



## MEDINA HOUSE SCHOOL

### POLICY FOR RECORD KEEPING AND MANAGEMENT OF CHILD WELFARE AND CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL PUPILS

#### General Principles

1. Good, up to date record keeping of concerns and action taken is essential for two main reasons:
  - It helps the school identify causes for concern at an early stage. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are seen as a whole that a pattern can be seen indicating a safeguarding or child protection concern. Often it is only with hindsight that the significance of an incident becomes apparent.
  - It helps the school monitor and manage its safeguarding practices. Furthermore, in any inspection it will be important to provide evidence of robust and effective safeguarding policy and practice.
2. **The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been repeatedly highlighted in many Serious Case Reviews, including the high profile enquiries into the deaths of Peter Connolly and Khyra Ishaq.**
3. A record of a concern, suspicion or allegation is made at the time or as soon as possible after the event. (N.B. It is not advisable to make a written record whilst a child is disclosing abuse, as this may deter the child from speaking).
4. Records are factual, using the child's own words where a disclosure is made. Professional opinion can be given, but should be supported by setting out the facts and observations upon which the opinions are based. (N.B. expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds).
5. All records are dated and signed, with the name of the signatory clearly printed, and filed in chronological order.
6. Medina House School has a concern sheet (See Appendix A) for recording information/concerns. This can ensure that essential information is not overlooked.
7. Any handwritten notes made immediately after the event, for example a disclosure, can act as evidence of them having been written at the time in any future court case. Therefore, these should not be destroyed if the details are recorded more formally at a later time, but instead kept securely attached to the child protection concern forms used by the school.
8. All recorded child protection concerns must be passed to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection (DSL) as soon as possible. The DSL will need to make a professional judgement about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with local child protection procedures.
9. The common law of confidentiality, Data Protection and Human Rights principles must be adhered to when obtaining, processing or sharing personal or sensitive information or records. (*Refer to Information Sharing Protocols and Guidance*). In summary, the Data Protection Act requires that records should be accurate, relevant, kept up to date and securely and kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were made.

10. It is important to make it clear to pupils that any disclosure they make will be treated with sensitivity but may need to be shared with other professionals if it is considered necessary to protect the child or someone else from harm.

## **How Medina House stores child welfare and child protection records?**

11. Medina House has CPoms- an secure electronic storage system which stores a range of safeguarding information for every child, including attendance issues, significant behaviour incidents and welfare concerns, as well as Child Protection issues. Only the Headteacher and Assistant Head (both Designated Safeguarding Leads) have access to this system.
12. All written records of child protection or child welfare concerns, disclosures or allegations are treated as sensitive information and are kept together, securely and separate from the child's general school records in the Headteacher's office. The information is shared with all those who need to have it, whether to enable them to take appropriate steps to safeguard the pupil or to enable them to carry out their own duties, but it is not be shared wider than that.
13. These records are stored in a secure (ie locked) filing cabinet, accessible through the DSL or their deputy, to ensure reasonable access.
14. A child protection file will be started for an individual pupil as soon as the school is aware of any child protection concerns about that pupil. This may arise in a number of ways eg:
  - a. If a member of staff raises a concern about the welfare or well-being of a pupil – this should be recorded in writing (see below for guidance)
  - b. If information is forwarded to the school by a previous school attended by the pupil
  - c. If the school is alerted by another agency (eg health; social care; school or other setting attended by a sibling) of child protection concerns about that pupil
15. Members of staff should make a written account of any concern they have regarding the welfare or well-being of a pupil, using the school's pro forma for this. This record should be passed without delay to the school's DSL. Concerns which initially seem trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information later, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation with the DSL, or could lead to matters being heard in court. If there hasn't been a specific incident that causes concern, try to be specific about what it is that is making you feel worried
16. The Schools child welfare / child protection record concern sheet, includes all of the following::
  - A record of the pupil's details: name, date of birth, address and family details
  - Date (including year) and time of the event/concern;
  - the nature of the concern raised;
  - the action taken and by whom
  - Name and position of the person making the record
  - CPoms records includes links to all associated agencies plus links to other siblings/children in school.

In the case of disclosure, the record should also include:

- as full an account as possible of what the child said;
- an account of questions put to the child;
- time and place of disclosure;
- who was present at the time of disclosure;
- the demeanour of the child; where the child was taken and where returned to at the end of disclosure.

