

Reporting and recording a child protection concern

If a pupil makes a disclosure to a member of staff about their welfare it is vital that staff member knows exactly what to do

Reporting a concern

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

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

All concerns about the welfare or safety of a child should be reported to the designated teacher (DT), or deputy designated teacher (DDT).

What constitutes a concern?

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 child protection policy.

Recording a concern

Recording procedures should be fully explained to staff to ensure concerns are reported quickly and records are as concise and unambiguous as possible.

All records should:

- ✓ Clearly identify which pupil the record refers to, leaving no room for mistaken identity.
- ✓ State the name, designation and signature of the person completing the record.
- ✓ Give the date the record was written.
- ✓ Show the date(s) and time(s) of any incidents or when a concern was observed.
- ✓ Provide details of any witnesses to an incident.
- ✓ Distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay.
- ✓ Describe the concern in sufficient detail.
- ✓ Recount anything the pupil has said in their own words. Swear words, insults, or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim.
- ✓ Be written free of jargon, and in a professional manner without stereotyping or discrimination.
- ✓ Cross-reference any siblings or extended family members, if relevant.

- ✓ Provide information as required for other agencies about the pupil's abilities, disability, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, preferred language, family background and culture.
- ✓ Include a completed body map if relevant to show any visible injuries.
- ✓ Indicate who the record has been given/sent to.

Where to record a concern

The recording of a concern creates a confidential record which should be kept secure in accordance with the school's data protection policy.

It is advisable that concerns, particularly for those that seem to indicate the possibility of abuse or neglect, be recorded on a standardised form. Such a form reminds staff of the essential information that should be recorded. It should be signed and dated by the member of staff completing it so there can be no doubt where the information came from, and reminds staff to pass the form onto the DT/DDT only.

A copy should *not* be kept by the completing member of staff.

Storing recorded concerns on an individual basis in this way prevents those recording information from seeing several children's and staff names which may appear on one page, as in a communal logbook or diary.

Security of child protection records

There are strict guidelines related to how to store records and when to share information relating to child protection.

Transferral of child protection records to a new school or college should be done securely and separately from the main pupil record.