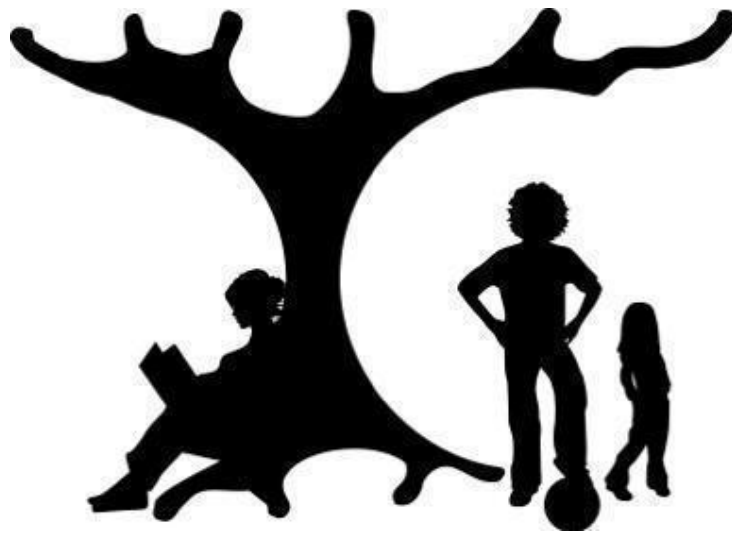


New Forest Small School

Whistleblowing



Member of Staff Responsible	Headteacher
Regularity of Review	Every 3 years
Approved By	Proprietor
Last reviewed	March 2026

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1. Rationale

This procedure has been designed to operate in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, as updated by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, which gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as *whistleblowing*.

The procedure applies to all staff in the school and is intended to encourage staff to raise concerns within the school in the first instance if at all possible, rather than make a wider disclosure outside of the school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been written in line with [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

3. Principles

The Headteacher of the school will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly, seriously and with appropriate confidentiality.

In order to meet the requirements of the Act, in addition to staff in schools, the procedure is applicable to students on placements, volunteers, visitors, contractors and suppliers operating under contract to the school. The term “employees” in this procedure is intended to cover all of these categories of people.

This procedure should not be confused with other existing procedures such as the individual or collective grievance procedures that exist to enable employees to raise concerns about their own employment, such as bullying, harassment or discrimination. It is designed to deal with major issues that fall outside of the scope of those procedures. Therefore, any matter which is more appropriately covered by those procedures is excluded from being considered under the “Whistle blowing” procedure.

Examples of the type of issue that would fall within the scope of this procedure are:

- Conduct which is a criminal offence or a breach of the law
- Inappropriate behaviour or sexual or physical abuse of students or others
- Major health and safety risks – to staff or members of the public
- Fraud and/or corruption
- Neglect of students
- Miscarriage of justice
- Environmental damage, or risk of environmental damage

- Other unethical conduct of a serious nature

The procedure gives protection to people who make such a disclosure, provided that it is in the public interest, from victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. It also ensures employees receive an appropriate response to their disclosure and are aware of how they may pursue the matter outside of the school if this response is not satisfactory. It is acknowledged that there are some circumstances in which there may be a statutory requirement to report information to an external agency, such as the police.

Disclosures made under this procedure are likely to be of a sensitive nature and all parties should preserve confidentiality at all times.

4. Practice

Representation

Employees are entitled to representation by a representative or a 'work colleague', who will normally be another employee, at any meetings or interviews that are held in relation to the disclosure made. Employees should specify that they are making a disclosure under this procedure.

The individual manager hearing the disclosure is encouraged to take advice from an appropriate service that the school subscribes to, such as the school's external and/or legal advisors.

5. Time limits

There are no time limits on raising concerns under this procedure, but they should be raised at the earliest practicable opportunity, since delays in making a disclosure may prevent a full investigation from taking place. Where time limits are included within this procedure, they are there to ensure that disclosures are dealt with as quickly as possible, and to ensure that there is a prompt initial response from management.

The investigation that takes place after a disclosure is made is not time limited, but will be conducted as quickly as possible within the circumstances of the disclosure.

6. Unfounded allegations

If an allegation is found to be unfounded, i.e. no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation being made, but the employee has made the allegation in good faith; no action will be taken against the employee. However, employees who make allegations maliciously, frivolously or for personal gain may face disciplinary action.

- **Unsubstantiated:** An unsubstantiated allegation means that there is insufficient identifiable evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Malicious:** The term 'malicious' implies that an allegation, either wholly or in part, has been made with a deliberate intent to deceive or cause harm to the person subject to the allegation. For an allegation to be classified as malicious, it will be necessary to have evidence to prove the intention to cause harm. Care should be taken in dealing with such allegations, as some facts may not be wholly untrue. Some parts of an allegation may have been fabricated or exaggerated but elements may be based on truth.

7. Procedure

7.1 Step 1 - Raising a concern

In the first instance, concerns under this procedure should be raised with the Headteacher, Alex James, who should then deal with the problem as quickly as possible. In cases of sexual or physical abuse of a student by a member of staff, this should be reported immediately to the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if they are not the same individual. If the employee believes it is not appropriate to raise the matter with the Headteacher, they may approach the Proprietor, Greta Alp.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the Headteacher/Proprietor hearing the concern will write to the employee to acknowledge that the concern has been received. They should also indicate what initial steps they intend to take to deal with the matter and, where possible, provide an estimate of the time it will take to provide a final response.

Concerns may be raised orally or in writing, although written submissions are preferred wherever possible. These disclosures should provide as much information as possible about the matter, including dates, individuals involved, other possible sources of information and potential witnesses, etc. Employees must be able to demonstrate to the person hearing the disclosure that there are reasonable grounds for making the allegations.

Although employees who wish to make an anonymous disclosure may do so, it may be important for the investigating manager to know the source of the information for a full and appropriate investigation to be possible. Furthermore, the Headteacher would need to take into account the nature and credibility of an allegation before deciding whether to proceed with an investigation. However, employees should be reassured that all disclosures will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to preserve anonymity. The Act provides protection against victimisation of anyone who makes a protected disclosure in good faith.

7.2 Step 2 – Determine whether it is a Protected Disclosure

Following a disclosure made under this procedure, the person who has received the concern must determine whether the disclosure is a ‘qualifying disclosure’ under the Act, by considering the following:

- Whether any information was actually disclosed, as opposed to opinion only, to the employer (or relevant person);
- Whether the employee believed that the information tended to show that one of the matters in the Act has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur (see below); and
- Whether that belief was reasonable.

The following is a list from the Act showing qualifying disclosures, which, if a person discloses them having reasonable belief of their validity, would be a protected disclosure under the Act.

- (a) that a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed,
- (b) that a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject,
- (c) that a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur,
- (d) that the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered,
- (e) that the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged, or
- (f) that information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

If the above criteria are met, the disclosure will qualify as a protected disclosure, and the following procedure will apply.

7.3 Step 3 - Investigation

A preliminary investigation will need to be undertaken to establish whether the allegation could actually have occurred, be occurring or be likely to occur in the future. The investigation is not, at this stage, to determine whether the allegation has actually occurred, but to determine the facts of the case (e.g. was the alleged individual actually where they were purported to be, what does the evidence show). The person making the disclosure will not have a say in how it is dealt with.

Allegations that have some foundation to them should be followed up with a full internal investigation, which may result in one or more of the following:

- No case to answer
- Disciplinary action taken against the individual
- Referral to Social Services or the Police, or other relevant organisation
- In cases where there are concerns around the suitability of a member of staff to work with children, a referral should be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If the allegations are found to be unfounded (no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation), or unsubstantiated (can neither be proven nor disproven), no action need be taken by the school, although it would be pertinent to determine why the employee felt the need to raise the allegation in the first place, e.g. is there a training need within the school?

If it is found that the allegation was made for malicious purposes or for personal gain, the school should deal with this under the disciplinary procedure.

7.4 Step 4 - Communication

Subject to legal constraints and the need to protect the rights of individuals, the employee raising the concern will be informed of the outcome of any investigation at the earliest practicable opportunity, to reassure them that appropriate action has been taken. Such information will not include confidential details about formal action taken against another employee.

