



Escalation and Professional Disagreement Policy

Responsible for policy:
Chair of Directors

CC3: Quality Provision and Performance

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Definitions

In this **Escalation and Professional Disagreement Policy**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i **'The Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company named at the beginning of this **Escalation and Professional Disagreement Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Blue Sky, SS Peter and Paul, St Gregory, St John Fisher, St Patrick, Cardinal Wiseman, Shared Services Team.**
- ii **'Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.
- iii **'Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.
- iv **'Chair'** means the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- v **'Governance Professional'** means the Clerk to the Board or the Clerk to the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- vi **'Chief Executive Officer or CEO'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- vii **'Diocesan Schools Commission'** means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- viii **'Local Governing Body'** means the Local governing body of the School.
- ix **'Local Governing Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Governing Body of the School, from time to time.
- x **'Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.
- xi **'School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- xii **'Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)
- xiii **'Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body elected from time to time.

Introduction

This policy/guidance was originally issued in September 2019 and has been updated in 2025 from the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership [Safeguarding Practice Local Guidance](#). This policy has been reviewed and updated in relation to the updates issued.

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inactions or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard or promote the welfare of a child. The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that in such situations issues between agencies are resolved in a timely manner.

Professional disagreements will sometimes arise over another professional's decisions, actions or lack of actions in relation to a referral, an assessment or a plan which are considered not to be in the child's best interests. This policy relates to all agencies including the statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors. Disagreements can be healthy and foster creative ways of working with children and families. However, disagreements always require resolution.

This procedure identifies a non-exhaustive list of potential areas of disagreement, guidance on preventing disputes and procedures to be followed when disputes cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation between professionals at front line level. It does not include procedures when there is a disagreement regarding the need to convene an Initial Child Protection Conference or the implementation of the Child Protection Plan.

Potential Areas of Disagreement

- A referral not considered to meet the threshold for assessment by Children's Social Care;
- Children's Social Care conclude that further information should be sought by the referrer before a referral is progressed;
- There is disagreement as to whether the Child Protection Procedure should be invoked;
- Children's Social Care and the Police place different interpretations on the need for significant agency response in relation to a Child Protection Enquiry;
- There is a disagreement over the sharing of information and/or provision of services;
- There is disagreement over the outcome of any assessment and whether the appropriate action plan is in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child
- Service Provision
- Outcome of assessments
- Role and responsibilities of workers

Stage One – Preventing Disputes

Most disagreements can be resolved through discussion and negotiation. The professionals involved should attempt to resolve differences through discussion **within one working day**, but if they are unable to do so, their disagreement must be reported by them to their line managers or equivalent. Safeguarding leads or their equivalent can be used in place of Line Managers. With respect to most day-to-day issues, the relevant line managers will be able to resolve the disagreement. This contact should take place within twenty-four hours. The purpose of this contact is to review the available information and to resolve the concern. It may be helpful to consider the involvement of the designated or named professional at this stage in preference to use of line management.

Any action agreed should be fed back immediately to the relevant managers involved and the detail of the conflict and agreements reached should be recorded on the child's file.

Stage Two – Informal Dispute Procedure

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter at front line management level, the matter should be referred **without delay** to second tier management level within the LA Council structure

The issue will then be considered at second tier management level and/or include Team Around the Family, with direct communication taking place with the designated professional or named professional for safeguarding within the individual agency or at a second-tier management level.

If the area of conflict relates to whether a case meets the threshold for a referral or service from Children's Social Care, then the CAF/Early Help Assessment/TAC Implementation Officer will also be involved in this discussion. This discussion should take place within the appropriate timescales.

Stage Three – Formal Dispute Procedure

If despite following the Stage Two process the disagreement remains, the matter will be referred to an appropriate Head of Service within Specialist Children's Services, who will consider the matter with their equivalent level of management within the concerned agency who is in dispute.

The purpose of escalating the dispute to this level is to reach a position where differing professional opinions have been taken into account and efforts made to explore whether the dispute has arisen through lack of clarity or understanding in the professional dialogue. **Ultimately a decision will need to be reached where agencies agree a way forward where the interests of the child take precedence over a professional stalemate.**

Stage Four – Where disagreements remain

In the unlikely event that the professional disagreement remains unresolved, the matter must be referred to the CEO, who acts as the Head of Safeguarding for the MAC, who will determine a course of action including reporting to the Independent Scrutineer of Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CSCP).

In all cases where it has not been possible to resolve differences and/or where there may be lessons to be learned for future practice, consideration should be given to holding a multi-agency case review.

At any stage of the process, any action agreed should be fed back immediately to the second-tier management staff involved and the detail of the conflict and agreements reached should be recorded on the child's file.

Please note:

All disputes should be resolved in a timely way so that the welfare of the child remains paramount. In some situations, it may be required to instigate all the stages within a short period of time or to escalate the process so that the safety of the child is not compromised.

Useful links

Coventry Safeguarding Children Board

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/lscb>

Monitoring and Review

The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this policy to the Governing Body.

This policy will be reviewed by CC3 Quality Provision, Performance and Standards.