



St. Francis Xavier's RC Primary School

Love one another as I have loved you

Low Level Concern Safeguarding Policy

Our Mission

Share God's love with one another

Follow your dreams

EXcel in citizenship

Our Mission is to:

- Be a witness to the values, teaching and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church
- Promote achievement and enjoyment for all
- Expect the best for individuals
- Inspire learning
- Collaborate with the community
- Promote a healthy and safe life style
- Create a sustainable school
- Continually strive to be effective

This policy is to be read alongside the following documents:

- KCSIE 2023
- KCSIE 2023 Part 1 and Annex for Further Information
- St Francis Xavier's Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2018\)](#)
- [Information Sharing \(HM Govt July 2018\)](#)
- The procedures of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
<https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/>
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy 2023
- Behaviour Policy 2023
- Antibullying Policy 2023

Low level concerns

St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School promotes a whole school approach to safeguarding, ensuring an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

At St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School all concerns about adults, including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold (KCSIE 2023) are shared responsibly and with the right person, they are recorded and dealt with appropriately. This will encourage an open and transparent culture; enable school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the school.

What is a low level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 424 KCSIE 2023. 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.

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;
- 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.

Please see Appendix 1 for the flow chart to follow up low level concerns

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.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see KCSIE 2023 Part Four), are shared responsibly and 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 the school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Reports of any low level concern from pupils or staff should be made in the first instance to the DSL, Mrs Diana Pearce (headteacher), or in her absence the DDSL, Mrs Liz Christopherson. If the issue relates to the headteacher, the information is to be given to the Chair of Governors, Mr Paul Williams via email chair@st-francisxaviers.hereford.sch.uk or by phone with the telephone number held in the school office.

Staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies

This low-level concerns policy sits alongside the 2023 Staff Code of Conduct Policy and the 2023 SFX Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. It is important to share low-level concerns for the purpose of creating and embedding a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

The governing body ensures the staff code of conduct, behaviour policies and safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively, and ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and facilitate a whole school approach to dealing with any concerns.

St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School can achieve the purpose of the low-level concerns policy 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 safeguarding concerns
- 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; and,
- helping identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

Sharing low-level concerns

Low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor should be reported as per paragraph 424 KCSIE 2023. Please see Appendix 1 for Reporting Low Level Concerns. Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Our school will ensure there is an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Recording low-level concerns and Reporting Low Level Concerns Appendix 1

All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

The headteacher will keep these written records. The record will be confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) (see paragraph 109 for more information).

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO, Terry Pilliner. Consideration will be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school 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.

The school will retain the information until the individual leaves the school's employment.

References

Part Four para 442 of KCSIE 2023 is clear that the schools will only provide substantiated safeguarding allegations in references. 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. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

Responding to low-level concerns

On receiving information regarding a low level concern, the person raising the concern will be asked to complete the form in Appendix 1 'Reporting Low Level Concerns.' The headteacher will discuss the concerns raised with the person completing the report and the actions around the concern. The information collected will help the headteacher to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this will be recorded along with the rationale for the decisions and action taken.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help them to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this needs to be recorded along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken.

This low level concerns policy will be a reflection and extension of the school's wider staff code of conduct policy.



St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School
Reporting Low Level Concerns

Name of person raising concern: _____ *(or report submitted anonymously)*

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Present: _____

Meeting **Telephone Call** **Other** _____

Details of the Concern

Context in which the concern arose

Action Taken

Follow Up Notes

Signed: _____ **Person raising concern (if not anonymous)**

Signed: _____ **Headteacher / or Chair of Governors**

This policy was written by Diana Pearce (DSL) September 2021. The policy was initially adopted by the Governing Body of St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School on 27.9.21 and reviewed October 2023.

The policy will be monitored by members of the Senior Management Team and Chair of Pastoral Support Committee, Ivan Powell.

The policy will be reviewed in two years October 2025.

Signed: *Ivan Powell*

Date: 13.11.23

Chair of Pastoral Support Committee

Signed: *Diana Pearce*

Date: 13.11.23

Headteacher