# Low-Level Concerns Policy

**Approved: June 2026**

**To be reviewed: June 2027**

**(in line with the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policies)**

## Introduction

At Raddlebarn Primary and Nursery School, we are committed to maintaining a culture of openness, trust and transparency, in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

This policy provides a framework for identifying, sharing and responding to low-level concerns, as part of our wider safeguarding culture and duty to protect children.

## What is a Low-Level Concern?

A *low-level concern* is any concern, no matter how small and even if no more than 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/or
- Does not meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO), but may still pose a risk to children.

Examples of low-level concerns may include:

- Being overly familiar with pupils
- Using inappropriate language
- Displaying favouritism
- Engaging in one-on-one social contact with a pupil outside school hours without justification
- Humiliating pupils

## Purpose of This Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Encourage an open and transparent culture
- Enable staff to share concerns, no matter how small
- Ensure that concerns are handled sensitively and proportionately
- Promote early intervention to minimise the risk of harm to children

## Sharing and Reporting Low-Level Concerns

All staff must share any low-level concern they may have about a colleague (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) with the headteacher.

- Concerns about the headteacher must be shared with the chair of governors.

- Staff may prefer to use the school's whistle-blowing procedure if they feel uncomfortable reporting directly. This can be found on the school website.

Staff can report concerns:

- Verbally (preferably followed up in writing)
- By emailing the headteacher, or the chair of governors Reports should include:
- A brief description of the concern
- The name of the individual involved
- Dates, times and locations of any concerns
- Any witness names, if applicable

**Responding to Low-Level Concerns**

The headteacher (or chair of governors, where applicable) will:

- Review the information
- Record the concern in line with the school's safeguarding procedures
- Speak with the individual concerned (unless doing so would escalate risk)
- Seek further information if necessary (from witnesses or records)

Depending on the nature of the concern, actions may include:

- No further action required
- Proportionate guidance or training
- Informal supervision
- Formal disciplinary process
- Escalation to LADO if the threshold for harm is met

**Record-Keeping**

All low-level concerns will be recorded in a secure, confidential location. The record will include:

- Details of the concern
- Context and who raised it
- Actions taken
- Rationale for decisions

Records will be kept in line with the school's safeguarding record retention schedule.

**When to Refer to LADO**

If the concern:

- Involves a child being harmed or at risk of harm
- Involves possible criminal behaviour
- Suggests a pattern of inappropriate behaviour

It *must* be escalated to the LADO in accordance with statutory guidance and Section 2 of the safeguarding policy. This policy is stated clearly at point 23.2.

**Confidentiality**

Concerns will be treated with discretion. Identities will be protected as far as reasonably possible and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

**Monitoring and Review**

The headteacher will report anonymised data on low-level concerns to the governing board annually, helping to identify patterns and promote reflection on the school's culture.

This policy will be reviewed annually alongside the safeguarding and staff code of conduct policies.