



Keeping Records of Safeguarding Concerns

Guidance for Schools

Document name	Keeping Records of Safeguarding Concerns: Guidance for Schools
Authors	Adapted by E. Fitzpatrick, Head of School Improvement
Date	Amended August 2016
Version	Version 2
Previous document	01/06/2015
Review plan	This guidance will be reviewed one year from the date of the current version, in August 2017.

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 These guidelines are produced for school Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and their deputies (referred to in this guidance as DSL/s) to assist them in establishing and maintaining record keeping systems that support effective safeguarding practice. The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been repeatedly highlighted in many Serious Case Reviews, including the 2013 high profile enquiry into the death of Daniel Pelka.

Accurate and up-to-date record keeping is essential for a number of reasons:

- **It helps schools identify causes for concern at an early stage. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are taken as a whole that a safeguarding or child protection concern becomes clear.**
- **It helps schools to monitor and manage its safeguarding practices.**
- **It helps to evidence robust and effective safeguarding practice in inspections and audits.**

- 1.2 Promoting the welfare of and safeguarding children is a whole school task. Ensuring all staff know when and how to record concerns for a child's welfare, however small or apparently insignificant is an essential part of the DSL role. Good record keeping is an important part of a school's accountability to children and their families and will assist DSLs in meeting their key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns for children. Records should be factually accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk-assessment and planning for children and enable informed and timely referrals to be made when necessary.
- 1.3 For some children a one off serious incident or concern may occur and staff will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported. More often however, it is the accumulation of a number of small incidents, events or observations that can provide the evidence of harm being caused to a child.
- 1.4 This guidance should be read with the following documents:
- [Working Together To Safeguard Children; March 2015](#)
 - [Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to vulnerable children, young people, parents and carers \(2015\)](#)
 - [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners, March 2015](#)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016
 - The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2. Establishing a standard school recording process

- 2.1 The use of a standard “child welfare concern” form for all staff irrespective of their role in school and an aide memoire to assist in its completion is strongly recommended. A template is provided for personalisation by schools (**Appendix B**). It is suggested that this two page welfare concern form is photocopied back to back onto coloured paper to promote familiarisation and shared ownership of the school’s concern form.
- 2.2 The concern form and aide memoire must be easily accessible to all staff and depending on the size and type of school should be available in a range of places for example, the staff room, school office, in the office of the Headteacher /DSL / Pastoral care staff.
- 2.3 The DSL may find it helpful to use a whole staff meeting to introduce the welfare concern form to staff. Ideally this should be in the context of a safeguarding training / briefing session or other opportunity to remind staff of their safeguarding responsibilities and the expectations on them to report and record concerns. Meetings can be a useful forum for clarifying what the school’s DSL would view as a “welfare concern”. The aide memoire may be used to help with staff briefings.
- 2.4 It is acknowledged that schools may employ a range of staff who hold specific pastoral care responsibilities and may have their own systems for recording their on going work with children and their families. It is especially important that DSLs are aware of these systems and establish processes for sharing information. In some cases it may be appropriate for pastoral care staff to provide copies of their records for inclusion in a child’s safeguarding file. **In all cases where specific incidents or events arise, pastoral care staff must be aware of the need to complete the school’s “welfare concern” form.**
- 2.5 Staff should be mindful of the possibility that welfare concern forms they complete may be shared with others at some stage and in exceptional cases, the possibility that they may become evidence in court proceedings. It is therefore essential that DSLs ensure that an appropriate process and guidance is in place and that staff are supervised appropriately in carrying out these arrangements.
- 2.6 It is also vital that DSLs notify staff of how they will respond to reported and recorded concerns. Staff should be empowered to seek clarification on why concerns have not been reported to the statutory agencies and if concerns remain then a consultation should be had with Children’s Social Care.

- 2.7 Various pro forma recording templates are provided with this guidance. These should be personalised for school with school name and logo added to the document header. Back to back printing is advised for two page templates.

3. Induction and training

- 3.1 Safeguarding children and promoting their welfare is a task for the whole organisation. All staff members must know when and how to record concerns.
- 3.2 As part of their induction, all new staff members must be given training on how to recognise child protection concerns and how to report and record concerns. Induction must include how to use the child protection incident/welfare concern form and the aide memoire.
- 3.3 All staff members in the establishment should be given refresher training to ensure that the system is put into practice robustly.
- 3.4 Establishments must ensure that all their staff members are aware of their legal responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 for data processing, including accuracy, retention, disposal and subject access rights.

4. The Designated Safeguarding Lead's role

- 4.1 It is an essential part of the DSL's role to ensure that all staff members know when and how to record concerns about a child's welfare, however small or apparently insignificant they may seem.
- 4.2 The DSL should ensure that staff members are given appropriate induction and refresher training and are supervised appropriately in carrying out these arrangements.
- 4.3 It is the DSL's responsibility to decide what action needs to be taken in response to reported incidents or welfare concerns.
- 4.4 It is also the DSL's role to start and maintain a stand-alone file for children with child protection or welfare concerns.

5. Reporting concerns

5.1 Concerns about the welfare or safety of a child may initially be raised by:

- the student themselves
- a parent or carer
- a member of staff
- someone else connected to the school

5.2. Individuals who work with children and young people on a regular basis are in a position to monitor their welfare and safety. If, as a result of their contact with a child or young person, a member of the school staff is concerned as to the safety and welfare of a child, they have a responsibility to pass their concerns to the DSL within their school without delay.

5.3 Not all child protection information results in a referral. A record should be made of **anything** that gives staff cause for concern about a child as well as any disclosure or allegation made. Even if the information does not appear to be very significant on its own, it could contribute to a picture of abuse that should not be ignored.

5.4 A concern may be an observation about the behaviour or appearance of a pupil that initially does not seem to point to a child protection issue, but which someone feels should be reported and logged. Even without evidence, it is important that early concerns be put in writing, in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

5.5 The school safeguarding policy should make it clear to parents, carers and students that the school has a duty of care and therefore a responsibility to pass any safeguarding concerns to Children's Social Care.

6. When and how to start a stand-alone concern file

6.1 Once a child welfare concern form has been passed to the DSL, they should start a separate safeguarding/concerns file for the child where the form is stored and any responses and outcomes will be recorded. **This file must be kept separate from the child's other school records.**

6.2 A separate concerns file must be created **regardless of whether formal child protection procedures have been initiated.** For some children, this single record will be the only concern held for them over their time in the school. For others, further information may well be accumulated, often from a variety of sources, over time.

- 6.3 An effective method for storing single or infrequent records of concern is to file them alphabetically in divided ring binder files using a ring binder file for each year group. This can be indexed with details of the names and dates concerns were raised about the children concerned. This system is particularly recommended for primary schools since this will assist at the end of the academic year with meeting the responsibility to transfer records when children leave the school.
- 6.4 **A stand-alone file for a child must be started when:**
- concerns for the child and, consequently, records of these and actions are increasing; or
 - the child's previous school has transferred the child protection file they maintained; or
 - the child has been referred to Children's Social Care; or
 - the school has been made aware of the involvement of Children's Social Care with the child or family; or
 - the school is participating in multi-agency work to safeguard the child.
- 6.5 If concerns relate to more than one child from the same family at the school, a separate file for each child should be created and cross-referenced to the files of other family members. Common records, e.g. child protection conference notes, should be duplicated for each file.
- 6.6 When an individual file is started, it is helpful to use the recommended front sheet (**Appendix A**). Alternatively, a front sheet similar to this, e.g. from the electronic information management system, could be used, if available. The front sheet will need to be updated with any change of circumstances.
- 6.7 Schools that no longer maintain paper records must ensure that they keep the electronic safeguarding file separate from the child's general educational record.
- 6.8 It is also recommended that the child's general educational record is marked in some way to indicate the presence of this separate confidential file. A coloured sticker is one means of doing this for the paper record, or some form of flag for the electronic record.

7. What records should be included in a safeguarding file?

- 7.1 The following information must be kept in the stand-alone file, whether paper or electronic:
- Front sheet
 - Chronology
 - All records of concern
 - Any notes initially recorded in the form of notebooks/diaries
 - Any child protection information received from the child's previous school
 - Records of discussions and telephone calls (with colleagues, parents and children/young people and other agencies or services)
 - Safeguarding consultation records
 - Letters sent and received
 - Single service request forms - both for support services and to Children's Social Care (irrespective of outcome)
 - Formal plans linked to the child e.g. child protection plan, child in need plan, CASA & Action Plan
 - Risk assessments
 - School reports to interagency meetings and conferences
 - Minutes of interagency meetings e.g. child in need, strategy, child protection conference
- 7.2 In cases where different types of information, as in 7.1 above, are held, it may be helpful to organise them on a modular basis for ease of reference, e.g. in sections entitled 'referrals', 'letters', 'multi-agency records', etc.

8. Chronology of events

- 8.1 A well maintained chronology is a fundamental part of good record keeping. Chronologies are central to understanding concerns for a child in the context of history, timelines and other known information.
- 8.2 A chronology must be maintained in the child's stand-alone safeguarding file and updated on an on going basis as incidents or events occur. A chronology/action record pro forma with exemplar is found in **Appendix F**. The chronology must be stored at the front of the child's safeguarding file, alongside the front sheet, where it can be quickly accessed and viewed.
- 8.3 In addition to aiding assessment, a chronology will serve as an important record of the school's actions and, when attached to an inter-agency referral form, can provide evidence for the reason for a referral. It will also enable the establishment to provide evidence to Ofsted of what actions have been taken

and what responses the school had to any referrals. The chronology is also a useful tool to evaluate the level of support needed at different points in a child's life.

- 8.4** A chronology must list specific and significant incidents, events and actions taken in relation to the child and, where appropriate, their family, with a brief explanation or cross-referenced to the relevant record within the file.
- 8.5** In addition to recording incidents and events, the chronology must record all significant and relevant contacts between the school and parents, whether it is face-to-face, by email or telephone, with a record of what was discussed and action taken in response.
- 8.6** Any significant event or change which has an impact on the child must be included in the chronology, even if it seems to be contradictory. As a guideline, the following should be included, but the list is not exhaustive:
- **Change of circumstances:** changes of carer, address, legal status, school, family circumstances and household composition.
 - **Issues for the child:** the child's views, physical or mental health issues, incidents of abuse, losses, developmental issues, educational issues including out of school episodes, personal achievements, incidents of running away/going missing, incidents re bullying, gender or culture, offending or police involvement.
 - **Family issues:** changes in family composition, loss and separation, domestic violence, financial or housing problems, physical or mental health, substance misuse, homelessness, imprisonment, victimisation.
 - **Professional involvement:** referrals made, involvement of other agencies (universal, targeted and specialist), assessments, significant decisions, interventions, Children's Safeguarding and Specialist Services involvement (child in need, child protection, child looked after, court hearings).
- 8.7** Entries on a chronology should:
- Be brief but informative
 - Specify the date of the event, source of the information and date information received/recorded.
 - Contain factual information or be clearly specified as unsubstantiated.
 - Be in neutral, objective language, suitable for professionals and family members to read.
 - Include all relevant information even if it seems contradictory.
 - Specify the full name and job title of the person making the entry.

9. Guidance when making a welfare concern record

- 9.1 When making child protection notes or records it may not be possible to know who will eventually have access to it or when. It may be consulted months or even years after it was written. Always bear in mind that someone who is a complete stranger to you and your school may need to read your record at some stage in the future.
- 9.2 The recording of a concern creates a confidential record which should be kept secure in accordance with the school's data protection policy.
- 9.3 Where a child has made a **disclosure**, a **written** factual record, using the child's own words, should be made using the 'child welfare concern' form (**Appendix B**).
- 9.4 Professional opinion may be expressed, but should be supported by stating the facts with observations upon which the opinion is based, i.e. ***"Tommy appeared angry as he was kicking the table and swearing"***.
- 9.5 Where **no disclosure** has been made, but a member of staff has concerns regarding the welfare or well-being of a student, they should make a **written** account of such concerns using the 'child concern form' (**Appendix B**). This will ensure that information from all members of staff is logged and collated so that essential information is not overlooked.
- 9.6 Hand written notes should be legible and written in ink. All notes and reports must contain the following:
- Date of the incident
 - Date and time of the record being made
 - Name and date of birth of the child(ren) concerned
 - A factual account of what happened and 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
 - Action taken and any future plans e.g. monitor and review
 - Other agencies informed or consulted
 - Printed name of the person making the record
 - Job title of the person making the record
 - Signature (please print name alongside)

- 9.7 In the case of a disclosure, the record should also include:
- As full an account as possible of what the child said
 - An account of any questions put to the child
 - Time and place of disclosure
 - Who was present at the time of the disclosure
 - The demeanour of the child; where the child was taken and where the child was returned to at the end of the disclosure
- 9.8 Any handwritten notes made immediately after the event, for example a disclosure, can act as evidence of them being written contemporaneously in any future court case. Therefore, these should not be destroyed if the details are recorded more formally, but instead kept securely attached to the child concern form used by the school (**Appendix B**).
- 9.9 The source of the information should be recorded e.g. **“Miss Moon, a teaching assistant told me that ...”** or **“I saw Tommy in the playground at break time”**.
- 9.10 Information should be factual or based on fact. Record what you saw, heard e.t.c and try not to be vague or woolly (e.g. **‘Sally was crying and pulling her hair’ rather than ‘Sally was upset’**).
- 9.11 Distinguish clearly between fact and your professional opinion. When recording your professional opinion, make it clear what your opinion is based upon (i.e. state the facts and observations upon which the opinion is based e.g. **‘Tommy ran and hid under the table when his father arrived to take him home. He clung to me when I tried to get him. He appeared to be frightened’**).
(Note: Expressing the opinion that the child is not telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds)
- 9.12 Make a note of what you have done with the information (e.g. **‘I consulted the Headteacher, Mr Wilson and he said he would...’**)
- 9.13 Try to avoid specialist jargon which someone from another agency would not necessarily understand.
- 9.14 All records should be dated and signed, with the name of the signatory clearly printed, and filed in chronological order.
- 9.15 All recorded child protection concerns should be passed to the DSL as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours. In some cases it may be necessary to pass concerns verbally to the DSL and follow it up in writing soon after.

- 9.16 Concerns that appear initially to be trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. The DSL will make a professional judgment about what action needs to be taken.
- 9.17 Students should be informed that any disclosure they make will be treated sensitively but may need to be shared with other professionals if it is considered necessary to protect the child or someone else from harm.
- 9.18 A concern raised may not progress any further than a discussion with the DSL. If a referral is made to Children's Social Care or the Police, a written note or a copy of the completed interagency referral form must be forwarded **to Children's Social Care via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**. A copy of the referral form must be kept by the school in the child's safeguarding file.
- 9.19 Any concerns that a child or young person is suffering harm or at risk of harm must be reported to Children's Social Care via MASH.

10. Secure storage, retention and disposal of records

- 10.1 All schools have a duty to protect personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998. The eight principles of the Act must be adhered to when processing information about children.
- 10.2 The child concern file must be kept separate from all other school records relating to the child.
- 10.3 Child safeguarding records on paper must be stored in a locked cabinet with access only to those with direct safeguarding responsibility for children in the school.
- 10.4 A senior person must be nominated to be responsible for holding the key to the locked cabinet in the absence of the Safeguarding Lead.
- 10.5 If the child protection/welfare concerns file is an electronic file, the school must ensure that access privileges to this separate file are limited to only those with safeguarding responsibilities in the school.
- 10.6 It is essential to ensure that the school's leadership team knows the arrangements for access to records in the absence of the DSL. These arrangements should be stated in the school's child protection policy in relation to how welfare concerns will be managed if the DSL is not available.
- 10.7 A note or symbol (e.g. a red 'C') should be placed on the cover of the school file for the child, indicating that there is a child concern file relating to the child. All staff who 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. This should also serve as a reminder to transfer the child protection file if the child/young person moves to another school.

