RHODES AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rhodes Avenue Primary School

Managing Allegations Against Staff

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Signed by:

M.Panayiotou Headteacher Date: 29/09/25

FGB Chair of governors Date: 29/09/25

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Part 1

1. **Introduction**

It is now a requirement for schools and academics to follow statutory guidance when dealing with allegations that may meet the harms threshold and concerns that do not meet the harm of threshold.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) states that organisations should have clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Those policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a complaint or a concern about the quality of care or practice.

2. **Purpose and scope of the guidance**

Schools have a duty to safeguard pupils and create a safe learning environment by ensuring that only staff who are suitable to work with children are employed, so it is crucial that there is a robust process in place for dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse by a staff member or volunteer against a pupil.

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed by head teachers and governors when dealing with allegations that a member of staff or volunteer 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; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, for example behaviour in their private life that raises concerns (a *transferrable risk)*.

As well as covering the four categories of harm and abuse, allegations involving inappropriate relationships with pupils, grooming behaviour on-line, possession of indecent photographs or images of children and other offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and including activities and behaviour taking place outside school that involve a transferrable risk, should also be dealt with under this policy.

The guidance applies to all school governors, head teachers and staff members within the school, including permanent and temporary staff, supply teachers and volunteers who are currently working at the school even if the allegation involves an incident that happened at another school. Allegations against staff that have since left the school are not dealt with under this policy and should be referred to the police.

If allegations about a staff member's treatment of their own child are raised, the police or local children's social care department where the staff member lives should notify the Haringey LADO who will contact the school and the CAIT to explore whether the information raises questions about the person's suitability to work with children.

Any incidents and allegations arising in a Haringey school will be dealt with by the Haringey LADO under these procedures even if the pupil lives in another borough. However, if there are concerns about the safety and welfare of other children with whom the staff member is in

contact with in other boroughs, the designated safeguarding lead should consider making a referral to children's social care in that borough.

3. **Legal framework**

All schools must have procedures in place to deal adequately with any allegations made against staff and the procedures must comply with the guidance set out in Working together to safeguard children and the statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education.
Keeping children safe in education 2025 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Schools are expected to have a two-tier system for dealing with concerns and allegations in relation to the behaviour of staff:

- Low level concerns that do not involve harm to a child but raise concerns about the staff member's professional behaviour will be dealt with via internal procedures based on the school's staff conduct policies.

- Concerns and allegations that involve possible harm to a child will be dealt with under this policy. This includes any concerns relating to transferrable risks even where the named child has not been harmed on this occasion.

Haringey follows the London Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (**section 7**) and schools should be aware of their role under these procedures.

7. Allegations against staff or volunteers, who work with children - London Safeguarding Children Board: Child Protection Procedures

Relevant statutory guidance;

Working Together to Safeguard Children: Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Guidance about the use of physical restraint in schools for governing bodies, headteachers and school staff:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools

Guidance regarding making a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service(DBS)
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs

4. **Principles**

The welfare of pupils is paramount; all staff members and volunteers have a duty to take any necessary action to safeguard and promote the pupil's welfare.

The pupil's welfare must be taken into account throughout the duration of any investigation and appropriate services provided where needed.

Parents, pupils and staff should be made aware of this policy so that everyone is clear about how concerns can be raised and what actions are likely to happen when an allegation is made.

Information should be shared in a timely way but only for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Those staff members wishing to raise concerns anonymously will be supported through the school's whistle-blowing procedures.

All responses should be fair, transparent and balanced and should ensure the safety of children whilst supporting those adults who are the subject of allegations.

School must have a named person who is responsible for the management of allegations against staff and to whom allegations and concerns should be reported in the first instance. This will normally be the head teacher, a designated governor or the designated safeguarding lead.

Schools should also appoint a deputy to deal with allegations in the named person's absence or in the event that the named person has an allegation made against them. Allegations against head teachers should be referred to the Chair of governors.

Haringey has a named Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose role is to oversee the management of all cases involving allegations against staff. The LADO will provide advice to schools on individual cases, liaise with Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW) and the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) where required and monitor and review the progress of cases.

