

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF AN ALLEGATION BEING MADE AGAINST MEMBER OF STAFF

It is recognised that whilst Artisans staff are uniquely placed to detect signs and indicators of child abuse, they are themselves particularly vulnerable to malicious or misplaced allegations made by children either deliberately or innocently, arising from normal association with them within the setting.

When a child makes an allegation of abuse by a member of staff, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and deal with it by informing either the nursery manager, Ruth Martin, (if the allegation is not against that person) or the Company Secretary, Nick Martin, or the Nominated Safeguarding Children Officer, Katie Dorney or Karen Page. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

WHAT TO DO WHEN AN ALLEGATION IS MADE

If an allegation is made against an employee of Artisans, the Senior Manager will be immediately informed. The following action will be taken:

- The member of staff against whom the allegation is made should immediately be suspended;
- Ofsted should be notified immediately;
- Immediate Contact should be made with the LADO (local authority designated officer) Frazer Smith ***** or Mel Leicester ***** incl. out of hours
- If there is difficulty contacted the LADO within 24 hours the police should be informed
- Senior Teachers should also be informed that an allegation has been made;
- No discussions are to be held at this stage with the member of staff concerned.
- Ofsted whistleblowing line is 0300 123 3155

Ofsted and the LADO will advise further on the action that Artisans should now take with regard to the member of staff.

Artisans may talk to the member of staff concerned but should not discuss the matter with the child until Ofsted and the Intake and Assessment Team give the go-ahead. Depending on the outcome of these investigations the Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.

If the allegation relates to the Nursery Manager the next most senior member of staff must follow the procedure listed above. They may also seek support from S***** N***** (mob *****) who provides us with management training and a confidential support structure for staff, or from the company secretary (mob, *****)

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

Artisans staff:

1. Cannot promise total confidentiality to children since they must inform the Nursery Manager, who will in turn be required to involve other authorities.
2. Must make a written note 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. All records should be written as soon as possible to ensure maximum accuracy and the exact phrases of the child recorded if possible. See safeguarding children policy.
3. Will only establish what the child is saying and will not question the child about the allegation or ask any form of leading question.
4. Who has any reason to suspect that a child may have been abused by another member of staff, must immediately inform either the Nursery Manager or a Senior Teacher, as outlined above.

In the case of suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child attending Artisans and involving members of Artisans Staff are received by a person outside the group eg. social worker, Police, by a parent, relative or family friend, then the Nursery Manager or Senior Teacher should be informed as soon as possible who will 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 Artisans should

1. obtain details of the allegation in writing, signed and dated by the person who received the allegation (not the child)
2. record any information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses;
3. establish whether Ofsted and the LADO have been informed about the allegation;
4. follow the main procedure outlined above.

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

Criminal	Ofsted and LADO will decide if there sufficient evidence to carry forward a prosecution of the member and if so will involve the police directly.
Disciplinary	Ofsted and the LADO may determine that there is not sufficient evidence to press a criminal prosecution, but there may nevertheless be issues which require that disciplinary action is taken via Artisans' disciplinary guidelines.
Training	The investigations may indicate that the allegation was unfounded but the case may well have shown that there are issues of training and performance amongst staff which need to be dealt with by additional staff training.
Safeguarding Children	There may be other outstanding Safeguarding Children issues which do not involve the member of staff concerned but which Ofsted and LADO deem need to be dealt with via Safeguarding Children procedures.
Unfounded	Where the allegation has been found to be without basis Ofsted and the LADO will write to Artisans 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 Artisans confidential Safeguarding Children file and staff 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 member of staff's personal and confidential file.

Other Parents

In the event of other parents becoming aware of the situation before a conclusion has been reached, they will all be given full copies of our Safeguarding Children Policy, our Allegations Policy and our Privacy Policy. The importance of the matter being taken through the official channels will be re-iterated and explained. At the conclusion of any situation the parents will be informed of the outcome and the actions taken or to be taken.

Designated Staff Member

Ruth Martin

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