Woodfield Nursery School Policy and Procedures for Low Level Concerns

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Context

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025), statutory guidance recommends that 'schools and colleges need to report and record all concerns and allegations against adults, including low-level concerns.'

KCSIE states that it is vital that there is a whole-school approach to safeguarding and everyone works to create a safe culture within the organisation. This means all concerns and allegations against adults working in the establishment, including school staff, supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors, are dealt with promptly and effectively.

It is critical that all allegations against staff are recorded and dealt with appropriately. This will lead to an open culture where concerning and problematic behaviour is identified early, minimising the risk of abuse. Woodfield Nursery School takes responsibility of safeguarding children and adults seriously. Woodfield follows clear safer recruitment procedures ensuring all staff are appropriate to work with children and young people.

All concerns will be listened to without prejudice to obtain factual evidence from both parties as appropriate. If requestedthe person reporting the concern will have anonynimity where reasonable possible and approriate to do so. Immediate action will be taken if a child/children are at risk of harm and the member of staff may be suspended whilst investigations take place. The police will be informed if any criminal activity is detected.

This policy should be read in conjuction with

- Staff code of conduct
- Staff Handbook
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Bullying and Harrassment Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Definition of low Level concerns

A low level concern is any concern which

- A low-level concern means the allegations against that staff member do not meet the harms threshold and this person does not pose an immediate risk towards children.

- The adult in question may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and is otherwise not considered serious enough to report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples of low-level concerns include:

- Being **over-friendly** with children – inappropriate to child's age and stage of development

- Having favourites
- Engaging with a child one to one in a secluded area
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language
- Racially inappropriate comments or "jokes"
- Taking photographs for personal use or on personal devices
- Behaviour which is inconsistent with staff code of conduct either in or out of school

These examples exist on a wide spectrum, from behaviour that is seemingly harmless, to possible inappropriate behaviour that is actually innocent. However, on the other end of the spectrum, it could be behaviour that is intended to enable abuse and grooming in the future.

Why report low level concerns

Small concerns can lead to a bigger picture of the events occurring within the school. Therefore, it is critical that all concerns are recorded to prevent the future harm and exploitation of children in our care. Dealing with these concerns effectively also protects those working at Woodfield from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Recording

All low level concerns will be recorded and kept securely on staff safe. This is accessed only by the Headteacher. All records and data will be kept confidential with restricted access.

Records will contain

- Name(s) of person reporting a concern
- Name(s)of person involved in the low level concern
- Date of concern
- Context and place of allegation or concern
- a clear factual summary of the concern
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome with dates and person(s) involved
- All staff will be informed of the correct recording procedures and must speak to DSL or Deputy DSL.
- All discussions will be recorded on Low Level Concern forms, dated and signed by DSL/Deputy DSL and person with the concern.
- Concerns will be escalated to Safeguarding Team as appropriate or if advice required to ascertain the level of action required.

Actions that may be taken

As a school we will consider if any wider cultural issues exist that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence. The rationale for all decisions and actions taken must be recorded.

- Discussion with person(s) involved
- Verbal warning
- Monitoring and supervision
- If appropriate a written warning will be issued with actions clearly stated
- Any previous allegations/concerns will be considered
- Reported to Governors – anonymised
- Report to Safeguarding Team
- Suspension or dismissal
- Police will be informed of any criminal activity

This policy is part of the staff code of conduct and will be reviewed annually.