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# **Transferring Child Protection / Safeguarding Files between Educational Settings Policy**

**March 2024**

***Version 2.1***

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 The September 2023 Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance for Schools and colleges – says:

- *Where children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO) or the named person with oversight for SEND in colleges, are aware as required.*

## 2 Good practice

2.1 A clear statement about the process of transferring information is included in our safeguarding/child protection policy. By stating that we have a duty of care to share information ensures that parents understand that this is our practice.

2.2 A Privacy Notice is available parents on our website and new parents, who join in the year should also be given a copy of the Notice. This is a general Privacy Notice to cover all data held and processed in the school and therefore includes the transfer of child protection files.

## 3 What should be in a Child Protection/Safeguarding File?

3.1 A child protection /safeguarding file is the record kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of any safeguarding concerns for the child. These concerns should be factual and not have opinions attached. This file may only have one concern in it or it may contain an extensive history. **Regardless of its size, the file must be passed on, in its entirety, to the next educational setting.**

3.2 It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that the file is kept up to date and a chronology is maintained in each case. A chronology is the brief overview of the school's concerns and highlights significant events for the child. It should not contain full details, just a brief statement of what has occurred, who was involved and what happened as an outcome.

3.3 The contents of the file can include:

- *Basic details*
- *Chronology*
- *Cause for Concern forms*
- *Referrals to First Response (for Early Help or Children's Social Care) and outcomes of referrals made*

- *Domestic abuse information e.g. police notifications*
- *MARAC information/ Child Protection Conference minutes/ school contribution/ core group minutes*
- *Any CYPS assessments*
- *Common Assessment Framework/ Single Assessment Framework(CAF/SAF)*
- *Multi-Agency meetings minutes*

3.4 Should third party reports be included, then the owner of such reports should be aware that it will be included in the child protection/ safeguarding file.

## **4 How to transfer the Child Protection/Safeguarding File**

4.1 When a child transfers to another school, it is good practice for the Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform the receiving school within five school days, that a child protection/ safeguarding file exists. The receiving school should routinely ask the previous school if a child protection/safeguarding file exists, for all transfers. The original child protection/ safeguarding file must be passed on either by hand or sent recorded delivery or by secure email, separate from the child's main school file, within five school days from the notification. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible. Parents should never be used as couriers for such files.

## **5 Retention of records**

5.1 Schools should keep a copy of the file themselves; this will provide the school with evidence of what the school knew and the actions they took to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. All copies should be stored securely and destroyed once the retention period has expired. The minimum retention period within this policy is date of birth plus 25 years\*.

\*A request from the Chair of the INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE that 'Your organisation is asked to retain any and all documents; correspondence; notes; emails and all other information – however held – which contain or may contain content pertaining directly or indirectly to the sexual abuse of children or to child protection and care'.

5.2 It is recommended that all records relating to child abuse are retained until the Inquiry is completed. This section will then be reviewed again to consider any recommendations the Inquiry might make concerning record retention.

5.3 Whether child protection/safeguarding files are passed on by hand or sent recorded delivery or by secure email, there should be written evidence of the transfer (such as a form or slip of paper signed and dated by the member of staff at the receiving school – (see Appendix A). This receipt should be retained by the originating school for six years, in line with Records Management Society guidance.

## **6 Children that are risk of, or already experiencing VVE (Violence, Vulnerability or Exploitation) or pose a risk**

- 6.1 It is essential that information is provided to the receiving school at the earliest possible stage where there is a concern that a pupil/ student may be at risk of, or already experiencing VVE or could pose a risk to other learners or members of staff
- 6.2 This enables the receiving school to plan and undertake any necessary risk assessments to ensure that adequate safeguards and supports are put in place for the pupil and other students and staff in the new establishment. The transfer arrangements should be informed by and produced in conjunction with any existing child protection plans.
- 6.3 Schools are strongly advised to contact the previous school and or Children's Social Care if they have concerns about a young person and are not in receipt of a child protection/safeguarding file.

## **7 Children subject to a Child Protection (CP) Plan**

- 7.1 If a child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan the DSL of the originating school must speak to the DSL of the receiving school to give details of the child's allocated Social Worker and ensuring the establishment is made aware of the requirements of the CP Plan.
- 7.2 If a child subject of a CP Plan leaves an establishment and the name of the child's new education placement is unknown – the DSL should contact the child's Social Worker to discuss how and when records should be transferred.

## **8 Elective Home Education**

- 8.1 If the pupil is removed from the roll to be electively home educated, the school should pass the child protection/safeguarding file to the local authority's Elective Home Education (EHE) adviser and a receipt obtained as described above. See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/58/contents>

## **9 Children Missing Education**

- 9.1 If a pupil with a Child Protection Record leaves the school and no contact is received from a new school, a referral should be made following our Children Missing in Education Policy. A discussion on how long the school must store the child's file will take place following the referral.

## 10 Electronic Child Protection Records

- 10.1 Electronic records must be password protected with access strictly controlled in the same way as paper records.
- 10.2 They should be in the same format as paper records (i.e. with well-maintained chronologies etc.) so that they are up to date if/when printed, if necessary e.g. for court. Electronic files should only be transferred electronically to other schools if there is a secure system in place (such as Egress). When the receipt has been returned to confirm that the file has been received at the new school, it should be retained by the originating school for a period of 25 years from the date of birth of the child, in line with guidance detailed in Section 3.
- 10.3 Child protection/ safeguarding records may also be recorded on Management Information Systems (BromCom). All schools have to record whether a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or if they are a Looked after Child. Additional information can be stored on Bromcom but requires schools to use Bromcom software to enable them to scan and attach documents. Schools must ensure they make this information confidential by ticking/applying the appropriate privacy settings. An up to date chronology is still required.

## 11 Pupils who are Dual Registered or Educated Off-Site

- 11.1 Where a pupil is on roll at one school but attends another, it is good practice for the chronology and other relevant information in the child protection/safeguarding file to be copied and passed to the DSL of the other school (Pupil Referral Unit, Academy or other Learning Centre) **within five school days**. Responsibility for maintaining an up to date and complete record remains with the school where the pupil is on roll. Because of the nature of such bespoke arrangements for individual pupils, the two DSLs should agree on how best to communicate to each other significant events and issues in relation to that pupil.

## 12 Storage

- 12.1 All child protection/safeguarding records are sensitive and confidential so should be kept in a secure (i.e. locked at all times) filing cabinet, separate from other school files and accessible through the DSL, the Deputy DSL and other specified senior staff in larger schools.
- 12.2 The pupils' general school file should be marked in some way (e.g. a coloured star) to indicate that a child protection/safeguarding file exists (such coding must reflect current circumstances). All staff that may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means. For example, if a member of the office staff may need to look in the main file for a parent's contact details because of an unexplained absence. The marker will help prompt them to report this to the DSL in case the absence is significant.

## **14 Retention of Records**

- 14.1 The school should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains in school and then transferred as described above.
- 14.2 Records Management Society guidance states that, when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age (or where the pupil completes 6th Form studies), the last school attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It should then be shredded or deleted in the case of electronic files (and a record kept of this having been done, date, and why).

## **15 Access to Child Protection/ Safeguarding Files and Information Sharing**

- 15.1 Any child who has a child protection/ safeguarding file has the right to access their personal record, unless to do so would affect their health and well-being of that or another person, or would be likely to prejudice an on-going criminal investigation.
- 15.2 Parents (i.e. those with Parental Responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's child protection /safeguarding file, on behalf of their child, with the same exceptions applying as to the child's right to access.

## **16 Dissemination**

- 16.1 The Policy is available on the school web site and a paper copy is available from the school admin office on request.

## **17 Reviewing the Policy**

- 17.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the SENCo and monitored by the Link SENCo Governor to ensure that the Policy is relevant and up to date.

## 18 Sources of Further Information

*Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* Department for Education

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf)

*Children Act 2004*

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents)

**Department for Education**

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education)

Brandon et al (2013) *New Learning from Serious Case Reviews: a two year report for 2009-11*, DFE

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/184053/DFE-RR226\\_Report.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/184053/DFE-RR226_Report.pdf)

NSPCC National Case Review Repository – Serious Case Reviews

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/case-reviews/national-case-review-repository](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/case-reviews/national-case-review-repository)

*Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings October 2015* Safer Recruitment Consortium

[www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org](http://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org)

**19 Appendix A:**

**Receipt of Transfer of Child Protection / Safeguarding Pupil Records within Educational Settings Form**

**A: This section to be completed by the originating school:**

Name of Child:	
Date of Birth:	
Unique Pupil Number:	
Unique Learner Number:	
Full Name of current school:	
Full address of current school:	
Name / contact details of current Designated Safeguarding Lead:	
Full Name and address of Receiving School/ College:	
Date file exchanged:	Date:            Month:            Year:
Electronic Copy:	Yes / No
Hard Copy File by Recorded Delivery post:	Yes / No            Post            By Hand
Signature Designated Safeguarding Lead:	
Date:	



**20 Appendix B**

**B: This section to be completed by the receiving School / College. Please ensure this completed form is returned to the originating school / college without delay. The originating school should keep this receipt securely (see guidance above).**

Full name of receiving School / College:	
Full address of receiving School / College:	
Name / contact details of receiving Designated Safeguarding Lead:	
Date electronic version received:	
Date hard file copy received by Recorded Delivery / By Hand:	
Date receipt returned to Originating school:	
Signature of Designated Safeguarding Lead:	
Date:	

## 21 Appendix C

### Transfer of Pupil Records

Dear Sir/Madam

One of your former pupils has recently joined our school. Please could you return this form together with any relevant documentation. We will of course send you an acknowledgment on receipt.

Thank you for your assistance.

Regards

Mr. Chris Hirst (DSL)

Child's name: DOB:

	Current	Previous (Date)
Child protection plan		
Child in Need		
TAC/TAF		
Welfare concerns – below TAC/Referral threshold		
Health Care Plan		
Young Carer		
LAC		
Other		

Name of current social worker/lead professional:

Name of DSL:

There is a safeguarding file on this child      Yes/No

Record sent:

Signed:

Date: