



**Richmond Hill School**  
**Low-Level Concerns Policy**

**We aim to in all we do to - 'Empower, Embrace, Encourage'**

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This is a Local authority adopted policy	
This is school policy	

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This policy outlines Richmond Hill School's approach to managing concerns about adults which **do not** meet the allegation threshold nor are considered serious enough to make a referral to LADO.

For reference - the LADO allegation threshold - Is it alleged (or there is a concern) that an adult who works with children has: - harmed a child - committed a criminal offence in relation to a child - behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children.

1.2 For the purpose of this policy, the term 'employee' will refer to any adult associated with Richmond Hill, i.e. whether working for or with the school, engaged as a paid employee, self-employed contractor, volunteer, agency staff, governor or trustee.

1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Procedure and Whistle blowing policy.

## **2.0 Purpose and aims**

2.1 The purpose and aims of this policy are to:

- create and embed a culture of openness and transparency throughout the school
- ensure that people feel empowered to share any low-level safeguarding concerns or problematic or inappropriate behaviour so that it can be identified, reported, recorded and dealt with appropriately to minimise the risk of abuse
- ensure that all employees are clear about professional boundaries and act within them at all times
- address unprofessional behaviour and support employees to correct their behaviour at an early stage
- provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way to handle such concerns when they are raised
- identify any weakness in the RHS's safeguarding procedures

## **3.0 Definition – what is classed as a 'low level concern?'**

3.1 The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that the concern is insignificant but means that the behaviour towards the child does not meet the 'harm threshold' as defined in KCSIE 2025

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_from\\_1\\_September\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf)

- 3.2 A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than a nagging doubt’ – that an employee may have acted in a manner which:
- is not consistent with the school 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 person’s suitability to work with children.

- 3.3 Examples of low-level concerns may include, but are not limited to:
- being over-friendly with children
  - shouting or berating a child
  - talking negatively about a child when they are unable to verbalise and respond
  - having favourites
  - engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
  - using ‘nicknames’ for children
  - isolating a child and excluding a child unfairly
  - inappropriate use of communication aids
  - failure to adapt interactions to individual pupil needs
  - inconsistent application of behaviour support strategies.

#### 3.3.1 Physical intervention

- Restraint should only be used as a last resort once all other options have been exhausted. Any form of restraint should be used only when Reasonable, Proportionate and Absolutely Necessary.
- It should **only** be used if the learner is putting himself/herself or others in danger and where failure to intervene would constitute neglect.
- Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the service user remains safe.
- A debrief will follow each incident that has involved the use of restrictive physical intervention to review techniques and inform new approaches.
- If Team Teach trained staff are not using taught de-escalation techniques or holds appropriately to manage a situation. Then additional training and support should be put in place for that member of staff.
- All forms of physical interventions will be recorded on CPOMS.

- 3.4 Staff, themselves, do not need to be able to determine in each case whether their concern is a low-level concern, or if it is in fact serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO, or meets the threshold of an allegation. Once staff share what they believe to be a low-level concern that determination should be made by the Headteacher.

## 4.0 Sharing and Recording Low-Level Concerns

- 4.1 Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All concerns, no matter how small, must be reported.
- 4.2 Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported **immediately** to the Headteacher and where HT is not on site the Deputy Head/ site lead.
- 4.3 Where a low-level concern relates to the Headteacher, this should be reported to the Chair of Governors, Clare Hall, who can be contacted via the Office Manager, Gill Thornton. The Chair of Governors will follow the same recording and investigation procedures as the Headteacher.
- 4.4 Where a low-level concern relates to supply staff or a contractor working within RHS, that concern should be shared with the Headteacher. This should be recorded in accordance with this policy. Their employer, for example the agency, should also be notified so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

- 4.5 All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. Using the 'low-level concern reporting form' which can be found at appendix 1 of this policy. A copy of which will be kept in a folder at each site by the Headteacher and added to the member of staff's CPOMs StaffSafe.
- 4.6 A record of the concern should be kept in a central 'low level concerns file' (which can be an electronic or paper file). An example of a 'low level concerns file' can be found in the [Farrer guidance document](#). The record should be kept in a secure manner. The concern records will be kept in a chronological order as a running record. Each entry will have the time and date recorded, along with the name of the individual who has made the record and the outcome of the concern. Schools should ensure the records are stored securely and confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. The records should be retained at least until the employee ceases employment.
- 4.7 Records should be reviewed periodically to ensure that all such concerns are being dealt with promptly and appropriately, and so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where such a pattern is identified, the school/trust should seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as to whether the pattern of concerns meet the harm threshold and whether the matter should be dealt with under the school's disciplinary process. A record of reviews should be made. Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.
- 4.8 If a low-level concern in and of itself is deemed to be serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO, the records relating to the low-level concern will be placed on the individual's personnel file.
- 4.9 If a low-level concern (or group of concerns) is re-classified as an allegation, all previous records of low-level concerns relating to the same individual should be moved from the central low-level concerns file to the individual's personnel file.

## **5.0 Self-Reporting**

- 5.1 Occasionally an individual might find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others. Equally, an individual may, for whatever reason, have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, they consider falls below the standard set out in the Code of Conduct. In these instances, an individual may wish to self-report and this is encouraged. This can be positive for a number of reasons:
- it enables a potentially difficult issue to be addressed at the earliest opportunity
  - it demonstrates awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to the individual's own actions or how they could be perceived; and
  - it is an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour

## **6.0 Responding to low-level concerns**

- 6.1 After being informed of the concern, the Headteacher will be required to collect as much evidence as possible by speaking to the person who raised the concern, the individual involved (unless advised not to do so by the LADO where they have been contacted) and where appropriate any witnesses.
- 6.2 The information collected will be reviewed to determine whether the behaviour:
- is in fact consistent with the schools Code of Conduct and the law
  - constitutes a low-level concern or is serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO; or
  - when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO

- 6.3 The Headteacher will categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action is appropriate. This information needs to be recorded along with the rationale for their decision and the action taken.
- 6.4 Where necessary, the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO (maintaining the anonymity of the individual at this point where possible).

## **7.0 Outcomes**

### **7.1 The behaviour is consistent with the school's Code of Conduct**

If the Headteacher determines that the behaviour is consistent with the schools Code of Conduct, then they should inform the individual to whom the concern relates what was shared about their behaviour so that they have an opportunity to respond. The individual in question will be informed that their behaviour is consistent with the schools Code of Conduct.

- 7.2 The Headteacher will also speak to the person who shared the low-level concern to provide them with feedback about how and why the behaviour is consistent with the Code of Conduct and the law. It is important that the person who shared the concern understands that whilst the employee's behaviour is consistent with the Code of Conduct, they were right to raise the concern.

### **7.3 The current concern is a low-level concern**

If the Headteacher determines that the concern is a low-level concern, the individual in question will be informed of what information was shared about their behaviour so that they have an opportunity to respond.

- 7.4 The Headteacher will determine the most suitable response and may wish to seek HR advice. The response may include:

- a constructive conversation with the individual about their behaviour and why it was deemed to be a concerning, problematic or inappropriate, what change is required in their behaviour, and what, if any, support may be provided
- training and/or guidance
- mentoring from an appropriate individual, e.g. a line manager
- any support as identified by the individual themselves

### **7.5 The concern is serious enough to warrant a referral to the LADO**

If the Headteacher determines that the concern is sufficiently serious, or when considered with any other low-level concerns that have been shared about the same individual, the concern should be reclassified as an allegation. The Headteacher must make a referral to the LADO

- 7.6 In the event that the concern is referred to the LADO or reclassified as an allegation, the school procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff will be followed and upon LADO advice, disciplinary action may be instigated.

## **8.0 References**

- 8.1 Low level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated after an investigation, it should be referred to in a reference. Further information can be found in the school/trust Reference Policy.

## Appendix 1 Low Level Concern Report Form

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 the 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.

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). The record should be signed, timed and dated.

***This form should be completed and given to the Headteacher as soon as possible.***

Details of Child	
Child’s Name:	Child’s Class:
Details of person reporting concern	
Name:	
Job Title:	
Details of person whom the concern relates to	
Name:	
Job Title:	
Details of concern	
What happened (What was said, observed, reported. Please include as much detail as possible)	
Date of concern:	
Location of concern:	
How did you become aware of the concern:	
Names of others present if applicable:	
Action taken: (What did you do following the incident/disclosure/concern?)	
Any other relevant information	
Signed:	Date and time:

**Checklist for completing low level concern form:**

- Is the concern described in sufficient detail?
- Distinguished between fact, opinion and hearsay?
- Are the child's own words used? (Swear words, insults or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim)
- Free from discrimination/stereotyping or assumptions?
- Concern recorded and passed to Headteacher in a timely manner?

**For completion by the Headteacher:**

Headteacher Response:	
Date and time reported to Headteacher:	
LADO Contacted: Yes / No	
Action Taken:	
Rationale for decision making / action taken:	
Outcome of Action taken:	
Signed:	Date and time: