investigation that raises such concerns the investigation will be suspended and further consultation undertaken with the LADO, a referral made to children's social care and/or the Police.
27. A senior member of staff may undertake a straightforward internal investigation. Where appropriate resources are unavailable, a conflict of interest exists, or the nature or complexity of the allegation requires it, the school will appoint an investigator who is independent of the school.
28. The purpose of an internal managing allegations investigation is to determine the facts. It is not a disciplinary investigation.
29. Where interviews are arranged with subjects of allegations they will be given at least **two working days'** notice and offered the opportunity to bring a trade union representative or colleague for support. Their companion will not be able to speak on their behalf, but can help them with their notes, provide emotional support and request a break in the meeting if necessary. They may not bring a solicitor or other legal professional.
30. Interviews with subjects, witnesses and young people will be minuted and a copy of the minutes will be shared for an accuracy check. Amendments can be made, or if different recollections are held both will be recorded.
31. A report of the internal investigation will be compiled and shared with the subject. This will make recommendations and reach a finding whether the allegation is:
 - **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
 - **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person who is the subject of the allegation;
 - **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
 - **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence; or
 - **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.
32. Internal investigations should not be lengthy and should conform to the timescales set out in this document.

Strategy discussions

33. Where the LADO or school identify that a child may be at risk of significant harm a managing allegations strategy discussion **must** be convened by the LADO. This **must** include Children's Social Care, the Police and Health. The school should also be part of this discussion along with any other agencies that have a significant interest (for example, if the subject was also a scout leader, then Scouts' safeguarding manager should be invited).
34. The strategy discussion should be attended by the DSL or directors and Case Manager. While minutes are taken and circulated the school should make their own record of the meeting and place this on the confidential safeguarding file.
35. If other investigations are to be undertaken the school should ask the Police and Children's Social Care to obtain consent from people they interview to share the records of interviews with the school for use in the internal investigation and any disciplinary process. This will reduce the potential for duplication later.
36. The meeting will consider:
 - Whether children affected are safe from harm.
 - Threshold for a Section 47 Enquiry and / or police investigation
 - Whether any parallel internal investigation or disciplinary process can take place and agree protocols for sharing information.
 - Whether the school, employer or personnel supplier has a legal duty to refer the person to the Disclosure and Barring Service, and whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency or another professional or regulatory body must be considered. Decisions must have due regard to the school's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty where applicable.
 - Relevance of any previous allegations or concerns

- What information can be shared, with whom and when.
- What support is being provided for children and their families
- What support is being provided for the subject, what they can be told and be kept up to date with the progress of the investigation.
- Issues which need to be brought to the attention of senior managers, including potential for press interest.
- Learning across organisations
- Whether a complex abuse investigation is required (see local area child protection procedures)

Considering suspension

37. Suspension must not be automatic and will be considered only where there is no reasonable alternative, there is cause to suspect a child or other children are at risk of harm, or the allegation is so serious that dismissal may be an outcome. The decision rests with the proprietor/Trustees as employer, taking appropriate account of HR advice, the LADO and, where involved, police and local authority children's social care.

Considering suspension

Has an interim prohibition order has been made by the Secretary of State in respect of the subject? YES/NO

The subject must be **immediately** suspended. In other cases:

Is there cause to suspect the child or other children are at risk of harm, or that transferable risk makes the person unsuitable to work with children? YES/NO

Might this be grounds for dismissal YES/NO

If both answers are no, there are insufficient grounds for dismissal. If at least one answer is yes, could children be kept safe by:

redeployment within the school or college so that the subject does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned YES/NO

redeploying to alternative work in the school or college so the subject does not have unsupervised access to children YES/NO

moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the subject, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted; or YES/NO

temporarily redeploying the subject to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or college or work for the local authority or academy trust YES/NO

If the answer to any of these is yes, and if the police, children's services or the designated officer raise no serious objections, the member of staff may not be suspended as there is a reasonable alternative.

Risk assessment

Set out what could happen and the likelihood of this, with the risk mitigated by any action set out above (e.g. no contact with the child)

Set out the impact of permanent professional reputational damage, or other personal impact (e.g. depression and similar) if concern was malicious or unsubstantiated.

Views of the LADO and other agencies (if involved)

Decision:

Reasons:

Action:

Your name & post:

Date:

38. A copy of the above record should be sent to the LADO. If the subject is suspended written confirmation should be sent to the subject **within one working day**, if suspended:

Letter to suspended subject

- The reasons for suspension (as agreed by the LADO)
- The name and contact details of the person the organisation has identified to support them
- Suspension is a neutral act while actions are taken to ascertain the facts. This is not a disciplinary investigation, but an investigation to determine what has happened and how everyone can be kept safe.

39. The suspension of a member of staff should be kept under review as new information emerges. The 'Considering Suspension' box above can be completed at each point.

Notifying the subject

40. Allegations and concerns can raise significant stresses and worries for the subject, whether the allegations are with or without foundation. The school has a duty of care to staff, trustees and volunteers and must provide them with clear information and support through the process.
41. As much information about the concern as possible should be shared with the subject at the earliest opportunity, while respecting the anonymity of the person raising the initial concern. However, this cannot be undertaken if police or children's social care are to be involved until they have been fully consulted. In practice, this means allegations will not be shared until there has been consultation with the LADO.

