

Appendix 1a

PROCEDURE FOR SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION RECORD KEEPING, SHARING OF INFORMATION AT TRANSITION AND RETENTION OF RECORDS

Introduction

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) reminds us that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Good record keeping is an important part of professional accountability to children and their families; it will assist Designated Safeguarding Leads in meeting their key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns about children.

- ✚ Well-kept records provide a consistent account of our involvement with children, young people and their families. They help in the early identification of cause for concern; often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are taken as a whole that a safeguarding or child protection concern becomes evident. Clear accurate records mean that families and professionals only need to tell their story once.
- ✚ The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been repeatedly highlighted in many Serious Case Reviews.
- ✚ Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk assessment and planning for children; enabling appropriate, informed and timely actions to take place.
- ✚ The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child.
- ✚ This document outlines expectations of staff working in Cheshire East's educational establishments around their record keeping

2 The "Safeguarding" file

A 'Safeguarding' file (often known as a child protection file) should be commenced in the event of:

- A referral to children's social care.
- A number of minor concerns on the child's main school file which increase the level of concern/risk.
- A child being an open case to social care ie CP/CiN/C4C.

The decision to commence a concern file rests with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The information may relate to either a child protection or safeguarding concern or may be an accumulation of concerns about a child's welfare which are outside of the usual range of concerns linked to ordinary life events. Where a "Safeguarding" file is kept for a child, it is important that the child's main file notes reflect and record this through use of an agreed code; (eg a green dot) that is widely known and understood within the staffing group and is consistently used.

Files will be subject to external scrutiny, for example through the serious case review process or Ofsted.

Contents of the Safeguarding File:

Safeguarding files should contain the following:

- Basic Information relevant to the child; (could include a genogram)
- Up to date key contacts (family and professionals)
- Index to sections
- Chronology

- Case Notes: ongoing daily events/telephone calls, records of discussions with colleagues, other agencies, services, parents and children
- 'Cause for Concern Sheets'
- Body Maps
- Meeting notes and minutes: (CAF, Professional meetings, CiN, CP)
- Reports
- Any notes initially recorded in the form of notebooks or diaries
- Professional consultations
- Letters sent and received
- Referral forms (both for external and education-based services)
- Formal plans linked to the child (e.g. Child Protection Plan)

The chronology: provides a skeleton of key incidents, events and changes in a child's life. It is a dated overview/timeline of the involvement and events that have occurred in terms of safeguarding/child protection. It should not be detailed; just a brief one sentence /statement of what has occurred, who was involved and what happened as an outcome

Purpose:

- Keeps the focus on the child
- Supports identification of risks, patterns and issues
- Identifies links between the past and present
- Enables the significance of issues to be better understood
- Clarifies cases of chronic neglect
- A good method of sharing information between professionals
- At a later stage, it can help a young person to understand and make sense of their past

The body map: this is used to record injuries which can be readily seen; you should never ask a child to undress to show an injury. **INJURIES SHOULD NEVER BE PHOTOGRAPHED.**

Cause for concern sheets: Where they are hand written they should be clearly legible and written in ink. The sheets must contain the following:

- Date and time of the incident
- Location
- Date and time of the record being made (remember to include the year)
- Name and date of birth of the child(ren) concerned
- A factual account of what happened
- The location where the incident took place (include the actual words spoken by the child where possible)
- A note of any other people involved e.g. as witnesses (full names and role/capacity in which involved)
- Action taken, and any future plans e.g. monitor and review (SMART)
- A note of whether the parents were spoken to and a record of that discussion. If parents were not spoken to then a record should be made of the decision not to inform them and reasons for that decision
- Any other agencies informed
- Printed name of the person making the record
- Job title of the person making the record
- Signature (print name alongside)

Records should use clear, straightforward language, be concise, and accurate. They should clearly differentiate between facts and professional judgements.

- ✚ Actions and decisions taken should be carefully recorded. Where decisions have been taken jointly across agencies, or endorsed by a manager, this should be made clear on the record.
- ✚ A record of a concern, suspicion or allegation should be made at the time or as soon as possible after the event. (N.B. It is not advisable to make a written record whilst a child is disclosing abuse, as this may deter the child from speaking).
- ✚ Records should be factual, using the child's own words where a disclosure is made. Professional opinion can be given, but should be supported by setting out the facts and

observations upon which the opinions are based. (N.B. expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds).

- ✚ All records should be dated and signed, with the name of the signatory clearly printed, and filed in chronological order.
- ✚ Any handwritten notes made immediately after the event, for example a disclosure, can act as evidence of them having been written at the time in any future court case. Therefore, these should not be destroyed if the details are recorded more formally at a later time, but instead kept securely attached to the child protection concern forms used by the school/setting.
- ✚ Other information may form part of the file e.g. letters/notes etc. These should be fully annotated to show the context of them e.g. who wrote it, when and why
- ✚ All recorded safeguarding/child protection concerns must be passed to the school/settings Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible. The DSL will need to make a professional judgement about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with Cheshire East's child protection procedures. Decisions taken should be clearly recorded
- ✚ All records of child protection or child welfare concerns, disclosures or allegations are to be treated as sensitive information and should be kept together, securely and separate from the child's general school records. The information should be shared with all those who need to have it, whether to enable them to take appropriate steps to safeguard the pupil or to enable them to carry out their own duties, but it should not be shared wider than that.
- ✚ We do not recommend using a form for pupils to use to write out their 'statement' of what has happened.

Storage of the Safeguarding File:

These records must be stored in a secure (ie locked) filing cabinet, accessible through the DSL or their deputy, and, in larger schools, other senior staff, to ensure reasonable access.

The pupil's general school record file should be marked to indicate that additional information is held about the child (e.g. a Green Dot). All staff that may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means and who to consult if they see this symbol.

Ensure that records clearly show links to siblings (especially where they do not share surnames)

Where concerns and actions are about several children in the same family there should be separate files for each child. Where meetings take place about siblings each child's file should have a copy of minutes, plans etc. This is because they may leave school at any time, not necessarily together. It also ensures that there is a trail of involvement and concern for each individual.

Transfer of records:

If a pupil transfers to another school, we would expect their child protection information, normally held in a separate file, to transfer with them. We do not expect exporting schools to keep a copy of the child protection file. They should however ensure they use a secure reliable method of transfer and confirm that the receiving school (or local authority if a child is to be home educated) has received the file.

DfE 2012

What **should be** passed on?

- ✚ The chronology
- ✚ Records of any incidents/cause for concern sheets (including handwritten notes of incidents)
- ✚ A dated genogram for any child that has one

- ✚ Reports prepared by provider/children's centre/school for safeguarding meetings e.g. case conferences, strategy meetings etc.
- ✚ Minutes of meetings

What **should not be** passed on?

- ✚ Minutes from child protection case conferences or review meetings etc if a case has ended. (Dates and concerns should be made on the chronology.)
- ✚ Records of un-established 'concerns' (these should be on the chronology.)

The file must be transferred separately and securely from other records; direct to the Safeguarding Lead in the receiving setting or school.

- ✚ The file should be sealed and marked 'Private and Confidential FAO the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Child Protection Officer'.
- ✚ The receiving setting or school should be notified by telephone that there are concerns and an agreement must be made on how the records will be securely transferred.
- ✚ If posted the sealed records should be placed within a plain addressed envelope. A record should be kept of the date of transfer of such sensitive files and of the person to whom they are transferred. The package should be sent by courier or recorded delivery.
- ✚ It is recommended that the receiving school acknowledges receipt of the records. This acknowledgement needs to be recorded and retained by the sending setting or school.
- ✚ The current school should keep a record of the file until they receive written confirmation from the receiving school that it has been received.
- ✚ The person who has the information is the 'data controller' and this role should follow the child. A school/setting would have to record why they were keeping a file when they are not the data controller and an example such as the case may shortly go to court and they may be required to give evidence would be a good example.
- ✚ If there is more than one copy of a child's file in existence this would need to be recorded on the existing current file as to where and what information was held elsewhere and when it will be destroyed in line with retention periods.

Retention of Records

Current guidance from the Records Management Society is that, when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age, the last school attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25th birthday. It should then be shredded (and a record kept of this having been done, date, who by and why)

The **Freedom of Information Act 2000** requires schools to maintain a list of records which have been destroyed and who authorised their destruction. We require members of staff to record at least:

- File reference (or other unique identifier);
- File title (or brief description);
- Number of files
- The name of the authorising officer
- Date of destruction
- Manner of destruction
- A list of contents

This could be kept in an Excel spreadsheet or other database format

If a child is removed from the school/setting roll to be home educated, the last school which the child attended must retain the file.

If the destination setting/ school/ college is unknown at the time of transition, the records should be retained until the school is contacted by a receiving setting or school or until the end of the retention period.

Access to Child Protection Files and Information Sharing:

Any **child** who has a Safeguarding file has the right to access their personal record, unless to do so would affect their health or well-being or that of another person, or would be likely to prejudice an ongoing criminal investigation

Parents (i.e. those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's Safeguarding file, on behalf of their child, with the same exceptions applying as to the child's right to access. An older child may be entitled to refuse access to their parents.

The school should take advice about information sharing with parents if they have particular concerns about doing so. It is generally good practice to share information held, unless there is a valid reason to withhold it, e.g. to do so would put the child at risk of significant risk of harm.

Parental requests, to access the file on the child's behalf, should be done in writing

References by name to children other than the pupil, who is the subject of the record, should be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual/s concerned (or their parents/carers on their behalf). Care should be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.

Safeguarding File Audit

All CDAT schools are encouraged to complete an annual Safeguarding file audit. On completion there should be a discussion of strengths/ weaknesses'. The intention is not to criticise. Lessons learnt from the audit can be fed back to all staff using the school's normal staff training or briefing routes.

Appendix 1b FRONT COVER

Child's Name

Date of Birth

Siblings

CAF CIN CP other _____

Contact Details

Name	Service	Role	Team Leader	Phone	Email

Date file reviewed and by whom:

Appendix 1d

RECORD OF CONCERN (to be typed or completed in black ink)

Detail of concerns: *What you saw, what you heard, in the child's words. Include brief, accurate details and who else was present. Was it 1st or 2nd hand information? Distinguish between fact and opinion.*

Name of Child:		Class/Year Group	
SEN status		Name of sibling/s	
Name of person completing this form:	Role:	Date of Concern:	Time of concern:
Nature of concern:		Place of disclosure	
			Continued Over Leaf:
Concern shared with:	Signature of referrer:	Date of record: Time of record:	

For Completion by Designated Lead:

Agreed actions with basis for decision	By whom	By when

Parent/Carer Informed	Date:	
If not the reason for not doing so:		
Entry on Chronology <input type="checkbox"/>	By:	
Signature of Designated Lead:	Date of when actions are to be reviewed	

Appendix 1e

TRANSFER OF SAFEGUARDING RECORDS

This form should be completed when a pupil moves to another setting and there are safeguarding concerns and records to transfer.

Child's name	
D.o.b	
Previous surnames or aliases	
Current School Year	
Name of parent/s carer/s	
Names of people with PR	
Name of any siblings	
Name of social worker / lead professional	
Information and files transferred <i>(to include chronologies and assessments):</i>	
Name of sending school	
Name of receiving school	
Passed to (name)	
Date of first entry in file	
Date of last entry in file	

Child status: (please tick)

Single agency Support	
CAF	
Child in Need	
Child Protection	
Cared for Child	

Transferred by:	Received by:
Position:	Name:
Signed:	Position:
Date:	Signed:
	Date:

Appendix 1f SAFEGUARDING FILE AUDIT TOOL

Child		Date of Birth	
Date of File Audit			
Date file opened		Date file closed/transferred	

MEMBERS OF STAFF INVOLVED WITH THIS CASE				
No	Audit	Yes, No, N/A	Action to be Taken	Actions Complete: date
1	Was the file stored in the designated area?			
2	Was the file found stored in alphabetical order?			
3	Is it clear to whom the file relates?			
4	Does the main pupil record have a clear marker on it to indicate that there is a Safeguarding file?			
5	Has all confidential information been transferred from the main pupil file to the Safeguarding file?			
6	Do all entries in the file have times, dates, names and signatures of the people who wrote them?			

7	Have any original contemporaneous notes been kept, in addition to later more formal records?			
8	Have all materials in the file e.g. notes/ letters etc been annotated to show the context?			
9	Is there an up-to-date, accurate 'Front Sheet' of basic factual information about the child and family?			
10	Is an index present to define file sections?			
11	Is a key contact sheet present and in use?			
12	Is it clear which individuals have been involved in the case and when?			
13	Are records typed or legibly written in black ink?			
14	Have telephone calls and discussions with other agencies (police, health, social care) been recorded; are resulting actions clear?			
15	Is there evidence that the DSL has reviewed the file and discussed the child with relevant staff?			
16	Is there clear evidence of the child's voice?			
17	Is there clear evidence of the parents being seen and spoken to on a regular basis			

Comments:

CHRONOLOGY

1	Are events recorded and dated on the sheet in chronological order?			
2	Is each 'entry' signed and dated?			
3	Is it clear who has made the entry/taken action?			
5	Does the chronology tell the 'story' of the significant events?			
6	Does recording clearly show whether this case has escalated /de-escalated and where the interventions are to prevent/ support this?			
7	Is there clear evidence in the chronology of the impact on the child?			
8	Do entries refer to where the evidence can be found within the file?			

Comments:

RECORDS OF CONCERN AND CASE NOTES

1	Are all concerns recorded and dated on the chronology sheet?			
2	Is each concern written on the appropriate referral form?			
3	Is it clear who has raised the concern and to whom?			
4	Are records in accordance with policy and guidance ie. No jargon/ abbreviations, clear definition between fact and opinion etc?			
5	Is decision making clearly evidenced in the case notes? Is there evidence of why these actions were taken?			
6	Have injuries been accurately recorded on a body map?			
7	Is there clear evidence of the voice of the child?			

Comments:

MINUTES, REPORTS AND ASSESSMENTS

1	Does the file include copies of correspondence relating to the case?			
2	Are copies of reports sent to meetings by the school included in the file?			
3	Is it clear from the file that reports have been shared with parents prior to meetings and if not why not?			
4	Are all minutes from meetings/ conferences included in the file?			
5	Is it clear whether actions required of the school from meetings/conference minutes have been completed?			
6	Is it clear from the chronology which member of staff attended each meeting/conference?			
7	Is there evidence of a clear plan for the child and family?			

Comments

REFERRALS				
1	Is it clear when a decision to refer has been made; who by and why?			
2	Is the process of making a referral evidenced?			
3	Are outcomes of referrals recorded and resulting actions?			
4	Has information sharing been timely and appropriate?			
Comments				
TRANSITION				
Moving between schools can be a time of risk as children may be leaving a school where they and their family are known well, to attend one where they may not be known. It would be wise to include in the audit a consideration of a child who has 'moved in' recently and one who has 'moved out'.				
1	Pupil transferring in from another school: has the DSL from this school discussed the pupil at transfer with the other school; is this recorded?			
2	Pupil transferring out to another school: has the DSL contacted the other school and is this recorded? Was the Safeguarding file delivered to the new school? Is this evidenced?			

SUMMARY OF FILE AUDIT FINDINGS AND ACTION REQUIRED

Person completing the audit:

Name.....

Position.....

Signed.....

Date.....

Case worker/holder in school

Name.....

Position.....

Signed.....

Date.....