

Managing Allegations Policy 2026-2027

Author:	Name	Stephen Musa	
	Job Title	Deputy Principal	
Policy approved by:		Date approved:	

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Definitions	3
3. Reporting an Allegation	3
4. Initial Response and Support	4
5. Low Level Concerns	4
6. Involvement of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	5
7. Concerns that reach the threshold of harm	5
8. Investigation Process	6
9. Outcome and further action	6
10. Monitoring and Review	7
11. Allegations made against persons using college premises	7
12. Related Policies	8

1. Introduction

Southport Education Group is committed to ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for all its staff and students. This policy outlines the clear process to be followed in managing allegations and applies to all staff and those working in or on behalf of the college in a paid or unpaid capacity (i.e. members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers, contractors and organisations using our premises). The policy aims to provide a fair and robust framework for investigating allegations while prioritising the welfare and safeguarding of all parties involved.

2. Definitions

2.1 Allegation - A claim made against a staff member or those working in or on behalf of the college, regarding their behaviour or conduct that may indicate a breach of professional boundaries, code of conduct, or potential harm to a student or colleague.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - The senior designated staff member responsible for coordinating and overseeing safeguarding within the college.

2.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)- The designated staff member who supports the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in their responsibilities and acts as a point of contact in their absence.

2.4 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - A designated officer within the Local Authority responsible for coordinating, managing, and monitoring allegations made against individuals who work with children.

2.6 Duty Principal - The designated member of the college's management team who takes on the role of overseeing the college's operations and decision-making during specific periods when the Principal or other senior leaders are not available. The Duty Principal has delegated responsibilities related to safeguarding, including responding to urgent safeguarding matters and coordinating necessary actions.

2.3 Those working in or on behalf of the college - This term encompasses all individuals who have a direct or indirect association with the college. It includes members of staff, which comprises permanent and temporary employees, supply teachers, as well as volunteers, contractors, and organisations using college premises. This collective term encompasses anyone who, in the course of their role or responsibilities, interacts with or represents the college in any capacity, including those providing services, conducting activities, or participating in events within the college premises.

2.4 Allegations may include conduct involving technology-facilitated abuse, including AI-generated content, deepfake imagery, online sexual harassment, cyberbullying, online grooming, misogynistic behaviour or other digital conduct that may place children at risk of harm.

3. Reporting an Allegation

3.1 Any person who witnesses or becomes aware of an allegation against a staff member or contractor¹ at Southport Education Group should not share this with any other colleagues other than reporting it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or the Head of HR, who will act with the authority of the Principal.

3.2 The person reporting the allegation should provide as much detail as possible, including dates, times, locations, and the names of any individuals involved. They should not question or investigate the matter any further.

3.3 If the allegation involves the Head of HR or the Designated Safeguarding Lead then the allegation should be reported directly to the Principal.

3.4 If the allegation involves the Principal, the allegation should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will refer it to the Chair of the college's governing board.

3.5 All allegations should be treated seriously and confidentiality should be maintained throughout the process to protect all parties involved.

4. Initial Response and Support

4.1 Upon receiving an allegation, the DSL, DDSL, Head of HR or Duty Principal will take immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of the alleged victim(s) and any other potentially affected individuals.

4.2 The alleged victim(s) will be provided with appropriate support and offered external support agencies as required. This may include referrals to children's social care and/or the police.

4.3 Informing a staff member of an alleged allegation against them may not be immediate, this may be due to a number of factors, including liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

4.4 Only once agreed with the DSL, DDSL or the Head of HR the staff member will be informed of the nature of the allegation and their rights to support during the investigation process.

4.5 The College will adopt a trauma-informed approach when supporting all parties involved in an allegation, recognising the potential impact on victims, witnesses and those subject to investigation.

5. Low Level Concerns

5.1 Southport Education Group recognises that not all concerns may meet the threshold of harm, but that low-level concerns still require appropriate attention and action.

