



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

Complaints

We aim to offer a warm welcome to each individual child and family to provide a warm and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play. We believe children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and the community and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our group at any time.

Making concerns known:- a parent who is an easy about any aspect other groups provisions should first talk too a member of staff or key person about their worries. If this does not provide a satisfactory outcome within 28 days what is the problem re-occurs that parents put concerns or complaints in writing and request a meeting with the settings owner Mel Lawlee. Both parents and owners may have a friend/relative/partner present if required and agree a written record of the discussion should be made. Most complaints should be resolved informally and satisfactorily at this initial stage.

OFSTED involvement

All complaints will be reported to OFSTED within 28 days. A parent has the right to contact the OFSTED helpline if they so desire. Safe hands will provide to OFSTED on request a written record of all complaints made during any specific period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint. You can contact the steady rate play on 0300 123123. Their opening hours are between 8 AM a.m. and 8 PM p.m. Monday to Friday. It is a requirement by OFSTED to log all complaints along with the outcome and any action taken. These records will be made ready available any OFSTED inspector if required

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interests of the after-school club and it's parents that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way that respects confidentiality.



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

Allegations Against Members of Staff and Volunteers

- Safe Hands after school club recognises that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that might cause harm to children and takes seriously any allegation received. Such allegations should be referred immediately to the Manager or deputy in their absence who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Mel Lawlee then staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Deputy Manager who will contact the LADO in the first instance.
- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- All members of staff are made aware of the After school Clubs Whistleblowing procedure and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

If a child makes an allegation or discloses an abuse against an adult or other child, it is important that you

- stay calm and listen carefully
- reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- do not investigate or ask leading questions
- let them know that you will need to tell someone else
- do not promise to keep what they have told you a secret
- inform the Safeguarding Designated Officer as soon as possible
- make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which you must sign, date and record your position using the Safeguarding Report Form.
- Record keeping staff can play a vital part in helping children in need or at risk by affective monitoring and record keeping. Any incident or behaviour change in a child or young person that gives cause for concern should be recorded on an incident sheet, copies which are kept on the Safe Hands After School Club safeguarding file. It is important that records are kept and recorded factually, and directly reflect the words of the child. These must be signed and dated with timings if appropriate.

We take allegations seriously and we ensure total transparency and without bias. We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working or may come into contact with children and young people whilst at the club

The club has procedures for handling allegations of abuse made against members of staff, visiting activity providers or volunteers. The club has appointed a Safeguarding Designated Officer (SDO) who has lead responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding issues at Safe Hands After School Club.



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. This could include inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or other persons working with the children such as inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their role and responsibilities, inappropriate sharing or images. They can be made by children and young people or other concerned adults.

Allegations are made for a variety of reasons:

- abuse has actually taken place
- something has happened to the child that reminds them of a past event and the child is unable to recognize that the situation and people are different. Children can misinterpret language or actions
- some children recognize that allegations can be powerful and if they are angry about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out
- making an allegation is a way of seeking attention. If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust, whether they are members of staff, visiting activity providers or volunteers, this should be brought to the immediate attention of the SDO who will advise the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the nature of the allegations in order for the appropriate action to be taken. This may constitute an initial evaluation meeting or strategy discussion depending on the allegation being made. The SDO will need to:
 - refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately and follow up in writing within 48 hours
 - consider safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser
 - contact the parents/carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO
 - consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation
 - advise Ofsted of allegation within 14 days of the allegation
 - ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation if this is deemed necessary.
- act on any decision made in any strategy meeting
- advise the Independent Safeguarding Authority where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations being founded.



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

Safe Hands After School Club has a legal duty to refer to the disclosure and barring service (DBS) anyone who has harmed or posed risk of harm to a child or if there is any reason to believe that the members of staff has committed one of the number of listed offences and who has been removed from working paid or unpaid in regulated activities or would have been removed if they had not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at the Safe Hands setting a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO

How we can protect ourselves?

- If a child sustains an injury whilst in our care, we will record it in the accident book as soon as possible. When the child is collected, we will inform whoever picks the child up about the injury and ensure that they also sign the accident book.
- If a child arrives with an injury sustained elsewhere we will ask for an explanation and again record this in the accident book and ask whoever has brought in the child to sign the record.
- We will ensure that all staff undertake regular child protection training.
- We will ensure that all parents understand our role and responsibility in child protection.
- Our behavioural management policy states that no physical sanctions will be used and we will ensure that everyone complies with it in all rooms within the setting.
- We will try to avoid situations where an adult is left alone in a room with a child. If this does occur, we will make sure that the door is left open and there are other people around.
- We will avoid engaging in rough physical play with children - as this may be misconstrued and could cause accidental injury to a child.
- We will avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- We will take up references, including one from the candidate's last employer, and will always question any gaps in employment history.
- We will encourage an open door ethos, to enable staff to talk to senior managers if they have concerns about the conduct of any of their colleagues.

