



Managing Allegations Against Green Sparks Southwest CIC Employees and Volunteers

Version	Date	Reviewed by	Recipients	Review Due No Later Than	Summary of amendments
1.0	26/01/2023	Naomi Bush, Director 	All Green Sparks staff	19/01/2023	N/A
1.0	18/01/2024	Naomi Bush, Director 	All Green Sparks staff	17/01/2024	N/A
1.0	06/01/2025	Naomi Bush, Director 	All Green Sparks staff	20/12/2025	N/A

INTRODUCTION

- Green Sparks expects its staff (including temporary, agency, interim, contractor or consultant staff) to be scrupulously impartial and honest in all affairs relating to the Company and their job within it. All staff also bear a responsibility as employees to act as ambassadors for the Company in terms of their general conduct both within and outside the organisation. This policy outlines the response that will be taken if an allegation is made that staff conduct has fallen short of these expectations. This policy draws heavily on the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children's Board (PDSCB) policy for managing allegations against staff which can be found at; https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p_alleg_against_staff.html
- This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989 and in line with government publications, local guidance and procedures including:-
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018.
 - What To Do If You Are Worried a Child Is Being Abused 26th March 2015.
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (current version as per the Government website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education—2>)
 - The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - HM Gov Information Sharing 2015

GENERAL STANDARD OF CONDUCT REQUIRED BY THE COMPANY

Bribery and Other Corrupt Behaviour

- Green Sparks has a strict anti-bribery and corruption policy in line with the Bribery Act (2010). A bribe is defined as: giving someone a financial or other advantage to

Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy

encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so.

4. If an employee bribes (or attempts to bribe) another person, intending either to obtain or retain business for the company, or to obtain or retain an advantage in the conduct of the company's business this will be considered gross misconduct. Similarly accepting or allowing another person to accept a bribe will be considered gross misconduct. In these circumstances the employee will be subject to formal investigation under the Company's disciplinary procedures, and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be applied.

Gifts and Hospitality

5. In addition to the duties placed on employees by Civil and Statute Law Green Sparks requires its employees to ensure that gifts and hospitality offered by suppliers and potential suppliers of goods and services to the Company are declined. This applies, whether the gifts or hospitality are offered within, or outside normal working hours. The only exceptions to this are trivial gifts with a nominal value of less than £10 such as a calendar, diary, chocolates or mugs can be accepted. All other gifts must be politely refused or, if received through the post, returned to the donor with a suitably worded letter signed by your line manager.

Transaction of Private Business

6. Employees having official dealings with contractors and other suppliers of goods or services must avoid transacting any kind of private business with them by any means other than the Company's normal commercial channels. No personal favours or transactions should be sought or accepted.

Visits to Conferences, Demonstrations etc

7. The Company intends that when it is necessary for employees to visit conferences, demonstrations and similar occasions, it should bear the travelling and subsistence expenses itself unless otherwise approved by a senior manager.

Attendance at Luncheons, Receptions etc

8. Where it is evident that the work of Green Sparks will be facilitated, invitations to attend receptions, luncheons etc. may be accepted under the following rules:
 - no employee may accept an invitation without first obtaining the approval of their line manager;
 - in exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to seek prior approval, the facts should be reported immediately afterwards;
 - if addressed personally, such an invitation may not be transferred to another employee, except with the consent and approval of a senior manager as above and with the concurrence of the party issuing the invitation;
 - invitations involving attendance outside normal working hours may be accepted only on the authority of the line manager;
 - as a general rule, any employee who has any doubts about the wisdom of accepting any hospitality should decline the offer.
9. NB The important difference between, for example, attendance in an official capacity

Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy

at a function organised by the Company and the acceptance of hospitality from a private individual or firm should be recognised.

Identification

10. Employees who have been issued with identity badges should wear or carry these whilst carrying out their duties.

Confidentiality

11. At all times confidentiality must be maintained. No information can be released to unauthorised persons or organisations. The Chief Executive / Business Owner or other Senior Managers of the Company will inform employees of those authorised to receive information.
12. If doubt exists as to the validity of an organisation or individuals to receive information, this must be checked with your line manager.

Personal Relationships

13. If a personal and intimate relationship between two employees develops within the working environment, the onus is on the senior employee concerned to bring this to the attention of his or her manager to confirm that there is no conflict of interest, nor will a conflict of interest arise. The Company reserves the right to move one of the employees concerned if it deems it necessary to do so.

Outside Interests and Employment

14. Outside interests include directorships, ownership, part ownership or material shareholdings in companies, business or consultancies likely to seek to do business with the Green Sparks. These should be declared to the individual's line manager as should the interests of a spouse / partner or close relative.

Political and civic activities

15. It is not the intention of Green Sparks, or this policy, to dissuade employees from participating actively in public duties. It is important, however, that by doing so there is no suggestion to a third party that the employee is acting on behalf of, or with the support of, Green Sparks. To avoid any misunderstanding, no Company employee should permit his or her company affiliation to be noted in any outside organisation's materials or activities without the express written approval of a member of senior management.

General Conduct

16. Employees should at all times conduct themselves in such a way as to enhance the reputation of the Company.
17. Green Sparks will support employees who become aware of and are willing to report breaches of this policy or who genuinely believe that a breach is occurring, has occurred or is likely to occur within the business.
18. These standards of conduct are intended to underpin and clarify standards required by the Company of its employees and form a fundamental part of the employment contract. Staff who fail to comply with the guidance detailed in this Policy could be subject, following full investigation, to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. If through their actions or omissions staff are found to be in contravention of either this Policy or, indeed, their legal responsibilities then the Company reserves the right to take legal action if it deems it to be necessary to do so.

Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy**RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEER AT GREEN SPARKS**

19. Allegations made against a member of staff will be evaluated according to the criteria described in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (Part 4, Sections 1 and 2), specifically concerns will be considered to have potentially reached the harm threshold where staff 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.

20. Concerns that do not appear to have the potential to have reached the harm threshold but will still be investigated include allegations that staff have behaved in a way that

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
 - having favourites
 - taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, or
 - humiliating children

21. Naomi Bush is the designated senior manager with overall responsibility for:

- Receiving, accurately recording and sharing details of allegations or concerns
- In the event that an allegation or concern relates directly to Naomi Bush, this report should be made directly to the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer who can be contacted at Dorset Council by calling 01305 221 000. Members of the public and service users can also consider sharing the allegation or concern with the wider professional group who will also retain a responsibility to ensure it is accurately recorded and shared, for example the school who commissioned the intervention from Green Sparks

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

22. Green Sparks will inform both Children's Services and the local authority designated officer (LADO) within 1 working day when an allegation is made and prior to any further investigation taking place. **LADO contact details are 01305 221122 or LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. Children's Services contact details for referrals are Children's Advice and Duty Service 01305 22 88 66**

Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy

23. The LADO will advise Green Sparks whether or not informing the parents of the child/ren involved will impede the disciplinary or investigative processes. Acting on this advice, if it is agreed that the information can be fully or partially shared, Green Sparks will inform the parent/s. In some circumstances, however, the parent/s may need to be told straight away (e.g. if a child is injured and requires medical treatment).
24. The parent/s and the child, if sufficiently mature, will be helped to understand the processes involved and be kept informed about the progress of the case and of the outcome where there is no criminal prosecution. This will include the outcome of any disciplinary process, but not the deliberations of, or the information used in, a hearing.
25. Green Sparks will seek advice from the LADO, the police and / or Children's Social Care about how much information should be disclosed to the accused person.
26. Subject to restrictions on the information that can be shared, Green Sparks will, as soon as possible, inform the accused person about the nature of the allegation, how enquiries will be conducted and the possible outcome (e.g. disciplinary action, and dismissal or referral to the DBS or regulatory body).
27. The accused member of staff will:
 - Be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved;
 - Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process;
 - If suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace.

CONFIDENTIALITY

28. Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and accused person (where this would not place the child at further risk) up to date with progress of the case, information will be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

SUPPORT

29. Green Sparks, together with Children's Social Care and / or police, where they are involved, will consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate. Liaison between the agencies will take place in order to ensure that the child's needs are addressed.
30. As soon as possible after an allegation has been received, the accused member of staff will be advised to contact their union or professional association.

SUSPENSION

31. Suspension is a neutral act and it should not be automatic. It should be considered in any case where:
 - There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of harm; or
 - The allegation warrants investigation by the police; or
 - The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy

32. The possible risk of harm to children will be evaluated and managed in respect of the child/ren involved and any other children in the accused member of staff's home, work or community life.
33. If a suspended person is to return to work, Green Sparks will consider what help and support might be appropriate (e.g. a phased return to work and/or provision of a mentor), and also how best to manage the member of staff's contact with the child concerned, if still in the workplace.

RESIGNATIONS AND 'COMPROMISE AGREEMENTS'

34. Every effort will be made to reach a conclusion in all cases even if:
 - The individual refuses to cooperate, having been given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations;
 - It may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete.
35. Compromise agreements' will not be used (i.e. where a member of staff agrees to resign provided that disciplinary action is not taken and that a future reference is agreed). Green Sparks will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service to consider whether to add the individual to the barred list. This applies irrespective of whether a referral has been made to local authority Children's Social Care and/or the designated officer or team of officers. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

ORGANISED ABUSE

36. Investigators will be alert to signs of organised or widespread abuse and/or the involvement of other perpetrators or institutions.

WHISTLEBLOWING

37. All staff will be made aware of the organisation's whistleblowing policy and feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.
38. If a member of staff believes that a reported allegation or concern is not being dealt with appropriately by Green Sparks, they should report the matter to the LADO.

TIMESCALES

39. It is in everyone's interest for cases to be dealt with expeditiously, fairly and thoroughly and for unnecessary delays to be avoided.