- 10.8** The school may also hold other records that should be cross-referenced and referred to in a child concern file, for example, information relating to Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- 10.9** Child protection records must be retained by all educational schools until the child's 25th birthday, unless the records are transferred to a new school when the child leaves. All child protection records retained by the school must be securely destroyed immediately after the retention period ends.
- 10.10** Primary schools do not need to keep copies of safeguarding records unless there are on going legal proceedings when the child leaves the school. Custody of, and therefore responsibility for, the records passes to the school the pupil transfers to.
- 10.11** The school which the child attends until statutory school leaving age (or the setting where the pupil completed sixth form/FE studies) is responsible for retaining records until the child reaches the age of 25 years. Arrangements need to be made to ensure the secure storage of child protection files for this period. Records should then be shredded, with a record of this being done, the date, and why.
- 10.12** The Data Protection Act requires that schools, or other bodies that keep information, maintain a list of records which have been destroyed and who authorised their destruction. Members of staff should record at least:
- File reference (or other unique identifier)
 - File title (or brief description)
 - Number of files
 - The name of the authorising officer
 - Date action taken
 - This could be kept in an Excel spread sheet or other database format

11. Transfer of child protection/welfare concerns records

- 11.1** When a student transfers from one school to another, their child protection file should be forwarded to the new school without delay, and in any case **within fifteen school days**. An example of best practice would be for the DSL of the transferring and receiving school to make contact and discuss cases as soon as is practicable.

- 11.2** This transfer should be arranged separately from the main educational file in line with Department of Education guidance. When a file is to be transferred, a **'File Transfer Record & Receipt'** form should be completed and attached to the child protection file (**Appendix G**).
- 11.3** The DSL is responsible for ensuring that a safeguarding record is transferred for the attention of the DSL at the receiving school. The record should be transferred in what the school i.e. the data handler, considers to be the most secure and appropriate manner to minimise the risk of any data breach. The data handler is accountable for any data breach.
- 11.4** It is good practice to keep a copy of the safeguarding file until the receiving school acknowledges receipt. At this point, the copy should be destroyed sensitively. It is also good practice to talk concerns through with receiving DSL in advance of sending safeguarding records.
- 11.5** If a child who is an open case to Children's Social Care leaves school and the DSL is unaware of the school to which the child is transferring, they should contact the allocated social worker to share this information and undertake further liaison.
- 11.6** Where safeguarding records have been kept for a child who is not an open case to Children's Social Care and details of the receiving school are not known, the existing school should keep the records until the new school makes contact.
- 11.7** If there are concerns that the child does not have a school place elsewhere or that alternative education arrangements have not been made, then the DSL should follow the Children Missing Education procedures.
- 11.8** Where no safeguarding records are held for a child, it is good practice at the time of transfer to include written confirmation of this to the receiving school.
- 11.9** Similarly where no information is received regarding safeguarding records following transfer i.e. the record itself or confirmation that no such record was held, the DSL should not assume that safeguarding concerns do not exist. Contact should be made with the DSL at the previous school to clarify whether there have been concerns and request the records where necessary.
- 11.10** If the child is the subject of a child protection plan at the time of transfer, the DSL must speak to their counterpart at the receiving school before arranging for the records to be transferred.
- 11.11** Schools should be aware that some information they hold in child protection records, such as CASAs which are normally made in collaboration with the

family, should only be transferred with the consent of the child or their parents.

12. Information sharing

12.1 When there is a concern that a child is at risk of significant harm, all information held by the school must be shared with Children's Social Care, police and health professionals. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004 empower all agencies to share information in these circumstances. If in any doubt, the DSL should consult Children's Social Care.

12.2 On occasions when safeguarding concerns exist for a child in the context of a family situation and siblings attend other school settings or the children are known to other agencies, it may be appropriate for the DSL to consult with, on a confidential basis, their counterpart from these other schools or other agencies to share and jointly consider concerns.

12.3 It is good practice to seek consent from the child or their parent before sharing information. Children over the age of 12 years are considered to have the capacity to give or withhold consent to share their information, unless there is evidence to the contrary. It is therefore good practice to seek their views. If the young person is over 16, they should be involved in decision-making about information sharing, unless they do not have the capacity to give consent.

12.4 However, consent should not be sought, or the child or family informed that their information will be shared, if doing so would:

- place a person (the child, family or another person) at risk of significant harm, if a child, or serious harm, if an adult; or
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime; or
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child or serious harm to an adult.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) is clear that these duties should not be a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

12.5 Consent may be dispensed with if the school is required to share information through a statutory duty such as a child protection investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 or a court order.

- 12.6 Information from records may be shared at child protection conferences and for serious case reviews.
- 12.7 Staff members' access to information on the child protection file should be on a need-to-know basis and decided case by case. Generally, the closer the staff member's day-to-day contact with the child is, the more likely that they would need to know an outline of the child's case. The school should have a well-understood policy about who should have direct access to the child's records and what other staff members need to be aware of an outline of the case. The child's and family members' confidentiality should be respected as far as possible, but **the child's welfare is paramount**.
- 12.8 Cases of alleged abuse that result in court proceedings may require the school to disclose their records, either through the police or Children's Social Care.
- 12.9 In all court cases, schools must seek legal advice before fulfilling any requests made by solicitors or other third party.
- 12.10 The school should share only the information necessary for the purpose and understand the limits of any consent given, especially if the information has been provided by a third party.
- 12.11 Suitably anonymised records may also be requested for use in disciplinary proceedings.
- 12.12 Under no circumstances should the school governors or trustees be given details of individual cases. Governors or trustees may, however, be provided with a report at the end of the academic year, outlining the number of cases dealt with and other statistics which do not identify individual children.
- 12.13 The Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately. [Information Sharing-Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to vulnerable children, young people, parents and carers \(2015\)](#) is a vital resource to help manage issues of confidentiality and decide with whom to share information in particular circumstances.

13. Children and parents' access to child protection files

- 13.1 Under the Data Protection Act 1998, any child who has a child protection file has a right to access it. The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 give parents the right see their child's school records. However, neither the child nor the parent has an automatic right to see all the

information held in child protection records. Information can be withheld if disclosure:

- could cause serious harm or is likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health or condition of the child or another person; or
 - could reveal that the child or another person has been a subject of or may be at risk of child abuse, and the disclosure is not in the best interests of the child; or
 - is likely to prejudice an on going criminal investigation; or
 - the information about the child also relates to another person who could be identified from it or the information has been given by another person who could be identified as the source, unless the person has consented to the disclosure or the person providing the information is an employee of the school or the Local Authority.
- 13.2** It is best practice to make reports available to the child or their parents unless the exceptions described above apply. If an application is made to see the whole record, advice should be sought from the child's social worker, if they have one, and the Information Governance Officer.
- 13.3** The school's report to any child protection conference should be shared with the child, if old enough and parent(s) at least two days before the conference.
- 13.4** When disclosing information, all third-party information must be removed, or consent sought for its disclosure from the person concerned. For example, all identifying information about other children or members of the public who have shared information about the child must be removed before disclosing information.

14. Quality assurance of safeguarding records/files

- 14.1** The DSL and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) should audit the school's children protection/welfare concerns files regularly to ensure that procedures are being followed and adequate records are being kept. (**Appendix J**)
- 14.2** Schools are advised to complete 'in-house' monitoring of a sample of child protection records, at least three times a year. This auditing/monitoring activity should include the following:
- Facing sheet with name, address, DOB, and family member details.
 - Note or symbol on child's regular school file
 - File cross-referenced with other family members, if appropriate
 - Chronology updated and complete
 - Records and notes typed or written in legible handwriting

- Routine auditing of the concern form using the checklist/audit tool (**Appendix C**) is advised.
- Incident date (including year!), time, place
- Factual outline of incident /concern/allegation/disclosure
- Clear names, job titles of staff involved
- Signature, printed name, job title of person making record
- Note of action taken, and with whom information was shared
- Note of outcome and any supporting minutes / letters from agencies
- Note of copies/referrals sent to Children’s Social Care as appropriate
- Copies of minutes or notes of meetings, e.g. child protection conferences, core group meetings, e.t.c are copied to the file of each child in the family as appropriate

Ofsted guidance on evaluating the quality of safeguarding records considers:

- ✓ **Are records up-to-date and complete?**
- ✓ **Do records demonstrate both effective identification and management of the risk of harm?**
- ✓ **Do records demonstrate sound decision-making, appropriate responses to concerns and evidence of relevant referrals made in a timely manner?**
- ✓ **Do they indicate that appropriate action is taken in response to concerns and allegations in a timely manner?**
- ✓ **Do they show evidence of tenacity in following up concerns with relevant agencies?**
- ✓ **Do they provide evidence of effective partnership working and sharing of information?**
- ✓ **Is there evidence of attendance at or contribution to inter-agency meetings and conferences?**

Briefing for Section 5 Inspectors on Safeguarding Children, Ofsted, 09/2011

- 14.3** In addition to checking that the file is complete and has full and up-to-date records, the DSL should also **assess the robustness of risk assessment and decision-making** by all staff members involved.
- 14.4** Any strengths and shortfalls should be discussed with the appropriate staff members and any learning should form a part of induction and training. The outcome of audits and action plans should be shared with the School’s Governor for Child Protection.
- 14.5** Under the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006, one of the functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) is monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of Board partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and advising them on ways to improve. In compliance with this legal duty, Merton Safeguarding Children Board may wish to audit safeguarding files maintained by schools in the borough.

INFORMATION / FRONT SHEET

Full Name:	DOB:	Additional / Special Needs:
Gender:	Ethnicity:	
Home Address:		Telephone:

Status of file and date:

OPEN					
CLOSED					
TRANSFER					

Child Status (indicate start date, where known)

CA\$A	Child in Need (CiN)	Child Protection (CP)	Looked After Child (LAC)

Any other child protection records held in school relating to this child or a child closely connected to him/her? YES/NO; WHO?

Members of household (include siblings; mother; father. Male partners of single mother; should be noted)

Name	Relationship to child	DOB/Age	Tel No

Significant Others (relatives, carers, child minders, e.t.c)

Name:	Relationship to child	Address:	Tel No:

Other Professional / Agency Involvement (strikethrough any obsolete entries)

Name	Role	Agency	Telephone Contact

WELFARE CONCERN FORM

Part 1 (for use by staff members)

Child's Name		Date of Birth:	
Date and Time of Incident:		Date and Time form completed:	
Staff Name & Role: (Print)		Signature:	

Record the following factually: Who? What (if recording a verbal disclosure by a child use their words)? Where? When (date and time of incident)? Any witnesses? What is the pupil's account/view? Any other relevant information (distinguish between fact and opinion). Previous concerns etc.

Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed and when.

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it. Handwriting must be legible.
Please pass this form to your Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

Part 2 (for use by Designated Safeguarding Lead/s)

<p>Time and date information received , and from whom.</p>	
<p>Any advice sought – if required (date, time, name, role, organisation and details of advice given).</p>	
<p>Action taken (referral to Children’s Social Care/monitoring advice given to appropriate staff/CASA etc) with reasons.</p> <p>Note time, date, names, who information was shared with and when & purpose etc.</p>	
<p>Parent’s informed? Yes/No. If NO, give reasons.</p>	
<p>Outcome Record names of individuals/agencies who have given information regarding outcome of any referral (if made). Has child or staff member raising concern been informed of outcome?</p>	
<p>Where can additional information about child/incident or follow up actions be found.</p>	
<p>Signature & Date</p>	
<p>Printed Name</p>	

Appendix C

Welfare Concern Form Checklist /Audit Tool for DSL

Child clearly identified?	Y / N
Name, designation and signature of the person completing the record populated?	Y / N
Date and time of any incidents or when a concern was observed?	Y / N
Date and time of written record?	Y / N
Distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay	Y / N
Concern described in sufficient detail, i.e. no further clarification necessary?	Y / N
Child's own words used? (Swear words, insults, or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim.)	Y / N
Record free of jargon?	Y / N
Written in a professional manner without stereotyping or discrimination?	Y / N
If applicable, the record includes an attached completed body map to show any visible injuries	Y / N

Audit date:	Audited completed by:		
Overall RAG rating (see key below)			
Action needed	Timescale	Name and position of person responsible	Date action completed

RED	Indicates that information from the checklist is lacking and deficiencies need to be addressed as a matter of urgency
AMBER	Indicates that key information is included but recording could be further improved
GREEN	Indicates that the recording meets the above required standards

This audit sheet may be shared with staff however the confidential details of the concern recorded overleaf must be excluded.

DSL DETAILED RECORD OF ACTION			
PUPIL NAME:		D.O.B	
DATE:			
DSL Name; Signature & Date Recorded:			

CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENTS OR WELFARE CONCERNS

RECORDING AIDE MEMOIRE FOR STAFF

Safeguarding children is a task for everyone

All staff members at [insert school name] have an important role to play in helping to identify welfare concerns and possible indicators of abuse or neglect at an early stage.

For some children a one-off serious incident or concern may occur and you will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported. Most often, however, it is the accumulation of a number of small incidents, events or observations that provide the evidence of harm being caused to a child.

It is vital that any concern you have for a child's welfare, however, small is recorded and passed to our Safeguarding Lead.

What should you do if you have concerns?

- ✓ **You must pass concerns to the DSL or another designated person in the DSL's absence, as soon as possible after they are identified and, where possible, before the child leaves for the day.** It is important that the child is not sent home at the end of the day without taking the right protective action.
- ✓ The DSL is responsible for referring child protection concerns to Children's Social Care. Although the timing of referrals is based on perceived risk, it is expected that **referrals will be made usually within one working day of recognition of risks. It is important, therefore, that the Safeguarding Lead is made aware of concerns as soon as possible.**
- ✓ In the first instance, you could pass concerns to the DSL verbally, but you must always follow this in writing. **All concerns must be recorded on the 'Concern Form'.**
- ✓ Do not keep your own system to note concerns. You must use the system detailed in this aide memoire. This is to ensure proper communication, collation, and storage of information.

What is a child concern and when should you record and report it?

When there are any concerns that might indicate possible abuse or neglect, the concerns need to be recorded and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

For example (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

- Physical presentation of the child
- Marks on the child's body or physical injuries. Injuries to the face should always be viewed as indicative of possible physical abuse
- Unusual or different behaviour
- Behaviour not appropriate to the child's age or development
- Mood changes
- Statements, stories or drawings from the child
- Missing from the establishment or non-attendance without a reasonable explanation
- Information from others, including siblings, parent who does not have residence, friends, other children, members of the public, etc.
- Concerning parental behaviour towards the child
- Concerning letters, telephone calls or contacts from the parent to the establishment
- Direct disclosure or allegation made by the child

What should you record on the child concern form?

Basic information

- ✓ Full name and date of birth of child
- ✓ Your name and job title
- ✓ Date (include year!) and time of incident
- ✓ Full details of all other people involved

Details of concerns

Use the list in the box above as a guide and record as much information as possible. Pay particular attention to:

- ✓ Visible injuries or marks (use the body map provided)
 - ✓ General demeanour and appearance of child
 - ✓ Changes in behaviour and mood or changes in classroom functioning
 - ✓ Response to sport and physical education (PE)
 - ✓ Relationships with peers and adults
 - ✓ Statements made by the child, comments, stories, drawings
 - ✓ Parental behaviour, interest and comments
 - ✓ Patterns of non-attendance
 - ✓ Hearsay and nagging doubts you have about the child's safety and welfare
- Make sure the information is factual and your opinions are substantiated.
 - Use the child's own words when recording a direct disclosure.
 - Do not examine the child specifically for any physical marks or injuries - only do what you would normally do as part of your duties. Record only what you can see.
 - Record all the actions you have taken.
 - Make sure the details are legible before you pass the record to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Actions for the Designated Safeguarding Lead

When a child concern form is passed to you

- ✓ Check that the form is sufficiently detailed. Use the checklist provided.
- ✓ Check that it has been dated and signed by the staff member who reported the concern.
- ✓ If a body map has been completed or there are any other documents referred to in the record, ensure these are attached and are, where appropriate, dated and signed.

Complete the 'Response to the incident/concern' section of the form

Record your response or action to every welfare concern form passed to you. The level of detail of this record will clearly depend on the nature and seriousness of the concern but may include:

- Requests to staff for monitoring specific aspects of the child's presentation, behaviour, attendance, e.t.c
- Discussions and telephone calls, with colleagues, children and parents, with a record of full names and dates
- Professional consultations and requests for information with a record of who was consulted (full name and job title) and dates consulted
- Letters sent and received

Complete the 'Outcomes' section of the form

Record the outcomes of any responses or action you took, with dates, for example:

- CASA started
- Referral sent to Children's Social Care or the police contacted
- Whether or not parental consent was obtained for sending the referral and the reason for referring without consent, i.e. the child is at risk of significant harm
- Contact from Children's Social Care or police in response to the referral, including contact with the child
- Strategy discussion or meeting under child protection procedures and the establishment's involvement, if invited, e.g. who took part, when and outcomes
- Referral sent to other agencies and contact from other agencies in response to referral, including contact with the child
- Appointments for child with other agencies

Update the chronology and observations

Update the chronology with brief details of the incident, the response and outcomes. Update observations or diary records with full details.

Update the child's file as new documents are produced or received

File all copies of referrals sent, letters sent and received, minutes of strategy discussions and child protection conferences and all other relevant documents in the child's file. Update the front sheet, if necessary.

Cross-reference to files for other children in the family

Update the chronology in each child's file and ensure that relevant documents are copied across to each file.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS/ACTIONS

CHILD/FAMILY:		D.O.B:	
DATE	KEY EVENT	OUTCOME/ACTIONS & TIMESCALES	NAME & ROLE
<p><i>Exemplar</i> 01/06/2015 09:50</p>	<p>'Tommy' came into school with visible bruising and swelling (welts) on the back of his legs. This was noticed by Class Teacher 'Sam Sung (SS)', during a PE lesson. He refused to say what happened to cause the bruises.</p>	<p>'Child Concern Form' and body map showing site of bruising completed by SS and handed directly to Ed Zed (EZ) the DSL. Tel MASH social worker, Lucy Bee (LB) for advice. LB already has contact with family and has been previous concerns. Discussed consent to a referral. LB advised not to seek consent due to previous concerns. LB will contact Mother to seek consent to interview Tommy at school. Written referral completed & sent MASH same day at 10:50. School Child Concern file started.</p>	<p>Ed Zed (DSL)</p>
<p>11:40</p>	<p>Social Worker Lucy Bee (LB) came to school to interview Tommy. She said she has Mother's consent.</p>	<p>Class teacher SS sat with Tommy during interview. Tommy wanted someone familiar with him.</p>	<p>Can Do (DDSL)</p>
<p>~~~~~ 03/06/2015</p>	<p>~~~~~ Tommy not in school. Parents have not given reason for absence.</p>	<p>~~~~~ Absence reported to Ms Can Do (deputy DSL). Telephone contact with mother & father unsuccessful. Social Worker informed by telephone. Social Worker to complete welfare visit with Police today</p>	<p>~~~~~ Can Do. (DDSL)</p>

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS/ACTIONS

CHILD/FAMILY:

D.O.B:

DATE	KEY EVENT	OUTCOME/ACTIONS & TIMESCALES	NAME & ROLE

Appendix G

**'CHILD CONCERN' FILE TRANSFER RECORD
AND RECEIPT**

PART 1: To be completed by sending/transferring school

Name of Child:	
Date of Birth:	
School Sending File:	
Address of sending school:	
Date File Sent:	
Name of Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	
Method of Delivery :	
Signature:	

PART 2: To be completed by receiving school

Name of Receiving School	
Address:	
Date File Received:	
Name of Receiving Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	
Was file securely transferred?	
Signature:	

Distinguishing fact and opinion

Consider each of the statements below. For each one decide whether it is a *fact* or an *opinion*.

Have a go at rewriting one statement that contains an opinion in a way that makes the difference between fact and opinion clear.

1. Being unemployed is depressing Mrs A.
2. Alan said his mother smacked him.
3. On the last contact visit the living room was not safe for the children.
4. The clothing in which Mrs Smith had dressed the baby was not appropriate.
5. Foster Care is not appropriate for Ian
6. Jenny is a very contented child.

Appendix H

Distinguishing fact and opinion (answers)

1. Being unemployed is depressing Mrs A.

This is an opinion. A possible rewrite could be:

Mrs A appears depressed. She is... list her symptoms... (e.g. tearful, tired, listless, relationship with the children). This change in Mrs A has been noticeable since she lost her job and I think unemployment may be the main reason that she feels the way she does.

2. Alan said his mother smacked him.

This as written is a factual statement. However, it is important to know *who* Alan said this to. If he reported to a member of staff that his mother smacked him, one would expect a more detailed explanation to follow this statement, including what Alan said in his own words and what action the staff member has taken since.