What happens if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff in the Setting?

- If anyone makes an allegation of abuse against a member of our staff, our manager will be informed immediately and will contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) see contact list on final page.**
- They will assess whether the allegation reaches the threshold for referral to Police/Children's Social Services and advise accordingly regarding further action to be taken in respect of the child and the member of staff.
- The *designated person Mel Lawlee* will complete the relevant form for recording allegations or complaints made against staff.
- The *designated person* will not discuss the allegation with the member of staff concerned, unless advised to do so by Children's Social Services.



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

- **All staff need to be aware that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult.**
- If Children's Social Services and/or the police decide to carry out an investigation, **it may be possible that we will be advised to suspend the member of staff whilst enquiries are carried out.** The *(name of setting)* could also invoke their disciplinary procedure.
- We will not carry out an investigation ourselves **unless** Children's Social Services and the Police decide it is not necessary for them to do so. We understand that Ofsted may wish to undertake further investigations in some circumstances.

Always remember;

The welfare of the child is Paramount

Guidance for managers completing Checklist for handling and recording allegations or complaints of abuse made against a member of staff regarding a child/children in their care.

1. Record the name and position of member of staff against whom the allegation or complaint has been made.
2. Verbal complaints should be backed up in writing by the complainant if appropriate; some may require immediate action that does not allow time for this to happen.
3. It is important to identify who made the complaint and whether it was received first hand or is a concern that is passed on from somebody else. If this is the case it is better that you receive the information first hand. If a parent, carer or a member of staff at the *(name of setting)* makes a complaint against you it must be passed immediately to your line manager.
4. Record the full name, age and date of birth of the child.
5. The address recorded should be the address at which the child lives with the main carer.
6. If there are one or more alleged incidents, be specific as possible about dates that they are alleged to have happened.
7. Check the attendance register/ diary of work to see if the child was present/seen on that day and the shift patterns of the staff member involved to see if they were working at that time. This will confirm the likelihood of the incident having taken place.
8. If you have received the complaint in writing attach it to the checklist. You can then summarise it on the form.



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

9. Any other information should be factual. It will be helpful if you can confirm things such as the level of contact that the staff member has with the child and any other minor concerns that may have been raised previously. **Do not attempt to investigate the complaint yourself unless the LADO has handed back this responsibility to the employer.**
10. Remember that if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of our staff you must inform Mel Lawlee who will contact the **LADO** for further advice.
11. **Ofsted must be informed** if an allegation is made against a member of our staff, even if the **LADO** decides no further action is required. Ofsted may do their own investigation to ensure that registration requirements are being met.
12. Make a note of any actions the **LADO** or Ofsted advise you to take and the date or times at which you implemented them.
13. **If the allegation is against Mel Lawlee then you should speak to the Deputy Manager who will follow the procedures above.**



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

Checklist for handling and recording allegations or complaints of abuse made against a member of staff regarding a child/children in their care

1. Name and position of staff who is the subject of allegations/complaint:

2. Is the complaint: Written or verbal? (delete as necessary)

3. Complaint made by: _____ Relationship to child _____

4. Name of child _____ Age and date of birth _____

5. Parent's/carers name(s) and address

6. Date of alleged incident/s _____

7. Did the child attend on this/these date/s: _____

8. Nature of complaint (if received in writing see guidance)

9. Other relevant information (continue on a separate sheet if needed):

10. Social
Services _____

11. Ofsted contacted at (date and time) _____

12. Further actions advised by Social Services Department and Ofsted

Your name and position _____

Signature

Today's date and time _____



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

This page is left intentionally blank



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

County Local Authority Designated Officer Contacts

The county LADO service deals with allegations against staff who work with children either in education or the wider workforce

If you need to speak to the LADO service regarding an **allegation** against a member of staff **please make contact with one of the contact & referral officers on the below number or complete a referral form.** Your details will be taken and passed to the LADO on duty that day. The same intake LADO will support you through the process until the matter has been resolved. Please note that the LADO service no longer works on an area basis.

County LADO service contact number: 03000 410 888

kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk

Kroner House

Ali Watling
County LADO Manager

Contact and referral officer and PA to LADO manager Emma Cumberbatch

Contact and referral Officer
Sara Blenkinsop (on secondment)

Anita Kearney - Locum

Marie Jackson
LADO

Hollie Priestly
LADO

Sarah Crann
LADO

Alexa Andrews
LADO

Susannah BURden
LADO

Mary Oni
LADO - Locum

Link to referral form: <https://www.kscb.org.uk/procedures/local-authority-designated-officer-lado>



Managing Complaints & Allegations Policy

If a call is urgent i.e. **a child is in immediate danger**, and the call **cannot** go through to the officer on **Duty**, the call should go through to the **Central Referral Unit on: 03000 41 11 11**

Urgent child protection issue outside of office hours, Call the **Central Duty** Out of Hours Number: 03000 41 91 91

Last Review March 2021
Date for review March 2022

Signed by Member

Dated