



## Low level Safeguarding concern policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the main Achieving Aspirations Safeguarding Policy and has been produced to supplement the guidelines laid out in this. Clear procedures are in place to deal with significant safeguarding concerns, the low-level concern policy is to provide a way for all staff to have a recognised way to highlight smaller concerns. These types of concerns can often be more easily missed but by encouraging staff to share their observations a pattern may be identified and potentially allow for early intervention and support.

The Department for Education (2018) has defined safeguarding as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone and by opening clear methods to communicate changes or concerns around service users it is hoped that situations can be monitored, and correct and timely interventions made. It is recognising that a concern no matter how small can be significant and by promoting a culture of safe information sharing no matter its perceived severity, all concerns can be shared. We understand that while a concern may be low level, that can escalate overtime and become something more serious. In response to this Achieving Aspirations has developed procedures to allow staff to easily communicate these low-level concerns to those within the organisation with overall responsibility for safeguarding.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) defines a low-level concern as ‘any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt’. These concerns can fall into many categories, they may suggest physical neglect, emotional neglect or concerns about parental behaviour

- Indications of physical neglect might be issues with a young person's health, nutrition, poor hygiene or inappropriate clothing. Failing to bring required medications or equipment or equipment broken or dirty
- Signs of emotional neglect include poor interaction between the young person and parents, inconsistent parenting, a failure to establish appropriate boundaries, a lack

of family routines and social isolation. Staff may notice changes in a young person's behaviour.

- Parental behaviours associated with neglect include parents prioritising their own needs over those of the young person, behaving inappropriately in front of them, failing to provide adequate supervision, exposing their children to substance abuse, domestic violence or risk of harm.

By encouraging all staff to recognise and report low level concerns it allows changes to be noted which may indicate a family is struggling, early intervention can often prevent difficult situations from escalating. By appropriate, trusted professionals engaging a family in conversation, problems may be identified and intervention and assistance can be sought to resolve a situation.

No single professional can have a full picture of a service users' needs and circumstances. If young people and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. There could be lots of people who have 'low-level' concerns about the same thing but if you do not pass the information on it cannot be addressed.

A robust reporting procedure for low-level concerns can also be used for staff to report concerns around a colleague. This could be something in relation to their behaviour at work and around the service users which is causing concern, for example language used or attitude towards certain service users. It could also provide a means for staff to raise concerns about colleagues that may not be directly related to work but is having an impact on their performance, increased demands in their personal life for example which if recognised and addressed, early support can be offered.

Low-level concerns would be reported via a simple form (see appendix 1) and given to the service manager, these can then be stored securely in accordance with GDPR and data protection policies. Concerns reported can be dealt with directly by the service manager, further information can be collated such as body maps and documentation to support concerns raised. The service manager can take action by speaking directly to the family or discussing with the social worker. If a service manager is unsure how to respond to a low-level concern or concerns are increasing discussions can be had with the wider management team and safeguarding leads to consider how best to address a situation. The need to escalate low level concerns will need to be assessed on an individual basis, but concerns can be shared and support offered in a timely manner.

## References

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2021/october/responding-low-level-concerns-in-education>

DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721581/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/news-events/nfer-blogs/low-level-child-neglect-is-a-high-stakes-issue/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>



Appendix 1

**Low level Safeguarding concerns Reporting Form**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) defines a low-level concern as ‘any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt’

Name of service user:

Date of birth:

Date of stay when concern noted:

Please outline the nature of the concerns you have regarding the service user.

Outline any actions you have taken

Once completed ensure this form is to be given to your service manager. You will receive feedback from your manager regarding the concerns, you have raised and any action taken.

Thank you