Low-Level Concerns Policy

White Spire School

Written by:	M Bartle
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1. KEY CONTACTS in school/setting

Name	Role	Contact details
Headteacher	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Chair of governing body	Shanie Jamieson	01908 373266
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Out of hours contact for DSL	Safeguarding Team	safeguarding@whitespire.milton-keynes.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Other members of the safeguarding team (DSLs')	Sophie Lunnon Sally Elton Karen Richards Laura Halsey Katie Marlborough	01908 373266
Prevent lead	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Child sexual exploitation lead	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Child Looked After/ Previously Looked After	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Mental health lead	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Designated governor for safeguarding	Tanya Stevens	01908 373266
Designated governor for mental health and well being	Tanya Stevens	01908 373266
Safer recruitment governor	Shanie Jamieson	01908 373266

2. Introduction

At White Spire School, we take 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.

3. Summary

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children but is inappropriate. Anybody who has a concern should inform the headteacher about their concern using a Low-Level Record of Concern form. If the headteacher cannot be contacted, the Deputy Head should be informed. Where appropriate, the headteacher should consult with the Lead DSL.

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

The form will be available from the headteacher

4. Low level Concerns

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
- Acting incosistently within 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 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 thoughlessness.

5. Investigation of low-level concerns

The headteacher will follow up on all low-level investigations. They should talk to the person reporting the concern and follow up with the person who the concern is raised about and any witnesses.

The Head Teacher 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 (using the staff code of conduct policy) this may involve a disciplinary, retraining or rewriting policies.

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

6. Clarity around Allegation vs Low-Level Concerns vs Appropriate Conduct

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

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,

Appropriate Conduct

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

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

Low-Level Concern forms (Appendix 1) and follow up information will be stored securely within the schools 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 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 or in their absence the deputy.

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 White Spire 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.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Low-Level Concern Form

Low-Level Record of Concern Regarding A Staff Member	
Date of low-level concern:	
Member of staff involved:	
Concern information:	
Reported by:	
Outcome:	