ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF POLICY

Reviewed:	August 2026
Next Review Due:	June 2027
Applies To:	Whole School
Owner:	Head of School
Approved By:	Board of Directors

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission
To inspire our children to reach their full potential by fostering curiosity and an interest in learning, awakening their minds and illuminating their world.

Vision
To create an affordable international secondary school with a high standard of education where children learn through practical and project-based work. To develop our students' moral and intellectual capacity, and to encourage creativity and adaptability.

Aim
An education that is broad, balanced and challenging, with an emphasis on developing strong connections to our host country, Uganda.

Values
Desire for lifelong learning; an ability to adapt; be innovative and reflective thinkers; open minded, and empathetic while achieving high academic success according to individual potential.

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1. Purpose and Principles

At 7Hills International School (7Hills) , safeguarding the welfare and safety of students is our highest priority. Occasionally, concerns or allegations may be raised about the conduct of a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, contractor or any adult working on behalf of the school. When this happens, the school has a responsibility to respond promptly, fairly and transparently.
This policy sets out how the school will:

- protect children from potential harm
- ensure staff are treated with dignity and fairness
- maintain confidentiality wherever possible
- follow clear, consistent and accountable procedures

It applies to:

- behaviour that occurs inside or outside school
- current and non-recent allegations
- concerns that may or may not meet a safeguarding threshold

This policy should be read alongside the:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

2. What This Policy Covers

An allegation falls within this policy when it is alleged that an adult working in or on behalf of the school has:

- harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved in a manner that could bring the teaching profession or school into disrepute

Some concerns may not meet this threshold. These are treated as **low-level concerns**, which relate to conduct that is:

- inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct (see Staff Handbook), but
- not serious enough to warrant a safeguarding referral

Examples may include:

- being overly familiar or developing “favourites”
- working one-to-one in secluded spaces
- inappropriate tone or boundary-blurred communication
- minor professionalism or judgement concerns

Low-level concerns are still taken seriously, recorded and monitored, as they may form part of a wider pattern of behaviour. Low-level concerns form an important part of creating a strong safeguarding culture and may help identify emerging patterns of behaviour before more serious concerns arise.

3. Reporting Concerns or Allegations

Any staff member, parent, student or community member who becomes aware of an allegation or concern must report it as soon as possible**.** Reports should be made to the Head of School (Case Manager) **or** Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If the allegation concerns the Head of School**,** it must be reported directly to the Board of Directors**.**

Concerns relating to external providers or third-party activities on school premises will be reported and managed using the same procedures.

4. Initial Response and Immediate Safety

Once a concern or allegation is received, the Case Manager will ensure that:

- the immediate safety and wellbeing of any child involved is secured
- a factual written record of the allegation is made
- no informal investigation or questioning takes place at this stage
- the DSL is informed and consulted
- safeguarding advice is sought where appropriate

Where a potential safeguarding risk is identified, the school will consult relevant safeguarding authorities and follow their advice and processes.

5. Deciding the Case Pathway

All allegations and concerns will be handled fairly, objectively and without prejudice. The school recognises the importance of protecting children while also ensuring that staff members are treated with dignity, professionalism and procedural fairness throughout any process. Following consultation, the allegation will be categorised as one of the following:

- **Meets harm threshold**
  referred to safeguarding authorities and/or police
- **Low-level concern / conduct matter**
  managed internally through support, coaching or HR processes
- **False, unfounded or malicious**
  no further action against the staff member

The school recognises that safeguarding concerns must always be treated with the utmost seriousness. Suspension may be necessary in some cases to protect students, staff, evidence or the integrity of an investigation. However, decisions will be based on an immediate risk assessment, the nature of the allegation and advice from relevant external authorities where appropriate.

Where suspension is used, it will be:

- proportionate
- time-limited
- reviewed regularly

and the staff member will be provided with appropriate support.

6. Support for Those Involved

Throughout the process, the school will:

- ensure students involved are supported and safeguarded
- treat staff with fairness, respect and presumption of innocence
- provide access to emotional and wellbeing support
- maintain regular, appropriate communication

No disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff until the investigation outcome is reached.

7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school will make every effort to:

- protect confidentiality
- limit unnecessary sharing of information
- manage communication sensitively

Information will only be shared with:

- those who have a legitimate professional need to know
- safeguarding agencies where required
- the Board where appropriate

Any media or community communication will be managed carefully to reduce speculation and protect those involved.

The school will comply with relevant Ugandan safeguarding, employment and criminal procedures where external referral is required.

8. Investigation Outcomes

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Case Manager, in consultation with relevant safeguarding authorities where appropriate, will determine the outcome of the allegation. The outcome should be based on the available evidence and recorded in accordance with safeguarding requirements. The outcome of an allegation determines the next steps for both the individual concerned and the School.

