

within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Designated Teacher will contact Social Services again.

23. Referral guidelines: A referral to the SSD or police will not normally be made where:

- the complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence; and
- a referral would be contrary to the wishes of a pupil complainant who is of sufficient maturity and understanding and properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents; and
- the case is one that can be satisfactorily investigated and dealt with under the School's internal procedures, the parents being kept fully informed, as appropriate.

However, if during the course of the internal procedures, it appears that the situation is more serious, the Designated Teacher will again consider whether a referral should be made in accordance with paragraph 22 above.

24. External agencies: Whether or not the School decides to refer a particular complaint to the SSD or the police, the parents and pupil will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Social Services Department or the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate. Boarders and their parents have access to a complaints procedure in relation to issues affecting their welfare which provides contact details for Ofsted.

25. Monitoring of Low Level Child Protection Concerns in School

All concerns a teacher has regarding a child protection issue must be discussed with the Designated Teacher (with the exception of concerns about the Designated Teacher, where the Headmaster should be approached instead). Often there are insufficient grounds or evidence to suggest referral to an outside agency. However, it must be stressed that this is not sufficient reason to ignore a concern. It may be that the Designated Teacher will contact either the duty social worker or the duty education welfare/social worker/LADO to seek clarification on what action should be taken.

26. Allegations Against Staff Members

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow the guidance in chapter 5 of Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the pupils or pupil concerned; and
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Designated Teacher, the matter should be reported immediately to the Headmaster.