

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Hannah Pallôt or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Rachel Heffer immediately with any concerns.

MARU: 0300 1231 116 LADO: 01872 326536

Low-Level Concerns



Every Moment Matters
Pub Kors a Vern

Seven Minute Safeguarding

WB 28th November 2022

What are Low Level Concerns?

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in a position of trust has acted in a way that is inappropriate, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. It is any concern that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct; and/or does not meet the allegations threshold to refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly, with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

Why do Low-Level Concerns Matter?

Ensuring that all staff and volunteers who work with children are suitable to do so is one of the most important aspects of our safeguarding duties. The early identification and appropriate management of safeguarding concerns about adults is an essential part of this. Where a concern reaches the threshold of an allegation, clear guidance exists on how organisations should report, record and handle that allegation. However, more recently, there has been increased guidance and support on how to manage 'low-level concerns' that fall below the threshold of an allegation.

Low-Level concerns are one of the updates to the [2022 KCSiE](#) (paragraph 422, page 99)

There is further emphasis on schools needing to have policies and processes in place for reporting, recording and responding to low level concerns.

The ineffective reporting and failure to take seriously the reports of low level concerns are key features the [Serious Case Review of Nigel Leat](#) (2012) (please note, he is referred to at 'Teacher A' in this document)

Leat, 51, was seen taking pictures of children on his phone and stripping down to his underpants with pupils. Fellow teachers found explicit images on his school camera and watched him share 'adult' jokes with pupils as young as six.

A total of 30 inappropriate incidents were witnessed by staff at Hillside First School in Worle, Somerset, but only 11 of these were reported to Headteacher and none were passed on to the local education authority. No action was taken further than a 'quiet word' by the Headteacher.

Leat later, '...pleaded guilty to r pleaded guilty to 36 sexual offences, including 22 counts of sexually assaulting a child under 13 and eight counts of sexual assault by penetration of a child under 13.' Page 1 paragraph 4.

This case highlights the importance of seemingly small concerns being effectively logged and taken seriously. [This BBC report](#) from the time summarises the case.

What might a Low-Level Concern look like?

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; (our school policy is that ALL photos of children should be taken with a school iPad and sent via official school communications i.e. email NOT personal i.e. WhatsApp/text);
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind closed doors;
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Want to know more?

- [NSPCC: Preventing abuse from those in positions of trust](#)
- [Farer: Developing a Low-Level Concerns Policy](#)
- [NSPCC: Responding to Low-Level Concerns](#)

If you are concerned about the behaviour of any adult in school, you must report it to the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity. There will be a form (similar to the My Concern report form) available for this in due course.

How do we minimise the risk of Low-Level Concerns occurring in our school?

Safeguarding culture plays a huge part in this. We strive to create a culture where everyone knows who to speak to if they have a concerns and all adults in school put the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils are the forefront of all they do.

We have robust reporting procedures and empower staff to report all concerns to the relevant persons. We also make staff aware of local reporting arrangements (LADO, MARU)

We are in the process of writing a Low-Level Concern Policy which will be added to the list of documents that we ask all staff to read annually.