For reasons of sensitivity and confidentiality, all communications with an employee who takes action under this procedure will be sent to their home address, unless an alternative arrangement has been mutually agreed.

7.5 Step 5 - Taking the matter to the Proprietor

In the event that an employee feels that their concerns have not been resolved through the above process, they may write to the Proprietor, if they have not already been involved, outlining their concern, the action taken to date and the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, the Proprietor will write to the employee to acknowledge that the concern has been received and indicate when the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will meet to discuss the matter, as well as providing an estimate of the time it will take to provide a final response. The Proprietor will then inform the employee of the outcome of this process on the same basis as required of the manager above.

7.6 Step 6 - Taking the matter further

In the event that the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved within the school, the employee may escalate their concerns further to another statutory or representative body or prescribed person. Employees may raise their concerns, as appropriate, subject to the concern being a protected disclosure in the public interest (see step 2), with any of the following:

- A local Member of Parliament (MP)
- A Government minister
- A legal adviser

A 'prescribed person' as designated by the Act:

- o Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, OFSTED, tel. 0300 123 3155, E-mail: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

- o The Secretary of State for Education, Tel: 0370 000 2288, Website: www.gov.uk/contact-dfe
- o The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Tel: 020 7783 8330, Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
- o The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, tel. 020 7825 2500, E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk
- o The Information Commissioner (for disclosures relating to data protection), Tel: 0303 123 1113, Email: casework@ico.org.uk
- o The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation, OFQUAL (for disclosures relating to matters in relation to which OFQUAL exercise functions under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, Tel: 0300 303 3344, Email: whistleblowing@ofqual.gov.uk
- o The Environment Agency (for disclosures relating to actual harm or risk of harm to the environment), Tel: 03708 506 506, Website: www.gov.uk/environment-agency
- o The Health and Safety Executive, Tel: 0300 003 1647, Online form: www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm

Employees can only make a disclosure to a prescribed person if they:

- Reasonably believe the information is substantially true
- Reasonably believe they are disclosing the issue to the appropriate person or body

In taking their concern outside of the school, employees must ensure that, as far as possible, the matter is raised without personal information relating to other employees, or confidential information about unrelated matters, being disclosed. An employee who approaches an accredited legal advice centre, e.g. Public Concern at Work (0207 404 6609 or www.pcaw.org.uk) or Citizens Advice Bureau, must not breach the duty of confidence in this procedure to the Proprietor and Headteacher.

For reasons of sensitivity and confidentiality, all communications with an employee who takes action under this procedure will be sent to their home address, unless an alternative arrangement has been mutually agreed.

8. Failure to follow this procedure

Any employee who unreasonably and without justification raises such issues on a wider basis, such as with the media (including social media), without following the steps and advice in this procedure may be liable to disciplinary action. It should also be noted that in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, whistle blowers reporting their concern to the media lose their whistleblowing law rights.

All staff will be given refresher training on this policy annually at the start of the academic year. New starters after this will receive training as part of the induction process.

9. Further guidance

Employees who require further guidance or confidential advice on whistleblowing can contact:

- the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) on 0300 1231100 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)
- the whistleblowing charity Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) on 020 7404 6609 or 020 3177 2520 or via e-mail at whistle@protect-advice.org.uk
- their trade union, if applicable.

10. Monitoring of Policy and Practice

The effectiveness of this policy and its procedures will be monitored by the Headteacher after each case that has been brought to their attention and its effectiveness reported to the Proprietor.

11. Appendices – Procedure for Allegations that Relate to the Harms Threshold

11.1 Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, 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 he or she 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 – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A ‘case manager’ will lead any investigation. This will be the Head Teacher, or the school proprietor where the Head Teacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school (or from home if appropriate) so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school’s HR Advisor and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and children’s social care where they have been involved.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation

- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- **Discuss the allegation with the Designated Officer at the Local Authority (LADO).** This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above may be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary,** agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation

- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required

- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and may be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended may return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Confidentiality and information sharing

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information may be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information may be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we may make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements may be made.

11.2 Non-recent allegations

Abuse may be reported, no matter how long ago it happened. We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

11.3 Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – 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 to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly 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
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns so that they may be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per section 7.7 of this policy
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff code of conduct.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour may be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour may be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance