



What can you expect if there is an allegation made against you?

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This information is for staff who have been working in an educational environment through Smile Education who have had an allegation or concern raised against you.

This may be that either you have:

- Harmed a child
- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child
- Committed a criminal offence against a child
- Behaved in a way that suggests you may pose a risk of harm to a child.

It is important when an allegation or concern is raised against one of our members of staff that we follow the correct process to ensure the following:

- Investigations are fair to both the children involved and our staff
- The allegation or concern is investigated thoroughly
- Sufficient evidence is gathered and a conclusion reached swiftly.

The process is here to ensure that we are keeping children safe at all times, following up allegations thoroughly whilst supporting our staff in their career.

What is the LADO?

When an allegation is made at a School that concerns the safety of a child/children the School will inform the LADO.

LADO stands for Local Authority Designated Officer and each Local Authority has their own Designated Officer. The LADO will provide advice to the School and us as an agency in how best to manage the concern and may refer to other agencies.

It may be managed just by Smile Education as your agency and the School or it may involve other agencies such as the Police and Children's services.

Support

Having an allegation or concern raised against you can be a stressful experience. As your agency whilst we are here to help investigate the concern or allegation and to ensure the safety of children that our staff work with, we are also here to support you.

We will keep you as up to date as possible with the status of the investigation and what steps may follow and your consultant is always only a phone call away. For external support and advice you may wish to get in touch with your Trade Union. If you feel that your health is being affected please see your GP.

Position of Trust Meeting

A position of Trust meeting is when the LADO, a Director from our agency and representatives from any other agencies involved in investigating the allegation or concern meet together to discuss the allegation or concern and decide what needs to happen next. This is not a meeting you attend as the primary objective is to plan to make sure that the allegations or concerns are conducted fairly. The meeting is confidential to those involved and only other people that may need to know as part of the investigation or with follow up activities.

After the meeting you will be given an update so that you know about any decisions that have been made.

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Other Investigations that may occur

Often when concerns are raised to the LADO they log them as advice only. This means that the LADO give us as an agency advice on what we can do to ensure that our staff are not vulnerable to allegations in the future and/or give further recommendations on what could be done to keep the children safe. This happens when the allegation is not serious and there is nothing to indicate that children have been harmed or are at risk

However if this is not the case there may be investigations from other agencies that need to happen in order to make sure that there is enough information to make a decision. Such as Police child protection enquiries, Child Services protection enquiries, a Police criminal investigation, our own disciplinary investigation, a regulatory body investigation. When we have updates regarding any of the investigations being carried out we will let you know, unless we have been advised not to by the Police in order to not jeopardise a case.

We will always ask for your point of view on the allegation or concern. We will have a meeting with you to investigate from your point of view what happened in regard to the allegation. Usually in this meeting there will be a Manager, your consultant and a notetaker/Dictaphone. It is important that when you are asked about anything by us or others that you are honest and disclose anything that you feel might be relevant to the concern/allegation or may have contributed to the allegation being made.

Outcomes

Following investigations an outcome will be recorded as either false, unsubstantiated, substantiated or malicious as detailed below and you will be advised of the outcome by us. If there has been a Position of Trust meeting the LADO will write to you too.

False = enough evidence to prove the allegation false

Unsubstantiated = insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation

Substantiated = Enough evidence to prove the allegation

Malicious = Enough evidence to disprove the allegation and somebody has deliberately deceived.

There may be further referrals at this point e.g. to the disclosure and Barring service etc. however if this is required you will be advised. We may be required as an agency to alter our processes or offer training etc.

Recording the information

The LADO keep a confidential record of any contact and it is shared only in extremely specific circumstances.

We also keep a record of the investigation in our HR drive which is only accessible by the Office Manager and the Directors.