Briefing of the subject

- The information that can be shared with the subject
- Any changes that need made to their work (see considering suspension section if this is a possibility)
- Explanation of what will happen next
- Advice to contact Trade Union representative, or a colleague
- Information about welfare counselling & medical advice
- Who will be there to support the subject
- Advice about their confidentiality and discussions with colleagues or friends

42. The school must appoint a named representative to keep the subject informed of progress and consider their support needs.
43. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.
44. If the person resigns, refuses to cooperate or ceases to provide services, the school will continue the safeguarding process and make every effort to reach and record an outcome. A settlement agreement must not prevent investigation, a required DBS referral, consideration of a TRA referral or the provision of an accurate reference.

Notifying parents

45. Parents or carers will be formally told about the allegation as soon as possible and kept informed about progress and the outcome insofar as these relate to their child. The case manager will consult the LADO and, where involved, local authority children's social care and the police about what may be disclosed; information about the staff member must not be shared.

Briefing of parents

- The information that can be shared with the parents
- Explanation of what will happen next
- Any support they or their child might need
- Advice about their confidentiality & requirement on them to maintain confidentiality during the investigation (section 141F of the Education Act 2002). In particular, they cannot publish (or post on social networks) identifiable information about the allegation unless the subject is charged with an offence or it is published by the Secretary of State

Conclusion of investigations

46. The case manager will monitor progress to ensure investigations are thorough, fair and completed as quickly as possible. Wherever possible, the first review will be held within four weeks of the initial assessment and subsequent reviews at fortnightly, and no longer than monthly, intervals. Unnecessary delay will be escalated through local inter-agency procedures.
47. On completion of an internal investigation, or if there is a Police investigation and a decision has been made on whether or not to charge the subject, the Case Manager should gather the information available (e.g. statements where consent has been given) and discuss how to proceed with the LADO (this may take the form of a strategy discussion). Judgements should be made on the balance of probability, rather than the criminal threshold of beyond all reasonable doubt:

Case discussion with LADO

- Is there sufficient evidence to believe the subject has: harmed 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 indicating they may pose a risk of harm; and/or behaved or may have behaved in a way indicating they may not be suitable to work with children, including through transferable risk?
- Is the allegation:
- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- **Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person who is the subject of the allegation;**
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence;
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

or is a further internal investigation necessary to reach a view?

- Is there evidence to suggest a disciplinary or capability investigation should be commenced?
- Does the school, employer or personnel supplier have a legal duty to refer to the DBS because the referral criteria are met? Must a referral to the TRA or another professional or regulatory body be considered? Record how applicable Public Sector Equality Duty obligations were considered.
- If a child has made an unsubstantiated or malicious allegation the LADO should refer to children's social care to determine whether the child is in need of services or may have been abused by someone else. Consideration should also be given to disciplinary action or police involvement if an allegation has been deliberately or maliciously invented by anyone.
- Impact on child and parents and recommendations in relation to support for them and any other associated children or adults.
- Recommendations for support, monitoring or training for the subject
- If an allegation is substantiated the DSL & Case Manager should determine what could be improved to avoid similar events in future and improve the procedures and practice around the investigation.

Analysis:

Actions:

Name, role & date:

48. The case manager should share the above record with the LADO.

Support for subjects

- 49. The stress on subjects of allegations should not be underestimated. The school **must** provide a named person with contact details whose role is to support the individual and keep them apprised of the progress of the investigation.
- 50. The school should also ensure the subject is aware of confidential counselling services and health services they can access. They may have access to additional support through a trade union.
- 51. The subject's supervisor should meet with them more regularly to ensure they are feeling supported at work.
- 52. If suspended subjects should still have contact from their named person at least fortnightly to keep them apprised of the investigation. They should be advised of their rights to take issue with any delay in the investigation without prejudicing the fairness of the investigation.

Where a subject of an allegation returns to work from suspension the case manager should meet with them to consider how best to support them. The school can offer a phased return or a mentor to support them back into work. Particular attention should be given to how they rebuild relationships with young people involved in the allegation.

Repeat allegations

- 53. There is a risk that young people who persistently raise concerns will be denied a proper assessment. In these unusual situations, a robust individual plan should be put in place around the young person ensuring that their views are taken seriously, given the appropriate independent scrutiny in line with statutory guidance, while allowing a 'common sense' approach that does not disrupt the running of the school. This plan should be agreed with the LADO, other key agencies involved (such as children's social care or CAMHS) and where possible the parents and young person and placed on their safeguarding file.

Maintaining records

- 54. Details of allegations found after investigation to be malicious or false will be removed from personnel records unless the individual consents to their retention. A confidential safeguarding record concerning the child will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding-record procedures.
- 55. For substantiated, unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations, the personnel file will retain a clear summary of the allegation, how it was followed up and resolved, actions and decisions, the outcome, whether it will be referred to in future references, and—where agreed by social care or police—a copy supplied to the person concerned. Records will be retained until the person reaches normal pension age or for ten years from the allegation, whichever is longer.
- 56. False, unfounded, unsubstantiated and malicious allegations, including repeated allegations with those outcomes, will not be included in employer references. Substantiated safeguarding allegations that meet the harm threshold will be included factually and without opinion.