



Low Level Concerns Policy

September 2021

Part of the Safeguarding Umbrella

Approved by Governing Body

Review date September 2022

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1. Introduction:

At Falcon Junior School we ensure that all children are safe and protected from harm. 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 and forms one of the Safeguarding policy's link policies.

2. Aims:

This policy aims to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which Falcon Junior School's values and expected behaviour, which are set out in the staff code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by staff. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold -Part Four-Section One of Keeping Children safe in Education 2021) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately is critical. It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate.

3. What is a low level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 338 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. 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 allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered 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;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

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.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see Part Four - Section one), are shared responsibly and 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 potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

4. Allegations which meet the threshold vs low-level concern vs appropriate behaviour

Allegations:

Allegations indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school. This can also relate to an adult's behaviour outside of school.

Low Level Concerns:

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 allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered 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;
 - engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
 - using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Appropriate Conduct:

Conduct which is entirely consistent with Falcon Junior School's Code of Conduct, and the law.

5. Reporting a concern

Although KCSIE states that concerns should be raised with the DSL, at Falcon Junior School, a member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head Teacher about their concern using a Low Level Concern Form. This is in line with our whistleblowing policy. If the Head Teacher cannot be contacted, the Chair of Governors should be contacted instead. The record should include brief context in which the low-level concern arose and concise details (which are chronological and as precise and accurate as possible) of any such concern and relevant incident. The record should be signed, timed and dated.

When a concern is raised school will provide effective protection for the child as well as support the person subject to the allegation.

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

Low Level Concern forms and follow-up information will be stored securely within the schools safeguarding systems, with access only by the leadership team. This will be stored in accordance with the school's GDPR and data protection policies. The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not share the concern with others apart from the Head Teacher. 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 Falcon Junior School, 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.

Appendix 1

Low Level 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 Falcon’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.
- 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)

Details of concern:

Name of staff member: _____ Role: _____

Signed:

Time and date:

Received by:

Action taken: