



**UNDERVISNINGSS
MINISTERIET**
THE MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION

Professional concern

– A guide for private independent schools on children and young people who have welfare issues and are in need of special support

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Foreword

All children and young people need a safe and stable childhood in order to flourish and grow, and in order to have the best conditions for learning. Luckily, most children and young people have this kind of life. However, in recent years we have unfortunately seen examples of some children and young people whose childhoods have been far from safe and stable. In response, the former Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration appointed a panel of experts to draft recommendations for how we can work together to improve the situation of children and young people who have welfare issues and are in need of special support.

This guide has been created specifically for staff members at private independent schools. It addresses the more stringent notification requirements, absence that is cause for concern and collaboration with parents, the municipal council and other authorities that can help children and young people in need of special support. It is vital that you take action if there are any signs that give rise to concern about the welfare of a child or young person. You could be the one to make all the difference in the life

of a child or young person. It is a huge responsibility, but also a huge opportunity.

This guide has been published concurrently with the new, more stringent provisions of the Consolidation Act on Social Services, which entered into force on 1 October 2013. All parliamentary parties agree that there is a need to improve efforts in this area and voted unanimously to pass the act.

The Ministry of Education has asked representatives of the private independent school associations, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Integration and Local Government Denmark to participate in a taskforce tasked with drafting this guide. They have graciously devoted both time and insights to the task. I would like to thank them for their efforts, especially the private independent school associations for their willingness to take on this social responsibility.

Minister for Education
Christine Antorini

Introduction

This guide is intended specifically for staff members at private independent schools, including private independent primary and lower-secondary schools, private continuation schools and independent schools for practical life learning and craftsmanship.

This guide seeks to ensure that you are aware of children and young people with welfare issues and that you can contribute at an early stage to meeting the special support needs of such children or young people.

Perhaps you have noticed that a child or young person is not developing as per expectations. Or perhaps a child or young person has begun behaving differently or shown other signs that give rise to concern about his or her welfare.

All staff members at schools have a more stringent obligation to notify the authorities about any concerns they might have about the welfare of a child or young person with a need for special support. This also applies to employees at private independent schools.

At some private independent schools, the parents are very involved in the daily operation of the school and the staff therefore have close relations with the parents. You should be aware that the sense of solidarity at a school can influence how you assess any signs displayed by a child or young person. It is important that you do not let this cause you to hesitate to intervene and take the initiative in providing support for the child or young person.

It is your job to help ensure that support and help are provided to children and young people who have welfare issues and are in need of special support. It is good practice to involve the school leadership in such cases.

Like employees at municipal primary and lower-secondary schools and other childcare institutions, you have an obligation to notify the municipal council if you are concerned about a child. The municipal council is responsible for investigating the welfare of the child or young person and for assessing whether special support should be provided.

The duty of notification is a personal obligation

If you find that the municipal council does not respond to your notification or fails to provide (sufficient) support for the child or young person, you are entitled to notify the National Social Appeals Board.

You need to understand the regulations for notification concerning children and young people and you should be acquainted with the framework for collaboration with the municipal council.

This guide explains step by step what you should do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person who is in need of special support. Special emphasis is placed on the collaboration process with the municipal council.

You will be guided on how to contact the municipal council, the actions of the municipal council and the response you can expect from the municipal council. You will also be informed about the option of notifying the National Social Appeals Board.

This guide is based on the provisions and requirements set out in the Consolidation Act on Social Services.

This guide has come about as a collaboration between representatives of the private independent school associations, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Integration, Local Government Denmark and the Ministry of Education.

The background to this guide is the “Report of the Panel of Experts on Abuse of Children” (“Rapport fra ekspertpanel om overgreb mod børn”, Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, 2012) and the more stringent provisions of the Consolidation Act on Social Services pertaining to the protection of children and young people from abuse.