Haringey's Designated Officers are:

- Pauline Morris (Head of ESQA, Safeguarding & Social Care)
- Finola Owens (LADO Manager)

Email: LADO@haringey.gov.uk
T. 020 8489 2968

5. **The difference between an allegation and a concern**

The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out above or may do so without warranting consideration of either a police investigation or enquires by local authority children's social care services. In these cases, local arrangements should be followed to resolve cases without delay.

It might not be clear whether an incident constitutes an 'allegation'. It is important to remember that in order to be an allegation the alleged incident has to be sufficiently serious as to suggest that harm has or may have been caused harm to a child/ren or that the alleged behaviour indicates the individual may pose a risk of harm to children (or otherwise meet the criteria above). Issues that do not meet this threshold may constitute conduct or disciplinary issues and should be addressed by employers using the appropriate organisational procedures.

If it is difficult to determine the level of risk associated with an incident the following should be considered:

- Was the incident a disproportionate or inappropriate response in the context of a challenging situation?

- Where the incident involved an inappropriate response to challenging behaviour, had the member of staff had training in managing this?

- Does the member of staff understand that their behaviour was inappropriate and express a wish to behave differently in the future? For example, are they willing to undergo training?

- Does the child or family want to report the incident to the police or would they prefer the matter to be dealt with by the employer?

- Have similar allegations been made against the employee – is there a pattern developing?

Incidents which fall short of the threshold could include an accusation that is made second or third hand and the facts are not clear, or the member of staff alleged to have done this was not there at the time; or there is confusion about the account.

Whether an incident constitutes an allegation and hence needs to be dealt with through these procedures, may need to be discussed by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO or also known as Designated Officer DO) and the employer's safeguarding lead. If it falls short of this threshold there may still be a role for the LADO to provide advice and support to the employer. Where the matter constitutes a conduct or performance issue, the employer should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedures and let the LADO know of the outcome.

Initial response to an allegation or concern- Allegations may arise following a complaint from a parent or pupil or through concerns raised by other staff members. All allegations must be reported to the responsible person within the school immediately.

A written note of the details of the allegation, including times, dates, locations and the nature of the concern must be agreed with the responsible person. Pupils should not be promised confidentiality.

The responsible person should carry out preliminary enquiries to establish the facts and whether there is any evidential basis to the allegation before making a referral to the LADO.

This should help the responsible person decide whether the incident meets the threshold for referral as set out in **Section 2** of this guidance or if the matter should be dealt with as a low-level incident under the school's staff conduct policies. Where the responsible person is unclear as to which process to follow, the LADO can be contacted for a "no names" discussion so that advice can be given.

The responsible person should not speak to the staff member at this stage but should only do so once they have established that a LADO referral will not be needed or after taking initial advice from the LADO.

The responsible person must notify the Haringey LADO within **1 working day** of all allegations made against members of staff. The responsible officer should complete the LADO Agency reporting form and email this to the LADO mailbox LADO@haringey.gov.uk.The referral form is available at:

https://haringeyscp.org.uk/p/about-us/welcome-to-haringey-multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements

The LADO will contact the referrer as soon as possible and to discuss the case and decide what action to take. However, it is recognised that in some emergency situations, schools

may have to take immediate action to protect pupils and may contact the LADO by telephone to discuss the matter to agree urgent action.

Following notification, initial discussions between the school representative and the LADO should look at all the available information about the incident or allegation, the staff member and the child involved (including details of any previous allegations made by the child and their family) and decide if the allegation is serious enough to be dealt with under this policy.

Consideration should also be given to the safety and welfare of other children at the school and the staff member's own children and a decision made about taking any action to safeguard them.

The school representative and the LADO should agree what action to take, which may be:

- referral to the police for a criminal investigation
- referral to CSSW for assessment and possible child protection investigation
- initiation of disciplinary proceedings against the member of staff
- no further action to be taken.

Some cases may not involve harm to pupils and will not require an immediate response from the police or CSSW; in these cases, agreement will be made for the school to deal with the matter under local school policy as professional standards matter. If following the school's own investigations there are concerns, the school should refer the matter back to the LADO for action to be taken under this policy.

If the case raises serious concerns immediate action will be taken under this policy.

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 and college staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Where action will be taken, the LADO will liaise with the police and CSSW to ensure appropriate referrals are made and that all relevant information is passed on. The LADO and responsible person should also consider:

- if any further information is needed to assist the investigation
- whether any immediate action needs to be taken to protect pupils
- whether parents should be notified of the allegations (although in some cases this will be unavoidable, for example if the child requires medical treatment)
- how the child and their parents will be supported during the process
- whether any regulatory body such as Ofsted needs to be informed of the allegation.

Consideration should also be given to whether the seriousness of the allegations warrants the member of staff being suspended or whether they should continue to have contact with the child involved or any other pupil. **See section 8** for further guidance on this.

The member of staff should be informed of the allegation and given as much information as possible, unless there are good reasons for not doing so. In cases where a criminal or child protection investigation is possible, the LADO should seek the advice of the police and CSSW regarding what information can be shared.

The school and the LADO should both make a written note of discussions and decisions should be agreed and the reasons for taking any particular course of action noted. This is particularly important in cases where no further action will be taken.

If the LADO believes that the pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm, a referral will be made to CSSW and an **ASV meeting** convened to share information and agree on further action.

The meeting will be chaired by the LADO and should be attended by the responsible person from the school, a representative from the police CAIT and any other relevant person or agency, for example HR or a representative from the employment agency supplying a temporary staff member.

The ASV meeting will:

- Assess if the allegations involve a possible criminal offence or require a children's services investigation or should be dealt with by the school.

- Decide whether or not the pupil has or is likely to suffer significant harm and whether to instigate a child protection and/or criminal investigation which may be jointly conducted between the police and CSSW;

- Look at what disciplinary processes should be put in place;

- Consider the allegation in the light of any previous allegations or concerns and whether the staff member was acting reasonably in line with the school's behaviour policy

- Make a decision about suspending the staff member where this is a proportionate response (**see section 8**);

- Consider what action should be taken to ensure the safety of the pupil involved and all other pupils;

- Agree the plan for investigating the allegation and providing support to the staff member and the child whilst the investigation is on-going;

- Agree what information should be shared between agencies and how issues relating to media reporting or containing speculation will be dealt with.

The ASV meeting may consider suspending the member of staff **but** other alternative arrangements to ensure the member of staff has no contact with the child involved should be considered in the first instance before suspending the staff member.

It is a school decision as to whether or not to suspend the staff member and this should be in accordance with the school's own policies on staff conduct.

Where the initial consideration or strategy meeting decides the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence or require a children's services investigation it should be dealt with

by the school. In such cases if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be instituted within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

If the strategy meeting decides a Section 47 enquiry or police investigation is required any unilateral action by the school will need to be suspended, unless otherwise agreed, until their investigations are complete. Protocols for sharing information a police or children's services investigation need to be agreed especially as a common outcome will be to refer the issue back to the school to consider as a disciplinary issue. The strategy meeting should also consider what support should be provided to the member of staff and others who may be affected and how they will be kept up to date with the progress of the investigation.

Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action the employer should discuss who will undertake that with the LADO. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the disciplinary investigation to be conducted by a person who is independent of the employer or the person's line manager to ensure objectivity. In any case the investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the employer within 10 working days.

The following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

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

<u>Review ASV meeting</u>

A review ASV meeting should be held within a reasonable timescale in order to review the actions agreed at the initial strategy meeting and agree what further action should be taken.

The review should consider the outcome of any investigations carried out by the police and CSSW and whether there is enough evidence to pursue the allegation further or take action under child protection procedures.

If no further action will be taken by CSSW or the police, the meeting should agree what further steps the school should take to ensure the safety of pupils, for example what further investigation should be carried out by the school or what action to take with regard to the member of staff involved.

6. **Supply teachers and all contracted staff**

Schools should be aware that supply teachers and others who are not directly employed by the school will still be subject to these procedures and any allegations made against these staff must be investigated in the same way, even if the school decides to end the staff member's contract of employment.

