

## Education Department Policy

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**Title:** Procedure for disseminating sensitive information  
(Child Protection)

**Date:** May 2016

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### 1. Overview

This policy has been introduced to ensure that strict protocols are followed when dealing with sensitive and personal information specifically related to child protection issues. It is designed to provide helpful practical advice on how to handle such information in order to safeguard children without unlawfully compromising the privacy of individuals involved.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Education Department (ED) staff responsible for receiving or disseminating sensitive information in relation to child protection and for the purpose of protecting the children / students in their care.

### 3. Responsibilities and distribution

ED senior managers and head teachers are responsible for distributing this policy amongst their staff and ensuring that the principles laid out within it are understood and followed.

### 4. Policy/Standards

Information of a sensitive nature may be received by any officer of the department. When information is received indicating that a person has been identified as a possible risk to children and young people, officers of the department should establish that the source is reliable and that the information is not based on hearsay or rumour. It is necessary to check with the source of the information who it can be shared with. It is essential in the interests of child protection that such information is shared with the ED Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Should this information need to be disseminated to other parties, staff must ensure that recipients are authorized and legitimate. If you have concerns it may be advisable to discuss these with a senior member of staff.

The ED DSO may share the information with agencies in the Child Protection Multi-Agency Team, particularly Social Services or the Public Protection Unit at Police Headquarters. The DSO will ensure that the Head of Staff Services, Daycare Registration Manager and the Principal Youth Officer receive the information where appropriate. These personnel will ensure that the information

is disseminated to those staff who need to be aware of such information following the procedures below.

If it is thought necessary to alert schools to the risks posed by individuals, that information will be sent to head teachers by the ED DSO. It should preferably be sent in hard copy by post addressed as 'Private and Confidential' and 'To be opened by addressee only'. In cases of emergency it may be necessary to send information by email; the DSO will take advice from the Public Protection Unit at Police Headquarters in such circumstances.

When this information is received by head teachers / area youth officers the following procedures must be adhered to:

- Any photographs or written information about individuals must not be copied or reproduced.
- Photographs or written information about individuals must not be displayed anywhere in schools, they must be kept in an envelope in a locked file/drawer of the head teacher or the designated teacher for child protection.
- Head teachers will decide who to share the information with. In a small school it may be possible for all staff to be shown a photograph in a confidential setting. This may be more difficult in a larger school / youth project. It may be appropriate to show the photograph to teaching and non-teaching staff. A caretaker, for example, may be the most likely member of staff to notice a stranger on a school site.
- Head teachers / area youth officers should state to staff that information received suggests that this person could pose a risk to children and that their presence on or near a school / youth project site should be reported to Police Headquarters through the school / youth service Senior Management Team. In such circumstances the person will usually have been told to stay away from the vicinity of schools / youth projects by the police.
- Staff must be advised that this information is confidential and must not be shared with anyone outside school / youth project.

The DSO will keep head teachers / youth officers informed should the intelligence change and the photograph/information need to be destroyed.

## **5. Further information and related documents**

Please refer to the full ED Child Protection Policy for further information on Child Protection issues.

## **6. Recommendations and Guidelines**

If you have any doubts about whether or not to pass on sensitive information, please contact either the DSO or ED's Head of Governance.