17. The DSL will need to be aware whether the child has any sibling(s) at other schools or early years settings, and consider whether information held is such that it should be shared with that other setting or whether a check should be made about whether that setting also has concerns about sibling(s).
18. If the DSL makes a referral to Children's Social Care, this must be confirmed in writing using the current referral form. The DSL must record the outcome of the referral on the record sheet, and must chase for an outcome if none is forthcoming within the expected timescale – if necessary using the Escalation Process, and keeping a record of all calls and emails
19. The pupil's child protection file must contain *inter alia*:
  - Any concerns recorded by staff
  - Any child protection information received from previous schools; schools or early years settings attended by siblings; or other agencies
  - Copy of any referral by the Designated Teacher to Children's Social Care
  - In the case of a child who is the subject of a child protection plan, notes of any Child Protection conferences, review meetings, or Core Group Meetings etc.
  - If any information is removed from a file for any reason, a dated note must be placed in the file indicating who has taken it, why and when.

### **How long should the child protection record be kept?**

20. The school must retain the record for as long as the pupil remains at the school. For further details see points 28 and 29.

### **Who should have access to child protection records or information?**

#### **School staff**

21. The secure filing system should be easily available to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy or others as set out at para 11 above. A locked filing cabinet will usually be adequate.
22. It is highly unlikely that all members of staff need to know the details of a case, or that there should be widespread access to the records. Access to, and sharing of, information should be on a need-to-know basis, decided on a case-by-case basis. Consideration must also be given to *what* needs to be shared. Generally speaking, the closer the day-to-day contact with the child, the more likely the need to know an outline of the case. Essentially, if someone receives information *in her/his professional capacity* and the person giving that information *believes* it will be treated securely, and that belief is reasonable, then the recipient of the information will be under a duty to treat it securely.

#### **Pupils and their parents**

23. The child who is the subject of a child protection record has a right to access their personal record, unless to do so would affect their health or well-being or that of another person, or would be likely to prejudice an ongoing criminal investigation.
24. Parents (i.e. those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's child protection file, on behalf of their child, with the same exceptions as apply to the child's right to access to the records. Note that an older pupil may be entitled to refuse access to their parents. The school should take advice about sharing information with parents if they have particular concerns about doing so. However, it is generally good practice to share all information held, unless there is a valid reason to withhold it, e.g. if

to do so would place the child at risk of significant harm. If a parent makes a request to access the records on a child's behalf, this must be done in writing.

### Other professionals

25. Child protection information should not ordinarily be shared with agencies other than Children's Social Care, Health, the Police, other relevant schools or early year's settings, or the LA – as described in local procedures. Generally, in terms of compliance with the Data Protection Act, obtaining informed consent of the subject would legitimise information sharing, however, this is not always practicable. Information must not be released to solicitors on request – always seek the advice of the LA's legal service in such cases.
26. References by name to children other than the pupil(s) who is the subject of the record must be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual/s concerned (or their parents/carer on their behalf). Care must be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.
27. If the record to be disclosed contains information about an adult professional, that information can be disclosed if it relates to the performance by that person of their job or other official duties e.g. a reference to a teacher in their teaching role or a school nurse in their nursing role. However, if the reference refers to that individual's private life, it must be removed (unless this relates to a child protection matter which is relevant to the record to be disclosed).

### Transfer of Records

28. When a pupil transfers from one school to another, their child protection record (if any) must be forwarded to the new school without delay, separate from their main pupil file. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is safe as possible. Child Protection records **must** be signed for by the receiving school.
29. If a pupil with a child protection record leaves the school without a forwarding address for home and new school, the Education Inclusion Officer must be informed without delay and enquiries will be made. If no contact is received from a new school within 10 school days, the EIO must be informed and pupil tracking procedures will be instigated if the child's whereabouts are still unknown.

### Guidance when making a record of a child protection incident or concern

- You won't know when making child protection note, 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.
- Ideally, logs of incidents should be typed. Hand written notes should be clearly 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 (remember to include the year)
  - 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
  - Any other agencies informed?

- Printed name of the person making the record
- Job title of the person making the record
- Signature (print name alongside)
- You should identify the source of your information e.g. 'Ms Terry, a teaching assistant, told me that....' Or 'I saw Rowan in the playground at break time...'
- Information should be factual or based on fact. Record what you saw, heard etc. and try not to be vague or woolly (e.g. 'Jenny was crying and rocking' rather than 'Jenny was upset').
- Distinguish clearly between fact and your professional opinion. When recording your professional opinion, make it clear what your opinion is based on (e.g. 'Harry ran and hid under the table when his mother arrived to take him home, and clung to me when I tried to get him out. He appeared to be frightened.')
- Make a note of what you have done with the information (e.g. 'I consulted the Headteacher, Mr Wilson, and he said he would...')
- Try to avoid specialist jargon (e.g. 'he is on SEN stage 3') which someone from another agency would not necessarily understand.

Policy approved by Governors .....

Signed ..... Chair of Governors

Review Date: December 2021

**Medina House School Record of Safeguarding Concern**

<b>Child's Name</b>	<b>Child's Date of Birth</b>
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<b>Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>
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**Context:**

**Outline of Incident/Concern:**

**Immediate Action Taken including details of reporting/recording:**

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Name	Role	Signature	Date

<b>Action Taken by CPLO:</b>

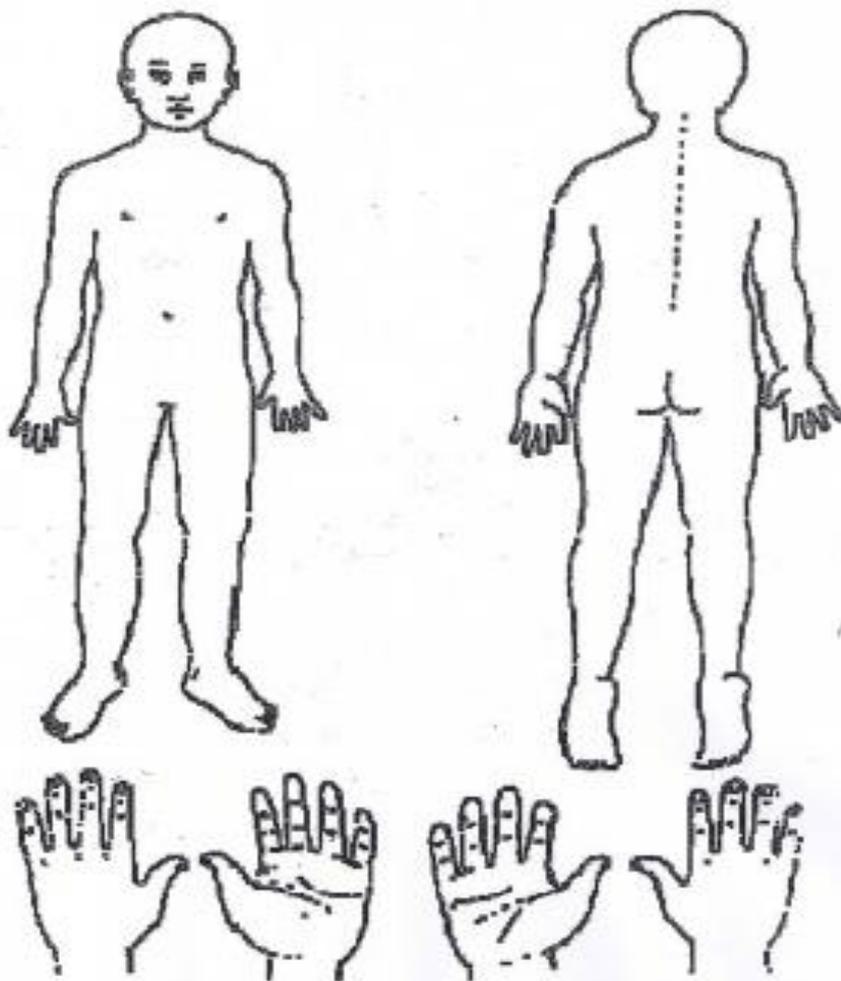
Name of CPLO	Signature	Date

Name of child:.....

Date of use of body map:.....

Name of staff member:.....

Body Map



**FRONT SHEET: CHILD PROTECTION RECORD (for use only in complex cases with a lot of paperwork)**

Date file started \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_

Any other names by which child known, if Relevant \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other family members  
(include full name, relationship e.g. mother, stepfather etc. For U18s, include age, if known.)

Are any other child protection files held in school relating to this child or another child closely connected to him/her? YES/NO

If yes, which files are relevant?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name and contact number of key worker (Children's Social Care), if known

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and contact number of GP, if known:

\_\_\_\_\_

Any other relevant school or Early Years setting: