Flying High Partnership

Low Level Concerns Policy

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1. Introduction

At the Flying High Partnership, we take safeguarding very seriously, we operate within a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which there are clear values and expectations of behaviour. The Code of Conduct sets out that adults who work with children must do so in a way that is in accordancewith the ethos and policies set out by the school/Trust and the law.

This policy sets out the detail and processes for staff regarding low-level concerns they may have.

This policy applies to all staff employed by the Trust along with Supply Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

2. Summary

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but it is however, inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead about their concern using a Low-Level Record of Concern Form.

This policy enables staff to share any concerns, no matter how small about their own or another member of staff's behaviour with the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

The purpose of this policy is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values of and expected behaviour which are outlined in the Code of Conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

We want to embed a culture of openness by:

- Ensuring that all staff are clear and confident to distinguish expected and appropriate behaviour from behaviour that is concerning, problematic or inappropriate, in both themselves and others
- Empower staff to share low-level concerns with the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead as a neutral act as soon as possible.

3. Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025

The following is taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025:

428. As part of their whole school or college approach to safeguarding, schools and colleges should ensure that they promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

429. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should:

- enable schools and colleges to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour

early
- minimise the risk of abuse, and
- ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

What is a low-level concern?

430. The term 'low-level' concern 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 in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted 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:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a
- closed door, or
- humiliating children.

431. Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

432. Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

433. It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

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

🔴 Allegation

Behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children has:

• behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child,
• possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child,
• behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

🟠 Low-Level Concern

Any concern – no matter how small, even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

• is not consistent with an organisation's 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 that adult's suitability to work with children.

🟢 Appropriate Conduct

Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation's Code of Conduct, and the law.

5. Reporting, Storing and use of Low-Level Concerns and follow-up information.

5.1 Staff do not need to be able to determine in each case whether their concern is a low-level concern, or if it is in fact serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO, or meets the threshold of an allegation. Once staff share what they believe to be a low-level concern that determination should be made by the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead.

5.2 Staff who wish to remain anonymous will have their wish respected as far as possible. Where, due to circumstances, this is not possible (for example in order to carry out a formal investigation) anonymity may not be possible. The school aims to create a culture of openness and as such staff will be encouraged to share low-level concerns in an open and transparent environment.

5.3 Where a member of staff finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising, these should be self-reported to the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead using the same mechanism.

5.4 Staff can use the low-level concern form to report the concern or they can share their concerns with the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead verbally. If the concern is communicated verbally the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide a written summary (using the LLC form) with the member of staff immediately following the discussion.

5.5 LLC forms and follow-up information will be stored securely within the school's StaffSafe system, with access only by the leadership team. This will be stored in accordance with the school's GDPR and data protection policies.

5.6 The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not

share the concern with others apart from the Headteacher or DSL.

5.7 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.

5.8 Whenever staff leave their employment, any record of low-level concerns which are stored about them will 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 so as 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

6. Dealing with and responding to a Low-Level Concern

6.1 All low-level concerns raised will be responded to in a sensitive and proportionate way, maintaining confidence that the concern will be handled promptly and effectively whilst protecting staff from any potential false allegations or misunderstanding

6.2 The Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead will review and triage the concern in the first instance. They will:

a. Speak to the person who raised the concern (unless it was raised anonymously).

b. Review the information and determine whether:

- (i) the behaviour is entirely consistent with the Code of Conduct
- (ii) it constitutes a low-level concern
- (iii) it is serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO
- (iv) when considered alongside any other low-level concerns previously raised about the same individual, it should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or other relevant external agencies.

c. Where the concern meets the threshold for LADO referral, or clearly breaches the Code of Conduct or professional standards, the Headteacher or DSL should escalate the matter to HR.

d. Where the Headteacher or DSL is in any doubt, they should seek advice from HR and the LADO.

e. Speak to the individual about whom the concern has been raised (unless advised not to do so by HR, the LADO or other relevant external agencies).

f. Make appropriate records of:

• All internal conversations – including the person who initially shared the concern (where possible), the adult about whom the concern has been shared, and any relevant witnesses.
• All external conversations – for example, with the LADO or other external agencies, including their determination, rationale and any action taken.

