

Guidance on the Retention and Transfer of Child Protection Records for Educational Establishments in Northamptonshire

Including Early Years Settings, Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Independent Schools and Colleges

This guidance should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

Part 1: When to transfer child protection records

For the purposes of this guidance, 'child protection record' refers to files kept outside the main pupil file that detail safeguarding, wellbeing and/or child protection concerns.

When children transfer from one educational establishment to another, either at normal transfer stage (e.g. from nursery to school or from school to further education) or as an in-year transfer and records of child protection/welfare concerns exist, these should be sent to the receiving school as soon as possible, **preferably within 5 days**. This transfer should be arranged separately from the main pupil file in line with DfE Guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)*. An establishment may also choose to share information in advance of the child leaving, if appropriate.

87. 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, ensuring 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 SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in a college, are aware as required.

88. 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 victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

Part 2: How to transfer child protection records

It is important that all child protection records are transferred at each stage of a child's education, up until the age of 18, or in some cases, beyond. The responsibility for transfer of records lies with the originating setting, as the receiving setting might not otherwise know that child protection concerns exist. The onus is therefore on the originating setting to facilitate the secure transfer of records, not on the receiving setting to make contact and collect the records. **Child protection records must always be passed directly and securely to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the receiving establishment.**

Transfer of paper records

Paper records must be transferred in the most secure method available. The process for transferring records is outlined below.

Transfer of paper records by hand

- Establish the name of the member of staff who should receive the files and check that the child will be transferring/has transferred to this establishment

- Include a Transfer Form (see Appendix 1) with the file
- Deliver the file by hand to the relevant member of staff in the new setting and obtain copy of the completed transfer form, signed by the new establishment
- Both establishments should securely store copies of the transfer form (functioning as a receipt) in line with retention schedule

Transfer of paper records in the post

- Photocopy the whole child protection file
- Include a transfer form (see Appendix 1) with the file
- Send the original copy of the file to the new educational establishment, including the transfer form (Appendix 1). It should be addressed to the relevant individual and marked as confidential. Send the files using tracked, signed-for delivery.
- Telephone the new establishment once the files are signed for to ensure that the transfer form (functioning as a receipt) is returned
- Once transfer form receipt is received, shred the photocopy of the child protection record
- Both establishments should securely store copies of the transfer form (functioning as a receipt) in line with retention schedule

Transfer of electronic records

- Electronic records must only be transferred by a **secure** electronic transfer mechanism or after the information has been encrypted
- Include either the transfer form (see Appendix 1) with the encrypted file, or request a receipt via the electronic system used (e.g. CPOMS)
- Both establishments should securely store copies of the transfer form (functioning as a receipt) or electronic receipt in line with retention schedule

Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

If a child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan at the time of transfer, the originating establishment must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the receiving establishment giving details of the child's key social worker from Safeguarding and Children's Services and ensuring the establishment is made aware of the requirements of the Child Protection Plan.

Children in receipt of Early Help

If a child is in receipt of early help at the time of transfer, the originating establishment should pass details of support on to the new establishment and inform the agencies involved of updated education contact details.

Part 3: The receiving establishment

Receiving establishment is an education setting (school or college)

When a child moves to a school, the school must complete the transfer form (see Appendix 1) and return it to the originating school without delay. It is recommended that a copy of the signed, dated transfer form is retained by the receiving school.

Dual-Registered Pupils

Where children are dual registered (e.g. on roll at a mainstream school, but receiving education in another establishment), any existing child protection records should be shared with the new establishment prior to the child starting, to enable the new establishment to risk assess appropriately. Where this is not possible, child protection records should be shared within five days of the child starting at the new establishment.

Receiving establishment unknown

If any child leaves the school and the name of their new setting is unknown, the school should follow their Child Missing Education procedures, contact the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Team and complete a [CME team referral form](#). In the event that a child has a social worker, the school should inform the social worker that the child left the school. In all cases, the school should retain the child protection file until they are able to transfer it to the child's new educational establishment.

Elective Home Education

If a pupil is removed from the roll to be electively home educated, child protection files should be retained by the setting and transferred to a new setting if the child returns to school, or destroyed once the retention period has expired, as detailed in the Retention section above. Please make sure EIPT are aware of any current child protection issues when you complete the [EHE referral form](#).

Part 4: Storage and retention of child protection records

Storage

All child protection records are sensitive and confidential so should be kept in a secure (locked at all times) filing cabinet, separate from other education records and accessible to Designated Safeguarding Leads and relevant senior staff only.

The child's education file should be marked in some way to indicate that a child protection file exists. All staff that may need to consult a child's file should be made aware what the symbol means and to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have concerns.

Electronic child protection Records must be password protected with access strictly controlled in the same way as paper records.

Retention of child protection records

When child protection concerns about a child arise, all educational establishments should maintain and retain child protection records for as long as the child continues to attend the establishment.

It is recommended that child protection records are transferred with the child and then retained by the child's final educational establishment until a child's 25th birthday (6 years after the subject's last contact with the Authority). Records should then be securely disposed of and a record of disposal kept. Paper records should be shredded and electronic records deleted.¹

Part 5: Further information

For further information, relating to child protection records, please see links below.

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2020\)](#)
- [Data protection: toolkit for schools \(2018\)](#)
- [Information Commissioner's Office](#)

Appendix 1

Transfer Form for Child Protection Records between Educational Establishments

Please print all information

Information required	Answer
Name of child	
Date of birth	
Unique Reference Number (URN) – schools only	
Home address	
Name of originating establishment	
Name of originating Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Name of receiving establishment	
Address of receiving establishment	
Name of receiving Designated Safeguarding Lead	

File transfer information

Complete as applicable

Method of transfer	Date sent	Date received (to be completed by receiving school)
File transferred by hand		
File transferred in post		
Electronic file transfer		

Originating school

I can confirm that the child's complete child protection record was transferred on the date shown above.

Information required	Answer
Signed	
Print name	
Role	
Date	

Receiving school

I can confirm that the child protection record has been received and the originating school is no longer required to hold this information.

Information required	Answer
Signed	
Print name	
Role	
Date	

Upon receipt, the receiving setting should:

- sign this form and keep a copy with the child's child protection records; and
- ensure the original form is returned to the originating establishment without delay
- The originating establishment should keep the returned form securely in line with the Northamptonshire Guidance on the Transfer and Retention of Child Protection Records