

RE: Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children in Education 'Child Protection and Confidential File Transfer between Local Authorities and the Annual Audit Toolkit for the spring term 2026 and Child Protection Record Keeping (including maintenance, storage, retention, and transfer).

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to confirm Nottinghamshire's approach to cross-authority transfer of child protection (CP) and confidential safeguarding files when children move between schools and colleges across local boundaries. These arrangements reflect **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** so that support is in place at the point of arrival and continuity of safeguarding is maintained.

KCSIE is clear that the child protection **file should transfer** to the new school or college **as soon as possible** and **within five school days for in-year moves**, or **within the first five days of the new term**. The file should be sent securely, kept separate from the main pupil file, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained from the receiving DSL. The receiving setting should ensure that key staff (the DSL and SENCO or named SEND lead) are aware so that immediate support can be provided. These steps are straightforward but crucial: they enable a safe handover, reduce the risk of delay, and ensure that the child's needs are known from day one.

Working Together to Safeguard Children sets the multi-agency expectations and the lawful sharing of information that underpin these arrangements. In practice, DSLs should have a brief professional discussion before admission to outline the child's current status, the professionals involved, and dates for any meetings or actions already scheduled. That discussion helps prevent gaps—particularly for looked-after and previously looked-after children, children with SEND or health needs, and those who move at short notice. Where the move is to alternative provision or a college, the same standards apply so that risks, supports and responsibilities are clear.

Nottinghamshire is surrounded by other local authorities - South Yorkshire, Nottingham City, Lincoln, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Derby and Derbyshire - and children often move across these borders. We therefore encourage direct DSL-to-DSL liaison as a matter of routine to agree immediate support on arrival, confirm key contacts (e.g., social worker and, where relevant, the Virtual School), and identify any outstanding actions due. This reciprocity between areas reduces confusion, protects timeliness, and ensures each child's safeguarding journey remains seamless.

When sending a file, please ensure the transfer is undertaken in line with established professional standards and the requirements set out above: send securely to the receiving DSL and separately from the main pupil file; include a brief covering note (child's legal name and date of birth, sending DSL, date and method of transfer); and request an acknowledgement confirming secure receipt and notification of relevant staff. Where an electronic route is agreed, the file and/or channel should be encrypted, and any password or key sent separately; where a physical transfer is used, a tracked service should be used and the envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL – FAO DSL ONLY." A short reply from the receiving DSL confirming receipt, secure retention, and staff awareness completes the audit trail.

On information sharing, share only the information that is necessary, proportionate and relevant to safeguarding the child and record the lawful basis and rationale for doing so. In most transfers, the lawful basis will be public task and/or legal obligation; for special category data, the Data Protection Act 2018 includes a specific safeguarding condition that, where appropriate, permits sharing without consent to protect children or individuals at risk. Transparency with families should be maintained where it is safe to do so.

If difficulties arise (such as no prior communication before admission, no file received within five days, a file that cannot be located, or missing details about ongoing social work involvement) please resolve promptly through professional discussion and, where necessary, use local escalation routes. In Nottinghamshire, settings use the [NSCP Resolving Professional Disagreements \(Escalation\) Procedure](#) to restore a safe, informed position around the child, and we ask partner LAs to adopt reciprocal escalation so that concerns are addressed swiftly. The intention is not to apportion blame but to unblock delays and ensure the child's safety and support are not compromised.

We also remain mindful of the wider assurance picture. Inspection continues to examine whether safeguarding arrangements are effective, and reviews of practice highlight the importance of accurate records and chronologies, clear rationales for decisions, and timely file transfer. A concise audit trail - recording dates, methods and named contacts for dispatch and receipt - will support internal assurance and demonstrate that standards have been met. This is especially relevant during out-of-cycle moves (e.g., house moves or emergency placements) when timescales are tight and risks can change rapidly.

To support consistent practice, a one-page File Transfer Guidance document is available to summarise the procedure. The wider NCC & NSCP Child Protection & Confidential File Toolkit (including letters, supporting guidance and the audit tools) remains available to all Nottinghamshire schools and colleges via the NSCP Website and the SCIEO Em Ed page. The toolkit has been refreshed to align with current statutory guidance and provides practical prompts for DSLs, Designated Teachers and governors/trustees when assuring the quality of record-keeping and transfer.

Thank you for your continued cooperation. If you would like to discuss a case or any part of these arrangements, please get in touch.

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