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**Date: - Revised January 2021**

**Auditing of Child Protection and Confidential Files**

The Named Governor for child protection and safeguarding, on behalf of the governing body, has confirmed that the school’s record keeping in relation to children of concern is appropriate, by conducting an audit of a sample of pupil files every year.

**Auditing your school’s record keeping and maintenance of files.**

**Good record keeping is not bureaucracy it is safeguarding!**

**Ofsted: if there is no evidence of it happening, it didn’t happen!**

Does the quality of your record keeping allow you to demonstrate to others your effective safeguarding practice?

**Background**: Case reviews have identified the importance of good record keeping in safeguarding children, and of the need to ensure the transfer of information between establishments is effective.

Governors need to be confident that schools keep careful records in relation to children of concern. One way to do this is for school to conduct an audit of a sample of child protection, confidential files each year.

The audit should be undertaken by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy with either the Chair of Governors or Named Safeguarding Governor or any combination of these people.

**Responsibilities:** Safeguarding and protecting children from abuse and harm is everyone’s responsibility but for those in leadership roles; such as the Head teacher, members of the school’s senior leadership team and those with designated safeguarding responsibilities, they have a duty to ensure all children are kept safe and free from harm as detailed in:

* The Education Act 2002, Sec 175 and 157.
* HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
* DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 in particular:
* Part One and Part Two at page 87 paragraphs 82 to 88,
* Annex A: Further Safeguarding Information.
* Annex B: The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with particular attention to pages 100 to 101.
* Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Inter-agency Safeguarding Children Procedures and Guidance

**Purpose**: The aim of such an audit is to learn how effective school record keeping is in relation to children with child protection/ safeguarding concerns – potentially the most vulnerable pupils in the school. Lessons from the audit can then be fed back to all staff to improve future practice and ensure all actions are taken to keep children safe.

**Sample**: Clearly the more files that you examine, the fuller the picture you will have of processes in your school. However, this needs to be balanced against the time demands of an audit. In smaller primary schools looking at one file from each year group might give sufficient information, while in larger primary schools two from each year group might seem more appropriate. In a secondary school the audit may need to look at as many as three or four files from each year group. It is also reasonable to take a proportionate approach; if audits regularly show widespread good practice then fewer files may need to be examined in future. If, however, the audit reveals poor practice this will indicate the need not only for training and guidance but also more careful monitoring of this issue.

**Confidentiality**: Material in child protection and confidential files is often of a very sensitive nature and the highest standards of confidentiality are required by anyone reading these files.

Governor are not required to read through all the child protection, confidential file content but should only read and check sufficient information to ensure the process of creating a file, the recording and maintenance of information and follow up actions are of a quality standard that meets with the requirements as described in DFE ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ published September 2020 and the schools own child protection policy.

**Summery and outcomes:** The audit checklist below provides a framework to review the schools record keeping and recording and identify and shortfalls. Any identified shortfalls should be address as a matter of urgency.

The responsibility for record keeping in-line with local and national guidance rests with the school, as does the self- evaluation. However, schools are invited to make use of the SCIEO for advice where this is felt to be helpful.

**References:**

HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018-

[**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020-

**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2**

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website- [**www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp**](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp)

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Interagency Safeguarding Children Procedures Resolving Professional Disagreements (Escalation Procedure)

**https://nottinghamshirescb.proceduresonline.com/p\_conflict\_res.html**

**Contact:**

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**Child Protection File/Confidential File Audit Date: ……………………………....**

**School: ………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Auditors: (names)…………………………………………………………………………..**

**Checklist:** To support an audit of a child protection file or confidential/ concern files this checklist will help to identify key issues or support confirmation of compliance.

