

**Southampton City Council**

**Schools and Education:**

**Guidance on the Retention and Transfer of Child  
Protection Records for Education**



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### Guidance on the Retention and Transfer of Child Protection Records for Education

Including Early Years Settings, Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools and Independent Schools, Sixth Form Colleges and Colleges of Further Education.

## Contents

Introduction.....	3
Retention of Child Protection Records.....	3
Transfer of Child Protection Records .....	3
Transfer Form .....	4
Children subject to a Child Protection (CP) Plan .....	4
Storage.....	4
Receiving establishment unknown.....	4
Elective Home Education.....	5
Appendix A – Transfer Form for Child Protection Records between Educational Establishments.....	5

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## Introduction

1. This guidance should be read in conjunction with Section 15 of the Safeguarding Children in Education Guidance.
2. The guide is for all educational settings in the city, including Early Years Settings, Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools and Independent Schools, Sixth Form Colleges and Colleges of Further Education.

## Retention of Child Protection Records

3. 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; the records should then be transferred as described below.
4. It is recommended that child protection records are transferred with the child and then retained until a child's 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Transfer of Child Protection Records

5. 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 the result of a move (e.g. to another setting within Southampton, to an Independent School or to another Local Authority), and records of child protection/welfare concerns exist, these should be sent to the receiving school as soon as possible, **preferably within 5 days**, once there is confirmation of transfer of roll. This transfer should be arranged separately from the main pupil file in line with DfE Guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016). It is important that Parents/ Carers are aware that these records will be transferred to the new establishment.
6. 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.
7. In order to safeguard children effectively, it is important that when a child moves to a new educational establishment, the receiving establishment is immediately made aware of any **current** child protection concerns, preferably by telephone prior to the transfer of records.

**Child Protection records must always be passed directly and securely to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the receiving establishment.**

8. 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.**

9. Paper or electronic records containing child protection information must be transferred in the most secure method available to the establishment:
  - By hand if possible;
  - If paper records are posted this should be by 'signed-for' delivery;
  - Electronic records must only be transferred by a **secure** electronic transfer mechanism or after the information has been encrypted.

## Transfer Form

10. Whether CP files are passed on by hand, by post or electronically, written evidence of this transfer (e.g. the form at Appendix A of this document) appropriately signed and dated, should be retained by both the originating and receiving setting. It is recommended that the originating establishment keeps **a copy of the form** along with a copy of the chronology of events and any records pertaining to the establishment (e.g. completed 'Welfare Concern' forms) in line with retention guidance.

## Children subject to a Child Protection (CP) Plan

11. If a child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan at the time of enrolment the originating establishment must speak to the Child Protection Lead of the receiving establishment giving details of the child's key Social Worker from Children's Social Care Services and ensuring the establishment is made aware of the requirements of the CP Plan.
12. If a child subject of a CP Plan leaves an establishment and the name of the child's new education placement is unknown – the Child Protection Lead should contact the child's Social Worker to discuss how and when records should be transferred as well as informing the Child Protection administration team in order to ensure that all key dates for key child protection meetings are shared.

## Storage

13. 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 safeguarding leads and senior staff only.
14. 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 safeguarding lead if they have concerns.
15. Electronic Child Protection Records must be password protected with access strictly controlled in the same way as paper records.

## Receiving establishment unknown

16. Where records of child protection/welfare concerns have been kept and details of the receiving establishment are not known, settings should inform the named Social Worker. Child Protection files should be retained by the setting and transferred to the new setting, once known, or destroyed once the retention period has expired, as detailed in the Retention section above.
17. Schools should follow the Local Authority Children Missing Education guidance for schools and also inform the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Officer if efforts to locate a child fail.

## Elective Home Education

18. If a pupil is removed from the roll to be electively home educated, the educational establishment should make the Local Authority aware that they have a CP file.

### 19. Appendix A – Transfer Form for Child Protection Records between Educational Establishments

(Please print all information IN BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name of Child .....

Date of Birth .....

Unique reference number (schools only) .....

Home address .....

Name of originating establishment .....

Address of originating establishment .....

Name of current Child Protection Lead .....

Date file exchanged by hand .....OR

Date file posted by special delivery .....OR

Date information received electronically .....

Name of receiving establishment .....

Address of receiving establishment .....

Name of receiving Child Protection Lead .....

Date file received by hand .....OR

Date received by recorded delivery .....OR

Date information received electronically .....

Signature of receiving Child Protection Lead .....Date.....

#### Upon receipt, the receiving setting should

- Sign this form and keep a copy with the child's CP records
- 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 Southampton City Councils Guidance on the Transfer and Retention of Child Protection Records