

## CEF Need to Know

# Children, Education and Families Staff Alert System

### Purpose

The alert system is common sense guidance to ensure that the right people are alerted about serious incidents quickly.

### Why do they need to know?

- So that managers and senior officers are able to comply with legislative responsibilities and requirements
- So that managers and senior officers are swiftly apprised of the nature and number of high-level risks and incidents being responded to by staff, at any particular time.
- So that managers and senior officers are genuinely accountable, share the responsibility for taking appropriate action, and can provide support where necessary.
- So that any emerging patterns and trends can be spotted and trigger strategic action.
- So that elected members, MPs, DfE or media enquiries can be answered from an informed position.

### How is this different from the Escalation Policy?

The OSCB Escalation Policy covers instances when there are differences of opinion between professionals, either internally or between partner agencies. It sets out the routes for resolving disputes.

### Guidance for Staff

The alert system **covers all children's services** – including all sites such as residential units, alternative education sites, Children & Family Centres, our offices and all our work with children, young people and families.

If you are not sure whether something is a serious incident, be safe and alert your manager. **Do not rely solely on email.** You must be sure the message has been received and understood. Once managers are aware, they are responsible for alerting others. When sending emails, please ensure that all messages begin **'Need to Know'** in the subject heading. Please complete the Need To Know template (Appendix 1) and attach to the email.

If you cannot contact your manager, contact your senior manager, failing that, another senior manager or your deputy director. They can then make sure other relevant people are informed within the directorate and, depending on the nature of the incident, others within the County Council including councillors and relevant agencies.

Incidents may also trigger the involvement of other teams such as The Emergency Duty Team, the LADO service or the Health & Safety Team. Once managers have been made aware, they are responsible for alerting others-see the list below. **Do not rely solely on email.** Please check that the message has been received.

Of course there will be other issues you need to talk to your manager about. This guidance is concerned with the most serious incidents that need to trigger the alert system. It is guidance however and cannot cover every type of incident. **If in doubt, alert.**

## **Guidance for Managers**

Once managers are aware, they are responsible for alerting others. **Do not rely solely on email.** Please check that the message has been received.

### **Once alerted you must contact:**

- Your line manager and/or a member of Directorate Leadership Team (DLT)
- Emergency Duty team, if appropriate
- Health & Safety Team if there has been a fatality or dangerous occurrence arising out of or in connection with work.
- The incident may also need to be recorded on the Health & Safety Incident Reporting System on the intranet. <https://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/reporting-accident-online>

### **You should consider alerting:**

- The Deputy Director for Safeguarding – serious safeguarding incident
- Child Death Overview Panel – if a child has died. [OCCG.cdopoxfordshire@nhs.net](mailto:OCCG.cdopoxfordshire@nhs.net). Follow OSCB Safeguarding procedures on Child Death Reviews <http://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/>
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if allegations have been made that a staff member/volunteer/foster carer has abused or harmed a child.
- Fire & Safety and Public Health Directorates where the incident involves a specific location that may contribute to risk in the future.
- Adult Social Care if a vulnerable adult is involved in the incident.
- A member of the Communications Team – if there is, or might be press interest.
- Chief Legal Officer
- The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) if the incident is reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

### **Tell your manager immediately about:**

#### **Serious incidents involving a child/young person may include:**

- Serious injury or harm ie life-threatening or potentially permanently disabling incidents of abuse or neglect affecting child or main care-giver
- Serious incident of abuse perpetrated by child/young person
- Abuse involving a number of individual children or perpetrators ie complex abuse or child sexual exploitation
- Serious accidents/self-harm involving looked after child, care leaver or child subject to child protection plan
- Missing children/young people – where there are concerns for a child's immediate wellbeing and any of the following apply:
  - Subject of a child protection plan
  - Where abuse or neglect is suspected whilst missing
  - Child is looked after, subject to a care order or interim care order
  - Recent or current court proceedings
  - Missing for more than 48 hours
- Safeguarding concern likely to attract media interest
- Anything else that has serious implications for children, staff, partner agencies, that in your judgement should be known by senior managers

## **Spiralling Risks**

Cases involving high levels of risk which are spiralling, leading to significant harm, in spite of multi-agency work to address the problems. Consideration should be given to a referral to the Complex Case Panel for inter-agency senior level assistance.

## **Death of a member of staff**

Death in Service guidance may need to be followed where the death arises out of or in connection with work <https://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/death-service> and may also require immediate reporting to the HSE.

## **Serious accidental or non-accidental injuries and violent incidents to staff in the course of duties**

Anywhere – client's property, public place, school, children's services site etc. The incident also needs to be recorded on the Health & Safety Incident Reporting System on the intranet.

## **Threats to staff**

Serious threats to health and safety of staff and their family members. The incident also needs to be recorded on the Health & Safety Incident Reporting System on the intranet.

## **Staff, foster carers, volunteers**

- Missing and concerns for safety
- Allegations of gross misconduct
- Arrested for offences which may impinge on ability to do job

## **Fire, flood, serious vandalism, burglary, or threat to Children's Services site**

Life-threatening/or major impact (e.g. building has to be evacuated and closed)

## **Controversies**

- Cases (including future court hearings and inquests) where there may be local or national publicity/media interest, controversial legal issues or political implications
- Controversial service problems or complaints likely to be raised with senior managers/director by clients, MP's, councillors, (County, District, Parish)
- Inter-departmental issues likely to be raised with senior managers/director by another chief officer.
- Court cases where likely to be criticism of the department (particularly if by the 'court' itself – i.e. the magistrate or judge) and likely to attract negative publicity
- Any other serious issue likely to attract intervention by any enforcement authority or negative publicity

## **Guidance for Senior Managers**

Once alerted, the Deputy Director (or in his/her absence, tier 3 manager) will decide whether to alert the Director for Children Education and Families and/or the Chief Executive. They will also decide whether Senior Managers in Fire & Safety, Public Health or Adult Social Care should be informed.