|  | **Yes/No** | **Follow up action/further information** |
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| Does the child’s main pupil file have a clear marker on it to indicate that a concern file is also held?  (We recommend that a clear red C be written on the top right-hand corner of the main pupil file.  This alerts any member of staff to the existence of a separate confidential/concern file) |  |  |
| Was all confidential information transferred from the main pupil file to the concern file when it was opened?  (Check there are no confidential documents still sitting in the main file) |  |  |
| Does the child protection or confidential/concern file have an up-to-date and accurate ‘Front Sheet’ giving basic factual information about the child and family? |  |  |
| Does the file have a running chronology of events/concerns?  This chronology would normally have begun in the child’s main pupil file and then should be transferred at the point of either a child protection concern is raised or the threshold for concern being reached. This will determine whether a child protection or confidential/ concern file is opened/ or created if using electronic management systems. |  |  |
| Is every entry in the file timed, dated?  Does every recording have the name and signature of the person who wrote the entry? |  |  |
| Have staff made use of the ‘logging an incident or concern template or a similar school template to help them record issues? |  |  |
| Where applicable, have any original contemporaneous notes been kept?  Have these been added to later through the addition of more formal records? |  |  |
| Have telephone calls and discussions with other agencies (police, health, social care, early help) been recorded?  Is it clear from these notes what action is to be taken and by whom and by when? |  |  |
| Is there evidence that the school’s Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead has reviewed the file and discussed the child with relevant staff?  Has this been recorded? |  |  |
| Is there evidence that school staff have reflected on the information they have about a child of concern, discussed it appropriately with others and then taken ***appropriate*** action in line with the Pathway to Provision v 8.  This action might include:   * Sharing information with others, e.g. DSL * Completing an EHAF * Referring to another agency * Discussed the case with the Education Adviser at MASH * Making a referral to MASH |  |  | |
| Has the Snr DSL been consulted around these actions, and have they taken all appropriate action?  Discussed concerns with   * Safeguarding Children in Education Officer (SCIEO) * MASH * Early Help Team * Other |  |  | |
| If a telephone referral was made to the MASH, was the referral confirmed in writing, by the referrer, within 24 hours as per the interagency procedures and guidance?  If the referral was not accepted by MASH, was this followed up by a written report within 48 hours? (Statutory requirement)  If the referral was not accepted by MASH, is there evidence of a discussion with the Snr DSL around what further actions are necessary? |  |  | |
| Where school staff considers that there is conflict of professional opinion, is there evidence of appropriate escalation to resolve the conflict?  (See Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Procedures: Resolving Professional Disagreements) |  |  | |
| If meetings relating to the child and their family have been called did the school act in accordance with KCSIE 2020 and local NSCP procedures and guidance by:   * Sending a report? (Statutory requirement) * Sending a representative? (Statutory requirement) * Receive minutes of the meeting? * Completed any/all actions they were assigned by the meeting? * Ensured that other key people in school were aware of any important issues? * Engaged with ongoing conferences, reviews and core group meetings Plans put in place for the child? |  |  | |
| If injuries to the child have been noted by the school, did staff use the body map and recording form and were the records clear? |  |  | |
| 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.  See DfE KCSIE 2020: Part One and Part Two Safeguarding information for all staff and at page 87 paragraphs 82 to 88 and Annex B Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with particular attention to pages 100 to 101 ‘child protection file’.    It would be wise to include in the audit a review of files for a child who has ‘moved in’ recently and one who has ‘moved out’.   * If the pupil concerned has transferred in from another school is there evidence that the Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead from this school and previous school have discussed and shared key child protection/safeguarding information? * Has a record of what information was shared been written including any actions agreed as part of the child’s transfer? * For a pupil of concern who has transferred school recently; did the Designated Safeguarding Lead make contact with the Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead at the new school? * Is there a note to that effect? * Was the pupil’s concern file delivered to the new school? * Is there evidence that the file was received? * Ensure the guidance within KCSIE 2020 Annex B and your school, academy or colleges child protection policy and procedures have been fully adopted and implemented regarding pupil transfer or move of placement * Have all actions been taken to promote the ‘best interests of the child’ and promote their well-being and safety. |  |  | |