

ALAMEDA MIDDLE SCHOOL



Ambitious ■ Motivated
Confident to Soar

LOW LEVEL CONCERNS POLICY

DECEMBER 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

At Alameda Middle School, we aim to create an open and transparent culture where any concerns about any of the 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 in accordance with our school ethos.

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

2 SUMMARY

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children but is however inappropriate.

A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff, volunteer, contractor or who, on reflection, recognises that their actions could have been viewed as a risk, should inform the Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead about their concern using a Low-Level Record of Concern Form.

In the Headteacher's absence, the Deputy Head (DSL) should be informed. If both the Headteacher and Deputy Head (DSL) cannot be contacted, then another member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed.

3 KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2023

The following is taken from Government statutory guidance from the document Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022 and identifies what may be considered behaviour relating to low level concern:

424. As part of their whole school or college approach to safeguarding, schools and colleges should ensure that they promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

425. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should:

- enable schools and colleges to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
- minimise the risk of abuse, and
- ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

What is a low-level concern?

426. 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 allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. (Local Authority Designated Officer)

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

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- humiliating children;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phones;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

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.

4 CLARITY AROUND ALLEGATION VS LOW LEVEL VS APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Allegation:

Any adult linked to our school who 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.

Low Level Concern:

Any adult linked to our school who has behaved 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.

Appropriate:

- Behaviour which is entirely consistent with our school's Code of Conduct, and the Law.



5 STORING AND USE OF LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS AND FOLLOW UP INFORMATION

Low Level Concern forms and follow-up information will be stored securely on the T drive in a folder named low level concerns. (only accessible by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers).

This will be stored in accordance with the school's GDPR and data protection policies. The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not share the concern with others apart from the Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. **(Low-Level Concerns will not be referred to in references unless they have been formalised into more significant concerns, resulting in disciplinary or misconduct procedures).**

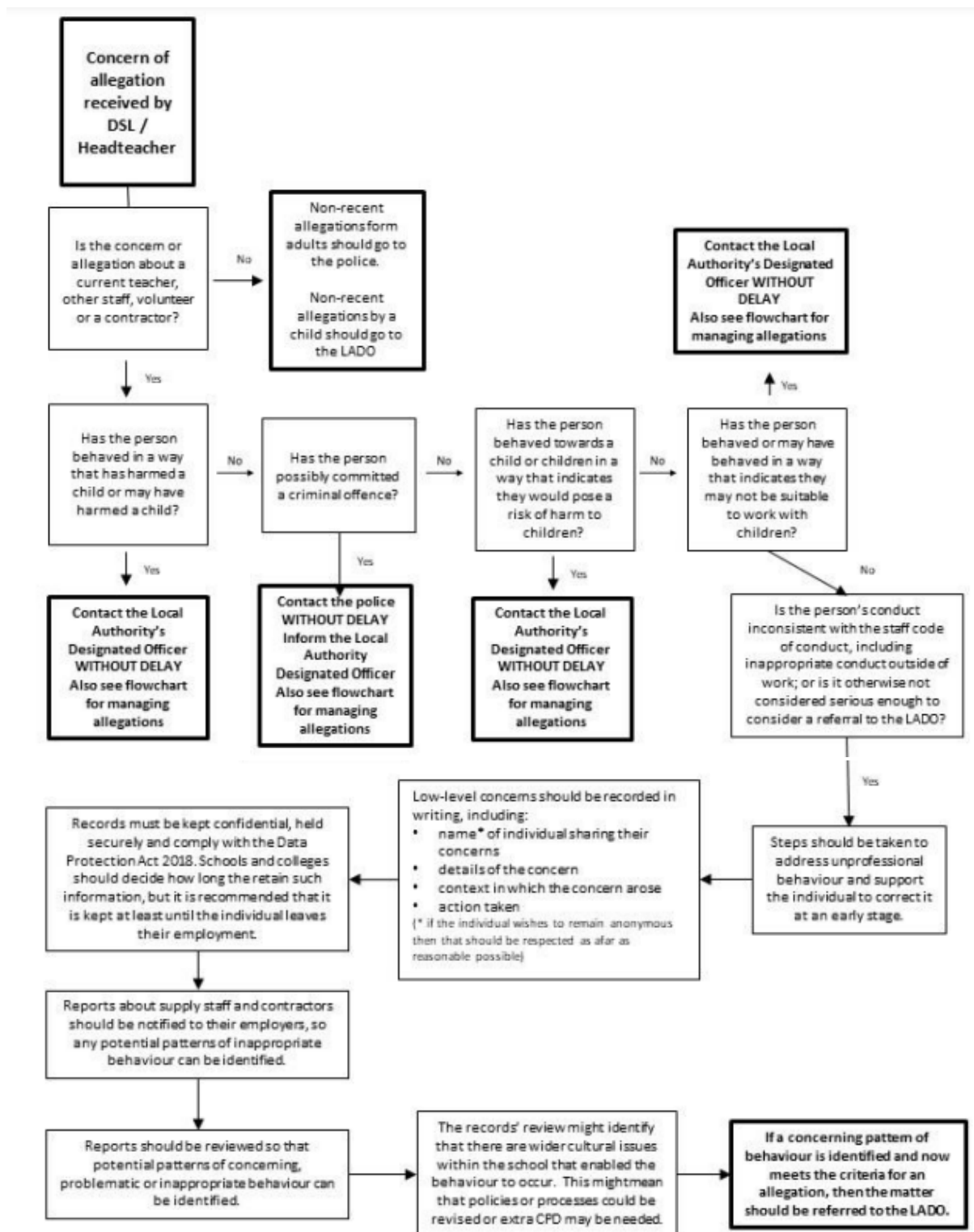
Whenever staff leave Alameda Middle School, any record of low-level concerns, which are stored about them, will be reviewed as to whether or not that information needs to be kept.

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 or destroyed accordingly.



6 PROCESS TO FOLLOW WHEN A LOW-LEVEL CONCERN IS RAISED



NB – if the concern is about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors should be informed.



7 LOW LEVEL CONCERNS REPORTING FORM

The Low-Level Recording Forms should be used to report any 'low level concern'. Once completed, email to the Headteacher or DSL and delete the original from your Drive.

Your Details	
Name	
Role	
Date form completed	
Details of the individual whom the concern is about	
Name	
Role	
Date concern arose	
Details of Concern	
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?	
Actions taken - to be completed by the Headteacher /DSL	

