Cedar Park School

Low Level Concerns Policy

Date Approved by Governing Body: September 2026

Review: Autumn 2027

Low-Level Concerns Policy

1. Introduction

At Cedar Park School, safeguarding is of paramount importance. We are committed to ensuring that all adults working with children do so in a manner consistent with the school's ethos, the Staff Code of Conduct, and statutory safeguarding guidance.

This policy sets out how low-level concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school are identified, reported, recorded, and managed. It supports a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability.

2. Creating a Culture of Openness

The school promotes a culture in which all staff:

- Feel confident to report concerns, no matter how small
- Understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Recognise that early reporting helps to protect both children and staff
- Know that concerns will be taken seriously and handled sensitively

No concern is considered too small. Staff are encouraged to share even a "nagging doubt".

3. Definition of a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct; and/or
- Does not meet the threshold of harm for referral to the LADO, but
- May indicate a pattern of behaviour that could pose a safeguarding risk

Examples may include:

- Being overfamiliar with pupils
- Showing favouritism
- Shouting at a child
- Working with a child behind a closed door without appropriate visibility
- Using inappropriate or offensive language
- Behaviour outside of school that could bring the profession into disrepute

These behaviours may not cause immediate harm but may indicate poor practice or emerging risk.

4. Reporting a Low-Level Concern

All staff must report low-level concerns **as soon as possible**, ideally on the same day.

Concerns should be reported to:

- The Headteacher; or
- In their absence, the Assistant Headteacher

If the concern relates to the Headteacher, it must be reported directly to the **Chair of Governors**.

Staff must:

- Speak to the appropriate person **in person where possible**, and
- Complete a **Low-Level Concern Form**

5. Recording Concerns

All low-level concerns must be formally recorded.

- Records will be:
    - Completed using the school's Low-Level Concern Form
    - Stored securely within the school's safeguarding system
    - Added to the individual staff member's confidential personnel file
- Records should be:
    - Factual
    - Completed promptly
    - Clear and concise

6. Responding to a Low-Level Concern

The Headteacher (or AHT/Chair of Governors where appropriate) will:

1. Review the concern in full
2. Speak to:
    - The person raising the concern

    - The individual involved
    - Any relevant witnesses
3. Determine whether the concern:
    - Remains low-level; or
    - Meets the threshold for referral to the LADO

If there is any uncertainty, advice will be sought from the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.

7. Outcomes and Follow-Up

Where concerns remain low-level, appropriate action may include:

- Advice or guidance
- Informal discussion
- Additional training or support
- Formal management processes where appropriate

Patterns of behaviour will be monitored over time.

If concerns escalate or meet the harm threshold, they will be managed in line with the Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Confidentiality

Low-level concerns must be treated with strict confidentiality.

- Information must only be shared with those who need to know
- Staff must not discuss concerns with others

Records will be processed in line with:

- GDPR
- Data Protection legislation
- Safeguarding record-keeping requirements

9. Use of Records and References

Low-level concerns:

- Will not be referred to in references unless they form part of a substantiated pattern of behaviour
- May be shared with the LADO if a later allegation meets the harm threshold

10. Retention of Records

When a staff member leaves the school:

- Records will be reviewed carefully
- Decisions will be made in line with safeguarding guidance regarding:
    - Ongoing relevance
    - Potential value in future safeguarding concerns

11. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff:

- Report concerns promptly
- Maintain confidentiality

Headteacher:

- Manage and record concerns
- Seek LADO advice where required
- Identify patterns

