



# Beachborough School

## Safeguarding – Low Level Concerns Policy

**Updated:** September 2024

**Date of next Review:** September 2025

**Policy Lead:** Mr S Preece (Deputy Headmaster - DSL)

**Reviewed by:** Senior Leadership Team and Ed Comms Committee

**Reviewed and Ratified by Governors:** Annually (Autumn Term Meeting)

## **Introduction**

At Beachborough 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 Headteacher about their concern using a Low-Level Record of Concern Form. If the Headteacher cannot be contacted, the Deputy Headmaster (DSL) should be contacted instead.

## **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024**

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

**431.** 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.

**432.** 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 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?**

**433.** 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.
- 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.

**434.** 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.

**435.** 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.

**436.** 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.

## 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; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

### **Low-Level Concern**

Does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the adult's behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out above. 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 may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with an organisation's staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO - but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no-names basis if necessary.

### **Appropriate Conduct**

Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation's staff 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.

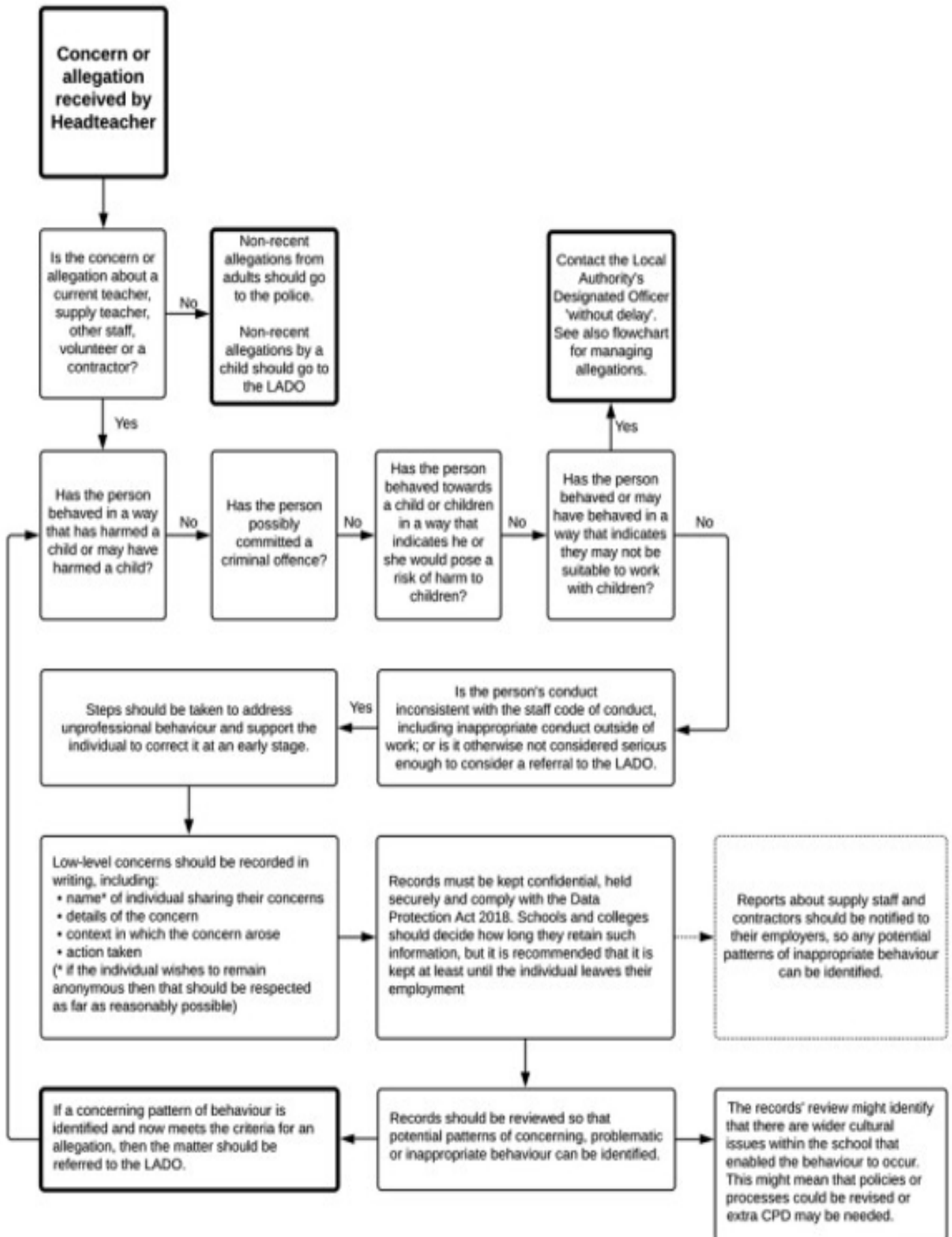
The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not share the concern with others apart from the Headteacher, DSL or those aware in the senior leadership team.

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 Beachborough 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.

Process to follow when a Low-Level Concern is raised



## Key Reference Document

Beachborough School has used and followed the guidance document provided by Farrer in the production of this Low Level Concerns policy, which is referenced in KCSIE. Further details are available here: [Developing and implementing a low-level concerns policy \(farrer.co.uk\)](http://www.farrer.co.uk/developing-and-implementing-a-low-level-concerns-policy)

## Low Level Concern Form

Low level concern forms for staff are available from the school office, the DSL team, the senior leadership team, the school internal network (in the safeguarding area) and from the school website at:

<https://www.beachborough.com/about-beachborough/school-policies>



### Low-Level Record of Concern Form - Regarding a Staff Member

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 Beachborough School’s Staff 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 Mrs Mitchell as the Headteacher as soon as possible, or in her absence the Deputy Headmaster (DSL). It is also helpful to document your concerns, which can be done using this form. When completed, please pass this form to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, please pass the form to the Chair of Governors – Mrs Barrett, or email: [s.barrett@beachborough.com](mailto:s.barrett@beachborough.com)

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 that an adult who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

#### Low-Level Concern

Does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the adult’s behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out above. 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 may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with an organisation’s staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO - but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no-names basis if necessary.

#### Appropriate Conduct

Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation’s staff code of conduct, and the law.

This policy applies across the whole school including Boarding and EYFS and will be reviewed and updated regularly. **Linked Policies and read in conjunction with:** Safeguarding, Behaviour, Taking and Use of images, Equal Opportunities, Safer Recruitment, Boarding, Staff Code of Conduct.