



Trinity Multi Academy Trust

Policy:	Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy (Including Low Level concerns)
Date or review:	September 2022
Date of next review:	September 2023
Lead professional:	Head of HR
Status:	Statutory

1. Purpose of policy and guiding principles

- a) The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent approach for managing allegations made against members of staff. Allegations are broken into two types:
 - a) Allegations that **may** meet the harm threshold
 - b) Allegations / concerns that **do not** meet the harm threshold, referred to as 'low level concerns'
- b) The purpose of this policy is:
 - a) to comply with Department for Education guidance ("Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018" and "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022") and any subsequent guidance.
 - b) to provide a consistent and transparent approach to how allegations made against a member of staff will be dealt with.
 - c) to establish a process which is fair to all employees.
- c) All matters relating to allegations are dealt with under the trust's child protection procedures and, therefore, confidentiality is essential. Information should be shared on a "need to know" basis only and all documentation should be carefully stored.
- d) This policy covers all members of staff (regardless of their contract of employment), supply teachers and any volunteers who are engaged within the trust. The term 'member of staff' is used throughout this policy, but applies to individuals who are employed, or engaged in these capacities, including volunteers.
- e) This policy only covers allegations about a member of staff, where a student is involved. Where students are not involved in a complaint / concern, this will be dealt with through the staff disciplinary or grievance policies, depending on the nature of the issue.
- f) Should the allegation be made against the Principal then this should be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Local Governing Board immediately. In such cases where the policy refers to the involvement of the Principal then "the Chair of the Governing Body" should be substituted for "the Principal".
- g) Should the allegation be made against the CEO then this should be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Board of Directors immediately. In such cases, where the policy refers to the involvement of the CEO then "the Chair of the Board" should be substituted for "the CEO".
- h) In an academy, the Chair of the Local Governing Body is contactable via the Clerk to the LGB, and contact information is in the Staff Code of Conduct.
- i) The trust has a duty of care towards its employees. Effective support will be provided for an employee facing an allegation and the trust will undertake to deal with the matter efficiently, fairly and consistently. This is to provide protection for the child as well as supporting the adult.

2. Links with other policies or legislation

- a) This policy links with terms and conditions of employment for all staff.
- b) Trinity Multi Academy Trust will treat all employees equally, in accordance with the Equality Policy.
- c) This policy is underpinned by the principals of the Children's Act, Education Act and Data Protection legislation.
- d) This policy links to the Staff Disciplinary Policy, the Complaints Policy, the suite of Safeguarding Policies and Child Protection procedures, the Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy.
- e) This policy is supported by the Staff Code of Conduct and Child Protection training.

3. Consultation

- a) This policy has been developed in consultation with recognised Trade Unions.
- b) The policy was approved by Directors after consultation with the recognised Trade Unions.

4. Allegations that may meet the harm threshold:

- 4.1 An allegation against a member of staff is defined as meeting the harm threshold if it is alleged that the member of staff 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 would 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 (this also includes behaviour that may have happened outside of the work environment)
- 4.2 Allegations may be received in a variety of ways, including:
- direct complaint by a student to another staff member.
 - direct complaint by a parent/carer to another staff member.
 - concerns raised by parties (such as employees, contractors, volunteers, agency supply staff, work placements and members of the public) who may have been told about, or witnessed something of concern.
 - direct contact by parent/carer to the local authority, or other external agency.
 - anonymous referral.
 - direct complaint to the assessment team or the police.

5 Low Level Concerns

- 5.1 The term 'low level' concern does not mean that the allegation 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 trust 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 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 5.2 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 trust policy
 - engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
 - humiliating pupils
- 5.3 Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from different sources, including:
- suspicion
 - complaint
 - disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation
 - a result of vetting checks undertaken
- 5.4 These examples exist on a wide spectrum, from behaviour that is seemingly harmless, to seemingly inappropriate behaviour that is actually innocent. However, on the other end of the spectrum, it could be behaviour that is intended to enable abuse in the future.

