

Individual Growth, Individual People'

Head Teacher: Mrs M A Tyers



Newark Orchard School Low Level Concerns Procedure

April 2022

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Introduction

At Newark Orchard School, all staff and volunteers are expected to work with children 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 Deputy Head Teachers should be contacted instead.

If the Low-Level Concern is about the Head Teacher then the Chair of Governors should be contacted.

- Head Teacher– Margot Tyers
- Deputy Head Teachers – Lisa Williams & Leanne Hurdle
- Chair of Governors– Laura Redfern

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021

The following paragraphs are from Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021.

As part of their whole school approach to safeguarding, schools 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 (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. 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 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 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?

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school to refer to the local authority.

Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

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.

Why do schools need to respond to low-level concerns?

Having clear procedures for responding to low-level concerns is part of creating a school culture of openness and trust. It helps ensure that adults consistently model the school's values and helps keep children safe. It will also protect adults working in school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

A clear process is required for sharing and responding to any concerns about an adult's behaviour, no matter how small. A concern can still be significant even if it does not meet the threshold of harm.

Newark Orchard School will ensure adults understand:

- what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- what a low-level concern is
- the importance of sharing low-level concerns
- how to report any concerns
- the process for recording, reviewing and responding to concerns.

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

Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child

Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

Low Level Concern

Any concern, no matter how small, even no more than a nagging doubt that an adult may have acted in a manner which;

Is not consistent with the school'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

Appropriate Conduct

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

Storing and use of Low-Level Concern Form and follow-up information

Low Level Concerns forms and follow-up information will be stored securely on the school's 'Staff Safe' system, 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 Newark Orchard 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.

Low Level Concern Form

Our form will be available to staff via:

- One Drive/Whole School Staff
- School Office – either ask for a hard or email copy

Once completed the concern form should be handed to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teachers

If it is relating to the Head Teacher, it should be handed to the Chair of Governors

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Low Level Concerns Form

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.

Name of staff member.....**Role**.....

Details of concern

Signed.....

Date.....

Received by..... **Time**..... **Date**.....

Action Taken