Step by step – what to do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person

Signs to look for

As an employee at a school, you live your daily life among children and young people. You notice their various signs and modes of behaviour, and sometimes you may have concerns about the welfare of a child or young person. If you are concerned, you must be extra attentive. You must assess whether there may be a need to provide special support for the child or young person.

In many cases, the pedagogical and educational efforts at the school can help and support the child or young person through a difficult period in their lives. But there may also be a need to notify the municipal council.

Children and young people with welfare issues

Children and young people who have welfare issues and are in need of special support are also sometimes referred to as “socially disadvantaged” children. These are children who are at risk of not having the same opportunities for personal development, health and an independent adult life as their peers.

If your concerns are related to the child’s learning, you should contact PPR. If your concerns are more about the social and family circumstances of the child or young person and any ensuing welfare issues, you must notify the municipal administration that handles such cases, typically social services. If you find that the municipal council does not respond to your notification or fails to provide (sufficient) support for the child or young person, you are entitled to notify the National Social Appeals Board.

It is good practice to involve your principal in your considerations about the child or young person so that you can jointly assess what action to take. However, the duty of notification is personal, so it is always your responsibility to notify the authorities about your concerns.

Absence that is cause for concern

You and your school must determine whether a pupil’s absence is cause for concern. If the absence gives rise to the presumption that the pupil may need special support, you must notify the municipal council. You must also notify the municipal council if you cannot convince the parents to collaborate in helping the pupil to take school seriously.

Absence that is cause for concern may be sufficient reason to notify the authorities

Absence from school that is cause for concern will often be unsanctioned absence, i.e. truancy. Sanctioned absence, such as absence due to sickness, can increase and thus also give rise to concern. If you assess that a pupil's sickness may be due to difficulties in the life of the child or young person, you have an obligation to report it.

Collaboration with the parents

If you are concerned about a child or young person, you should involve the parents so that you can work together to resolve the problems.

You should make a plan that sets out clear limits and conditions for the child or young person. If your concern is serious, your principal should attend the meeting with the parents.

If you suspect that a child or young person has been exposed to either physical or sexual abuse by the parents, the parents should not be involved.

Neglect

If you learn that a child or young person is being subjected to physical or mental neglect, you have an obligation to report it. In such cases, it is likely the child or young person will need special support.

It is important to clarify the severity of such cases quickly. It is good practice to discuss notification of the municipal council with your principal. However, the duty of notification is personal, so it is always your responsibility to notify the municipal council about your concerns. You should also consider how to discuss the matter with the parents.

Exchange of information

There are set regulations for professional secrecy.

However, it is possible to relax the duty to observe professional secrecy if the exchange of information is necessary as part of an early or preventive collaboration to help a child or young person with welfare issues or if it is necessary in connection with collaborative crime prevention.

Notification

The aim of notification concerning a socially disadvantaged child or young person is to identify and address welfare issues and abuse at an early stage so that the child or young person can receive the proper help and support.

Suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect must be reported to the municipal council immediately

SSD – Social Services, School, Healthcare and Daycare

You may need to discuss issues regarding a child or young person with others in an interprofessional collaboration between social services, the school, the municipal healthcare services and the daycare services, known as SSD collaboration (section 49a of the Consolidation Act on Social Services). This provides an opportunity to exchange confidential information and discuss the welfare of the child or young person with other professionals.

The SSD collaboration can be used early in the process to clarify whether concern about a specific child or young person is due to a problem that can be

resolved within the existing framework or whether it is necessary to notify the authorities and request special support.

Before you exchange confidential information within an interprofessional SSD collaboration, you should attempt to obtain consent, regardless of whether the parents – and possibly the child or young person – choose to attend the interprofessional meeting or not. Obtaining consent ensures that the parents – and possibly the young person – understand and accept the purpose of the meeting and that specific information will be exchanged at the meeting.

Obtaining consent also ensures that the professionals who attend the meeting have the best possible basis for discussing the problems.

If you cannot obtain the consent of the parents, section 49a of the Consolidation Act on Social Services allows the exchange information if it is necessary for the early or preventive interprofessional collaboration in relation to the child or young person in question.

An SSD meeting is a collaborative forum within which preliminary and clarifying discussions

Absence that is cause for concern

You and your school must determine whether a pupil's absence is cause for concern. Absence from school that is cause for concern will often be unsanctioned absence, i.e. truancy. Sanctioned absence, such as absence due to sickness, can increase and thus also give rise to concern.

may take place with relevant professionals, and it will often be exempt from the duty to take notes. However, if decisions are made at the meeting, notes must be taken. The matter of note-taking should be assessed individually for each case. The SSD collaboration is voluntary and you may therefore decline to participate. If you are the one seeking to hold an SSD meeting, the other parties may also decline to participate. In any case, you must bear in mind that your more stringent duty of notification as a professional always applies.

SSP – School, Social Services and Police

You may also need to participate in an exchange of information between the school, the social authorities and the police if the collaboration is of a crime prevention nature, a so-called SSP collaboration. These meetings are also not subject to the duty to take notes, and the parties may decline to participate. However, if the case is an administrative case, notes must be taken pursuant to the regulations of the Danish Access to Public Administration Files Act. Furthermore, according to the basic principles of law, an authority must ensure that notes are taken if any measures are implemented that are of

significant importance for the processing of a case and if these measures are not noted in the case records. This also applies in administrative cases. Thus, the matter of note-taking during the discussion must be assessed individually for each case.

Suspicion of physical and sexual abuse

Any suspicion of physical or sexual abuse must be reported immediately to the municipal council and the police.

If you suspect that a child or young person may have been exposed to physical or sexual abuse, it is good practice to discuss the problem with your principal immediately. However, the duty of notification is personal, so it is always your responsibility to notify the municipal council about your concerns.

If you suspect the parents, they should not be involved. If you do not suspect the parents, they should be informed immediately.

If a child or young person has committed an assault on another child or young person, this must also be reported immediately. It is important that you are aware of both the person who has committed the assault and the person who is the victim of the assault. You should inform the parents of both children immediately.

Duty of notification – a personal obligation

You have a duty of notification if, in the exercising of your duties at work, you become aware of or have reason to suspect that a person under the age of 18 may need special support.

You have not fulfilled your duty of notification by simply contacting the PPR office.

Physical or mental abuse

Physical abuse can be corporal punishment, i.e. where the child or young person is hit directly on the body.

Mental abuse can be emotional rejection, threats of abandonment, threats of punishment, confinement, degrading treatment, lack of stimulation or preventing a child or young person from going to school or participating in leisure activities.

The duty of notification is personal. If you deem it necessary to report a problem, you have an obligation to do so. This applies even if your principal does not agree with you.

Involvement of your principal or administrator

It is generally good practice to speak with the school leadership if you have concerns that a child or young person may have welfare issues. This ensures that the individual cases are considered and that you receive sparring on the case. However, the duty of notification is personal, so it is always your responsibility to notify the municipal council about your concerns.

Your principal may notify the municipal council based on your concerns. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that your concerns are reported.

Municipal guidelines

You must notify the municipality in which the child or young person is resident.

Visit the municipality's website to find out whom you should notify so that the notification is received immediately.

There are no formal requirements for the notification and it may be made either verbally or in writing. It is also possible to notify the municipal council and the National Social Appeals Board anonymously.

When making a notification, it can be helpful to acquaint yourself with the municipal council's guidelines and notification forms.

It is important that the notification describes in as much detail as possible the circumstances of the child or young person.

A notification must contain the following:

- Contact details for the child or young person and, where appropriate, the custodial parent(s)
- The background for your decision to notify the authorities

A notification may also contain the following:

- Your role in relation to the child or young person (for example, class teacher, contact teacher or other)
- Your observations of the child or young person and the family
- A general description of the physical, psychological and social circumstances, resources and difficulties of the child or young person
- Collaboration with the parents
- The child's or young person's school attendance/absence
- How long you have known the child or young person at the school
- Other important information about the child or young person
- Information about the parents' comments on the notification
- Information on any reasons why the parents may not been involved in the notification process

You do not need to provide an assessment or propose solutions. Once you have notified the municipal council, it is their responsibility to assess the situation and come up with solutions.

Case processing by the municipal council

Registration of notifications

As at 1 October 2013, the municipal council must ensure centralised registration of all notifications of abuse.

When the municipal council receives your notification, the authority responsible for processing notifications must assess within 24 hours whether the health or development of the child or young person is in jeopardy and whether there is a need to implement acute measures. If it is determined that the child or young person is in need of special support, the municipal council must investigate the circumstances of the child or young person. The investigation must be conducted as sensitively as possible and must not be more comprehensive than the objective dictates.

The municipal council must inform the family about the notification and its source. If the notification concerns abuse and the parents are under suspicion, the municipal council, in collaboration with the police, must assess when to involve the parents.

Response

The municipal council must acknowledge receipt of your notification within six days.

The right to information

You have the right to be informed within a reasonable period of time whether the municipal council has initiated an investigation or implemented measures for the child or the young person about whom you have made a notification. Special circumstances may dictate that the municipal council may not give you this information, in which case the municipal council must provide you with an explanation.

Measures

The municipal council shall decide, based on the municipal investigation of the circumstances of the child or young person, which measures are to be implemented with a view to giving the child the necessary help and support.

For example, the child or young person may need counselling, a permanent contact person, support in the home, a stay at a continuation school, a stay with a relief family or placement outside the home.

Collaboration with the municipal council

You must take action

You should be aware that, as a professional, you have an obligation to take action if you discover or have reason to presume that a child or young person has welfare issues and is in need of special support. You should help establish a collaboration with the municipal council concerning the child or young person in question. This collaboration may also comprise contributing to the discussions within an SSD collaboration.

When you need to take action, it is a good idea to bear in mind that municipalities have different administrative structures. In many municipalities, it is social services or child and family services department that handle such notifications and with whom you must collaborate.

Municipal action

It is important that the necessary support is provided. It is the municipal council's responsibility to investigate, decide on and initiate the right support.

This takes place wherever possible with the involvement of the parents.

In cases involving a child or young person with welfare issues, you must collaborate with the municipality in which the child or young person is resident. If the child or young person is attending a continuation school or an independent school for practical learning and craftsmanship, the municipality in which the school is located is often only the temporary municipality of residence of the young person. You must collaborate with the permanent municipality of residence.

The National Social Appeals Board

If you find that the municipal council does not respond to your notification or fails to provide (sufficient) support for the child or young person, you are entitled to notify the National Social Appeals Board.

The interests of the child or young person are paramount

Solidarity at private independent primary and lower-secondary schools

Private independent primary and lower-secondary schools are ethos-based schools. Some were created when parents joined forces to start a school based on a specific educational and religious ethos.

The sense of solidarity at these schools is often characterised by the staff, pupils and parents being acquainted with each other in various contexts both within and outside the school setting.

It is possible that parents at the school were instrumental in your appointment. It is also possible that, as a teacher, you have a colleague's child in your class.

You should be aware that the sense of solidarity at a school can affect how you assess any signs displayed by a child or young person.

These factors must not have any influence on when you choose to intervene and take the initiative in providing support for a child or young person. Relations with the parents must not influence whether you notify the municipal council. As an employee, you are subject to a more stringent duty of notification.

When assessing a concern, it may be helpful to make it clear to yourself, and if necessary to your colleagues

and the school management, that you are notifying the authorities in your professional capacity as an employee at the school. The interests of the child or young person are paramount.

Working intensively at independent boarding schools

At independent boarding schools, i.e. continuation schools and schools for practical life learning and craftsmanship, the process of working with young people can be very intensive. It is possible that a young person's problems are discovered while they are attending a boarding school, including in the case of young people who have not previously shown signs of difficulties.

