



St. Francis Xavier's RC Primary School

Love one another as I have loved you

Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff, Including Supply Teachers, Volunteers and Contractors

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

Legislation

The information provided is directly based on Part Four Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, para 352 to para 445. St Francis Xavier's School follows the guidance in KCSIE 2023, Part Four.

The aims of this guidance

To ensure that any allegation made against a member of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors in St. Francis Xavier's RC Primary School is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for children.

- A quick resolution should be a clear priority for all concerned.
- Those with responsibilities described in this procedure act without delay.
- Support will also be provided for the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- Support will be provided for all individuals involved to minimise stress.
- Any disruption to the normal running of the school will be minimised.

St Francis Xavier's School recognises that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors and any allegation is serious and needs to be dealt with in a sensitive, efficient manner. For the purpose this document, the term 'staff' will refer to any person working in or on behalf of the school in a paid or unpaid capacity including staff, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

There are two sections to the policy covering the two levels of concerns and allegations:

1. Concerns / allegations that **may** meet the harm threshold.
2. Concerns / allegations that **do not** meet the harm threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low-level concerns'.

These procedures are consistent with Herefordshire safeguarding procedures and practice guidance.

Section 1. Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section gives guidance about managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It will be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff in St Francis Xavier's School has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of school, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk. Where appropriate, an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt, seek advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO) hscb.herefordshire.gov.uk Follow 'Policies and Procedures Herefordshire' LADO: Terry Pilliner 01432 261739.

Allegations should be reported to the headteacher as the 'case manager' without delay. The headteacher will lead the investigation, unless the headteacher is the subject of an allegation, in which case the chair of governors leads the investigation.

The policy relates to members of staff who are currently working at St Francis Xavier's School. Allegations against a previous member of staff who is no longer at St Francis Xavier's School, will be referred to the police. Historical allegations of abuse will also be referred to the police.

The School recognises the duty of care to employees. The School will ensure the provision of effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff in the School is dealt with quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Initial considerations

If the School identifies that a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, the School will contact Herefordshire children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately.

There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

- **Looking after the welfare of the child** - the DSL (or a deputy) is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care
- **Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation** - the case manager will discuss with the LADO, the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, the School will:

- apply common sense and judgement
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently, and
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

The School follows the Regional Child Protection Procedures for the West Midlands <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/contents> and [LA procedures](#) for managing allegations

against staff. Documents are sent through anycomms+ or contact by email on LADO@Herefordshire.gcsx.gov.uk

The headteacher, or Chair of Governors (as 'Case Manager'), will be guided by the LADO in all matters relating to the case, including suspension, sharing of information and any follow up investigation.

Before contacting the LADO, the School will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts and to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. For example:

- was the individual in school at the time of the allegation
- did the individual, or could the individual have come into contact with the child
- are there any witnesses, and

The School will carefully consider when to inform the individual of the allegation on a case-by-case basis, with guidance as required from the LADO, and if appropriate Herefordshire children's social care and the police.

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the police and/or Herefordshire children's social care will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#). If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should take into account that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the member of staff's family, they will discuss these concerns with the LADO and make a risk assessment of the situation. It may be necessary for the designated safeguarding lead to make a referral to Herefordshire authority children's social care. Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or Herefordshire children's social care is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial assessment decides that is the case, the LADO will discuss the next steps with the case manager.

No Further Action

Where the initial discussion leads to no further action, the case manager and the LADO will:

- record the decision and justification for it, and
- agree on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom

Further Enquiries

Where further enquiries are required to enable a decision about how to proceed, the LADO and case manager will discuss how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. The LADO will provide advice and guidance to the School when considering allegations against adults working with children. The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, local authority children's social care, the school, or a combination of these.

Supply Teachers and all Contracted Staff

Whilst the School is not the employer of supply teachers or contracted staff, it will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will the School decide to cease to use a supply teacher or contracted staff due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome.

Organisations or Individuals using School premises

The School may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the premises for the purposes of running activities for children. As with any

safeguarding allegation, the School will follow safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

Governors

If an allegation is made against a governor, the School will follow Herefordshire safeguarding procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, the School will follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

Suspension

Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. The case manager **must** consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at School, until the allegation is resolved. It should be considered only in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the School is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, the case manager should seek views from Herefordshire HR and the LADO, as well as the police and Herefordshire children's social care where they have been involved.

Where a school is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order, in respect of an individual who works at the School, the School will take immediate action to ensure the individual does not carry out work in contravention of the order. This means that pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the individual **must not** carry out teaching work. The School will follow Herefordshire local authority guidance on pay arrangements whilst the person is suspended or where there is an interim prohibition order in place.

In many cases, an inquiry can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. The employer will decide on whether the individual should continue to work at the school, based on consultation with the LADO who will provide relevant information received from the police or Herefordshire children's social care on whether they have any objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation of the case.

Based on advice from the school's HR provider and/or a risk analysis drawn up with the LADO, the following alternatives should be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

- redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- redeploying to alternative work in the school so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, but this decision should only be made if it is in the best interests of the child or children concerned and takes account of their views. It should be made clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted, or
- temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or where available, work for the local authority.

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension, this will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The case manager should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unfounded, unsubstantiated, malicious, or false.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the case manager should record the rationale and justification for such a course of action. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be given within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.

Herefordshire children's social care or the police may give their view to the LADO but they cannot require the case manager to suspend a member of staff or remove a volunteer, although the case manager should give appropriate weight to their views. The power to suspend is vested in the governing body who are the employers. However, where a strategy discussion, or initial assessment, concludes that there should be enquiries by Herefordshire children's social care, and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should canvass police and Herefordshire children's social care for views about whether the accused member of staff should be suspended from contact with children. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision should be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment about whether the person poses a risk of harm to children.

Supporting those involved

Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process. Support for the individual is vital to fulfilling this duty. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the children's social care services or the police. The individual should be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support. They should also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is provided by the employer.

The case manager, either the headteacher or the Chair of Governors, should appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. This may include support via the local authority occupational health or employee welfare arrangements. Particular care will be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work-related issues. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or children's social care services need to be involved, the case manager should not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents or carers. Parents or carers should also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed but the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome in confidence.

Parents and carers should also be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers whilst investigations are ongoing as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002. If parents or carers wish to apply to the court to have reporting restrictions removed, they should be told to seek legal advice.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children's social care services, or the police as appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

It is extremely important that when an allegation is made, the school makes every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2011 amended the Education Act 2002, to introduce reporting restrictions. These provisions made it an offence (except in the limited circumstance expressly permitted by the legislation), for any person to publish any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a child from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation).

The reporting restrictions apply until:

- the point that the accused person is charged with a relevant offence, or
- the Secretary of State or the General Teaching Council for Wales publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation.

The reporting restrictions are disapplied if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so or if a court lifts the reporting restrictions in response to a request to do so.

The legislation prevents the "publication" of material by any person that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation. "Publication" includes "any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public." This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site would be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the teacher by members of the public). In circumstances where the School needs to make parents aware about an allegation, they should make parents and others aware that there are restrictions on publishing information.

In accordance with the [Authorised Professional Practice published by the College of Policing](#) in May 2017, the police will not normally provide any information to the press or media that might identify an individual who is under investigation, unless and until the person is charged with a criminal offence. In exceptional cases where the police wish to depart from that rule, for example an appeal to trace a suspect, they **must** apply to a magistrates' court to request that reporting restrictions be lifted.

The case manager should take advice from the LADO, the police and local authority children's social care to agree the following:

- who needs to know and exactly what information can be shared
- how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip
- what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation and
- how to manage press interest if, and when, it should arise.

Allegation outcomes

The definitions that should be used when the School determines the outcome of an allegation are set out below:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term,

therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence, or

- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Ultimately the options open to the School depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegations and the evidence and information available. This will range from taking no further action, to dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in future.

Following a substantiated allegation

If the allegation is substantiated and:

- the person is dismissed; resigns, or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, or
- the employer ceases to use the person's services.

In the case of a member of teaching staff at the School, the case manager will consider whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider whether the individual should be prohibited from teaching

There is a **legal requirement** for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they consider an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

Following a criminal investigation or a prosecution

The police should inform the LADO and the employer immediately when:

- a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete
- it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or
- it is decided not to continue to prosecute after the person has been charged.

In those circumstances, during the joint assessment meeting the LADO should discuss with the case manager whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or local authority children's social care should also inform that decision. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration should take into account the result of the police investigation or the trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and the case manager should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Herefordshire children's social care may be appropriate.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

Returning to work

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager should consider how best to facilitate that. Guidance and advice are usually provided via HR or the LADO. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The case manager should also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still attending the School.

Managing the situation and exit arrangements

Resignations and 'settlement agreements'

'Settlement agreements' (sometimes referred to as compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign if the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, should not be used in cases of refusal to cooperate or resignation before the person's notice period expires. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate.

The School will not cease the investigations if the person leaves, resigns or ceases to provide their services. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate.

Wherever possible, the accused should be given full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. The process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence and reaching a judgement about whether it can be substantiated or otherwise on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if the accused does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record an outcome wherever possible. The person concerned should be notified of the conclusion of the allegations and sanctions that might be posed.

Other than where allegations are false, malicious, unsubstantiated, or unfounded, the outcome should be made clear when providing references to prospective employers. This is particularly important where the person moves into another position involving working with children.

It is not appropriate to reach a settlement/compromise agreement if the person subject to the allegation resigns or their services cease to be used. However, in limited circumstances the School can sometimes use settlement agreements to end the employment relationship on agreed terms, but not where there is an allegation that the individual poses a risk to children.

Where a settlement/compromise agreement is used, the School should not let it prevent the employer from:

- fulfilling their legal duty to refer cases to the DBS where the referral criteria are met. Non-compliance of this duty is a criminal offence, or
- providing a reference to potential employers when requested, or
- considering whether to make a referral to the TRA where the criteria are met

Record keeping

Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time.

The School has an obligation to preserve records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry (further

information can be found on the IICSA website). All other records should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The Information Commissioner has published guidance on employment records in its Employment Practices Code and supplementary guidance, which provides some practical advice on record retention.

References

Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references. Any repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should also not be included in any reference. Substantiated safeguarding allegations that meet the harm threshold should be included in references, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions.

Non recent allegations

Where an adult makes an allegation to a school or college that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non recent allegations made by a child, should be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with local authority children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Learning lessons

Throughout the process in handling allegations and at conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, the LADO should review the circumstances of the case with the case manager to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the School's procedures to help prevent similar events in the future. This should include issues arising from any decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether or not suspension was justified. Lessons should also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The LADO and case manager should consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

For all other cases, where the allegation concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated the case manager (and if they have been involved the LADO) should consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if improvements can be made.

Section 2. Concerns or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold

Please also refer to Low-Level Concerns Safeguarding Policy 2023.

Low-level concerns

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, the School promotes 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.

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 the school 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 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?

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 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 harm threshold or is otherwise not 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, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating children.

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.

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.

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 the School from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

Staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies

The School and Governing Body have outlined the Low-Level Concerns Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The 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 inappropriate, problematic or concerning 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
- handling and responding to such concerns sensitively and proportionately when they are raised, and
- helping identify any weakness in the school or colleges safeguarding system.

Sharing low-level concerns

The School has ensured that the Low-Level Concerns Policy contains a procedure for sharing confidentially such concerns which is clear, easy to understand and implement. The headteacher is the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns. If the concern is regarding the headteacher, the concern should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If the School is in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, the headteacher will consult with the LADO.

The School will ensure it creates 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

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. The record will 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 School will keep a record of low-level concerns with the headteacher, and these will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO. Consideration should also 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.

It is for the School to decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.

References

The School will only provide substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations (including a group of low-level concerns about the same individual) that meet the harm threshold 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.

Responding to low-level concerns

The school’s Low-Level Concerns Policy sets out the procedure for responding to reports of low-level concerns. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher (or a nominated deputy) should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously, and
- 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. This information needs to be recorded in writing along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken.

This policy was written May 2014, updated January 2017, April 2019 and April 2024. The policy was adopted by the Pastoral Support Committee of the Governing Body of St Francis Xavier’s RC Primary School on 13th May 2024.

The policy will be monitored by members of the Senior Management Team and Chair of Pastoral Support Committee and will be reviewed every two years, or as appropriate.

Signed: <i>Ivan Powell</i>	Date: 13.5.24	Chair of Pastoral Support Committee
Signed: <i>Diana Pearce</i>	Date: 13.5.24	Headteacher

Diana Pearce
2014, 2017, 2019, 2024