

'School Safe Alert' Notification Guidance

Introduction

The School Safe Alert, has been in place since the mid 1990's. It has now become necessary to revise it, to consider changes in statutory guidance, GDPR and other emerging threats, including the use of social media.

The 'School Safe Alert Notification' protocol is an intelligence sharing suite of guidance for **low level** non-emergency information sharing. It should be used to raise concerns and share information in accordance with the existing safeguarding national guidance, and in accordance with GDPR and statutory information sharing guidance.

The 'School Safe Alert Notification' Protocol is made up of three parts:

1. The 'School Safe Alert Notification' Guidance
2. The 'School Safe Alert' Notification Form
3. The 'School Safe Alert' Notification Flow Chart

Together they provide clarity of how concerns, risks and threats should be responded to by a school, academy, or college. They provide clarity on the information which is required to support a notification to the police, as well as guidance on how this information should be shared. They provide a framework to help keep children safe which is compliant with GDPR and statutory information sharing.

The Schools Safe Alert protocol does not replace actions that should be taken to protect and safeguard children and young people as described in Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018, DfE KCSiE September 2023, and the local Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) procedures. Rather, it supplements local actions that should be taken by schools, academies, and colleges when an incident or concern is raised regarding someone displaying concerning behaviour or a threat. This may be on or within the perimeters of the school, academy, or college environment, and when children and staff are in attendance.

This guidance informs how information will be collated and shared with Nottinghamshire Police to:

- collate intelligence concerned with children and young people exposed to or at risk of harm or threat.
- inform further actions which may be required to be taken by the school, academy, or college, in consultation with the police.

- confirm whether a police investigation is required, and if so, how this will be conducted, when and by whom.
- agree what, if any, information should be shared with parents, carers, and children.

Schools Safe Alert: Guidance for all staff

The 'School Safe Alert Notification' form should be completed if you have concerns regarding a person or person(s), who you believe may pose a risk of harm or abuse to a child or children. This form should be used by you to identify and record information concerning people, places, activities, or vehicles which you believe may be involved with, or connected to causing a risk to children on or near a school, academy, or college site.

- **Anything presenting an *immediate* risk or threat to a child, young person, school or learning establishment should be reported via 999.**
- **Other non-emergency information should be reported via 101 to the police control room, where the information will be graded for a police response.**

All information should be recorded within the 'School Safe Alert' Notification form. The use of the notification form will help to clarify the information, which is being shared, the actions agreed by all involved, and the outcomes once confirmed. Information shared should be compliant with GDPR and respective Information Sharing Guidance.

Any risks or threats should be shared with the Head teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team in the first instance, and the details of these concerns referred to the Police without delay. The Head teacher or member SLT will subsequently act on the advice and information provided by the Police.

On occasions, and dependent on the nature of the risk or threat, contact or referral to Children's Social Care and the Local Authority will be required where the concern may affect a child who is already known to the Local Authority.

Guidance for completing the 'School Safe Alert' Notification Form

When completing the notification form please ensure that all details:

- are clear and recorded legibly.
- are factual and evidence based.
- described in verbatim from what the witnessed (saw and heard).
- clear and describe the actions you have already taken to ensure children and young people are safe, whilst contact is made with the police.

Any photographic images taken by the school, parents or carers must be discussed with the police. It will be important to maintain any images should the police need access to them as part of an investigation. This also includes any CCTV footage; these should not be shared without the agreement of the Police in the first instance.

Checklist to support a conversation with the Police and with other agencies:

Note: *the below points should feature as part of the conversation the school contact has with the Police Emergency Call Handler (PECH)*

POLICE

When the school contact the Police by phoning 101 to discuss the concerns which the school have recorded on the 'School Safe Alert' Notification form, the Police Emergency Call Handler (PECH) may ask the school contact what they think the next course of action should be and will help guide the referrer on the actions to be taken. The Police will:

- use their emergency call handler training, which includes use of the National Decision-making Model and THRIVE (Threat Harm Risk Investigation Vulnerability Engagement) assessments to grade the incident according to the level of risk presented.
- generate an Incident Number.
- agree the level of risk presented and the actions that will be taken by the Police in response to the incident.
- provide advice to the school referrer and confirm next actions to be taken.
- confirm what information should be shared, with whom and when: for example, with other local schools, parents/carers, or pupils/students.
- verify if the completed 'Schools Safe Alert' Notification form should be sent to Police, or not.
- record all information shared, advice given, and agreed actions to be taken and by whom and when.
- record all information shared with the police, to determine the level of risk of harm or threat and maintain it for future reference and intelligence gathering purposes.

Before concluding the call both the Police and the referrer should be clear regarding what each agency's response should be, and each will make a written record of the decisions and actions that will be followed.

Low level risks are likely to be progressed by the School's and Early Intervention Officers (for secondary schools and academies) or PCSO's (primary schools).

SOCIAL CARE

If the incident concerns a child or young person who is subject to a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan or has Looked After status, information should be shared with the child's social worker and social care, in accordance with statutory safeguarding procedures.

SCHOOL, ACADEMY, COLLEGE

If not the Head teacher, a member of the school's senior leadership team or the Designated Safeguarding Lead should conduct the following:

- collate all information from the reported incident and record it on the 'School Safe Alert' Notification Form, to ensure that all key information is available to be shared with the police. **Note:** *Full completion of the notification form should not prohibit contact with the police, if only certain details are known.*
- be prepared for the Police Emergency Call Handler (PECH) asking the school contact what they think the next course of action should be.
- the referrer should be clear about what actions school staff have already taken to address the potential risk or threat and seek advice on any other actions that may be required: for example, keeping the child or children in school, lockdown procedures, putting additional staff on duty on the school's site.
- the referrer should ensure that the date, time, and name of the PECH staff member receiving the information is recorded, and that the incident number is also recorded on the notification form once it has been provided.
- the referrer should verify if a copy of the 'School Safe Alert' Notification form should be sent to the police as well as being kept safely in school.
- retain a copy of the completed notification form for further reference.
- specifically make a point of asking and be clear on whether they should now share information, and if so, the level of information with:
 - other local schools
 - parents/ carers
 - children

In addition:

- particular attention should be paid to adhering to obtaining consent where relevant, and to GDPR guidelines.
- any recorded images (videos or photographs) or information from the incident should only be shared with the police, who will determine the level of risk of harm or threat and decide if or when to release further details to others, including the wider community and public.
- on no occasion should any personal identifiable information be uploaded on any social media or electronic platform, without guidance being clarified by the police. This is also relevant to members of the public who witnessed the incident.

- before concluding the call both police and the referrer (schools, academy, or college) should be clear regarding each agencies response and make a written record of the decisions and actions that will be followed.
- it remains important to record all information agreed with the police on the Schools Safe Alert Notification form and ensure all is acted upon.
- the referrer should verify of a copy of the 'Schools Safe Alert' Notification form should be sent electronically to the police and or provided to the School Early Intervention Officer or PCSO.

For 999 emergency incidents which involve identified serious risks of harm or threats to life, the Local Authority should be notified using contact number Tel: (0115) 9772573 and make clear that this information is for the attention of the Service Director Education Learning and Skills PA.

The Local Authority will provide any additional support and advice to the school, academy, or college, as necessary.

In the case of 999 emergency incidents only, a copy of the Schools Safe Alert Notification form should be emailed to: supporttoschools@nottscc.gov.uk

NOTE: The Headteacher and governing body will assume responsibility for keeping children safe and reporting any risk of harm or threat as required.

The 'School Safe Alert' Protocol is supplementary and does not replace or supersede current national or local statutory safeguarding guidance or policies.

Actions taken outside of the 'School Safe Alert Notification' Protocol will be the responsibility of the school, academy, or college.