¹ Taken from KCSIE September 24 - Schools and colleges should have their own procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns or allegations against those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges in a paid or unpaid capacity, i.e. members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors. Page 92

5.2 If the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) receives a low-level concern that suggests a breach of professional boundaries, inappropriate behaviour, or conduct, they will assess the level of risk and potential harm involved.

5.3 If the DSL believes that the threshold of harm may have been reached, or if there is a pattern of concerning behaviour, they will make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.

5.4 The LADO will then assess the information provided and determine the appropriate course of action, which may include advice on managing the concern internally or coordinating further investigation.

5.5 In cases where the threshold of harm has not been reached, the DSL, in consultation with the Head of HR, will determine the appropriate actions to address the concern, which may include providing guidance, additional training, or monitoring the situation closely.

5.6 All low-level concerns and actions taken will be documented and maintained in a confidential and secure manner by the Head of HR.

5.7 A Termly review and monitoring of low-level concerns will be conducted to ensure that appropriate actions have been taken and that the welfare and safeguarding of staff and students are continuously prioritised.

Note: This section aims to address low-level concerns where the threshold of harm may not be met, but where there is still a need for appropriate action and support. The involvement of the LADO is determined based on the assessment of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) regarding the level of risk and potential harm involved.

Whilst individual low-level concerns may not meet the threshold of harm, a pattern of repeated concerns may indicate a wider safeguarding issue and should be reviewed collectively.

6. Involvement of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

6.1 In cases where the allegation involves potential harm to a child or if the allegation is serious or complex, the DSL, the DDSL or the Head of HR will refer the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. See section 7 regarding the threshold of harm.

6.2 The LADO will provide advice and guidance on the investigation process, liaise with external agencies if required, and coordinate actions in line with the local authority procedures.

6.3 The college will fully cooperate with the LADO's investigation and follow their guidance and recommendations. See Annex 2

7. Concerns that reach the threshold of harm.

7.1 The College acknowledges that concerns regarding colleagues that meet threshold of harm, as outlined in Keeping children safe in education September 2024², require immediate attention and appropriate action. These concerns include instances where colleagues have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

7.2 A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. It is important to note that the last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have occurred outside of the college setting but still raises concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children. This concept is known as transferable risk.

7.3 This includes conduct occurring in personal, social or online environments where such behaviour may indicate an individual's suitability to work with children and young people.

7.3 Whenever the DSL, the DDSL or Head of HR determines that a concern about a staff member meets the threshold of harm, the issue will be escalated to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

7.4 The LADO will provide guidance on the next steps, including whether the managing allegations process should be invoked or if further investigation by the college is necessary.

7.5 These steps may lead to the college initiating its disciplinary processes. In cases where allegations are substantiated, dismissal and referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) may be considered.

7.6 It is important to note that a substantiated allegation through the managing allegations policy does not automatically result in dismissal.

8. Investigation Process

8.1 The Vice Principal – People and Culture, in consultation with the DSL and or the Principal, will appoint an Investigating Officer, who will initiate an impartial investigation to determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation. The investigation may include interviews with relevant individuals, gathering of evidence, and consultation with external agencies including if necessary.

8.2 The staff member and those working in or on behalf of the college against whom the allegation has been made will be interviewed and given an opportunity to respond to the allegation. They will have the right to bring a work place colleague or union representative to the interview.

8.3 Staff involved in the management of allegations should exercise professional curiosity, ensuring that information is appropriately explored and assumptions are avoided.

² [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

8.3 All parties involved will be informed about the progress and outcome of the investigation in a timely manner while respecting confidentiality and data protection laws.

9. Outcome and Further Action

9.1 Once the investigation is concluded, the Head of HR, in consultation with the DSL, will determine the appropriate course of action based on the findings.

9.2 If the allegation is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the college's conduct procedures and legal requirements.

9.3 The alleged victim(s) and the staff member or those working in or on behalf of the college will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any subsequent actions taken.

9.4 If the allegation is found to be false or unfounded, steps will be taken to support the staff member or those working in or on behalf of the college and to address any reputational or emotional impact resulting from the investigation.

9.5 Where an individual has made an allegation that has been found to be malicious, appropriate action will be taken against that individual in accordance with the college's staff or students conduct processes.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 Southport Education Group will review this policy regularly to ensure it remains up to date and compliant with relevant legislation and guidance.

10.2 All staff members and those working in or on behalf of the college will receive appropriate training and awareness regarding this policy and their responsibilities in managing allegations.

10.3 Feedback and suggestions for improvements to this policy should be directed to the Head of HR or the DSL.

10.4 This Managing Allegations Policy is effective from the date of its approval and supersedes any previous policies or guidelines on the subject matter.

11. Allegations made against persons using college premises.

The College recognises that allegations of misconduct or harm may not only involve staff members directly employed by the college but can also extend to individuals using college premises, such as clubs in the evening, contractors, and organisations utilising our facilities. The college is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all individuals who access our premises.

11.1 Reporting Allegations

- 11.1.1 Any person who witnesses or becomes aware of an allegation of misconduct or harm involving individuals using Southport Education Group premises should report

it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or Duty Principal. This reporting should follow the same reporting procedures outlined in this policy.

- 11.1.3 It is crucial to document as much detail as possible when reporting an allegation, including dates, times, locations, and the names of individuals involved, to facilitate a thorough investigation and appropriate action.

11.2 Initial Response and Support

- 11.2.1 Upon receiving an allegation involving persons using college premises, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or Duty Principal will take immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of any potential victims and affected individuals.
- 11.2.1 At the earliest opportunity the Duty Principal will refer the allegation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or college Principal.
- 11.2.2 Appropriate support will be provided to the alleged victims, and they will be offered access to counselling services or external support agencies as required.
- 11.2.3 In instances where the alleged misconduct or harm involves contractors or organisations using the premises, the college will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and welfare of all individuals accessing our facilities, which may include temporary suspension of their use of college premises pending investigation.

11.3 Investigation Process

- 11.3.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (SDSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), in consultation with relevant college Principal, will initiate a thorough investigation into the allegation made against individuals using college premises.
- 11.3.2 The investigation may involve gathering evidence, conducting interviews with relevant parties, and consulting with external agencies or authorities as necessary.
- 11.3.3 All parties involved, including the individuals using college premises and any affected parties, will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation in a timely manner, while maintaining confidentiality and privacy to the extent permitted by law.

11.4 Outcome and Further Actions

- 11.4.1 Based on the findings of the investigation, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), in consultation with the college Principal, will determine the appropriate course of action.
- 11.4.2 If the allegations are substantiated, the college will take appropriate actions to address the misconduct or harm, which may include termination of access to college premises, termination of contracts, or referral to relevant authorities.
- 11.4.3 The alleged victims and any affected individuals will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any subsequent actions taken by the college.

11.5 Monitoring and Review

- 11.5.1 The college will monitor and review its procedures for managing allegations involving persons using college premises on a regular basis to ensure they are effective, up to date, and compliant with relevant legislation and guidance.

12. Related Policies

12.1 This policy relates to the following college policies –

- Safeguarding Policy
- On-line Safety Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

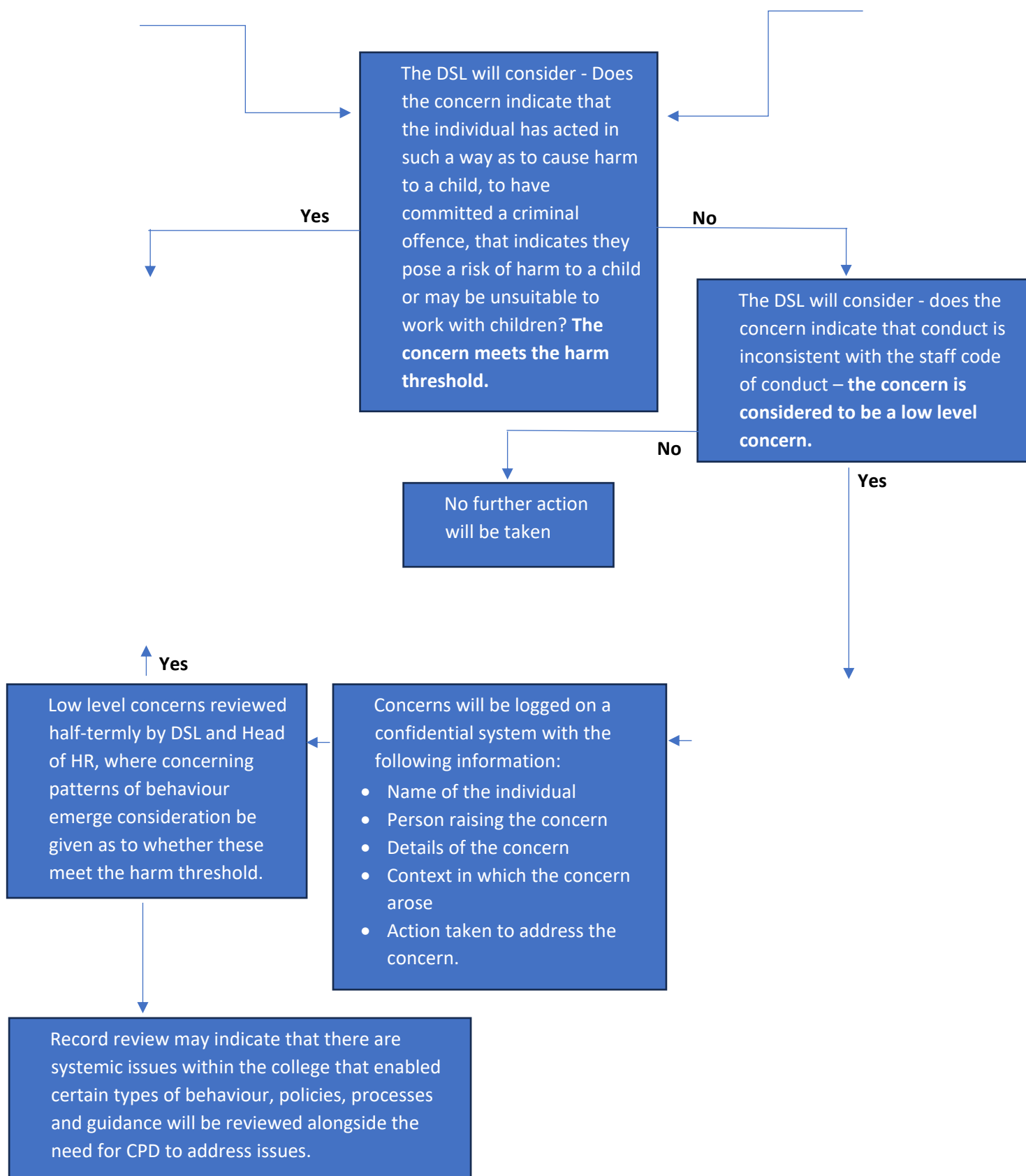
Annex One – Flowchart for Managing Allegation about staff.

Allegation related to the conduct of staff should be reported to the Head of HR or the DSL

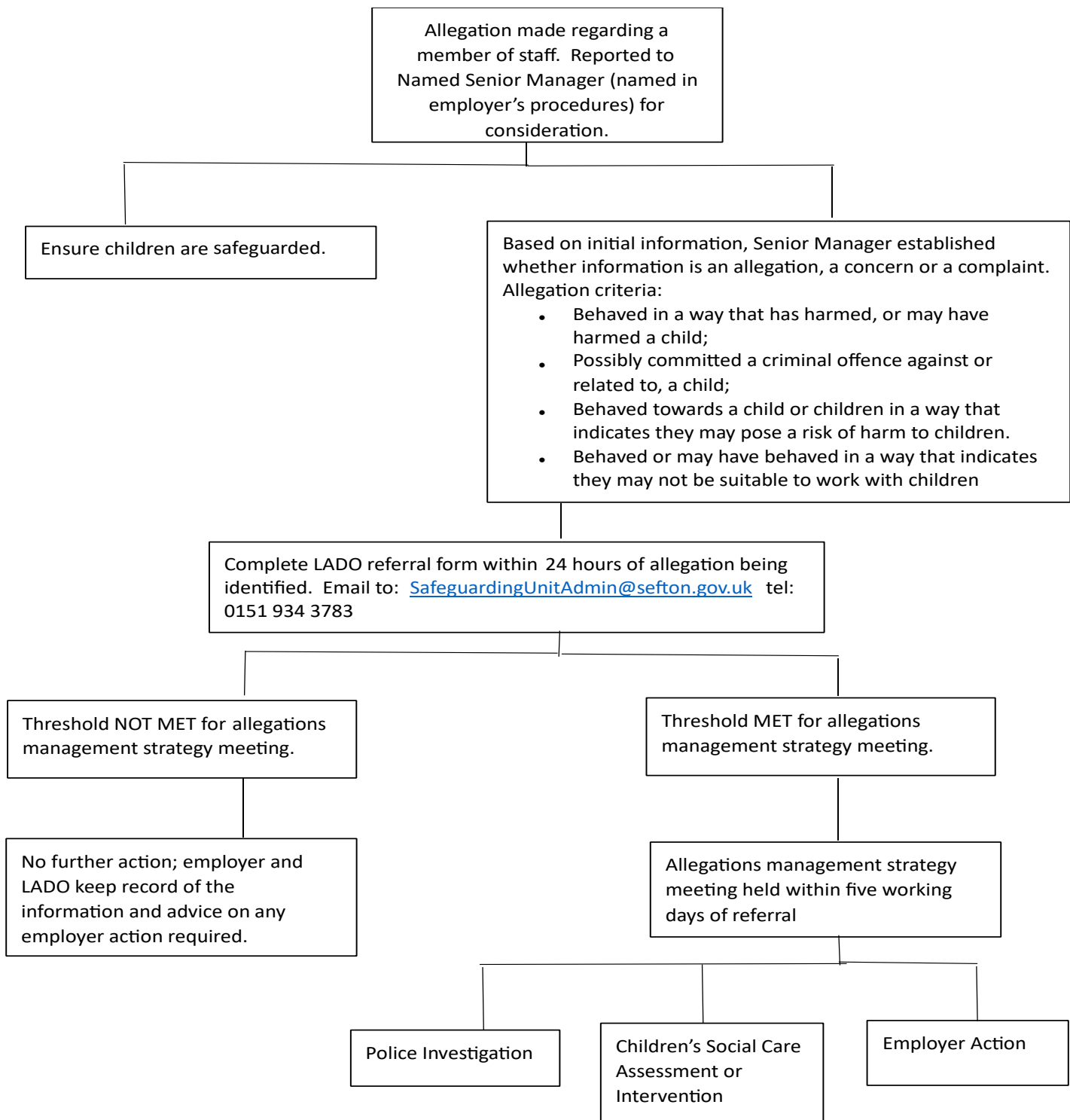
Allegations related to the conduct of DSL or the Head of HR should be reported to the Principal.

DSL to make contact with the LADO within one working day and seek advice as to next steps. Where LADO refer to the managing allegations process (Annex Two), the college will consider the need for suspension but will not instigate its own disciplinary processes until the managing allegations process has concluded.

Advice and guidance along with support will be provided to the individual to enable them to correct their conduct. This may include the implementation of other college policies.



Annex Two – Sefton’s Managing Allegations Flowchart



Annex Three – Useful Contacts

Contact	Email	Phone number
Principal – Michelle Brabner	brabnerm@southport.ac.uk	01704 392603
DSL – Stephen Musa	musas@southport.ac.uk	01704 392669 01704 391635
DDSL – Liz Jones	jonesl@southport.ac.uk	01704 392759
DDSL – Karen Marsh	marshl@southport.ac.uk	01704 392758
Head of HR – Alison McDowell	mcdowella@southport.ac.uk	01704 392861
Sefton LADO	safeguardingunitadmin@sefton.gov.uk	0151 934 3783