



Brookfields
Specialist SEN School

Brookfields School Low Level Concern Policy

Date	Description
14 September 2022	Approved by the Full Governing Board

Review schedule	Annually
Next review	September 2023
Policy holder	Catherine Bernie

Our Low-Level Concern Policy

1.1 The overarching aim of the school's Low-Level Concern Policy is to facilitate a culture in which the values and expected behaviours which are set out in our Code of Conduct are lived, constantly monitored, and reinforced by all staff. In particular, the intention of this policy is to:

- maintain a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which staff are confident and clear about behaviours expected of them and their colleagues, the delineation of boundaries and reporting lines;
- ensure staff feel empowered to raise any low-level concern, whether about their own or a colleague's behaviour, where that behaviour might be construed as falling short of the standards set out in our Code of Conduct; and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; and
- provide for responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised – maintaining on the one hand confidence that concerns when raised will be handled promptly and effectively whilst, on the other hand, protecting staff from false allegations or misunderstandings.

2.1 What is a Low-Level Concern?

A low-level concern for this purpose is any concern, no matter how small and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt', that an adult may have acted in a manner inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct or simply – even if not linked to a particular act or omission – a sense of unease as to the adult's behaviour particularly towards or around children. Low-level concerns include where an adult 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 allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO (see section 21)

3.1 Low-Level Concerns about self (self-reporting)

From time to time an individual may find him/herself in a situation which might appear compromising to others or which could be misconstrued. Equally, an individual may for whatever reason have behaved in a manner which on reflection s/he considers falls below the standard set out in the Code of Conduct.

Self-reporting in these circumstances is encouraged as it demonstrates both awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to the individual's own actions or how they could be perceived. As such, the school sees self-reporting of low-level concerns as an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

4.1 Low-Level Concerns about another adult

From time to time an individual may notice behaviour or actions in other adults which leave them concerned. These are behaviour or actions which fall short

of a formal allegation of abuse. These tend to be behaviours which indicate that our Code of Conduct has not been met. Any such concerns can be dealt with as a low-level concern.

4.2 **What should I do if I have one?**

Where a low-level concern exists it should be reported to the DSL or to the Head teacher as soon as reasonably possible and, in any event, within 24 hours of becoming aware of it (where the concern relates to a particular incident).

5.1 **How will my low-level concern be handled?**

The DSL will discuss all low level concerns s/he receives with the Head teacher as soon as possible and in any event within 24 hours of becoming aware of it. The Head teacher will, in the first instance, satisfy him/herself that it is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as an allegation and dealt with under the appropriate procedure. The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified as an allegation are where:

- the threshold is met for an allegation;
- there is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to an allegation; or
- there is other information which when taken into account leads to an allegation

Where the Head teacher is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the LADO.

Having established that the concern is low-level, the DSL or Head teacher as appropriate will discuss it with the individual who has raised it and will take any other steps to investigate it as necessary. Most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of management guidance, training etc.

6.1 **What records will be kept?**

Where a low-level concern has been communicated, a confidential record will be kept in a central record which logs all low-level concerns (see Appendix 9 for an example low-level concern reporting form). This is necessary to enable any patterns of concerning behaviour to be identified. However, no record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file (and no mention made in job references) unless either:

- the concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as an allegation as above; or
- the concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure

LOW-LEVEL EXAMPLE CONCERN FORM

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:

- is not consistent with [Insert name of the organisation] 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.

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). The record should be signed, timed and dated.

Name of reporting staff member	Description of Role
Name of adult of concern	Description of Role
Details of concern	
Signed	Date and Time
Received by	Date and Time
Action Taken (specify)	
Signed	Date and Time