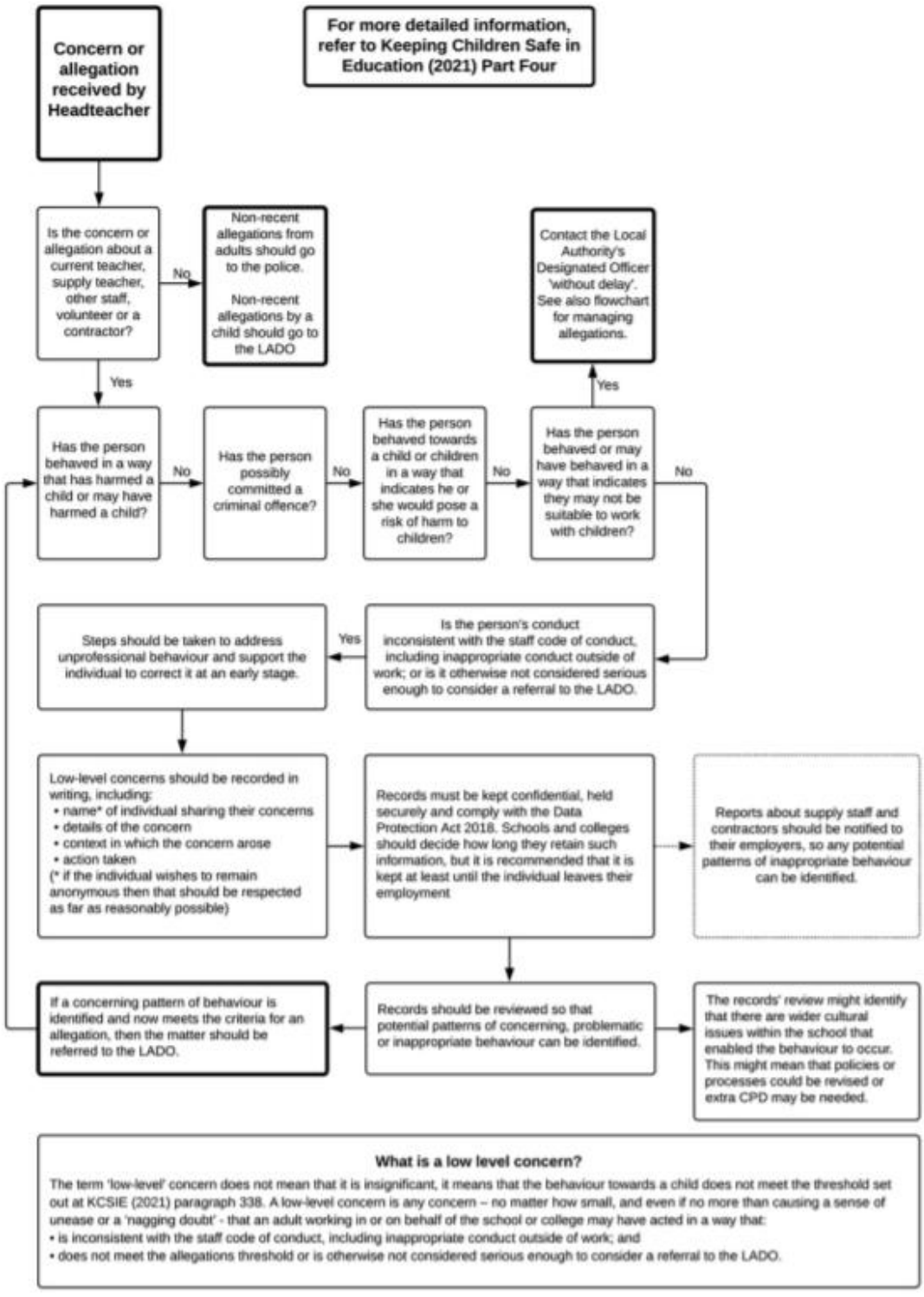
Governors:

- Provide oversight of safeguarding systems
- Ensure the policy is implemented effectively

12. Linked Policies

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Appendix 1


Concern or allegation received by Headteacher
For more detailed information, refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) Part Four
Is the concern or allegation about a current teacher, supply teacher, other staff, volunteer or a contractor?
No
Non-recent allegations from adults should go to the police.
Non-recent allegations by a child should go to the LADO
Yes
Has the person behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child?
No
Has the person possibly committed a criminal offence?
No
Has the person behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children?
No
Has the person behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children?
Yes
Contact the Local Authority's Designated Officer 'without delay'. See also flowchart for managing allegations.
No
Is the person's conduct inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; or is it otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
Yes
Steps should be taken to address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage.
Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:
• name* of individual sharing their concerns
• details of the concern
• context in which the concern arose
• action taken
(* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)
Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment
Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised or extra CPD may be needed.
If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.
What is a low level concern?
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 KCSIE (2021) paragraph 338. 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; and
• does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Appendix 2

Low-Level Concern Form

Low-Level Record of Concern 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 our 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 an 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 them 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 on to the Chair of governors. **Remember a low-level concern is different to an allegation.**	
Date of low-level concern:	
Member of staff involved:	
Concern information:	
Reported by:	
Discussion with LADO: Date and details of discussion	
Outcome:	
