



Victoria College Day Care
Allegations against Staff Policy
– referencing Standard 1

June 2023

Policy Date – 09/06/23
Agreed by Governors – 16/06/2023
Review Date – January 2024
Drafted by – E Wilson

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Rationale

Victoria College aims to support and maintain high standards of conduct and discipline among its staff...

This policy is intended to assist parents/carers and members of Victoria College Day Care staff who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety and should be read in conjunction with Victoria College Whistle Blowing Policy and Complaints Policy.

1. To ensure that all allegations against staff within the Day Care setting are managed appropriately.
2. To inform staff and parents of the policy and procedures for managing allegations against staff in the Day Care setting.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 The aim of the policy is to promote a culture of openness, transparency and dialogue within the Day Care setting, which at the same time:

- Upholds children's and parents' rights to confidentiality;
- Meets the obligations of members of the College community to their employer;
- Does not undermine confidence in the work of Day Care unreasonably;
- Reassures members of the Day Care staff that they will not be penalised for raising a concern, and gives them a process to follow.

2.2 Victoria College Day Care management recognises that in exceptional circumstances – such as an allegation of assault - a member of staff may wish to contact an external agency or the police immediately. Where it is at all possible the management would encourage the use of the internal procedure as set out in this policy.

2.3 The policy should not be used by members of staff or parents/carers who are aggrieved about a personal issue that should properly be pursued through the existing procedures for staff grievance.

2.4 The policy applies to all members of staff including those employed in a temporary capacity.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Victoria College Day Care management has a responsibility to:

- ensure that this policy enables issues raised under it to be dealt with effectively;
- promote a culture of openness and trust in which when issues are raised they are taken seriously and dealt with responsibly.
- ensure that members of staff who raise any issues in good faith, believing them to be of sufficient importance to justify disclosure, but which are not subsequently upheld, are not penalised for doing so.
- where, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations and particularly if he or she persists in making them, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual concerned.

3.2 The Day Care Manager, Miss Wilson, and Deputy Manager, Mrs Hrabovsky, have a responsibility to:

- take any concerns reported to them seriously and consider them fully, fairly and sympathetically;
- recognise that raising a concern can be a difficult experience and offer appropriate support;
- seek advice, where appropriate, from other senior colleagues within the setting;
- if it appears appropriate to do so, invoke the formal procedure as set out in paragraph 5.2 of this policy.

3.3 All members of the Day Care staff have a responsibility to:

- recognise that it is their duty to draw to the Day Care management's attention any matter of serious concern;
- adhere to the procedures set out in this policy;
- maintain their duty of confidentiality to pupils, parents and the College.

If the disclosure of confidential information to the Designated Person, Miss Wilson, or an outside agency appears to be justified, a member of staff should first, where appropriate, seek specialist advice from their line manager or trade union/professional body representative or the Designated Person, Miss Wilson.

4. Procedure

4.1 Informal Procedure

If a member of the Day Care staff or parent/carer is concerned about what they believe might be malpractice and have an honest and reasonable suspicion that the malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur, then the matter should be raised in the first instance with the Day Care manager, Miss Wilson, or if there are specific reasons for not doing so, the appropriate senior manager, Mrs Hrabovsky.

Anyone wishing to proceed in this way is entitled to involve a trade union/professional body representative or work colleague in assisting them.

The Day Care Manager, Miss Wilson or Deputy Manager, Mrs Hrabovsky, will endeavour to obtain information as to the veracity of the allegations.

If this procedure does not allay concerns, then the formal procedure as outlined below may be invoked.

- 4.2.2 The Designated Person for formal procedures will be the Registered Person or the Chairperson of the Board of Governors if a disclosure concerns the Registered Person.
- 4.2.3 The Designated Person will arrange an initial interview with the member of staff making the disclosure, which will be strictly confidential and will ascertain the area of concern. That person may be accompanied by a member of their trade union/professional body or work colleague. The Designated Person will reassure the member of staff about protection from possible reprisals or victimisation and provide them with a copy of the Day Care's Whistleblowing Policy. The Designated Person will write a summary report of the interview, which should be agreed by both parties.
- 4.2.4 If a disclosure concerns the improper use of public funds then, if the Designated Person is not the Chairman of the Board of Governors, the Designated Person should make the Chairman of the Board of Governors aware of the facts.
- 4.2.5 The Designated Person will be responsible for commissioning an investigation. An Investigating Officer will be appointed, drawn from senior members of the College's staff or the Board of Governors to conduct an investigation under terms of strict confidentiality and in accordance with the Day Care's disciplinary procedures.
- 4.2.6 In serious cases, for example, allegations of mistreatment of pupils or fraud an Investigating Panel may be appointed comprising either senior members of the College's staff, or members of the Board of Governors, or members of both groups to conduct the investigation.

In such a circumstance consideration may have to be given to immediate precautionary suspension from work of the person under investigation. This precautionary suspension should be carried out under the Day Care's disciplinary procedure.

If as a result of the investigation there is a case to be answered and it is deemed appropriate for formal disciplinary action, a disciplinary hearing will be convened under the Day Care's disciplinary procedure. Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles, time periods and rights to representation as set out in those disciplinary procedure.

- 4.2.7 Following the investigation the Investigating Officer/Panel will produce a report and inform the Designated Person who will ensure that appropriate action is taken, which may include changes in practice or disciplinary action.
- 4.2.8 The Designated Person will provide the individual who raises concerns with as much feedback on the outcome of the investigation as is proper in the circumstances. However, the setting may not be in a position to disclose the precise action taken where it would infringe a duty of confidentiality owed to someone else. In particular, precise details of any disciplinary action will not be provided.

Where appropriate, The Early Years Team at Everton Complex, 585-587 Crumlin Road, Belfast (028 95042811) will be contacted and kept informed about the allegation against staff and the procedures followed.

5. Role of Trade Unions and Other Organisations

A member of the Day Care community involved in any of the above proceedings has the right to consult and seek guidance and support from their professional organisation or trade union.

6. Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every six months by the Day Care Manager and at least once a year by the Board of Governors. The policy will be kept under review by senior members of staff who will keep Governors informed should any changes become necessary.

Allegations Against Staff - Process for Formal Procedure