6.3 If it is decided that the Low-level concern amounts to behaviour that is consistent with the Code of Conduct and the Law:

- It will still be important for the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform the individual in question about what was shared about their behaviour and give them to opportunity to respond to it;

- In addition, the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead should speak to the person who shared the low-level concern to provide them with feedback about how and why the behaviour is consistent with the organisation Code of Conduct and the Law.

6.4 If it is decided that the current concern is low-level as detailed above.

- It should be responded to in a sensitive and proportionate way as detailed in 6.1

- Where the concern is minor and does not give rise for concern and as such does not warrant any further action this is most likely to be dealt with by means of management guidance and/or training. In many cases a low-level concern may require a conversation with the individual about whom the concern has been raised.

- Professional conversations can help to maintain a positive working relationship with the member of staff concerned whilst reaffirming the school's values, any such conversation should include;

    - Being clear with the individual as to why their behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate
    - What change is required in their behaviour
    - What, if any support they need to achieve and maintain the acceptable behaviour, and
    - Consequences if they fail to reach the required standards or repeats ofthe behaviour
    - It may be appropriate to undertake transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour and/or put and action plan or risk assessment in place to be regularly reviewed.
    - Some concerns may raise issues of misconduct or poor performance, in these instances the Headteacher or appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider any advice from the LADO, consult with HR and follow the respective policies in relation to misconduct and performance.
    - Some concerns may trigger the disciplinary, grievance or whistleblowing procedures, these should be followed where appropriate. Professional judgment and advice from LADO and HR should be sought in the first instance.

6.5 If it is decided that that the concern is sufficiently serious or that when considered with any other low-level concern that have been shared about the same individual, then is should be referred to LADO and reclassified as an allegation. At which point the allegation should be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

7. Process to follow when a Low-Level Concern is raised – Flow Chart

1. **Initial Sharing of Concern**
   - The concern should be shared with the Headteacher (HT), or in their absence, with Deputy, a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
   - This must be done as soon as reasonably practicable and within 24 hours.
   - If the concern is initially shared with the Deputy, DSL or SLT member, they must immediately pass it on to the Headteacher.

2. **Headteacher Initial Review**
   - The Headteacher must speak to the person who raised the concern and review the information.
   - The Headteacher must determine whether the behavior:

(a) Is entirely consistent with the organization's Code of Conduct and the law.
(b) Constitutes a Low-Level Concern (LLC).
(c) Is serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).
(d) When considered alongside any previous LLCs about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or other relevant external agencies.

3. **Seeking Advice**
   - If in doubt, the Headteacher should seek advice from the LADO.

4. **Speaking to the Individual Concerned**
   - The Headteacher should speak to the individual about whom the concern has been raised, unless advised not to do so by the LADO or other relevant external agencies.

5. **Further Considerations**
   - The Headteacher should consider whether the LLC also raises misconduct or capability issues.
   - This should be done in consultation with HR, and advice from the LADO should be taken into account.
   - If misconduct or capability issues are identified, the matter should be referred to HR.

6. **Record Keeping**
   - The Headteacher must make appropriate records of:
     - All internal and external conversations.
     - Their determination and rationale.
     - Any actions taken.
   - Records must be retained in accordance with the LLC policy and stored on the Staff Safe System.

8. Key Reference Documents

Read this document for further information about low-level concerns, which is referenced in KCSIE 2025.

Policies that support the Low-Level Concerns Policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

9. Low Level Concerns Form

This form will be available to staff via:

- The School Office
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Senior Leadership Team
- FHP - All Staff Teams Area

Appendix A: Low Level Record of Concern Regarding a Staff Member

Name of adult writing this concern:	
Name of adult whom this concern is about:	
Date written:	
Signature:	
Were there any other witnesses?	
Please write your concerns below (continue overleaf) You should provide a concise record – including brief context in which the low-level concern arose, and details which are chronological, and as precise and accurate as possible – of any such concern and relevant incident(s) (and please use a separate sheet if necessary). Consider any contextual information that may be appropriate to know.	

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