

06 – Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults Procedures

06.2 – Allegations of Harm or Abuse Against Staff, Volunteers & Agency Staff

Our Approach

At Peekaboo Childcare, we take all concerns or allegations about the behaviour of adults extremely seriously. This policy explains exactly what happens if someone raises a concern about a member of staff, volunteer, student or agency worker.

Concerns can come from anyone — a parent, a child, a staff member or a member of the public.

All concerns must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately, even if the person later withdraws the allegation.

What Is a Low-Level Concern?

The NSPCC defines a low-level concern as any behaviour by an adult that:

- Goes against the staff Code of Conduct
- May be inappropriate but does not meet the threshold of significant harm
- Could still create a risk or allow inappropriate behaviour to develop over time

Low-level concerns can include:

- Over-friendly behaviour
- Having “favourite” children
- Taking photos of children on a personal phone
- Being alone with a child without a clear purpose (e.g., behind a closed door)
- Using sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

These concerns matter because they help us maintain a culture of professionalism, transparency and safety.

Reporting Low-Level Concerns

If a staff member, volunteer or student notices a low-level concern, they must:

1. Report it to the DSL immediately
2. Record it using a Staff Concern Form (on Google Drive)

The DSL reviews all low-level concerns and decides what action is needed.
This may include:

- Additional training
- Supervision discussions
- Internal investigation
- Preventative measures
- Speaking with the LADO to check the threshold

Reporting low-level concerns keeps children safe AND protects adults from misunderstandings or false allegations.

What Counts as a Serious Allegation?

An allegation against a staff member, volunteer or agency worker is considered serious if they have:

- Harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children
- Behaved inappropriately outside of work in a way that raises concerns about suitability

These concerns must be acted upon immediately.

If an Allegation Is Made — What Happens?

1. Staff report the allegation immediately to the DSL

A Staff Concern Form must be completed.

If the DSL is unavailable → Deputy DSL → Room Leader → and they must contact the DSL straight away.

2. Staff do NOT investigate themselves

No internal investigation begins until the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) gives permission.

3. The DSL ensures immediate safety

This may include:

- Adjusting staff duties
- Ensuring children are supervised safely
- Implementing temporary measures while waiting for advice

4. The LADO is contacted within one working day

If unavailable → LADO team manager or local safeguarding point of contact.

5. The DSL may make a child protection referral if required

This is decided with guidance from LADO and Children's Services.

What the DSL Checks with the LADO

The DSL will confirm:

- What steps to take next
- When/how to inform parents
- Whether a possible criminal offence has occurred
- Whether police involvement is required
- Whether an internal investigation is allowed
- Whether suspension should be considered or if alternative safety measures can be used

All conversations with the LADO are fully recorded by the DSL.

Informing Parents

Parents are usually informed after speaking with the LADO.

However, in emergencies — for example if a child requires medical attention — parents may be informed sooner.

Parents are *not* informed before LADO advice because this could:

- Jeopardise an investigation
- Increase risk to a child
- Prevent proper safeguarding procedures

Internal Investigations & Staff Safety Measures

The LADO will advise if an internal investigation is appropriate.

Sometimes temporary measures may be used instead of suspension, such as:

- Office-based duties
- Ensuring the staff member is not left alone with children
- Adjusting shift patterns

All actions focus on keeping children safe while ensuring staff are treated fairly.

Notifications & Record Keeping

The DSL:

- Completes all required Safeguarding and Confidential Incident Reports
- Updates Ofsted within 14 days of any allegation
- Keeps full records of:
 - Discussions
 - Actions taken
 - LADO advice
 - Follow-up steps
- Ensures each child mentioned in an allegation has a note added on their Family profile
- Reviews or updates risk assessments where needed (e.g., physical intervention incidents or environmental issues)

All allegations are recorded even if the staff member resigns.

Agency Staff

All allegations involving agency workers follow the same process. After speaking with the LADO, the DSL also contacts the agency.

If the Allegation Is About the DSL

If anyone has concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they must follow the whistleblowing policy and report directly to the LADO

Referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

A referral to the DBS is made if:

- A staff member is dismissed
- There is evidence or strong likelihood of harm or inappropriate conduct
- Behaviour indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- Safeguarding concerns arise during suitability checks or supervision

Escalation & Whistleblowing

If a staff member believes children are still at risk after raising concerns:

1. They must speak again with the DSL.
2. If still concerned → follow the Whistleblowing Procedure.
3. Contact the LADO directly.
4. If concerns remain → follow the escalation steps in 06.1 Safeguarding Policy.

Whistleblowing exists to protect children and ensure all concerns are acted upon.