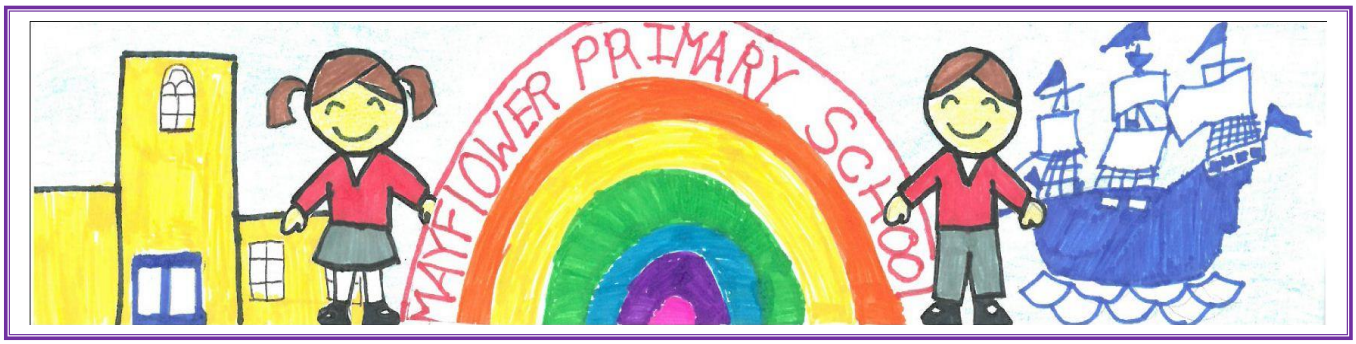
MAYFLOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL



LOW LEVEL CONCERNS POLICY

2024-2025

The term 'low level' does not mean the concern is insignificant. It means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out in KCSIE (2022) paragraph 338. A low-level concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or nagging doubt, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school 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 for a LADO referral

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Policy Review Date:	October 2024		Head Teacher: Luke Whitney		Insert Date
Ratified by Governing Body:					
Mr. K. Bhogaita (Chair of Governors)			Insert Signature	02.10.24	

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Introduction

At Mayflower Primary 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.

Summary

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. 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 Record of Concern Form. If the Head Teacher cannot be contacted, the Chair of Governors should be contacted instead.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)

The following is taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

407. As part of their whole school 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.

408. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold (see Part Four - Section one)) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable schools and colleges to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate 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?

The term 'low level' does not mean the concern is insignificant. It means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out in KCSIE (2021) paragraph 338. A low-level concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or nagging doubt, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school 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 for a LADO referral

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.

411. 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.

412. 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.

Clarity around the allegation vs low-level concern vs appropriate conduct

Allegation
Behaviour which indicates 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 towsrds a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
Low-Level Concern
Any concern, no matter how small, that an adult may have acted in a manner which: ▪ is not consistent with our Code of Conduct ▪ 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 the adult's suitably to work with children
Appropriate Conduct
Behaviour which is entirely consistent with our Code of Conduct and the law

Storing and use of Low-Level Concerns and follow-up Information

LLC 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 or those aware in the senior leadership team.

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 Mayflower Primary 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:

- 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.

The final decision will be taken by the Head Teacher, and where appropriate, support will be provided by the DSLs.

Reporting Form

Annexed to this policy is a copy of the form adults will use to raise a Low-Level Concern, and also accompanying guidance. Where there is room for doubt, the Head Teacher will happily provide additional information, as required. It is expected that staff become familiar with the school's policy, and also have a good understanding of the difference between an allegation, a low-level concern, and appropriate conduct.

Once the form has been completed, it should be handed to the Head Teacher who will take action in-line with the specifics of our policy. To ensure GDPR compliance, it should be placed in an envelope, marked as private and confidential, and also for the attention of the Head Teacher.

An electronic version of the form is also available, and this can be emailed via the following email address: lwhitney@mayflower.leicester.sch.uk

Process to follow when a Low-Level Concern is Raised:

The flow-chart on the next page will give a clear and sequential overview of the process that will be followed if a Low-Level Concern is raised. Questions will be asked as part of this process to determine which course of action should be taken.

Of primacy is the fact that the process will be both open and transparent. This is important because of the possible consequences, and also the duty that all senior managers uphold as they seek to fulfil their roles.

Annexe 1: Low-Level Concern – Reporting 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 Mayflower'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.

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 then 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 it onto the Chair of Governors or email them at sdesai@mayflower.leicester.sch.uk

Remember, a low-level concern is different to an allegation (which uses a different form). See the table below for a definition:

Allegation
Behaviour which indicates 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 towsrds a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
Low-Level Concern
Any concern, no matter how small, that an adult may have acted in a manner which: ▪ is not consistent with our Code of Conduct ▪ 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 the adult's suitably to work with children
Appropriate Conduct
Behaviour which is entirely consistent with our Code of Conduct and the law

Name of Adult Completing this Form	**Name of Adult about whom this Concern is about**	**Date**

Please provide as much information as you can in the box below. Continue on a separate sheet, if necessary	
Signature	**Date form passed to the Head Teacher**

Guidance

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.