



Low-Level Concerns Policy

for the whole School including EYFS

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Policy Written by | JP |
| Last SLT Review | December 2021 |
| SLT Review Period | Annual |
| Next SLT Review Due | 2022 |
| Governor Review Period | Annual |
| Governing Committee | PC&W |
| Last Governor Review | February 2022 |
| Next Governor Review Due | February 2023 |



Low-Level Concerns Policy

‘Making Beechwood a Safer School for Children’

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Mission | 3 |
| Values | 3 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Definition of Low-Level Concerns | 4 |
| Low-level concerns about self (self-reporting)..... | 4 |
| Low-level concerns about another adult..... | 4 |
| What should I do if I have a low-level concern..... | 4 |
| How will my low-level concern be handled?..... | 4 |
| Record keeping | 5 |
| Appendix 1 | 6 |
| Appendix 2 | 7 |

Mission

Staff, pupils, parents and governors at Beechwood Park understand the core Mission of the School, which is to **Nurture, Engage** and **Inspire** all of its pupils. As demonstrated by the images of the Beechwood Tree posted in key locations around the School, our primary aim is to Nurture the young people in our care.

Nurture is a very specific term at Beechwood and we advocate happiness, wellbeing, fun, enjoyment community, safety, security, thriving and friendship as being the soil into which our pupils can bury the deep roots of engagement. The Beechwood educational philosophy goes further than this by encouraging its pupils to recognise the child-centred part they play in the School's success. It is their School, to which they belong and play an important part, each according to their unique abilities and strengths. In accordance with Maslow's Hierarchy of Need, we believe that once our pupils feel nurtured, they will **engage** influentially in their learning in and out of School.

To **Engage** is again a very specific term at Beechwood Park. Engagement is the process of incrementally building confidence and independence in every pupil and across a wide range of academic, co-curricular, pastoral and spiritual educational experiences. Engagement encourages pupils to establish increasingly confident dialogues with their teachers, recognising them as human resources and managing them in such a way as to get the very best of them. It is about promoting their own learning, collaborative learning and the learning of others and promotes participation and active learning, curiosity, attentiveness, perseverance, determination and scholarship. Through effective engagement the School **inspires** in pupils the skills which will prepare them for a future life of learning.

Inspiration is a two-way process; we inspire in pupils with the skills which will powerfully contribute to their success in future years. The Beechwood Tree identifies those core skills.

Values

The School Mission forms the basis of the Schools sixteen core Values, which the School publishes in the School Calendar, on www.beechwoodpark.com. One of the functions of the School Forum is annually to review and agree the Beechwood Values for the following academic year. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) decides on the order of the School Values, assigning one Value to each fortnight throughout the School year. He ensures that the School Value of the Fortnight is the first slide on the projected assembly notices at every Monday and Friday assembly, enabling the Head or the Chaplain to develop pastoral messages around this core Value. Form Teachers and other staff refer closely to these core Values throughout the fortnight in Form Teacher Periods, in PSHEE lessons, in all areas of academic, co-curricular and pastoral education.

Safeguarding and child protection therefore lie right at the heart of our educational culture; they are a state of mind at Beechwood Park which go beyond policy and procedure.

Introduction

This policy helps articulates the methodology by which it implements and measures the impact of a culture in which all members of our community live within the Mission, Values and, for staff, the expected behaviours as set out in the BPS Staff Behaviour Policy. In particular, this policy:

- Maintains a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which staff are confident and clear about the expected behaviours of themselves and their colleagues;
- Promotes each employee's statutory responsibilities to protect children from abuse and harm in accordance with the School's child protection and health and safety policies;
- Ensures that staff feel empowered to raise any low-level concern, whether about their own or a colleague's behaviour, in support of the School's Mission and Values;
- Provides responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of concerns when they are raised - maintaining both the confidence that concerns will be handled promptly and effectively and protecting staff from false allegations and misunderstandings.

In particular, this policy should be read in conjunction with

- *BPS Child Protection Policy*
- *BPS Staff Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy*
- *BPS Grievance, Capability and Disciplinary Policy*
- *BPS Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *BPS Staff Behaviour Policy*
- *BPS Pupil Conduct Policy*
- *BPS PSHEE Policy*
- *BPS Missing Child Policy*
- *BPS Early Years Foundation Stage Policy*
- *Boarding School National Minimum Standards*
- *BPS Staff Whistleblowing Policy*
- *BPS Teachers Standards Policy*
- *BPS Online Safety and Acceptable Usage Policies*

Definition of Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small and even if it is no more than a ‘nagging doubt,’ that an adult may have acted in a manner inconsistent with the School’s Mission, Values or Staff Behaviour Policy, or a sense of unease as to the adult’s behaviour particularly towards or around children.

Low-level concerns about self (self-reporting)

From time to time an individual may find themselves in a situation which might appear compromising to others, or which could be misconstrued. Equally, an individual may have behaved in a manner, which on reflection, they consider fall below the standard set out in the *BPS Staff Behaviour Policy*.

The School encourages self-reporting in these circumstances as it demonstrates both awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to their own actions or how they could be perceived. The School views self-reporting of low-level concerns as an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of behaviour.

Low-level concerns about another adult

On occasions, an individual may notice conduct in others which causes concern. These actions and behaviours fall short of a formal allegation of abuse. These tend to be behaviours which indicate that the *BPS Staff Behaviour Policy* has not been met. Any such concerns can be dealt with as a Low-Level Concern.

What should I do if I have a low-level concern

Where a low-level concern exists, it should be reported to the DSL / DDSL. Where concerns exist about the conduct of the DSL / DDSL, this should be passed on to the Head. Staff report low-level concerns on a *BPS Low-Level Concern Form* as soon as reasonably possible and always within 24 hours of becoming aware it.

How will my low-level concern be handled?

The DSL / DDSL will consider all low-level concerns they receive and satisfy themselves in the first instance that this is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as an allegation and deal with under the appropriate procedure outlined in the *BPS Child Protection Policy*.

The DSL/DDSL will always discuss low-level concerns with the Head without delay and at the most within 24 hours.

If the concern is about the behaviour of

- the DSL/DDSL: the member of staff should report directly to the Head;
- the Head: the DSL / DDSL will consult with the Bursar. The Bursar will report to the Chair of Governors.

The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified as an allegation are when:

1. The threshold is met for an allegation as stipulated in the *BPS Child Protection Policy*;
2. There is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to an allegation; or
3. There is other information which when taken into an account leads to an allegation.

Where the Head is in any doubt whatsoever, he will seek advice anonymously from the LADO.

Having established that the concern is low-level, the DSL / DDSL or the Head, if necessary, will discuss with the individual who raised the concern and will take any other necessary steps to investigate.

The colleague responsible for raising the low-level concern will be discreetly informed when the concern has been forwarded to the Head / Bursar / Chair of Governors.

Most low-level concerns are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of discussion / guidance / training.

Record keeping

Once a low-level concern has been recorded and submitted, a confidential record will be kept in a central file which logs low-level concerns. This is necessary to enable patterns to be identified. No record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file and no mention made in a job reference unless either:

1. The form directly asks for details;
2. The concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as an allegation; or
3. The concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious enough to result in formal action under the *BPS Grievance, Capability and Disciplinary Policy*.

Appendix 1



Low-Level Concern Regarding A Staff Member

Please use this form to share any concern relating to another member of staff. This should be used no matter how small, and even no more than a ‘nagging doubt’ that an action is not consistent with the *BPS Staff Behaviour Policy*.

| | |
|---|-------|
| Name of adult writing this concern: | |
| Role in School: | |
| Name of adult whom this concern is about: | |
| Date and time of concern: | |
| Date and time of recording/reporting: | |
| Nature of concern: <i>You should provide a concise record - including brief context in which the low-level concern arose, and details which are chronological and as precise and accurate as possible - of any such concern and relevant incident. Please use a separate sheet if necessary. Consider any contextual information that may be appropriate to know.</i> | |
| Signature | Date: |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|--|---|
| Audit date: | | Audit completed by: | |
| Overall RAG rating | | Red | Information is lacking and vague, needs to be addressed urgently |
| | | Amber | Key information is included but recording could be further improved |
| | | Green | The recording meets the required standards |
| Action needed | Timescale | Name and position of person responsible | Date action completed |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Appendix 2



Low-Level Concern about Self (Self-Reporting)

Please use this form to self-report if you find yourself in a situation which might appear compromising to others, which could be misconstrued or if you have behaved in a manner, which on reflection, you consider falls below the standard set out in the *BPS Staff Behaviour Policy*.

| | |
|---|-------|
| Name of adult self-reporting: | |
| Role in School: | |
| Date and time of incident: | |
| Date and time of recording/reporting: | |
| Nature of incident: <i>You should provide a concise record - including brief context of the incident, and details which are chronological and as precise and accurate as possible - of any relevant incident(s). Please use a separate sheet if necessary. Consider any contextual information that may be appropriate to know.</i> | |
| Signature | Date: |

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Audit date: | | Audit completed by: | |
| Overall RAG rating | Red | Information is lacking and vague, needs to be addressed urgently | |
| | Amber | Key information is included but recording could be further improved | |
| | Green | The recording meets the required standards | |
| Action needed | Timescale | Name and position of person responsible | Date action completed |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |