



BRIGHTFIELD

— A C A D E M Y —

Inclusion. Choice. Growth.



Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy



Ensuring all concerns about the conduct of staff and volunteers are managed fairly, promptly and in the best interests of learners.



Inclusion.



Choice.



Growth.

Last Update:
June 2026



Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy

The Brightfield Academy

Policy Owner: Head of Provision

Approved by: Directors of The Brightfield Academy

Date Adopted: March 2026

Review Cycle: Bi-Annually

Next Review: September 2026

THE Brightfield ACADEMY

Managing Allegations & Low-Level Concerns Policy

2026–2027

"Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Professional curiosity protects children."

1. Policy Introduction

Purpose and Aim

Brightfield Academy is committed to creating and maintaining a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and where concerns about the behaviour or conduct of adults working with children are recognised, reported and managed promptly, fairly and effectively.

The purpose of this policy is to:

safeguard children and young people from harm;

promote a culture of openness, accountability and professional curiosity;

ensure allegations and concerns about adults are responded to appropriately and without delay;

provide clear guidance for staff, volunteers, learners, parents/carers and visitors on how to raise concerns;

ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding guidance and Buckinghamshire safeguarding procedures;

protect both children and adults by ensuring concerns are managed fairly, consistently and confidentially.

Brightfield Academy recognises that maintaining high standards of professional conduct is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

2. Legislative & Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

Working Together to Safeguard Children

Guidance for Safer Working Practice

The Children Act 1989 & 2004

Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)

3. Key Principles

Brightfield is committed to:

safeguarding children effectively

taking all concerns seriously

responding proportionately and fairly

maintaining confidentiality appropriately

promoting a culture where concerns can be raised safely

We recognise that:

creating a culture of openness helps identify concerns early and protects everyone.

4. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies where concerns arise about an adult who:

works with children

may pose a risk to children

has behaved in a way that causes concern regarding suitability to work with children

This includes both:

formal allegations

low-level concerns

5. Definition of an Allegation

An allegation may relate to an adult who has:

behaved in a way that harmed a child or may have harmed a child

possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child

behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children

behaved in a way that may indicate unsuitability to work with children

Responsibility and Review

Overall responsibility for this policy rests with the Directors of Brightfield Academy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Kathleen Larcombe

Telephone: **07545 123930**

Email: **dsl@brightfieldacademy.co.uk**

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Nik Larcombe

Telephone: **07395 111919**

Email: **nik@brightfieldacademy.co.uk**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
Buckinghamshire Council
Telephone: **01296 382070**
Email: **secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk**

The LADO should be contacted whenever an allegation is made that an adult working with children has behaved in a way that may have harmed a child, committed a criminal offence against a child, behaved towards a child in a manner that indicates they may pose a risk of harm, or behaved in a way that indicates they may no longer be suitable to work with children.

6. Definition of a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is behaviour that:

does not meet the threshold for a formal allegation
may still be inconsistent with professional standards
may create a sense of unease, concern, or boundary blurring

Examples may include:

over-familiar behaviour
inconsistent professional boundaries
inappropriate language or joking
private messaging outside agreed systems
favouritism
unnecessary physical contact
social media boundary concerns
Low-level concerns should never be ignored.

7. Creating a Safe Reporting Culture

Brightfield actively promotes a culture where:

concerns are raised early
professional curiosity is encouraged
safeguarding discussions are normalised
staff feel safe to report concerns

All adults working at Brightfield are expected to:

report concerns promptly
act professionally
prioritise learner welfare at all times

8. Immediate Safeguarding Actions

Where a concern arises:

the safety and welfare of learners must be prioritised immediately
appropriate action must be taken to reduce risk
safeguarding procedures must be followed without delay

Where required:

emergency services may be contacted
the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) may be consulted immediately

9. Reporting Concerns

Concerns should be reported immediately to:
the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
or senior leadership where appropriate

If the concern relates to the DSL or senior leader:
concerns should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or relevant external authority

Staff should:
report factual information only
avoid investigating concerns themselves
avoid discussing concerns widely with others

9A. What Should I Do If I Am Concerned About Another Adult?

If you become concerned about the behaviour or conduct of a member of staff, volunteer, contractor, visitor or any adult working on behalf of Brightfield Academy, you must act immediately. Do not:

- investigate the concern yourself;
- confront the individual;
- discuss the concern with colleagues unless necessary for safeguarding;
- attempt to gather evidence.

Instead:

- record what you have seen or heard;
- report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- where the concern relates to the DSL, report directly to the Director or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- where a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police (999) and then inform the DSL or LADO.

All concerns will be treated seriously and managed in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Buckinghamshire safeguarding procedures.

10. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL (or senior leader) is responsible for:

- receiving concerns
- assessing immediate risk
- consulting with the LADO where required
- ensuring appropriate safeguarding action
- maintaining confidential records
- ensuring procedures are followed fairly and consistently

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO should be contacted where an allegation suggests that an adult working with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;
- behaved in a way that indicates they may no longer be suitable to work with children.

The LADO should normally be contacted within one working day.

Buckinghamshire LADO

Telephone: **01296 382070**

Email: **secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk**

No internal investigation should begin until advice has been obtained from the LADO where appropriate.

12. Managing Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns will be:

recorded appropriately

reviewed proportionately

used to identify patterns or emerging risks

Responses may include:

discussion with the individual

clarification of expectations

support or supervision

additional training

Brightfield recognises that:

early identification of low-level concerns helps prevent escalation.

13. Confidentiality

Information relating to allegations or concerns will be handled:

sensitively

confidentially

in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements

Information will only be shared:

on a need-to-know basis

where safeguarding or legal obligations require it

14. Record Keeping

Brightfield will maintain clear and secure records of:

allegations

low-level concerns

actions taken

decisions made

outcomes

Records will be:

factual

objective

securely stored

15. Supporting Learners

Where allegations or concerns arise, Brightfield will ensure:

learners feel listened to

safeguarding support is provided

wellbeing is prioritised

communication is handled sensitively

16. Whistleblowing

Brightfield Academy encourages all staff and volunteers to raise genuine concerns about unsafe practice, poor safeguarding culture or the conduct of colleagues.

No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

Concerns should normally be raised with:

the Designated Safeguarding Lead;

a Director;

the Local Authority Designated Officer (where appropriate).

If staff believe concerns are not being appropriately addressed internally they may contact:

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

0800 028 0285

help@nspcc.org.uk

How Parents and Carers Can Raise a Concern

Parents, carers and learners who have concerns about the conduct of any adult working at Brightfield Academy should report these immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the concern relates to either of those individuals, concerns may be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Concerns may be raised in person, by telephone or in writing. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed confidentially wherever possible.

Buckinghamshire LADO

Telephone: **01296 382070**

Email: **secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk**

When and How to Report

Concerns should be reported:

- immediately where a child may be at risk of harm;
- on the same working day for all allegations or low-level concerns;
- verbally to the DSL in the first instance;
- followed by a written record using LearnTreK before the end of the working day.

The written record should include:

- date and time;
- factual observations;
- names of those involved;
- witnesses;
- actions already taken.

Anonymity

Brightfield Academy recognises that some individuals may feel anxious about reporting concerns. While named reports enable more effective enquiries, anonymous concerns will also be considered where sufficient information is provided.

17. Supporting Staff

Brightfield recognises that allegations may be distressing for staff.

Support may include:

supervision

welfare support

clear communication regarding procedures

access to guidance and advice

Brightfield will ensure that:

concerns are handled fairly

individuals are treated respectfully

procedures remain proportionate and evidence-based

18. Suspension

Suspension is not an automatic response.

Any decision regarding suspension will:

prioritise safeguarding

consider risk carefully

follow external guidance where appropriate

Alternative arrangements may be considered where suitable.

19. False, Unfounded or Malicious Allegations

Where concerns are found to be:

unfounded

false

malicious

appropriate support and follow-up actions will be considered.

Where a malicious allegation is identified:

this may be addressed through behaviour or safeguarding procedures where appropriate

Brightfield recognises the importance of:

protecting children while also ensuring fairness to staff

20. Professional Boundaries

All adults working at Brightfield must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

Staff must:

avoid over-familiarity

maintain appropriate communication

use authorised systems

avoid behaviour that could be misinterpreted

This policy should be read alongside:

Staff Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Online Safety Policy

21. Training & Awareness

All staff will receive training appropriate to their role, including:

safeguarding

professional boundaries

recognising low-level concerns

allegations procedures

Regular updates and safeguarding discussions will reinforce safe practice.

22. Monitoring & Review

Leadership will:

monitor safeguarding culture

review patterns or repeated concerns

evaluate effectiveness of procedures

identify training or support needs

This policy will be:

reviewed annually

updated in line with legislation and KCSIE guidance

reviewed following significant safeguarding incidents



BRIGHTFIELD ACADEMY

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REPORTING CONCERNS Flowchart



Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If in doubt, speak to the DSL.



**I HAVE A CONCERN
ABOUT AN ADULT'S BEHAVIOUR**



**Is a child at
immediate risk?**

YES



**Call 999
immediately**



**Inform the
DSL immediately**

NO



**Record factual
information**
(what, where, when,
who, how)



**Report to the DSL
as soon as possible**



Concern about the DSL?

YES



**Contact the LADO
directly**

NO



DSL assesses the concern



Low-Level Concern
Recorded and managed
in line with our
Low-Level Concerns
Procedure



**Internal
Management**
Managed internally
in line with relevant
policies and procedures



Consult LADO
Seek advice from the
Local Authority
Designated Officer
(LADO)



Formal Allegation
Follow Managing
Allegations Procedure
and ensure LADO
involvement



All actions are recorded securely on LearnTrek

Records are confidential and stored in line with our Data Protection Policy.



INCLUSION



CHOICE



GROWTH



BRIGHTFIELD — ACADEMY —

Inclusion. Choice. Growth.

We are
here to listen
and help.



If You Are Worried About the Behaviour of an Adult

A guide for children, young people and parents/carers

1



Tell someone you trust.

This could be:

- the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- the Deputy DSL
- another trusted member of staff
- your parent or carer



2



Your concern will be listened to seriously.

You will be treated with respect and your worry will be taken seriously.



3



Brightfield Academy will decide what action needs to be taken.

We will look into your concern carefully.



4



If appropriate, other people will be involved.

This could include the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Social Care or the Police.



5



You will be supported throughout the process.

We are here to help you.



You are not alone.

It is never your fault.
It is right to speak up.

You can contact our safeguarding team:

☎ 07545 123930 (DSL)

☎ 07395 111919 (Deputy DSL)

✉ dsl@brightfieldacademy.co.uk

We are
here for
you.