In such cases, you may need to establish a collaboration with the young person's permanent municipality of residence and notify them of the young person's circumstances.

Even though the parents are often farther away, if the young person is under the age of 18, they should be involved just as they would be at private independent primary and lower-secondary schools.

Special regulations apply to young people over the age of 18. You can contact the young person's permanent municipality of residence at any time.

Terminology and regulation

Here you will find a list of terms that are relevant when dealing with concerns about a child or young person who has welfare issues and is in need of special support.

Children and young people with welfare issues

Children and young people who have welfare issues and are in need of special support are also sometimes referred to as “socially disadvantaged” children. These are children who are at risk of not having the same opportunities for personal development, health and an independent adult life as their peers.

When a child or young person has welfare issues, they may be the result of sickness or disability, loss or other social circumstances.

Children and young people under the age of 18 can also have welfare issues if they are exposed to physical, mental or sexual abuse.

Physical or mental abuse

Physical abuse can be corporal punishment, i.e. where the child or young person is hit directly on the body.

Mental abuse can be emotional rejection, threats of abandonment, threats of punishment, confinement, degrading treatment, lack of stimulation or preventing a child or young person from going to school or participating in leisure activities.

Mental abuse is also when a child or young person is a witness to the abuse of someone close to them, such as a parent or sibling.

Regardless of the type of abuse to which a child or young person is subjected by the parents or other caregivers, this abuse disrupts their development of a positive self-image. In serious cases, it can be devastating for their positive self-image.

Children and young people must always be heard and protected when there is a suspicion of abuse.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is an act in which the child or young person is exposed to an offence of a sexual nature, i.e. intercourse, sexual acts other than intercourse or indecent exposure.

Neglect

The lack of fulfilment of the child’s or young person’s basic needs for health, food, hygiene, clothing, shelter, safety and protection, care, emotional contact, empathy, stimulation and development.

Absence from school

Sanctioned or unsanctioned absence from school that is cause for concern, and thus failure to meet the compulsory education requirement, may indicate that the child or young person is experiencing difficulties.

Unsanctioned absence from school refers to cases where the pupil has many trancies of a shorter or longer duration or very long periods of absence that are not due to, e.g., sickness or extraordinary time off with the permission of the school principal.

It is possible that the absence, while not unsanctioned, is due to sickness or another issue that is still grounds for notifying the municipal council. There may be situations where there is reason to presume that the sickness or other issue is caused by difficulties encountered by the child or young person.

The ultimate decision about whether absence is of a nature and duration that requires notification will depend on an individual assessment in each case.

Notification

The aim of notification concerning a socially disadvantaged child or young person is to identify and address welfare issues and abuse at an early stage so that the child or young person can receive the proper help and support.

Before you notify the municipal council, it is good practice to discuss the case with your principal. However, the duty of notification is personal, so it is always your responsibility to notify the municipal council about your concerns.

Parents should be involved at the earliest possible stage in your considerations about the welfare of

the child. However, if there are indications that the child or young person has been exposed to physical or sexual abuse and the parents are under suspicion, the parents should not be involved.

Duty of notification

The duty of notification is a personal obligation.

Notifying the municipal social authorities means making them aware that a child or young person has welfare issues and may be in need of special support. This duty of notification applies regardless of whether the person making the notification can continue to make use of the assistance available within the school framework, such as PPR.

Parental consent

When you notify the authorities about a child or young person, you do not need the consent of the parents or legal guardian, but it is always best to inform the parents and to give them the opportunity to read the notification and add their comments. However, this does not apply in cases where the parents are under suspicion of abuse.

The consent of the child

In some cases, it will be relevant to seek the consent of a young person under the age of 18 in addition to the consent of the custodial parent.

Whether you should seek the consent of the young person will depend on an individual assessment of the maturity of the young person in question.