Information of the above type should always be passed on unless:

- The situation is not one of serious harm or risk to a child or staff member; **and**
- The information is not controversial and/or unlikely to receive publicity/enter the public domain; **and**
- Council services are not affected; **and**
- There is little or no likely reputational or other risk to the Council.

Where relevant, the Deputy Director will need to inform and brief relevant elected members.

After an immediate alert, and where the actions taken do not resolve or reduce the risks within the planned timescale, the Deputy Director should be kept informed. The Deputy Director will ensure that the Director, Chief Executive and Lead Member/Leader of the Council are updated, accordingly.

## **Monthly 'Need to Know' Report**

The Safeguarding Manager provides a monthly briefing to the Deputy Director, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting which provides overview information on the issues, children, key dates and actions being taken on:

- Allegations against staff, carers, volunteers that reach a criminal threshold; relate to serious harm against children; likely to attract public attention
- Child deaths – for any reason
- Ongoing serious case reviews or partnership reviews – progress update
- Other serious safeguarding matters involving risks to children or staff

Any reports are password protected and only circulated to CEF Deputy Directors, Director and Chief Executive.

## Appendix 1

### Contact Numbers

**Emergency Duty Team: 0800 833 408**

#### **Senior officers:**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Mobile Phone</b>
Chief Executive	Yvonne Rees	
Director	Lucy Butler	07917 087289
Deputy Director CSC and Early Help	Hannah Farncombe	07775 025254
Interim Consultant Deputy Director for Education	Chris Hilliard	07881 518322
Deputy Director Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding	Lara Patel	07917 534366
Head of Leaving Care and CSE	Sue Lingard	07979 731737
Head of Family Solutions	Delia Mann/Laura Clements	07824 498791/ 07827 820310
Head of Disabled Children's Services	Sarah Ainsworth	07801 135147
Head of Corporate Parenting	Dan Ruaux	07827 979219
Head of Emergency Duty Social Work and Youth Justice	Amrik Panaser	07801 037978
Head of Front Door Services	Maria Godfrey	07785 724893
Head of Service (Looked After Children)	Karen Palmer	07801 038006
Strategic Director Resources	Nick Graham	07825 052770
Safeguarding Manager	Hazel Cringle	07825 865668
Principal Solicitor	Carol Watts	07930 506210
Child Death Overview Panel Administrator	Pauline Burke	01865 336709
LADO - allegations	Alison Beasley	07795 266750
County Health & Safety Manager	Paul Lundy	07780 644928
Head of Learning and School Improvement	Kim James	07741 607592
Head of Learner Engagement	Deborah Bell	07909 882843
Head of Access to Learning	Allyson Milward	07733 003540
Service Manager, Educational Psychology Service	Catherine Roderick	07825 274103
Head of SEND	Jayne Howarth	07776 996944
Communications Manager	Eddie Gibb	07825 521524
Chair of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board	Richard Simpson	01865 815843



## **CEF Need to Know template**

**Child death**

**Other**

- **Date:**
- **Name of child/adult/provider/setting:**
- **Reason and nature of CSC involvement (if any):**

**For Child/Young Person specific NTKs**

- **Date of Birth:**
- **Fwi no:**
- **Address (home or placement):**
- **Family Composition:**
- **Legal Status (if any):**
- **Education provision for child and siblings:**
- **Responsible team, Team Manager and Senior Manager:**

**Summary of issues of concern:**

**Key agencies involved (including Ofsted, Police etc)**

**Priority concerns and proposed CSC response:**

**Next steps:**

**Form Completed By:**

**Update information:**

As a minimum, NTKs should be sent to:

- Deputy Director, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting - Lara Patel
- Deputy Director, Children's Social Care & Early Help - Hannah Farncombe
- CEF Safeguarding Manager/Lead Officer for Child Deaths - Hazel Cringle
- CEF Head of Corporate Parenting – Dan Ruaux

\*Depending on the nature of the issue, consideration should be given to circulating to Education Senior Management team members as detailed below\*

In the event of a **child death**, the following CSC and Education Senior Management team members must also be immediately informed:

#### CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE

- Deputy Director, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting - Lara Patel
- Deputy Director, Children's Social Care & Early Help - Hannah Farncombe
- Head of Front Door Services - Maria Godfrey
- CEF Safeguarding Manager/Lead Officer for Child Deaths - Hazel Cringle
- Education Safeguarding Advisory Team Manager and LADO - Alison Beasley  
[LADO.SafeguardingChildren@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO.SafeguardingChildren@Oxfordshire.gov.uk))

#### EDUCATION

- Interim Consultant Deputy Director, Education – Chris Hilliard
- Head of Learning and School Improvement - Kim James
- Service Manager, Educational Psychology Service – Catherine Roderick
- Head of Learner Engagement – Deborah Bell
- Head of SEND – Jayne Howarth
- Head of Access to Learning – Allyson Milward