



INCLUSIVE LEARNING FEDERATION

**Bradwell Village School
Priory Common School
Romans Field School**

Low Level Concern Policy

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1. Aims

Throughout the Inclusive Learning Federation, we take child protection and safeguarding very seriously. This includes ensuring that adults who work with children do so in a way that is in accordance with the ethos and policies set out by the school, including the Staff Code of Conduct. This policy sets out the detail and processes for staff regarding low-level concerns they may have about the actions of their colleagues that may be deemed as inappropriate or counterproductive to the ethos and policies of the school. (See appendix 1).

2. Summary

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children but is inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head of School about their concern using a Low-Level Record of Concern Form (Appendix 2). If the Head of School cannot be contacted, the Designated Safeguard Lead or the Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher should be informed.

A low-level concern form should also be completed in all cases.

The form can be available from the DSL office, OneDrive or directly from:

- The Head of School
- Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher
- DSL

It can also be requested via email from the above people

3. What constitutes a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is not insignificant but is one that does not meet the threshold for harm and a referral through to the LADO.

It includes behaviour such as

- Being overfamiliar with children

- Having favourites
- Shouting at a child
- Acting inconsistently with the school code of conduct
- Engaging with a child on a one to one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language
- Inappropriate behaviour out of work such as the use of drugs, inebriation or acting in a way that brings disrepute on the school or teaching profession.

These concerns would commonly not have any direct harm to children but may be the result of carelessness or thoughtlessness.

4. Investigation of low-level concerns

The Head of School, DSL or Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher will follow up on all low-level investigations. They should talk to the person reporting the concern (unless this is anonymous) and follow up with the person whom the concern is raised and any witnesses.

The Head of School will consider the full details of concerns, if they are unsure if the allegation meets the harm criteria or not then they will consult the LADO for advice and guidance.

If the concern is deemed low level, they will gather information and take any appropriate action, this may involve disciplinary, retraining or reviewing policies.

The record will be kept on the employee’s personnel file. In the event of other allegations being made that meet the Harm criteria for a referral to the LADO, the Head of School will share this information fully with the LADO as this will identify any patterns or escalation in behaviour.

If the low-level concern is about the Head of School, then this will need to be raised with the Executive Headteacher and if raised about the Executive Headteacher then this will need to be raised with the Chair of Governors.

5. Clarity around Allegation vs Low-Level Concern vs Appropriate Conduct

Keeping children safe in education 2024 gives clear guidance around these concerns

Spectrum of behaviour

<p>Concern or allegation that may meet harm threshold</p> <p>Behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 they 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.
<p>Low-level concern</p> <p>Does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is inconsistent with an organisation’s staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and • does not meet the harm threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to merit a referral to the LADO.
<p>Appropriate conduct</p> <p>Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation’s staff code of conduct, and the law.</p>

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6. Storage and use of Low-Level Concerns and follow-up information

Low-level concern forms (Appendix 2) and follow up information will be stored securely within the school's safeguarding systems on an individual's personnel file, with access only by the core management team. This will be stored in accordance with the school's GDPR and Information Sharing Policy.

The staff member(s) reporting the concern **must** keep the information confidential and **not** share the concern with others apart from the Head of School or in their absence the Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher.

Low-level concerns will not be referred to in references unless they have been formalised into more significant concerns resulting in disciplinary or misconduct procedures.

Whenever staff leave our employment, any record of low-level concerns which are stored about them will be kept for up to six years following the end of employment they will then be reviewed as to whether or not that information needs to be kept.

Consideration will be given to:

- a) Whether some or all of the information contained within any record may have any reasonably likely value in terms of any potential historic employment or abuse claim to justify keeping it, in line with normal safeguarding records practice; or,
- b) If, on balance, any record is not considered to have any reasonably likely value, still less actionable concern, and ought to be deleted accordingly.

7. References

As outlined in KCSIE the federation should 'only provide substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations (including a group of low-level concerns about the same individual) that meet the harm threshold in references. Low-level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference.'

8. Review of low-level concerns.

The Heads of Schools and Designated Safeguarding Lead should review the central low-level concerns file at least termly to ensure that all such concerns are being dealt with promptly and appropriately, and that any potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour are identified. A record of these reviews and recommendations (i.e. additional training) should be made.

9. Links with other policies

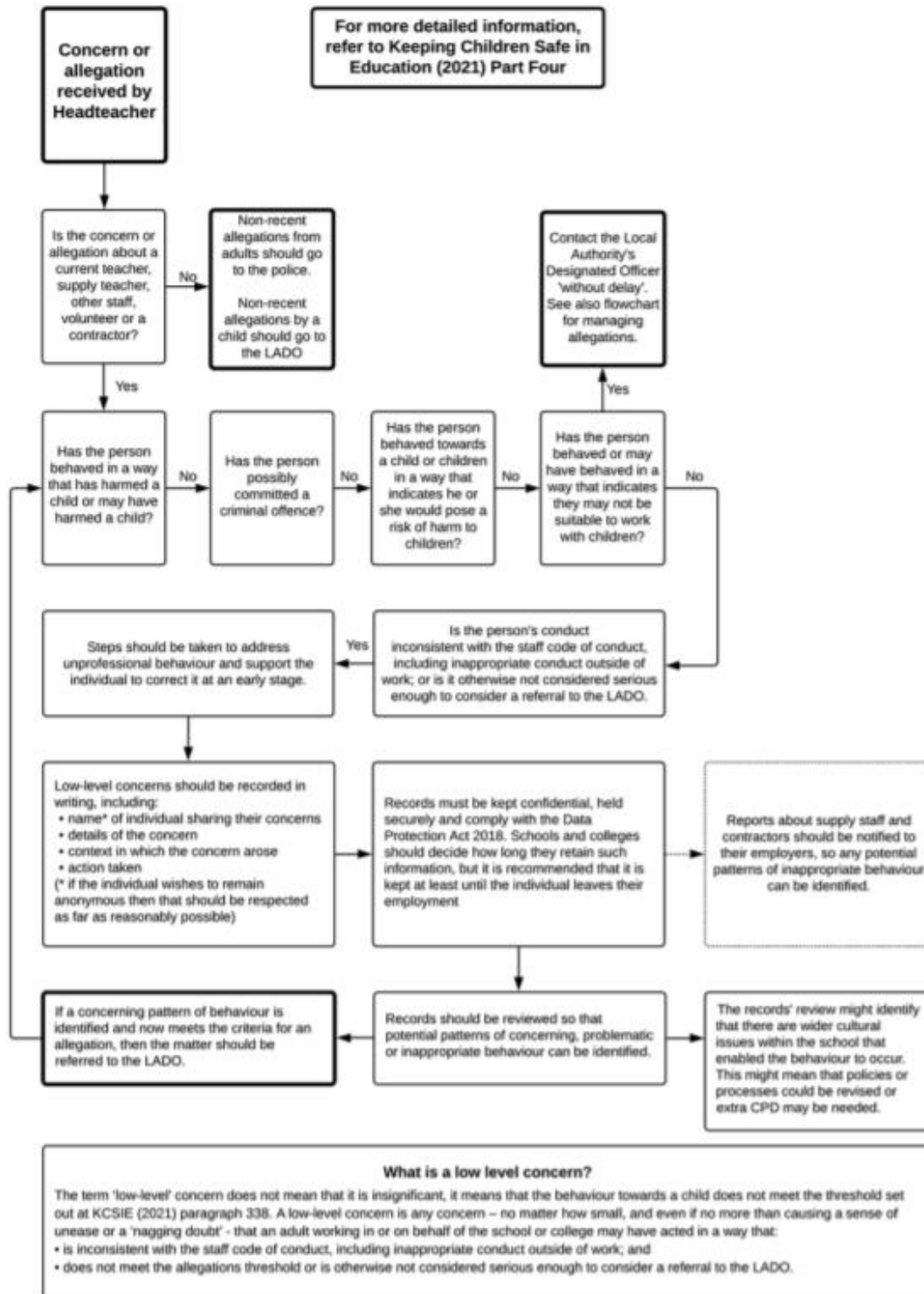
This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Children Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Online & Acceptable Use Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

- GDPR & Information Sharing Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Rules for All Staff
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Gifts & Hospitality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy Notices
- Grievance Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

There may be other School and Federation policies and procedures that will be considered.

Appendix 1: Concerns flow chart



Appendix 2: Low-Level Concerns Form

School:

<u>Low-Level Record of Concern Regarding A Staff Member</u>	
<p>Please use this form to share any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not consistent with our Code of conduct, and/or; • Relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about an adult’s suitability to work with children. <p>Where possible please speak with the Head Teacher as soon as possible. It is also helpful to document your concerns, which can be done using this form and them passed to the Head Teacher. When completed, please pass this form to the Head Teacher. If the concern is about the Head Teacher, please pass on to the Chair of governors.</p> <p>Remember a low-level concern is different to an allegation.</p>	
Date of low-level concern:	
Member(s) of staff involved:	
Concern information:	
Reported by:	
Discussion with LADO: Date and details of discussion	
Outcome:	

Name of Investigator:

Designation/Role

Date: