**Background and statutory framework**

There is a statutory duty, as set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2), for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to ensure that when a pupil moves between settings the child protection (CP) file is transferred to the new setting within 5 school days. The transfer of this information must be secure, and the transferring setting should ensure confirmation of receipt of the CP file. The receiving setting should ensure that appropriate staff, such as the DSL and SENDCO, are aware of such file transfers and review the incoming information in a timely fashion.

**What is a CP file, how should it be recorded and what should it contain?**

A safeguarding file is the record kept by the DSL (and their deputies) of any concerns about a child's welfare. A file may only have one concern it or it may have an extensive history. The file maybe paper-based, but more commonly settings will be using electronic systems such as CPOMS or My Concern. Regardless of its size, all the information in the file should be transferred. Where settings use electronic systems to record aspects of a pupil’s history at the setting beyond immediate CP and safeguarding concerns (e.g. behaviour) the file should still be shared in its entirety. However, it will be useful for the transferring setting to provide a summary of the main safeguarding concerns.

The contents of a CP file should include:

* Details of the child and their family
* Chronology of key events, including actions taken by the DSL and the reasons for these
* Genograms
* Records of any cause for concern
* Referrals and requests for additional support such as early help or children's social care (regardless of the outcome i.e. whether it met threshold or not)
* Any children’s social care assessments or early help assessments (regardless of the outcome i.e. whether it met threshold or not)
* Other relevant assessments, e.g. Neglect Graded Care Profile 2
* CP conference minutes
* Multi-agency meetings minutes
* Records of communications between the parents/carers, staff and external professionals
* Record of the child's voice
* Any previous safeguarding information received from previous educational settings
* Summary of information received from the police, for example PPNs or Operation Encompass emails (the original PPN should not be kept on file)

**How to transfer the CP file**

Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible. Whether paper-based CP files are transferred by hand or by secure post there should be written evidence, such as a signed and dated receipt from the receiving school. Parents should never be used as couriers for such files. If concerns are serious and current, the DSLs from both settings should discuss the safeguarding issues in advance of the transfer.

Electronic CP records must be password protected with access strictly controlled. If a pupil transfers between two settings that are using a system such as CPOMs, they will receive a notification from CPOMs that there is data pertaining to that student on another CPOMS system.

To ensure the timely transfer of CP files, whilst being mindful of the administrative burden of checking and redacting information, the following principles around tiers of information sharing should be considered:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Status of pupil regarding safeguarding concerns** | **Process** |
| Current involvement with Children’s Social Care  | DSL of current setting should speak to the DSL of the new setting prior to transfer and discuss the safeguarding context of the pupil / family.When the pupil is enrolled at the new setting the entire CP file should be transferred within 5 days, alongside a summary[[1]](#footnote-1) of key safeguarding concerns. |
| Historic involvement with Children’s Social Care or Early Help | When the pupil is enrolled at the new setting the entire CP file should be transferred within 5 days, alongside a summary1 of key safeguarding concerns. |
| Child who has an electronic ‘CP file’ (e.g. CPOMS records) but has not been the subject of multi-agency discussions | When the pupil is enrolled at the new setting the entire CP file should be transferred within 5 days. |

**Sharing information: ensuring safeguarding versus data protection worries**

The links below provide useful guidance on the legal framework for sharing information. Where settings have concerns about the details of what information to share they should seek specialist advice from their Data Protection Officer.

As a general principal it will be appropriate to share the full CP file, including historic safeguarding concerns. Settings are advised to ensure that staff receive adequate training on how to record information in the CP file, with due regard to data protection principles, as this will simplify the file transfer process. For example, information received from the police via a PPN should be summarised so that only the information pertinent to the pupil for whom the CP file belongs is recorded rather than the entire PPN being retained on file. Care should also be taken to ensure that information related to other pupils is carefully considered before being recorded. Such procedures should ensure that the information within the file is necessary, proportionate for the intended purpose, relevant, adequate, and accurate.

* DfE Information Sharing Guidance (May 2024): <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf>
* Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) ten step guide:
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/a-10-step-guide-to-sharing-information-to-safeguard-children/>

**Post-16 Students**

The transfer of the CP file must continue through to post-16 providers. The DSL should inform the receiving provider that a CP file exists and transfer this as per this guidance. Post-16 providers should routinely ask if any CP files exist for all transferring students. If unknown, the setting should retain the file until the student’s 25th birthday.

**Appendix A** – Summary of Safeguarding Concerns

This summary should be provided alongside the complete CP file for any pupil who has had contact with children’s services, Early Help or for whom there are other significant concerns about their safety and wellbeing. Where a pupil is currently open to children’s social care the DSL of the transferring school should discuss the safeguarding context of the pupil / family prior to transfer.

Where schools use an electronic system to transfer CP records this form should be completed and uploaded as the most recent entry on the system at the point of transfer.

|  |
| --- |
| Summary of safeguarding concerns at the point of transfer between settings |
| Name of Pupil: |  |
| Date of Birth: |  |
| Contact details of DSL at transferring school: |  |
| Contact details of DSL at receiving school: |  |
| Normal or in-year admission transfer? |  |
| Reason for transfer: |  |
| Current status (CP, CiN, EH or none) |  |
| Historic status (CP, CiN, EH or none) |  |
| Summary of current concerns:* Safeguarding
* Welfare
* Behaviour
 |  |
| Outside agencies currently involved: |  |

**Appendix B** - Checklist for use when transferring CP files between settings

The checklist below is offered as a helpful guide in supporting a good quality and consistent approach to record keeping and transferring safeguarding information for all children.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Checklist for transferring child protection / safeguarding records** | **Completed** |
| The child’s safeguarding records are separate to the child’s file | ☐ |
| The safeguarding records are accurate | ☐ |
| The record-keeping includes:1. Details of the concern(s)/incident(s)
2. How the concern was followed up and resolved
3. The actions taken
4. Decisions reached
5. The decision-making rationale
6. The outcome
 | ☐☐☐☐☐☐ |
| There is a clear **summary** of the current and historic safeguarding concern(s) as well as the full chronology  | ☐ |
| These records include details of **all** referrals and involvement including as a minimum, from Children’s Social Care, the Youth Justice Team, and Early Help (regardless of the outcome of these referrals) | ☐ |
| The information being shared is considered as **necessary, proportionate for the intended purpose, relevant, adequate, and accurateNB** – as a general principle the ICO supports the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes | ☐ |
| Where there are current safeguarding concerns, a **verbal handover** will also take place with the receiving school’s DSL | ☐ |
| The relevant safeguarding records have been sent to the receiving school or establishment (**within 5 days** for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term when a pupil moves schools) | ☐ |
| The safeguarding file has been sent **securely** (including password protected where possible) **and separately** from the main pupil file | ☐ |
| A **confirmation receipt** from the receiving school or establishment has been obtained | ☐ |

Appendix C – CP file transfer record and receipt

This form is offered as a means of settings recording the transfer of CP files.

**Part 1: to be completed by the transferring setting**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of pupil: |  |
| Date of birth: |  |
| Name of transferring setting: |  |
| Address of transferring setting: |  |
| Method of delivery (hand, secure post, electronic) |  |
| Name of person at receiving school the file is being transferred to: |  |
| Name and role of person at transferring school responsible for this handover |  |
| Signature: |  |

**Part 2: to be completed by receiving setting**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of transferring setting: |  |
| Address of transferring setting: |  |
| Name of person receiving the file at the transferring: |  |
| Date received: |  |
| Date confirmation of receipt sent: |  |
| Signature: |  |

1. Appendix A provides a template for such a summary. Being mindful of staff workload the emphasis should be on highlighting the safeguarding context of the pupil / family. It should not be re-creating the chronology contained within the CP file [↑](#footnote-ref-1)