8.1 Substantiated

A substantiated allegation is one where the evidence shows that the allegation is true.

Where an allegation is substantiated, the School will determine the most appropriate course of action based on the seriousness of the findings and any advice received from safeguarding agencies or other statutory authorities. Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- referral to the Staff Disciplinary Policy
- referral to the Police or other statutory agencies
- referral to the relevant professional regulator or licensing authority
- dismissal or other employment sanction
- review of safeguarding risk assessments
- ongoing support for the child and family
- consideration of whether other children may have been affected
- review of school procedures and safeguarding practice

The School will also undertake a formal lessons learned review to identify any improvements required to policies, procedures, supervision or staff training.

8.2 Unsubstantiated

An allegation is unsubstantiated where there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove what occurred. This outcome does **not** mean that the allegation was false, nor does it imply that the allegation was true. Where an allegation is unsubstantiated:

- no disciplinary finding will normally be made solely on this outcome;
- appropriate support will continue to be offered to the child and the member of staff;
- safeguarding monitoring may continue where appropriate;
- risk assessments will be reviewed before the employee returns to normal duties, where relevant;
- the School will consider whether any additional supervision, training or guidance is appropriate.

8.3 Unfounded

An allegation is unfounded where the evidence demonstrates that the alleged incident did not occur or that the individual was not responsible. Where an allegation is found to be unfounded:

- the allegation will be formally closed;
- the employee will return to their normal duties where applicable;
- consideration will be given to restoring the individual's professional reputation;
- appropriate support will be offered to all parties affected by the investigation;
- any temporary restrictions imposed during the investigation will normally be removed.

8.4 False

An allegation is false where the evidence clearly establishes that the allegation is incorrect.
A false allegation does not necessarily mean it was made deliberately or maliciously. There may be genuine misunderstanding, mistaken identity, confusion or inaccurate recollection.

Where an allegation is determined to be false:

- the investigation will be formally concluded
- the employee will normally return to their usual duties
- records will be managed in accordance with safeguarding guidance
- support will be offered to both the child and the employee where appropriate

The School will consider whether any safeguarding or wellbeing support is required for the child if the allegation arose from misunderstanding or other vulnerability.

8.5 Malicious

A malicious allegation is one that has been deliberately fabricated or made with the intention of causing harm. Where an allegation is found to be malicious, the School will consider appropriate action proportionate to the circumstances.

Depending on the individual involved, this may include:

- disciplinary action where the complainant is an employee;
- behaviour or disciplinary procedures where the complainant is a student;
- restriction of access or action under the Parent Code of Conduct where the complainant is a parent;
- referral to external agencies where criminal offences may have been committed.

The School will also consider what support should be provided to the member of staff whose reputation has been affected and whether any wider communication is necessary to restore confidence within the school community.

8.6 Following Every Investigation

Regardless of the outcome, the Case Manager will ensure that:

- all relevant records are completed and stored securely
- those directly involved are informed of the outcome, subject to confidentiality requirement
- safeguarding agencies are updated where required
- any agreed actions are implemented and monitored
- lessons learned are identified to strengthen safeguarding practice across the School.

9. Record-Keeping

The Case Manager will ensure that a clear written record is maintained, including:

- a summary of the allegation
- how the case was managed
- key actions and decisions taken
- the final outcome

Records will be:

- stored securely and confidentially
- retained in line with safeguarding best practice

- shared only where legally or professionally appropriate

Where an allegation is found to be false or malicious, records will be removed from personnel files (unless there is a legal reason to retain them). Where allegations are substantiated:

- only factual information may be included in employment references
- opinions or speculation must never be recorded

10. Low-Level Concerns Process

7Hills promotes a culture of openness, reflection and early professional support. Low-level concerns are handled in a supportive and proportionate manner. They will be:

- recorded confidentially
- reviewed periodically
- addressed constructively
- used to improve practice

Where a pattern of repeated low-level concerns emerges, the case may be escalated into the formal safeguarding process.

11. Non-Recent / Historical Allegations

Abuse can be reported at any time, regardless of when it occurred. If a child makes a historical allegation:

- the school will follow normal safeguarding procedures

If an adult reports abuse experienced as a child:

- they will be supported and encouraged to report to the police
- the school will cooperate fully with any investigation

12. Learning and Improvement

After any substantiated case, the school will review:

- whether procedures were followed effectively
- whether suspension or other actions were proportionate
- training or safeguarding practice improvements
- lessons to strengthen safer working culture

This review will inform policy development and ongoing staff training.

13. Oversight and Review

This policy will be:

- reviewed annually
- updated following any incident or regulatory change

- presented to the Board for approval

The school remains committed to ensuring that allegations are managed with integrity, compassion and fairness, protecting both students and staff.

14. Distribution and Access

This policy is available to all staff, students, and parents via the school website and on the school Google drive. Printed copies can be requested from the school reception.