

Low-level Concern Policy

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| Post holder responsible | Assistant Principal: DSL/Inclusion |

**Purpose:**

Staff and volunteers at Hagley Catholic High School are acting in a position of trust and authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people at the school. All adults are seen as role models and are expected to act appropriately.

**Our responsibilities include:**

* Prioritising the welfare of children and young people.
* Providing and maintaining a safe environment.
* Ensuring equipment is used safely for its intended purpose.
* Having up to date knowledge of safeguarding practices and procedures including who to report concerns to.
* Staying within the law at all times.
* Following all policies, procedures and principles of the Emmaus Multi Academy Trust.
* Modelling positive behaviour.
* Challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting breaches of the behaviour policy (staff and pupils) to SLTC.
* Understanding that our young people are individuals with individual needs.
* Encourage our young people to speak out about behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

 **What is a low-level concern?**

Low level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour and can be characterised as being inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour and behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

A low-level concern will not meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school or college to refer to the local authority.

 **Example of such behaviour could include:**

* Being over friendly with children
* Having favourites
* Adults 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 (without good reason i.e. safeguarding concerns/confidentiality)
* Using in appropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

 **Mitigating low level concerns**

In order to protect all adults working with children, the following advice should be considered (where practicable)

* Exercise caution when staff are discussing sensitive issues with young people
* Ensure all contact with young people is relevant to the work being undertaken.
* Ensure that wherever possible, there is more than on adult present during activities or ensure that other adults know where you and the child are.
* Only provide personal care where this has been agreed and staff are trained to undertake this.
* Do not allow concerns or allegations to go unreported.
* Do not take unnecessary risks.
* Do not make inappropriate promises to young people.
* Do not engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive, including having any form of sexual conduct with young people in our care (this would be escalated and would not be classed as low level)
* Do not allow our young people to have access to your personal details, including social media.
* Do not act in a way that could be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
* Do not patronise or belittle our young people.
* Always listen to and respect young people at all times.

**Upholding this code of behaviour**

All adults working in the school setting should follow this code of behaviour and never rely on personal reputation or the reputation of our organisation for protection. If, following an investigation by the relevant line managers and SLT, inappropriate conduct has been evidenced, then our disciplinary procedure will be triggered. Depending upon the seriousness of the situation the alleged perpetrators may be asked the leave site. On occasion, there may be a duty to inform and report offending behaviour to the local authority.

All staff have a duty to report breaches to the Senior Leadership Team who will investigate within a time frame of 5 working days.