

This matter is being dealt with by:

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Reference: NCC & NSCP 'Child Protection
Confidential File' Audit

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Dear Colleagues,

Re: Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children in Education 'Child Protection and Confidential File Transfer between Local Authorities and the Annual Audit Toolkit for the spring term 2023 and Child Protection Record Keeping (including maintenance, storage, retention, and transfer).

We are writing to draw your attention to our revised Child Protection and Confidential File Transfer arrangements between schools/colleges and across other Local Authorities for Nottinghamshire children including children with looked-after status. Our arrangements have taken into account the revisions made to the statutory guidance within KCSiE 2022 in particular:

KCSiE 2022 Information Sharing paragraphs:

121. *Where children leave the school or college, 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 to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO's) or the named persons with oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in a college, are aware as required.*

122. *In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse, or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and can have that support in place for when the child arrives. More information on the child protection file is in Annex C.*

Staff training

Our response has been as a result of an extensive piece of work undertaken by members of the Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership with an aim to encourage best practice and consistency of approach across the county and with other neighbouring local authorities and Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

The transfer and receipt of Child Protection Records and Safeguarding Files for pupils and students in a timely manner is a current concern and one which we wish to address with your support. One of the challenges is that Nottinghamshire is surrounded by South Yorkshire, Nottingham City, Lincolnshire, and Derby and Derbyshire.

In an effort to raise standards and safeguard our most vulnerable children, including children who are in the care of Nottinghamshire County Council the guidance provides expectations for all Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) and Designated Teachers (DT's) in Nottinghamshire schools and colleges to liaise with their counterparts in neighbouring counties:

- to ensure child protection and safeguarding information is shared prior to transition/transfer by the DSL and or DT, and
- arrangements are agreed for the child protection file and safeguarding information exchange between schools and colleges, so that support to children and especially vulnerable children and those with Looked After status, remains in place and provision and safeguards are seamless.

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of our guidance and arrangements and aim for a reciprocal agreement.

Should a concern arise where a schools or college does not adhere to this guidance and child protection files are not received with in the statutory period of five days, we will adopt our NSCP escalation procedures and we ask you to adopt your escalation procedures to remedy situations where:

- *There has been no prior communication about the pupil/student being admitted which may get in the way of keeping that child safe.*
- *A child's file from another school/college or setting has not been sent.*
- *A child's file from another setting has not arrived in a timely way.*
- *A school has appeared to have lost the file having made enquiries.*
- *A receiving school does not appear to have robust systems in place which reassure you can send the file safely and knowing it will be retained.*
- *You only become aware that the pupil/student has a history of concerns and or safeguarding file at the previous school having made enquiries due to an emerging need or safeguarding incident.*
- *You have not received information about ongoing social work support and dates for meetings, reviews, or conferences for the child.*

We advise schools/colleges that communication is the key to resolving issues and expect the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Teacher to robustly pursue and attempt to resolve requests for information and records, but if difficulties exist we would expect liaison with the Head teacher, Principal or Exec HT with a view to swiftly remedy concerns as a first response before engaging the escalation procedures.

We are mindful that families, children, and young people also move homes, accommodation and change living arrangements which usually requires a transfer of school, college and or engagement with alternative education. This is often outside of the usual transfer and transition times, so we wish to ensure our advice and guidance to schools maintains a robust process to prevent any gaps occurring for these children and families.

We maintain the view that good communication is the key to resolving safeguarding concerns and issues, and we expect the DSL in Nottinghamshire schools and colleges to robustly pursue and attempt to resolve requests for records and files for children and young people transferring into Nottinghamshire. We also advise DSL should maintain a record of the requests made by other LA's for when child protection and confidential files are sent onwards in order to provide an extensive audit trail.

We hope that you will welcome the revisions we have put in place in Nottinghamshire and request you share the content of this letter with schools and colleges in your area.

Should a safeguarding or child protection concern arise or become unresolved and require escalation please see the link to the NSCP escalation procedures: [Resolving Professional Disagreements \(Escalation Procedure\) \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://www.proceduresonline.com)

The NCC & NSCP Child Protection and Confidential File toolkit for use by Nottinghamshire schools, colleges, and alternative education providers can be accessed from the NSCP website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp in section resources-schools.

Should you have any queries please contact me by email: cheryl.stollery@nottscc.gov.uk

We would thank you for your co-operation in this matter, your time and support are much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



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