**Reviewing of Safeguarding Records**

***Good record keeping is not bureaucracy it is safeguarding!***

**Background**: Serious case reviews have repeatedly identified poor record keeping by schools as a problem. One way to check this is for the DSL or Headteacher to conduct a review of a sample of pupil files each year.

**Purpose**: The aim of such a review is to learn how effective school record keeping is in relation to children of concern – potentially the most vulnerable pupils in the school. Lessons this can then be fed back to all staff to improve future practice.

**Sample**: Clearly the more files that you examine, the fuller the picture you will have of processes in your school. However this needs to be balanced against the time demands of a review. In smaller primary schools looking at one file from each year group might give sufficient information, while in larger primary schools two from each year group might seem more appropriate. In a secondary school the review may need to look at as many as three or four files from each year group. It is also reasonable to take a proportionate approach; if reviews regularly show widespread good practice then fewer files may need to be examined in future. If, however, the review reveals poor practice this will indicate the need not only for training and guidance but also more careful monitoring of this issue.

**Confidentiality**: Material in pupil files is often of a very sensitive nature and the highest standards of confidentiality are required by anyone reading these files.

**Checklist**:

To guide a review of ‘safeguarding files’ this checklist will help to identify key issues.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes/No** | **Follow up action/further information** |
| Does the child’s main pupil record have a clear marker on it to indicate that a safeguarding file is also held?  |  |  |
| Was all confidential information transferred from the main pupil file to the safeguarding file when it was opened? (Check there are no confidential documents still sitting in the main file.) |  |  |
| Does the file have an up-to-date and accurate ‘Front Sheet’ giving basic factual information about the child and family? A genogram to visually show family connections? |  |  |
| Is the file cross referenced to other sibling files if appropriate? |  |  |
| Does the file have a brief running chronology of events/concerns?  |  |  |
| Is every entry in the file timed, fully dated and have the name and role and signature of the person who wrote the entry?  |  |  |
| Have staff made use of the cause for concern’ form to help record issues? Are these clear?  |  |  |
| If injuries to the child have been noted, did staff use the body map and were the records clear? |  |  |
| Where applicable, have any original contemporaneous notes been kept, in addition to later more formal records. |  |  |
| Have telephone calls and discussions with other agencies (police, health, social care) and parents been recorded (times dates who spoken to) and is it clear from these notes what action is to be taken and by whom? |  |  |
| Is there evidence that the DSL has reviewed the information and discussed the child with relevant staff? |  |  |
| Is there evidence that school staff have analysed the information, discussed it appropriately with others and then taken appropriate action such as sharing information with another agency/completing a CAF? Have these actions been followed up/escalated if needed? |  |  |
| If meetings have been called did school:i) send a report if requestedii) send a representativeiii) receive minutes of the meetingiv) complete any actions they were assigned by the meetingv) ensure that other key people in school were aware of any important issues.vi) ensure copies of plan/minutes were placed in each siblings file. |  |  |
| i) If the pupil concerned has transferred in from another school is there evidence that the DSL from this school and previous school discussed the pupil at transfer and that a note was made of that discussion.ii) For a pupil of concern who moved out recently did the DSL make contact with the new DSL at the new school? Is there a note to that effect? Was the pupil’s safeguarding file delivered to the new school? Is there evidence that the file was received? |  |  |

**Learning from the review**

A review such as this is not intended to be a ‘box ticking exercise’. The purpose is to understand how well staff fulfil their duties in relation to safeguarding in terms of how well records are maintained. Following the review there should be a discussion about any strengths and weaknesses identified. The intention is not to criticise any individual member of staff but to see what lessons the school community, as a whole, needs to learn.

The lessons from the review can be fed back to all staff using the school’s normal staff training or briefing routes.