In cases where the young person is over the age of 15, you should obtain their consent before exchanging confidential information within the interprofessional SSD collaboration.

Professional secrecy

Professional secrecy means that, as a professional, you must keep secret all the confidential information on children, young people and their families to which you become privy in the course of your employment.

The duty of notification is an exception to the duty to observe professional secrecy.

The purpose of professional secrecy is to ensure due process protection and basic trust between citizens and the public officials with whom they come into contact. In relation to the regulations on professional secrecy, staff members at private independent schools are regarded as public officials.

The regulations on professional secrecy ensure, among other things, that confidential information about children, young people and their families is only shared with other professionals, and that this only takes place when it is necessary and has a clearly defined objective. The duty of notification and the possibility of exchanging information within SSD and SSP collaborations are exceptions to the duty to observe professional secrecy.

Duty to take notes

In cases where decisions will be made by an administrative authority, the authority must note in writing any information it receives verbally that is relevant to the decision in the case. In this context, this means that the social authorities have an obligation to note in writing if they receive new information verbally. Citizens who are parties to the case are entitled to access relevant documents, except in criminal cases. The duty to take notes does not, as a rule, apply to information exchanged within SSD and SSP collaborations.

More stringent obligation for municipal councils regarding notification

- All municipalities have an obligation to ensure centralised registration of all notifications and systematic assessment and processing of all notifications they receive.
- Within 24 hours of receiving a notification, an assessment must be made of whether the health or development of the child or young person is in jeopardy and whether there is a need to implement acute measures.
- The municipal council must inform the person making the notification whether the notification has given rise to an investigation or the implementation of measures.

These more stringent provisions apply as of 1 October 2013.

The National Social Appeals Board

If you find that the municipal council does not respond to your notification or fails to provide (sufficient) support for the child or young person, you are entitled to notify the National Social Appeals Board.

Pursuant to section 65 of the Consolidation Act on Social Services, the National Social Appeals Board has the competency to:

- Order the municipal council to take the necessary case planning steps or to make the necessary decisions
- Make, on its own initiative, preliminary decisions regarding voluntary support measures
- Decide, on its own initiative, on compulsory support measures

Legal framework

This is the legal framework for ensuring that children and young people in need of special support are given the proper care.

Duty of notification

The duty of notification is described in the Danish Consolidation Act on Social Services.

Danish Consolidation Act on Social Services

The legal framework for the duty of notification is, with the amendments as of 1 October 2013, sections 152-155 of the Consolidation Act on Social Services. These sections set out the general and more stringent duty of notification.

Section 154 describes the general duty of notification for all citizens who learn or become aware that a child or young person under the age of 18 is being neglected or abused by his/her parents or other persons or is living under conditions endangering his/her health or development.

Section 153 describes the duty of notification for all persons providing public services or holding public offices. This is what is called the more stringent duty of notification.

As of 1 October 2013, section 153(1) shall apply: Persons providing public services or holding public offices shall notify the municipal authorities if, in

the exercising of their duties, they learn or become aware of any circumstances giving rise to the presumption that

- (i) a child or young person under the age of 18 may need special support;
- (ii) a child may need special support immediately after being born because of the circumstances of the expectant parents;
- (iii) a child or young person under the age of 18 may need special support on account of the child's or young person's unsanctioned absence from school or failure to meet the compulsory education requirement; or
- (iv) a child or young person under the age of 18 has been exposed to abuse.

The National Social Appeals Board

Section 65 describes the powers of the National Social Appeals Board without a complaint.

65. The National Social Appeals Board may, on its own initiative, review cases involving support for children and young persons where it must be presumed that a municipal council, in a specific case, has failed to take the necessary case planning steps or has failed to make the necessary decisions in compliance with the best interests of the child or

The support must be provided at an early stage and on a continuous basis so that any problems encountered may, as far as possible, be remedied in the home or the immediate environment

young person. The National Social Appeals Board may in such cases order the municipal council to take the necessary case planning steps or to make the necessary decisions.

(2) Where there is a need for measures under sections 52 or 52a above and the municipal council fails to implement such measures as appropriate, the National Social Appeals Board may, on its own, make a provisional decision to implement such measures.

(3) Moreover, the National Social Appeals Board may on its own make a decision under sections 51, 58, 63 and 68a.

(4) The National Social Appeals Board may order the municipal council to enforce decisions under subsections (1)-(3) and may also order the decisions to be enforced within a specified time limit where this must be deemed necessary to protect the best interests of the child or young person.

(5) Where citizens, professionals or any other persons have grounds to assume that the municipal council has failed to take or make such case planning steps or decisions as are prescribed in the Act in compliance with the best interests of the child or young person, these persons may notify the National Social Appeals Board thereof. The National Social Appeals Board shall subsequently assess whether a basis exists for reviewing the case pursuant to subsection (1) above.

The Child's Reform

The Child's Reform entered into force on 1 January 2011 and, among other things, entailed a number of amendments to part 11 of the Consolidation Act on Social Services, Special support for children and young persons. The "Purpose" article for that part is as follows: 46. The purpose of assisting children and young persons with special needs is to provide such children and young persons with the same opportunities for personal development, health and an independent adult life as other children and young persons. The support shall be provided to ensure the best interests of the child or young person and shall be designed to

- (i) ensure continuity in childhood and youth and a safe environment of care offering close and stable relations to adults, for instance by supporting the child's or young person's family relations and other networks;
- (ii) secure the child's or young person's opportunities for personal development and acquisition of skills to build social relations and networks;
- (iii) support the child's or young person's schooling and chances of completing an education;
- (iv) promote the health and welfare of the child or young person; and
- (v) prepare the child or young person for an independent adult life.

(2) The support shall be provided at an early stage and on a continuous basis so that any problems encountered may, as far as possible, be remedied in the home or the immediate environment. On the basis of a case-by-case assessment, the support must be adapted to the specific situation of the individual child or young person and his/her family.

(3) The support shall be based on the child's or young person's own resources, and the views of the child or young person shall always be taken into account, and proper importance shall be attributed to such views in accordance with the age and maturity of the child or young person in question. Where possible, the difficulties of the child or young person shall be resolved in consultation and cooperation with his/her family. Where this is not possible, the background, purpose and constituent features of the specific measure taken shall be explained to the custodial parent as well as to the child or young person.

The SSD model – Social Services, School, Healthcare and Daycare

Part of the Child's Reform is section 49a, the so-called SSD Model. The model covers both municipal schools and private independent schools:

49a. - (1) Schools, school-based leisure-time facilities, nurses, health visitors, dentists and dental hygienists working in the municipal healthcare service, daycare facilities, after-school facilities, and authorities solving tasks in the field of socially disadvantaged children and young persons may mutually exchange information on strictly private aspects concerning a child's or young person's personal and family circumstances if any such exchange of information is deemed necessary in the context of any early or preventive collaboration on socially disadvantaged children and young persons.

(2) Any exchange of information under subsection (1) above for the purpose of considering a case, cf. parts 11 and 12, pertaining to a specific child or young person may be effected once at a meeting. In special circumstances, information may be exchanged at a subsequent meeting among the authorities and institutions set out in subsection (1) hereof.

(3) Self-governing or private institutions, private clinics or private independent schools that solve tasks for the authorities set out in subsection (1) above may, mutually and in collaboration with the authorities and institutions set out in subsection (1) hereof, exchange information to the same extent as mentioned in subsection (1).

(4) The authorities and institutions entitled to disclose information under subsections (1)-(3) hereof are under no obligation to do so.

Professional secrecy

Professional secrecy means that, as a professional, you are under a duty to observe professional secrecy with regard to any confidential information on children, young persons and their families to which you become privy in the course of your employment.

The duty of notification is an exception to the duty to observe professional secrecy.

The purpose of having regulations on professional secrecy is to ensure due process protection and basic trust between citizens and the public officials with whom they come into contact. The regulations on professional secrecy ensure, among other things, that confidential information on children and young persons and their families is exchanged with other professionals only when necessary and when such exchange has an objective purpose.

You can read more about your duty to observe professional secrecy in section 27 of the Danish Access to Public Administration Files Act and sections 152 - 152f of the Danish Criminal Code and in the pamphlet “Dialog om tidlig indsats - udveksling af oplysninger i det tværfaglige SSD-samarbejde og fagpersoners underretningspligt” (“Dialogue on early intervention - Exchanging information within interprofessional SSD collaboration and professional duty of notification”).

The Danish Access to Public Administration Files Act **27.** - (1) Any person acting within the public administration is bound by professional secrecy, cf. section 152 and sections 152 c-152 f of the Danish Criminal Code, whenever information is designated as confidential by statute or other legally binding provision or whenever it is otherwise necessary to keep the information secret to protect material public or private interests, including in particular:

- (i) the security of the State and the defence of the realm;

- (ii) Danish foreign policy and Danish external economic interests, including relations with foreign powers and international institutions;
- (iii) prevention and investigation of any infringement of the law, prosecution of offenders, execution of sentences and the like, and protection of persons accused, witnesses and others in matters of criminal or disciplinary prosecution;
- (iv) implementation of public supervision, control, regulation and planning activities and of measures planned under taxation laws;
- (v) protection of public financial interests, including interests relating to public commercial activities;
- (vi) the interests of individual persons or private enterprises or societies in protecting information on their personal or internal, including financial, circumstances; and** (editors' emphasis)
- (vii) the financial interests of individual persons or private enterprises or societies in protecting information on technical devices or processes or on business or operational procedures and policies.

Links

The National Social Appeals Board

<http://www.ast.dk>

The National Board of Health and Welfare knowledge portal on socially disadvantaged children and young people

<http://vidensportal.socialstyrelsen.dk/>

SISO – Danish National Centre for Social Efforts against Child Sexual Abuse

Here you can obtain advice and guidance on what to do if you suspect sexual abuse. You can also read about the signs of and reactions to sexual abuse. The telephone helpline is open weekday on tel. +45 2077 1120. <http://www.socialstyrelsen.dk/iso>

Professional guidance material

“Den professionelle tvivl – Tegn og reaktioner på seksuelle overgreb mod børn og unge” (Professional doubt – Signs of and reactions to sexual abuse of children and young people), published by the National Board of Health and Welfare

<http://shop.socialstyrelsen.dk/products/den-professionelle-tvivl-tegn-og-reaktioner-paa-seksuelle-overgreb-mod-boern-og-unge>

Pamphlet: “Dialog om tidlig indsats – Udveksling af oplysninger i det tværfaglige SSD-samarbejde og fagpersoners underretningspligt” (Dialogue on early intervention – Exchanging information within interprofessional SSD collaboration and

professional duty of notification), published by the National Board of Health and Welfare. You can read more about SSD collaboration here:

<http://www.socialstyrelsen.dk/boern-og-unge/barnets-reform/lovaendringer/ssd/pjece>

The Consolidation Act on Social Services

http://english.sm.dk/MinistryOfSocialWelfare/legislation/social_affairs/social_service_act/Sider/Start.aspx

Publications by the National Board of Health and Welfare on children and young people

<http://shop.socialstyrelsen.dk/collections/boern-og-unge>

Guidelines on socially disadvantaged young people at continuation schools

<http://www.efterskoleforeningen.dk/Publikationer/~media/D8205940259C436CAC15D6120D936FE1.ashx>

On socially disadvantaged young people at continuation schools

http://www.efterskoleforeningen.dk/Publikationer/Gode_relationer_2013.aspx

Information on the SSP collaboration in the individual police districts

www.politi.dk

Colophon

Professional concern

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