

# Low-Level Concerns Policy

September 2021



## **Low-Level Concerns Policy**

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### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on \_\_\_\_\_

It is due for review in July 2022

<b>Head Teacher:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	<b>Date:</b>



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**A copy of the Low-Level Concern Form can be found on Pages 8 and 9**

### 1. Introduction

At Toner Avenue 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. This policy sets out the detail and processes for staff regarding low-level concerns they may have.

### 2. 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.

### 3. Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021

The following is taken from Keeping Children Safe In Education September 2021.

*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 and on behalf of the school (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 institutions.

What is a low-level concern?

409. 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. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, 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 expectations set out in key policies for staff conduct (e.g. Safeguarding, Acceptable Use etc.) 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.

410. 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 meet the harm threshold (See Part Four – Section 1), 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. 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;
- 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 the organisation'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 organisation's Code of Conduct, and the law.

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

LLC forms and follow-up information will be stored securely within the school's safeguarding systems, with access only by the leadership team. This data 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 must not share the concern with others apart from the Head Teacher or those aware in the Senior Leadership Team.

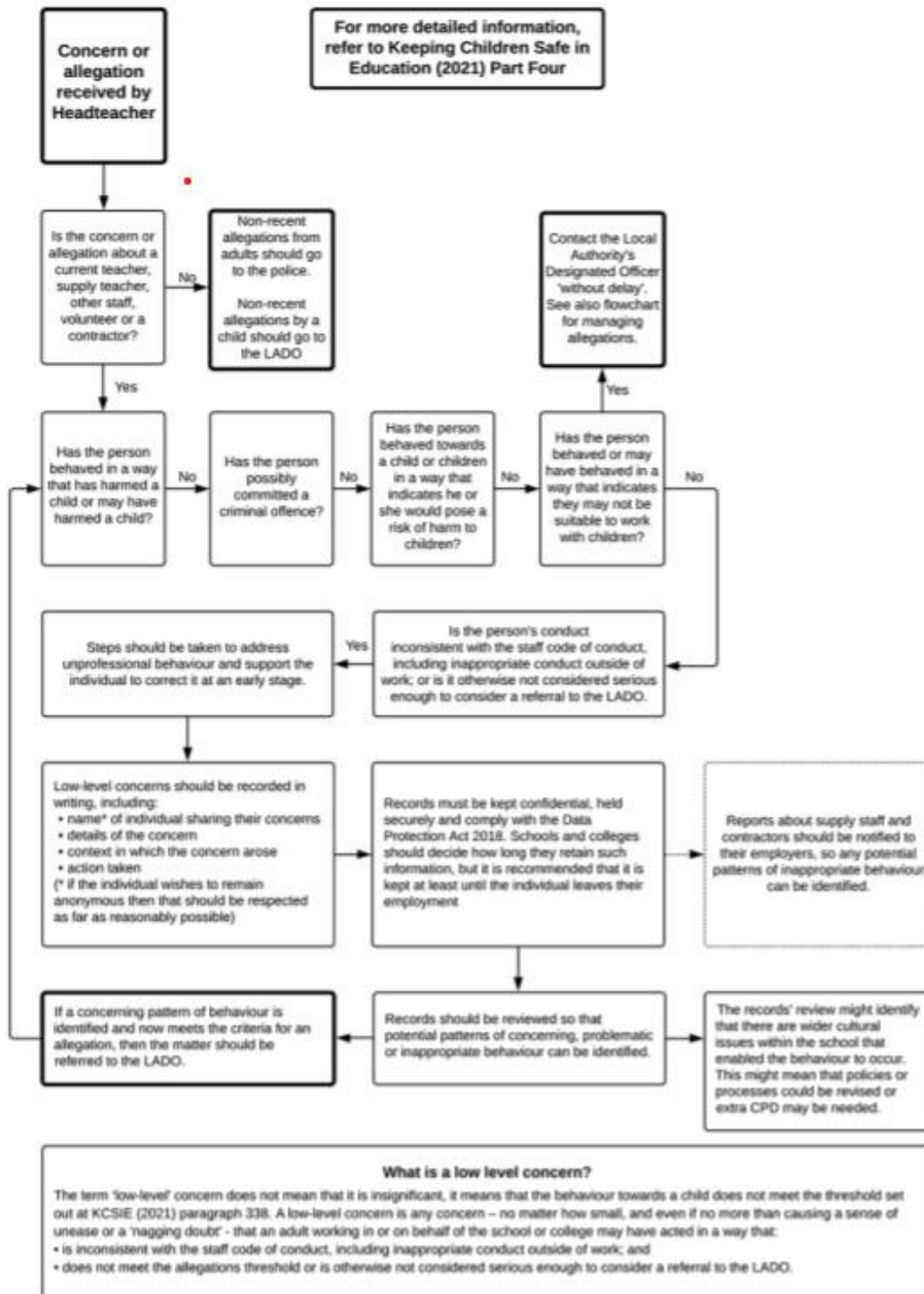
Low-Level Concerns will not be referred to in references unless they have been formalised into more significant concerns resulting in disciplinary or misconduct procedures.

Whenever staff leave Toner Avenue, 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.



## 6. Process to follow when a Low Level Concern is raised.





## **7. Key Reference Document**

Read this document for further information about Low-Level Concerns, which is referenced in KCSIE 2021

<https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and-sectors/safeguarding/low-level-concerns-guidance-2020.pdf>

## **8. Low Level Concern Form**

This form will be available to staff via:

- The Office
- DSLs
- Senior Leadership Team
- Staff Room
- Toner 2021 2022 Shared Drive (Policies File)
- <https://toneravenue.uk/policies-2/>



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

Please use this form to share any concerns – no matter how small, and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' – than an adult may have behaved in a manner which:

- Is not consistent with Toner Avenue's 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 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 him at [george.bone@me.com](mailto:george.bone@me.com)

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), Continue on a separate sheet if necessary). The record should be signed, timed and dated.

**Name of Staff Member the concern is about:**

**Role:**

**Details of Concern:**

**Signed:**

**Time & Date:**





**Received by:**

**At: (Time)**

**On: (Date):**

**Action Taken: (Specify)**

**Signed:**

**Time & Date:**

This record will be held securely in accordance with Toner Avenue Primary School's Low-Level Concerns Policy. Please note that low-level concerns will be treated in confidence as far as possible, but Toner Avenue may, in certain circumstances be subject to legal reporting requirements or other legal obligations to share information with appropriate persons, including legal claims and formal investigations.