



Designated Seniors Newsletter

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SAFER WORKING PRACTICES FOR STAFF

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS FOLLOWING A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW INTO ABUSE BY A TEACHER IN SOMERSET

Many of you will be aware of the case of Nigel Leat, a 51 year old teacher, married with two children, who was convicted in 2011 of 36 sexual offences involving children in the school in which he taught (Hillside First, Weston-super-Mare), for which he is now serving an indeterminate prison sentence. We discussed this at the Designated Seniors Development day in September 2012. I attach a copy of my power point presentation from the day which summarises the lessons learned from the Serious Case Review. It makes extremely sobering reading. It will take about five minutes to read, and it includes **pointers to identify grooming behaviour** and it highlights **some preventative strategies**. It is relevant to all schools, wherever they are in the world. Just to highlight a couple of key points:

- The Review highlighted that the **Safer Working Practices** document had been circulated to schools but staff in the school were unaware of its existence. I therefore attach several copies of it so that these can be made freely available. I would recommend that staff sign to say that they have read and understand the contents.
- It also highlighted that **record keeping** was poor, where staff had reported concerns to senior managers in the school about Nigel Leat, no record had been kept, therefore patterns were not identified, potentially he could have been stopped at a much earlier stage. So please, record, record, record, keeping a note of action you have taken and any review plans.

It is of course important to protect staff against malicious allegations, however, all concerns and complaints should be treated with **respectful uncertainty**. Seek further advice from me, members of the Education Social Work Team, or Mark Fraser, Asst Director, Pupil and Family Services, if you are unsure about what to do.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The full Serious Case Review can be found at www.northsomersetscb.org.uk/serious-case-review
SCEs Procedure for Dealing with Allegations against Staff 2010 (currently under review) available on
SCE web

ENCLOSURES

- Safer Working Practice Guidance
- Power point presentation summarising the SCR