



PRINCE REGENT
STREET TRUST

Low-Level Concerns Policy

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Introduction

At Prince Regent Street Trust, we take safeguarding very seriously. This policy is based on **Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.**

We aim to create an open and transparent culture where all concerns about all adults involved with our school are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

We aim to identify any concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with our Trust ethos.

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

This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

This policy applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

It is important to recognise that, in practice, the words 'allegation' and 'concern' can be and are used interchangeably by different people. Sometimes individuals may shy away from the word 'allegation' and express it as a 'concern' instead. The crucial point is that whatever the language used, the behaviour referred to may, on the one hand, be capable of meeting the harm threshold



(and hence be referable), or, on the other, it does not meet the harm threshold (in which case it should be treated as a low-level concern)

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

What is a low-level concern?

The following definition is taken from **KCSiE 2022**:

425. 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 and
- 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 pupils.

426. 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.

427. 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.

428. 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

<p>Allegation:</p> <p>Any adult linked to our school who has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
<p>Low Level Concern:</p> <p>Any adult linked to our school who has behaved in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
<p>Appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour which is entirely consistent with our school's Code of Conduct, and the Law.

Sharing low-level concerns

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

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.
- 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

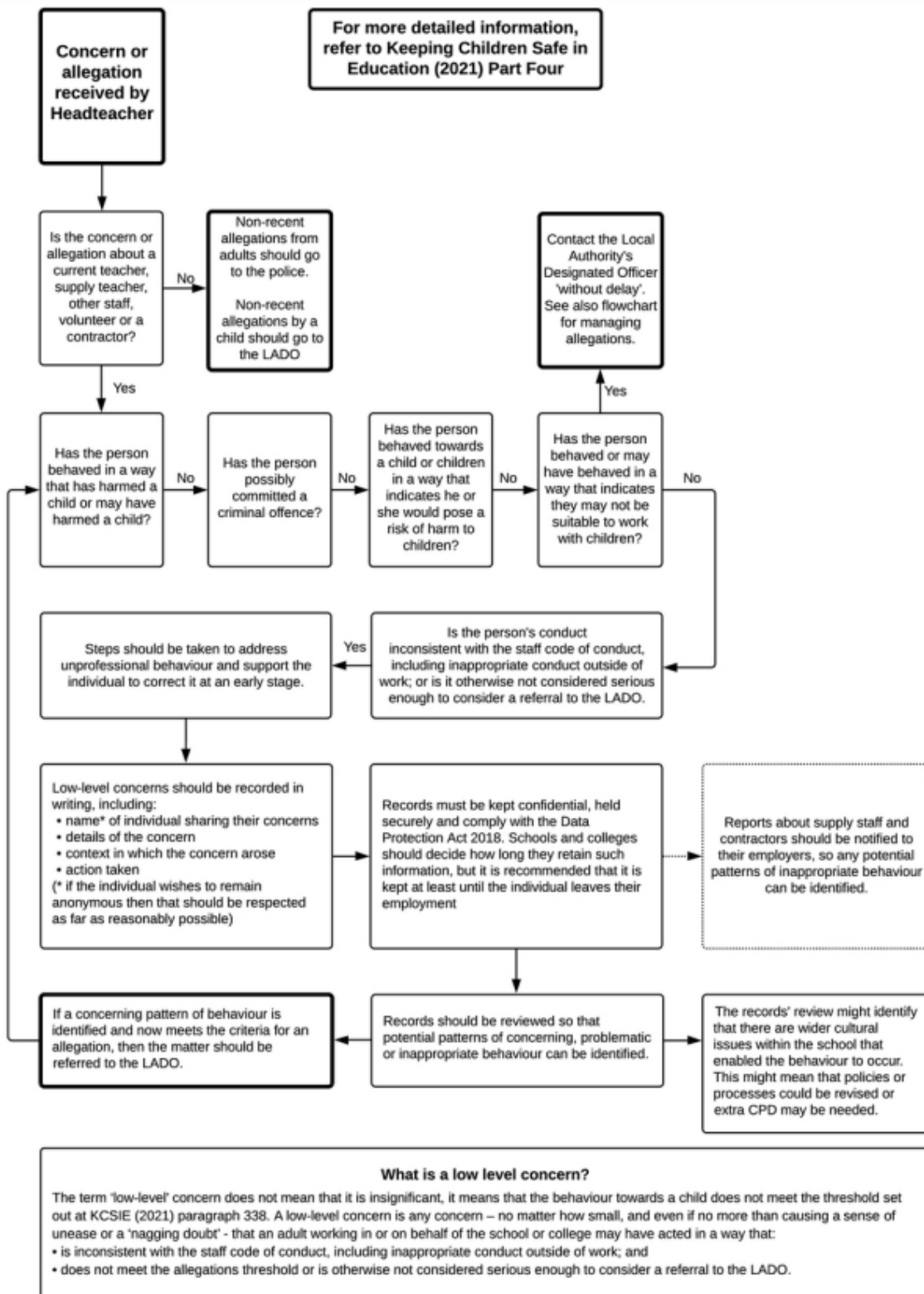
If the concern is raised via a third party, the Headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- 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 Trust’s Staff Code of Conduct Policy. The Headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL and the CEO.

Process to follow when a Low-Level Concern is raised



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 can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action through our disciplinary procedures. We will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority.
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the Trust. At this point, 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:
 - 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
 - if, on balance, any record is not considered to have any reasonably likely value, still less actionable concern, and ought to be deleted accordingly.

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 can 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.



Appendix A: Low-Level Concern Form

Name	
Role	
Date and time of completing this form	
Details of individual (including yourself, if self-reporting) whom the on concern is about	
Name	
Role	
Relationship to the individual reporting e.g. manager, colleague	
Details of concern	
<p>Please include as much detail as possible. Think about the following: What behaviour and/or incident are you reporting? What exactly happened? Why does the behaviour and/or incident worry you? Why do you believe the behaviour and/or incident is not consistent with our Staff Code of Conduct?</p>	
Details of any children or young people involved	
Name	
For use by HT/safeguarding team upon receipt of the concern	
Date and time concern received	
Signature	
Role	
Actions to be taken and follow-up	