7 Procedures for dealing with allegations

- 7.1 The procedure for how the trust will deal with allegations that may meet the harm threshold is outlined in **Appendix 1**.
- 7.2 The procedure for how the trust will deal with allegations against staff and volunteers that are likely to follow a criminal process is outlined in **Appendix 2**.
- 7.3 The procedure for how the trust will deal with allegations made against the Principal, or CEO is outlined in **Appendix 3**.

7.4 The procedure for how the trust will deal with low level concerns, is outlined in **Appendix 4**.

8 Supporting employees

- 8.1 Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible, along with a likely course of action. Guidance will be sought from the LADO as to when this information can be shared. Individuals should be kept informed of the progress of the matter, again taking into consideration LADO guidance as to what can and cannot be shared.
- 8.2 Being the subject of an allegation is likely to cause distress to the member of staff. It can also cause distress to the wider academy or trust community. The trust is able to provide external support, through the approved counselling service or occupation health provider.
- 8.3 Social contact between the individual and work colleagues should not be prevented, unless this is likely to be prejudicial to gathering or presenting evidence.
- 8.4 When a member of staff is suspended they will be provided with a named senior leader, to contact during their suspension.
- 8.5 If and when a suspension is lifted, consideration should be made as to how to supportively facilitate this, and depending on the individual circumstances, a phased return and/or provision of a mentor to provide support in the short term may be appropriate. Guidance from HR should be sought. Consideration should also be made as to how the staff member's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can be best managed, if they are still attending the academy.
- 8.6 Employees will also be advised to seek advice from their professional association or an appropriate work colleague.
- 8.7 Any press enquiries will respect the confidential nature of the matter and will be dealt with by the Chief Operating Officer.

9 Roles and responsibilities

9.1 The role of the Principal/CEO

- The role of CEO is to ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently across the trust.
- The role of Principal is to ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently across an academy.
- The CEO will take the role of Principal where an allegation is made against a member of trust staff (not based in an academy).
- The Principal will be kept informed of any ongoing investigations into allegations, but will not become involved in, nor have details linked to, the allegations. Any such knowledge would prejudice their possible involvement in any future appropriate action which the Principal may be advised to take. In addition, the Principal has to be clear that they are not taking any action that would prejudice the position of the individual under investigation.
- Issues relating to allegations are of a confidential nature in accordance with the trust's Child Protection Procedures. Information should only be shared on a "need to know" basis. Where it becomes apparent that there is a potential impact or perceived impact of any allegation on an academy community the Principal will inform the Chair or Vice Chair of the Local Governing Body. All details will be anonymised.

9.2 The role of the Directors/Governors

- The Directors/Governors will monitor, evaluate and review policies in line with statutory and best practice guidelines.
- The Board of Directors will approve this policy and is committed to ensuring that this policy is applied consistently and fairly.
- Directors/Governors (as appropriate) will receive a relevant factual statement provided by the Head of HR on serious cases. It is important that Directors/Governors should neither become involved in, nor have details linked to, the allegations. Any such knowledge would prejudice their possible involvement in any future appropriate action which the Directors/Governors may be advised to take. In addition, the Directors/Governors have to

be clear that it is not taking any action that would prejudice the position of the individual under investigation.

- The Chair of the Local Governing Body will be involved when the allegations refer to the Principal. The Chair of the Board of Directors would be involved if the allegation referred to the CEO. When the outcome of the investigation is known and it is appropriate for the Board of Directors/Local Governing Body to deal with the matter, the Chair will decide the course of action that will be taken. This will be within the trust's agreed policies.

9.3 The role of the employee/other staff

- DSLs in each academy will ensure that the new staff induction programme in their academy ensures that new employees are made aware of the academy's child protection and safeguarding procedures. This includes introduction to the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Appropriate leaders and managers will ensure that when volunteers, supply teachers or other visitors are invited to work within an academy, they are made aware of the academy's child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- All staff will be familiar with policies and procedures relevant to Child Protection.
- All staff are responsible for attending relevant training events, undertaking training programmes, reading training materials and updating their professional knowledge.
- All staff are responsible for raising concerns, as outlined in this policy.
- All staff are responsible for their own professional conduct, including respecting the confidential and sensitive nature of dealing with allegations against staff.

10 **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 10.1 Through information sharing with each senior leadership team, supported by HR, each serious case will be discussed to establish if lessons can be learnt and policies and practices meet the needs of the academy or trust.
- 10.2 Any concerns will be brought to the Principal in the first instance.
10. The Director with responsibility for child protection will ensure that this policy meets statutory requirements.

Appendix 1

This appendix details how allegations against staff will be dealt with.

1) Initial response to an allegation

- a) The procedures for dealing with allegations needs to be applied with common sense and judgment.
- b) Where applicable, the student making the allegation should not be left alone, or with other students, until there have been consultations with the academy's DSL and a course of action agreed, including the appropriateness of the student remaining in the academy.
- c) The member of staff receiving the complaint must not seek to investigate the allegation themselves, interview or approach students about the matter.
- d) Where possible, details of the allegation should be obtained in writing, signed and dated by the person receiving the allegation and the student or person who is making the allegation. The statement can either be completed by the individual or on their behalf but all statements must be countersigned by the person giving the statement as a true record. All individuals should be given time to re-read their statements to ensure they are a true reflection of events, before they sign and date.
- e) Should the allegation against the member of staff appear to meet any of the criteria outlined in 4 (main body of this policy), then the DSL, or other designated person, will report the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer the same day the allegation is received. Before contacting the LADO, the DSL or other designated person will undertake **basic** enquiries to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, but being careful to not jeopardise any future police investigation, for example:
 - i) was the individual in the school at the time of the allegations?
 - ii) did the individual, or could the individual, have come into contact with the child?
 - iii) are there any witnesses?
 - iv) is there any CCTV footage?
- b) Where the allegation has been referred to the LADO, the academy will not take any action before receiving advice from the LADO on the appropriate action that needs to be taken. The discussion between the DSL and LADO will consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.
- c) When to inform the individual of the allegation will be considered on a case by case basis, with guidance taken, as required from the LADO and if appropriate local authority children's social care and the police. See section 8 (main body of this policy) for further information relating to supporting employees.
- d) Where a serious allegation requires the intervention of children's social care services and/or the police the LADO will consult the appropriate agency.
- e) If there is cause to suspect that a child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the LADO will make the decision whether or not a strategy meeting will be held, in accordance with their procedures. In these circumstances, the strategy discussion will be led by the LADO who will also invite representation from the academy. This will usually be a senior leader.
- f) The police will decide if a criminal investigation will take place. That decision is likely to involve the academy and other multi-agency partners. Please refer to **Appendix 2** for information on how allegations that are likely to follow child protection or criminal process and proceedings.
- g) Where the allegation does not meet the criteria to refer to LADO but still raises a concern about the professionalism or behaviour of a member of staff, or where it is agreed, following investigation by the LADO, academy representatives, or police, that the matter falls into the category of inappropriate behaviour as opposed to child protection, then the academy may still pursue an internal investigation, in line with the Staff Disciplinary policy.
- h) The DSL, or another designated person, will agree with the LADO what the course of action will be, and what will be communicated in writing to the individual. A representative of the academy (or the HR team, if this is more appropriate) will then follow up on any agreed actions.

4) Action following initial consideration

- a) Following agreement with LADO, or where there is no LADO involvement, the academy will deal with the matter using its internal procedures. This ranges from taking no further action to using

the disciplinary process, or to not use the person's services in the future (freelance or agency staff).

- b) Where it has been agreed that an internal investigation should proceed, the Principal will appoint a member of senior leadership to investigate the matter further. In exceptional cases, a member of trust senior leadership may be appointed as an investigating officer. This investigation will follow the investigation process and timelines outlined in the Staff Disciplinary policy.
- c) The trust will make the decision whether to suspend the member of staff during this investigation; to protect the individual, the investigation and staff and students. Suspension should not be the default position, and the individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative and HR advice should be sought. Refer to KCSIE 2022 for further advice on alternatives to suspension. The process of suspension is outlined in the Staff Disciplinary policy.
- d) In preparing their investigation, the investigating officer will pay particular regard to the following:
 - i) a list of potential witnesses, which will include the alleged victim.
 - ii) if the incident occurred in a classroom (or other public area), a random selection of students will be interviewed, if appropriate.
 - iii) assessing the credibility of the person making the allegation. In doing so, consideration should be given to the issues of listening to young people, treating each allegation seriously and professionally and ensuring that the person does not feel intimidated in making the allegation.
 - iv) consent from parents/guardian, if appropriate.
- e) In undertaking the investigation, the investigating officer will pay particular regard to the following:
 - i) the student should be listened to but not interviewed or asked to repeat the account.
 - ii) avoid questions, particularly leading questions.
 - iii) the student should not be interrupted when recalling significant events.
 - iv) all information should be noted carefully, including details such as timing, setting, who was present and what was said, in the child's own words. The account should be obtained verbatim or as near as possible.
 - v) care should be taken not to make assumptions about what the child is saying or to make interpretations.
 - vi) 'listened to' means just that; on no account should suggestions be made to children as to alternative explanations for their worries.
 - vii) all actions subsequently taken should be recorded.
- f) If, at any point, the investigating officer, becomes aware that there may be child protection issues emerging, the investigation will be stopped and referred to the LADO. See section 1e above.
- g) Once the investigation is concluded a recommendation will be made as to whether there is no case to answer, whether to move to disciplinary action or to deal with the matter through informal counselling. The LADO will be informed of this decision.
- h) In any case where Children's Social Care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the student or students are in need of protection, the DSL will take account of any relevant information obtained in the course of those enquiries when considering disciplinary action. It is expected that the LADO will continue to liaise with the academy, or trust representative, on the progress of the case and provide advice or support, as required or requested.

5) Outcome of investigation

- a) The following definitions should be used to determine the outcome of allegation investigations:
 - i) **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
 - ii) **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.
 - iii) **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
 - iv) **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
 - v) **Unfounded:** this reflects cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Each outcome is dealt with below:

6) Outcome of investigation - Substantiated

- a) If the investigation concludes that the matter is substantiated then it would usually move to a disciplinary hearing following the Staff Disciplinary Policy. If the matter is not serious enough to pursue a full disciplinary hearing, then the employee may be issued with a management instruction, as outlined in the Staff Disciplinary Policy.
- b) Refer to section 11 of this appendix for details of record keeping.
- c) If the member of staff resigns before an investigation or disciplinary process is complete, the process should still be followed. It is important that every effort is made to reach and record a conclusion in all cases to ensure the safety or welfare of children.
- d) The individual should be made aware of this and informed about the employer's statutory duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and in the case of teaching staff, the Teacher Regulations Agency (TRA), for their consideration.
- e) The trust will not agree to a settlement agreement or agreed resignation in which the employee seeks to avoid a full investigation and/or referral to the DBS and or TRA. Refer to most recent statutory guidance (e.g. KCSIE 2022) for further advice.

7) Outcome of investigation - Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, False or Malicious

- a) If the investigation concludes that the allegation is unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious there will be no further action against the member of staff.
- b) The LADO and investigating officer 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.
- c) In the case of malicious allegations, the Principal will, if appropriate, seek to discipline the student making the allegation.
- a) The member of staff will be informed, in writing, of the outcome and any other action taken. In all cases, the Principal should speak with the employee to discuss and determine what support is required, to aid the member of staff at that time and avoid difficult situations in the future.
- b) Refer to section 11 for details of record keeping.

