

## CIRCULAR

Circular No. 02/026/L&PS

Date: 11 February 2002

To: Secretaries of Divisions in England and Wales – **FOR ACTION**  
Secretaries of Local Associations in England and Wales – **FOR INFORMATION**

Dear Colleague

### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST TEACHERS OF ABUSE**

The updated guidelines have been agreed between the six teacher organisations and the national employers' organisation and have now been endorsed by the Department of health, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of Directors of Social Services. The national employers will shortly be publishing the guidelines to LEAs.

The guidelines bring together and revise the two earlier documents that related to allegations against teachers and against headteachers.

A number of changes have been incorporated in the updated guidelines.

- They incorporate clarification of the **respective roles** of the designated teacher, nominated governor and designated LEA lead officer (section 2).
- The guidelines make reference to the problems which may be caused by **media attention** (paragraph 3.4)
- There is clarification of the steps to be taken during an **urgent initial assessment** of an allegation. The earlier guidance stated that an immediate referral in accordance with local child protection procedures would be necessary where it appeared that a child or children are at risk of significant harm. The guidance now also provides for an immediate referral when a child makes an allegation that is considered to be a potential criminal act (section 7).
- The guidelines clarify that immediate referral will not be necessary where the allegation relates to the use of **reasonable force to restrain a pupil**. As long as the allegation is not one of assault beyond the use of reasonable force, the guidelines provide that it will be appropriate for the head teacher or the nominated governor and LEA lead officer to deal with the matter at school level (paragraph 7.3).

- The guidelines state that staff should not automatically be suspended when an allegation is made. Suspension will properly occur when the allegations would warrant dismissal for gross misconduct if proven, or where there is evidence of risk to a child or risk that the investigation will be impeded if the individual is not suspended (section 14).

Divisions are asked to review existing local child protection procedures in the light of these changes to the national guidelines, with a view to proposing any necessary revision of local procedures.

Yours sincerely

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