The school should take the lead in referring the matter and investigating the allegation in partnership with the LADO under these procedures but employment agencies and others are expected to co-operate, and should be invited to the strategy discussion to ensure their role is clarified.

Schools should ensure that supply teachers and others are aware of their right to support from a trade union or colleague during the investigation process (**See para. 380 – 383 of the KCSIE 2024**).

7. **Organisations or Individuals using school premises**
If an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises, schools and college should follow their own local procedures, including informing the LADO (**See para. 384 of the KCSIE 2024**).

8. **Governors**
If an allegation is made against a governor, schools and college should follow their own local procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, they should follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

9. **Suspension**
School must consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at the school until the allegation or concern is resolved. An individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. School Leadership should seek advice from HR before a decision to suspend is made.

Suspension should be considered only in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. Suspension should not be the default option but if used the reasons and justification should be recorded by the school and the individual notified of the reasons.

The ASV meeting may advise a school to suspend but the actual decision will rest with the Head teacher or Chair of Governors.

Before making a decision to suspend, consideration should be given to potential permanent professional reputational damage to the employee that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unfounded, unsubstantiated, malicious, or false.

Based on assessment risk the following alternatives should be considered by the Head Teacher before suspending a member of staff:

- redeployment within the school or college 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;
- redeployment 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, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted;
- temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another school in a different location, for example to an alternative school or college or for the local authority or academy trust.

Where an interim prohibition order is in place for teaching staff following an allegation and the TRA are carrying out an investigation, the member of staff must not carry out any teaching duties until the matter is resolved. Schools should put in place policies in relation to pay during this period.

10. **Supporting those involved- Duty of care**

The school have a duty of care to their employees. They should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations and disciplinary process. Support for the individual is key 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 local authority 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. When appropriate they should also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is provided by the employer. Schools can refer staff to "workplace options" if they buy into this service.

The school 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. Particular care needs to 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 must 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 a 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 local authority children's social care services need to be involved, the head should consult those agencies and agree what information can be disclosed to the parents.

They 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 prohibition on reporting or publishing allegations about teachers in section 141F of the Education Act 2002.

11. **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.

Information should be shared between all agencies at the initial discussion and ASV meetings about the person who is subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim in order to gather as much information as possible to make an informed judgement on what action to take.

At the initial discussion, the school representative should take advice from the LADO, Police, HR and children's social care services to agree the following:

- Who needs to know and, importantly, 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

Consent must be obtained from the individual to share information with third parties, for example police statements or child protection investigations being passed on to schools for the purposes of disciplinary proceedings.

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained whilst any investigation is on-going and the Police will not make public any details of criminal investigations unless and until the person involved is charged.

All those involved, including parents and pupils, must be made aware of the statutory reporting restrictions in place to ensure the identity of the staff member and the victim is not made public. This includes posting information about the allegation on social networking sites.

12. **Allegation Outcomes**

The following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

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;

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.

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

13. **Action following a criminal investigation or a prosecution**

The police or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) should inform the school and LADO straight away when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or if it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or not to continue to prosecute the case after person has been charged. In those circumstances the LADO should discuss with the head teacher, and chair of governors whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed.

Action on conclusion of a case

If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, the school and HR discuss in the case of a teacher a referral to TRA. A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of inclusion on the barred lists and must be made.

There is also a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct (including inappropriate sexual conduct) that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child. In such circumstances, the duty to refer an individual to the DBS arises where an employer

has removed the individual from relevant work with children or the person has chosen to cease relevant work in circumstances where they would have been removed had they not done so.

Professional misconduct cases should be referred to the relevant regulatory body. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person from working in regulated activity, which will include work in schools and other educational establishments. Local authorities & schools and other bodies all have a statutory duty to make reports, and to provide relevant information to the DBS. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the member of staff involved and within one month of ceasing to use the person's services.

In respect of malicious or unsubstantiated allegations

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the LADO should refer the matter to the children's social care services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services or may have been abused by someone else. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the head teacher, principal or proprietor should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil who made it; or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible, even if he or she was not a pupil.

14. **Return to work**

Where a member of staff returns to work following suspension as it would have been a stressful period for them. Schools should consider how best to facilitate their return and take advice from their HR provider. The staff member should be offered support to help them with their return and a phased return, reinduction into work and/or mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. Support should also be available to parents and children. Consideration should be given to how to manage contact between the pupil and staff member in the light of the allegation.

15. **Resignations and Settlement agreements**

Full investigations into allegations must proceed even if the person involved resigns as it is important that the matter is properly dealt with and that a resolution or conclusion is reached and appropriate action taken.

It is important to decide whether allegations are substantiated and what further action may have to be taken to safeguard children through referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulations Agency even if the staff member involved has left the school

Schools should not use settlement agreements that allow a person to resign with a reference in return for not initiating disciplinary proceedings in cases where allegations of abuse of children are involved. As stated above, it is crucial that all allegations are fully investigated and failure to refer to the DBS or TRA when the criteria for doing so are met would be a criminal offence on the part of the school.

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

16. **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 a person's confidential personnel file, 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 Disclosures 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 record should be retained at least until the person has reached normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer

17. **References**
Cases in which an allegation was found to be false, unfounded, 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 allegations should be included in references, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions.

18. **Learning lessons**
At the conclusion of a case where the allegations are substantiated, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

19. **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 children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Part 2

20. **Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold- (Low Level Concerns)**
This should be read in conjunction with the staff code of conduct and Keeping children Safe in Education (**2025, Part 4**).

KCSE 2024 requires schools to record and address low level concerns to enable schools to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early, minimise the risk of abuse and ensure employees are clear about professional boundaries. A low level concern does not mean that it is insignificant but that is does not meet the harm threshold (explained in section

one of this procedure) or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples given in KCSE of such behaviour could include but are not limited to:

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,
- humiliating children; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Rhodes Avenue Primary school will:

- ensure all staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is (as set out in the Staff Code of Conduct Policy), and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
    - empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns;
    - provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised, for both the child/ren and the adult; and,
    - helping identify any weakness in the school or colleges safeguarding system.

21. **Sharing low-level concerns**

All low-level concerns will be reported to the headteacher; low-level concerns about the headteacher will be reported to the chair of governors. Reports about supply staff and contractors will be reported to their employers. (**See para. 440 – 443 of the KCSIE 2024**)

22. **Recording low-level concerns**

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.

Schools should decide where these records are kept, but they must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) (**see paragraph 444-447 of the KCSIE 2024 for more information**).

Records should 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 or college should 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.

Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college 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.

23. **References**

Part three of KCSIE guidance 2024 is clear that schools and colleges should 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 (**see paragraph 448 of the KCSIE 2024 for more information**). 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.

24. **Responding to low-level concerns**

The school will respond to reports of low-level concerns in accordance to the school conduct procedures (**see paragraph 449-452 of the KCSIE 2024 for more information**). If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher should 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

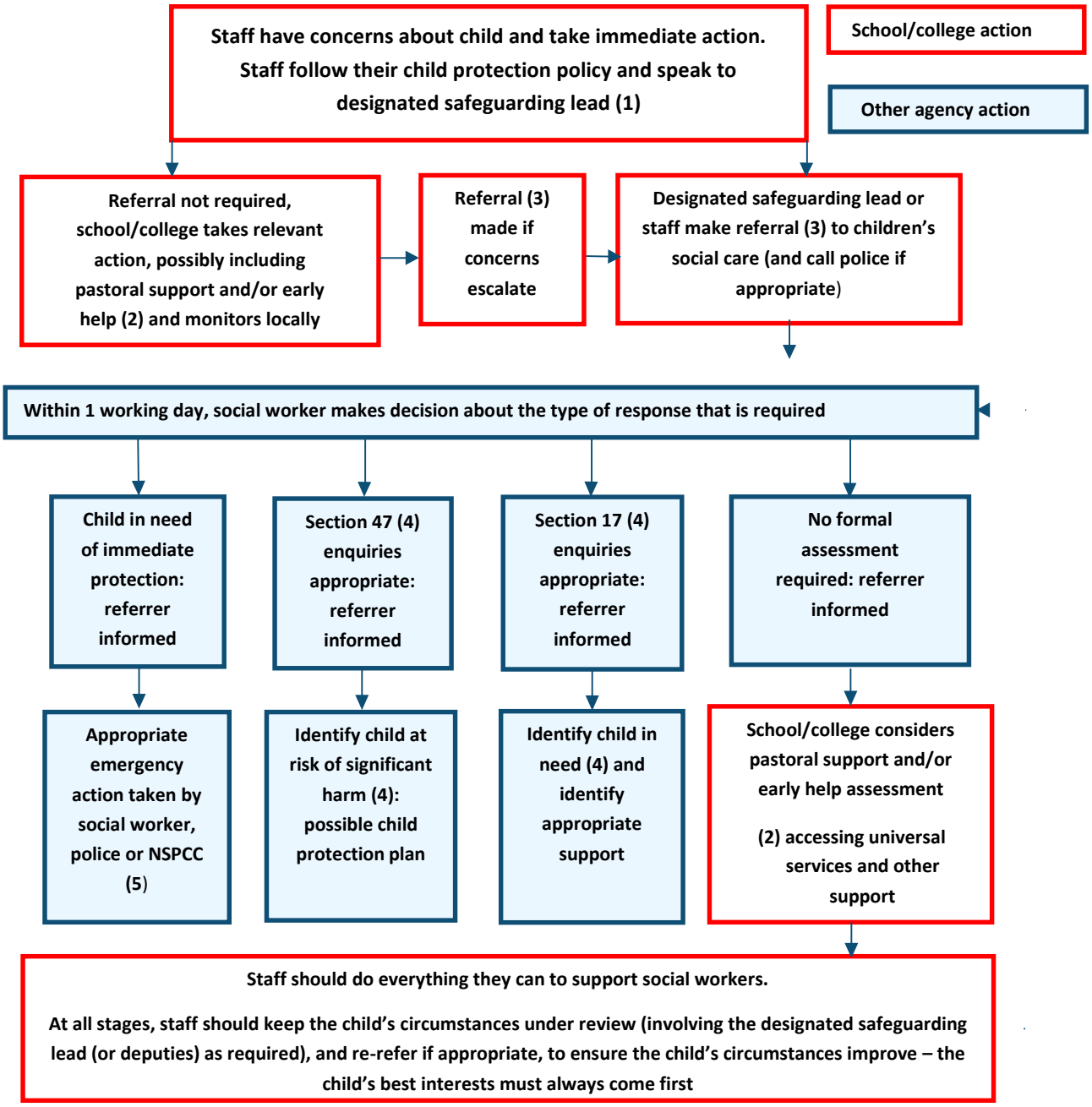
For more detailed guidance and case studies on low- level concerns can be found in

- developing-and-implementing-a-low-level-concerns-policy-a-guide-for-organisations-which-work-with-children/
- developing-and-implementing-a-low-level-concerns-policy.pdf (farrer.co.uk)

Document Control

Version History	0.3			
Version History	0.1	SCG Approved		26.09.2022
Review Date	This Policy will be reviewed yearly in September/October to ensure compliance with any changes to KCSIE Document.			
V2	Update – incorporating KCSIE 01 Sept 2023	SCG Approved		22.01.2023
V3	Update – incorporating KCSIE 01 Sept 2024	**Changes** 1. All references to KCSIE 2023 Replaced with Sept 2024 **2.** 2023 paragraph "Governors" previously Paragraph 7 is now moved to 8 and new paragraph 7 "Organisations or Individuals using school premises" added.		
	FINAL	**V3**	**SCG Approved**	21.10.2024

Appendix 1: What to do if you have concerns about safeguarding practices- Actions where there are concerns about a child.



In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part Four of this guidance.

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of **Working Together to Safeguard Children** provides detailed guidance on the early help process.

Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare

Full details are in Chapter one of **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.