3. On the last contact visit the living room was not safe for the children.

This is an opinion. It could be rewritten in the following way:

When I visited the family to talk about the children's attendance I did not think that it was safe to leave them in the living room. There were dirty syringes and other sharp objects within their reach. I therefore phoned their social worker.

4. The clothing in which Mrs Smith had dressed the baby was not appropriate.

This is an opinion. It could be rewritten in the following way:

I did not think that the clothing Mrs Smith had dressed the baby in was appropriate because it was a cold November morning and the baby was dressed in only a tee – shirt and shorts to be taken out in her pram with only a thin blanket to cover her.

5. Foster Care is not appropriate for Ian.

Again this is an opinion. A possible rewrite could be:

I do not think that foster care is appropriate for Ian. This is his sixth placement in five weeks and all his previous placements with foster carers have broken down. Ian has told me that he feels that he is being disloyal to his mother by living in a family and he would like to be placed in a residential home. Although I have talked at length with him about this he remains consistent in his view and his behaviour appears to be directed at ending the placement.

6. Jenny is a very contented child.

This statement is written as if it is a fact. However it is clearly an opinion. What is meant by the phrase *very contented*? Would we all understand it in the same way and would we all agree on the difference between a contented and very contented child? It would be more helpful to give description of Jenny's behaviour and appearance.

Insert School Name & Logo in header

Appendix I

Safeguarding Records Case File Audit Tool

Auditor (Name & Role)		Audit date:	
Case Name/ID:			

Descriptor of standard (Case files)	RAG rating	Evidence/Comments
1. Are records up to date and complete?		
2. Is there evidence of clear and transparent records – i.e. can they be easily followed by someone else?		
3. Do records show effective identification and management of risk of harm?		
4. The record shows clearly what action was taken by the DSL to safeguard the child?		
5. Is there evidence of timely referrals, where necessary?		

Descriptor of standard (Case files)			RAG rating	Evidence/Comments	
6. The file shows the names of any other staff or external agencies that the DSL has shared information with, what information was shared and the rationale for this.					
7. Does the record of welfare concern comply with the checklist					
8. The records of concern show the feedback that has been given to the member of staff who brought the concern to the DSLs attention					
9. The record shows clearly any feedback/outcome of the actions taken to safeguard the child, e.g. spoke to parents for clarification, a safeguarding referral was/was not required.					
10. Is there evidence of work with other agencies?					
11. Is there evidence of work with parents/carers?					
Overall RAG rating: If red or amber, an action plan which details areas for development must be completed. The action plan should be regularly reviewed to ensure that actions are completed within timescales and achieve a green rating;					
Red (R)	Indicates that processes are lacking and need to be developed as a matter of urgency in order to meet minimum requirements for a specific standard	Amber (A)	Indicates that processes are in place but they need to be reviewed or further improved for a specific standard.	Green (G)	Indicates that the standard is fully met with all processes in place and up to date, at least to the required minimum

Appendix J

Organisational Safeguarding Audit Tool

Name & Role of Auditor:		Date:	
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Descriptor of standard (Organisational Audit)	RAG rating	Evidence/comments
1. Do all staff members use a centralised and standardised recording system to keep accurate and contemporaneous records of concerns?		
2. Is the recording system easily accessible to all staff and available in a range of places, e.g. in the staff room?		
3. Are safeguarding concerns shared securely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)?		
4. Who manages in the absence of the DSL?		
5. Are records stored securely with controlled access?		

Descriptor of standard (Organisational Audit)	RAG rating	Evidence/comments
6. Are child protection records kept separate to other pupil files?		
7. Does the Headteacher/DSL audit the safeguarding records of concern regularly to ensure that procedures are being followed and adequate records are being kept/		
8. Is there evidence that adequate measures have been taken to address any practice issues arising from the record of concern audit?		
9. Are CP records transferred securely and a receipt obtained from the receiving school? <i>(Consider whether there are clear procedures for transfer of safeguarding information to a receiving school when a child leaves the school? (e.g. evidence that files were transferred or requested from another school)) For secondary schools or Colleges, are arrangements made for archiving if the child is not moving on to Further Education?</i>		
<p>Overall RAG rating</p> <p>A judgement must be made about the overall RAG rating for the case file that has been evaluated. If red or amber, please complete an action plan which details areas for development. The action plan should be regularly reviewed to ensure that actions are completed within timescales and achieve a green rating; further actions should be agreed for the next audit to ensure continuing improvement. School should share the action plan with the CP Governor.)</p>		

<p>Red (R)</p>	<p>Indicates that processes are lacking and need to be developed as a matter of urgency in order to meet minimum requirements for a specific standard</p>	<p>Amber (A)</p>	<p>Indicates that processes are in place but they need to be reviewed or further improved for a specific standard.</p>	<p>Green (G)</p>	<p>Indicates that the standard is fully met with all processes in place and up to date, at least to the required minimum</p>
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Appendix K

Safeguarding Records/Organisational Action Plan

Record keeping standard and descriptor	RAG rating	Action needed	Timescale	Name and position of person responsible	
Red (R)	Indicates that processes are lacking and need to be developed as a matter of urgency in order to meet minimum requirements for a specific standard	Amber (A)	Indicates that processes are in place but they need to be reviewed or further improved for a specific standard.	Green (G)	Indicates that the standard is fully met with all processes in place and up to date, at least to the required minimum