8) Informal action

- a) If following investigation, it is recommended not to proceed with disciplinary action but there is a need to support the employee in terms of understanding their professional expectations, the Principal can agree one, or a combination of the following actions:
 - consider whether support, counselling and/or informal professional advice for the employee is appropriate and the form this might take and make arrangements to offer such appropriate support to the employee.
 - consider whether CPD, or other training is appropriate, the form this might take and appropriate arrangements.
 - a temporary change in role or other duties the employee should undertake whilst they seek this support/CPD.

9) Supply Teachers

- a) In the event of a complaint about a supply teacher, the Administration/Cover manager should be contacted and will make the necessary communication with the supply agency, based on HR advice.
- b) In no circumstances should a decision be taken to cease using a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. A decision to suspend their use or redeploy them to another academy may be taken whilst an investigation is undertaken.
- c) Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate with the process. The academy will usually take the lead in any required investigation as the agency will not have direct access to children or other trust staff.
- d) In all cases, the trust will co-operate with the supply agencies procedures and policies in dealing with complaints about their staff.

10) Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- a) In an allegation management meeting or the initial assessment of the case, all agencies involved should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation and the alleged victim.
- b) The investigating officer will take advice from the LADO, the police and the 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
- c) Parents/carers should be told of an allegation as soon as possible or as soon as agreed by the 'LADO'. Parents/carers should be kept informed of the progress of the case only in relation to their child. Careful consideration should be given to the information that is disclosed, particularly in relation to staff members and advice / guidance should be sought from HR or the Chief Operating Officer.
- d) Parents/carers should be made aware of the prohibition on reporting or publishing allegations (outlined in the Education Act 2011). The Act provides restrictions on the publication of material that can identify staff or students. This includes publication via social media. Parents should be advised to seek legal advice in these situations.
- e) The employer will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity during an investigation.
- f) The trust will refer to the LADO for advice on press speculation, breaches of reporting restrictions and any press enquiries will be dealt with by the Chief Operating Officer.

11) Record keeping

- a) Details of allegations following an investigation that are found to have been malicious or false should be removed from personnel records, unless the individual gives their consent for retention of the information.
- b) For all other allegations, i.e. substantiated, unfounded and unsubstantiated it is important that the following information is kept on the file of the person accused:
 - a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
 - details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
 - a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome i.e. substantiated, unfounded or unsubstantiated
 - a copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by local authority children's social care or the police, and
 - a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.
- c) These records must be kept until the individual has reached normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the allegation, if that is longer.
- d) 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.

Appendix 2

This appendix details the procedures for dealing with allegations made against staff or volunteers that are likely to be dealt with under criminal proceedings.

1. Actions following the strategy meeting

- a) Following discussion at the strategy meeting, the police will decide if the complaint is a criminal offence.
- b) At this point the police will liaise with the individual and inform and update the Principal or DSL of how their investigation is progressing.
- c) Where the police are intending to pursue a criminal investigation, the trust will make the decision as to whether the member of staff should be suspended. Suspension should not be the default position, and the individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative and HR advice should be sought. Refer to KCSIE 2022 for further advice on alternatives to suspension. The process of suspension is outlined in the Staff Disciplinary policy.
- d) The matter will be treated as strictly confidential and the academy will not take any action that is likely to prejudice or impact the police investigation. Advice will be sought from the police throughout.
- e) If following the risk assessment, the trust decides not to suspend the employee then provision will be made to ensure that contact with the alleged victim is avoided and any other risks to the academy is minimised. Supervision may be required.

2. Actions following police investigation – No further criminal action

- a) Following the police investigation, the police will update the academy (or trust) representative and LADO of the outcome. If there is no criminal action the trust will then make the decision whether an internal investigation is required, based on whether the individual's actions could constitute inappropriate behaviour or conduct.
- b) If the member of staff is suspended during this investigation, a decision will be made as to whether the suspension remains in place during the internal investigation. HR advice should be sought at this stage.
- c) When the matter has been referred to the police, it should be understood that, where a police investigation has been undertaken the outcome may be that there is "insufficient evidence to proceed". It is normal for this to be the only recorded statement made by the police where they have not taken any further action against a person against whom allegations have been made. This outcome refers to a criminal investigation and the academy may still pursue an internal investigation.

3. Actions following police investigation – Criminal action

- a) Following the police investigation, the police will update the academy (or trust) representative of the outcome. If the police intend to pursue criminal action (including issuing a caution), the trust may pursue disciplinary action in line with the Staff Disciplinary policy.

4. Actions during police investigation

- a) Depending on the nature of the allegations and advice from the police, employees should be aware that the trust can pursue internal disciplinary action during the police investigation.
- b) Any internal investigation would need to recognise the confidential nature of the police investigation and not prejudice this criminal investigation.
- c) HR guidance must be sought.

Appendix 3

This appendix details the procedures for dealing with allegations made against the Principal.

1. Allegations made against the Principal

- a) When the allegation is made about the Principal, direct contact should be made with the Chair of the Local Governing Body and LADO.
- b) Any allegations about a Principal should be referred to the CEO and Head of HR.
- c) The Chair of the Local Governing Body will appoint a suitably trained and experienced Investigating Officer with the support of the Head of HR who will follow procedures in relation to discussion with the LADO to determine whether thresholds for child protection are met.
- d) The LADO or Chair of the Local Governing Board will contact the Principal to inform them of the allegation.
- e) If the allegation falls into the category of inappropriate behaviour, the Chair of the Local Governing Body may obtain support from the Head of HR about how best to proceed.
- f) If the allegation is treated as a Child Protection referral the normal procedures will apply, with the Chair of the Local Governing Body taking the Principal's role in the investigation.
- g) The Chair of the Local Governing Body will consider the need for suspension with the support of the HR Manager and Trustees.

Where allegations are made against the CEO, this should be referred to the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Chair will take the role of the Local Governing Body chair.

Appendix 4

This appendix details the procedure for how the trust will deal with low level concerns

1. Sharing concerns

- a) The trust promotes an open and transparent culture in which **all** concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the trust are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
- b) The trust has a Staff Code of Conduct which outlines the behaviour that is expected of all staff, ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour.
- c) Where a staff member has a concern about the behaviour or conduct of an adult acting on behalf of the trust, this should be reported to the Academy DSL or Deputy DSL
- d) Staff are also encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer, for example if they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe that they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.
- e) Concerns about supply staff / contractors should be notified to the DSL / Deputy DSL who will ensure that their employers are notified so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

2. Responding to and recording low-level concerns

- a) The DSL / Deputy DSL should ensure that the low-level concerns are immediately shared with the Principal. The Principal will work in collaboration with the DSL / Deputy DSL, but will be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low- level concerns.
- b) If there are any doubts as to whether the information that has been shared in fact meets the harm threshold, the DSL or Principal should consult with their LADO.
- c) When a concern is raised, the Principal (or nominated individual) should collect as much information and 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.
- d) Any other records held relating to the low-level concerns regarding that particular staff member should also be reviewed.
- e) The information collected will help the Principal, in collaboration with the DSL, categorise the type of behaviour, and determine whether there is a pattern of such behaviour, to establish what further action (if any) may need to be taken.
- f) Further action could include:
 - Informal action (as detailed in part 8 of Appendix 1)
 - Disciplinary action in accordance with the Staff Disciplinary Policy
 - Progress from a low-level concern to meeting a harm-threshold, in which case a referral to LADO is required (as detailed in Appendix 1)
- g) Consideration should also be given as to whether there are wider cultural issues within the academy that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised or additional CPD may be required.

3. Recording low-level concerns

- a) All low-level concerns should be in writing. The record should:
 - details of the concern
 - the context in which the concern arose
 - details of any action taken and the rationale for the action taken
 - name of the person raising the concern (however if the person wishes to remain anonymous, this should be respected as far as reasonably possible).
- b) These records should be confidentially retained and in accordance with the trust Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy.

- c) Low-level concerns should not be included in references if they relate exclusively to a safeguarding issue.