



## **SOUTH WEST SCHOOLS' FEDERATION**

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Our schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment**

**This policy has been written following a thorough review of, and where necessary amendments to, the policy that was already in place to ensure it meets with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: “Working Together to Safeguard Children” 2006, “Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families” 2000, “What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused” 2003. The guidance reflects “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” DfES Jan 2007.**

The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff<sup>1</sup>, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to, approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.

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Wherever the word “staff” is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc, and governors

- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care.
- To ensure that all staff working within our schools who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory List 99 or Enhanced CRB check (according to guidance)<sup>2</sup>, and a single central record is kept for audit.

## **2.0 Safe School, Safe Staff**

We will ensure that:

- All members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities.
- We have a senior designated officer for safeguarding and a deputy, both of whom have undertaken the DSCB Two Day Level 3 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Training and who undertake to update their training at least every 2 years.
- All members of staff are provided with child protection awareness at induction, including in their arrival pack, the school safeguarding statement “Safeguarding Children at Woolacombe School and Combe Martin Primary School”<sup>3</sup> so that they know with whom to discuss a concern.
- The Headteacher, where he/she is not the SDO, and all other staff and governors, have child protection awareness training, to be arranged by the SDO every 3 years, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
- All members of staff, volunteers, and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through delivery of the awareness raising pack “What to do if you are worried a child is being abused”.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the schools’ Safeguarding Policy, and reference to it in our introductory school pack.
- Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time.

- Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.
- We will ensure that child protection concerns or allegations against adults working in school are referred to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against staff) for advice, and that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Independent Safeguarding Authority<sup>4</sup> for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service in the case of a volunteer.

Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and up-dated annually.

The name of the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding, will be clearly publicised in our schools, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

All new members of staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding statement, and safeguarding policy, with the SDO's name clearly displayed, as part of their induction into the school.

The SDO is the Head Teacher of School; SENDCO (Inclusion) who may act as a deputy on all safeguarding issues.

Our Deputy Safeguarding leaders are :  
 Angela Fernyhough – SWSF Director of Teaching and Learning  
 Sue Cottrell- Bampton School Business Manager

We also have designated Governors for Safeguarding:  
 Stephanie Molligoda and Lucy Bull

The National leader of Education is also a SDO

### **3.0 Responsibilities**

The SDO is responsible for:

- Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to CYPS and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be made in writing, following a telephone call.
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely, separate from pupil records, until the child's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, and are copied on to the child's next school or college.

- Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records.
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Ensuring that either the SDO or the class teacher attends case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contributes to assessments, and provides a report which has been shared with the child's parents and legal guardians.
- Ensuring that any pupil with a current child protection plan who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
- Organising child protection induction, and update training every 3 years, for all school staff.
- Detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the SDO, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children with child protection plans (anonymised)<sup>3</sup>
- In practice most of these duties are delegated to the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion who shall keep the SDO fully informed. Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the governing body.

## **Supporting Children**

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth.

We recognise that school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our school will support all pupils by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the pupil's new school or FE College and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

## **Confidentiality**

- We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential and therefore are covered by the SWSF's Confidentiality Policy.
- The Headteacher or SDO will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.<sup>5</sup>
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise to a child that they will keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.
- We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with CYPS on this point.

## **Supporting Staff**

We recognise that staff working in school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through the anxieties with the SDO and to seek further support as appropriate.

## **Allegations against staff – Also see Policy on Keeping Children Safe**

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews with, or work with, individual children or parents that they are conducted in view of other adults.

All Staff must be aware of the school's Behaviour Management policy.

Guidance about conduct and safe practice will be given at induction – (see Induction Pack)

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.

If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Head Teacher.

The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Duty Local Authority Duty Officer. (LADO)

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as above, without notifying the Headteacher first.

The schools will follow the Devon County Council procedures for managing allegations against staff<sup>3</sup>. Under no circumstances will we send a child home, pending such an investigation, unless this advice is given exceptionally, as a result of an Allegations/Senior Strategy Meeting.

Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and Personnel Consultant in making this decision.

In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice as above.

We have a procedure for managing the suspension of a contract for a community user in the event of an allegation arising in that context. (Consult DCC)

### **Whistle-blowing –**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment or culture where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the LADO following the Whistleblowing Policy.

### **Physical Intervention**

Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out separately in our Physical Restraint Policy and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

Staff likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.

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We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff are given, and must be familiar with, “Safe Practice” guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.

#### **4.0 Bullying**

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate document, the Anti-Bullying Policy, and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying.

#### **Racist Incidents**

Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately, and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

#### **Prevention**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- Work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include across the curriculum, including PSHCE, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.
- See Policy on Conduct and Keeping Children Safe

#### **Health & Safety**

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment, and, for example, in relation to internet use, and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

# Appendix 1

## **GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS ON RECORD KEEPING AND MANAGEMENT OF CHILD WELFARE AND CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL PUPILS**

### **These guidelines cover**

- General principles of keeping child welfare and child protection records
- What records should be kept
- How records should be made and kept
- How long should schools retain child protection records
- Access to child protection records / information sharing
- Transfer of child protection records

The guidelines reflect and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding Children in Education (DCFS, Jan 07)

Working Together (HM Government, April 06)

Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide (HM Government 2008)

Records Management Society Schools Retention Schedule

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People (Government Office for the English Regions 2009)

### **General Principles**

1. Good, up to date record keeping of concerns and action taken is essential for two main reasons:
  - It helps schools identify causes for concern at an early stage. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are taken as a whole that a safeguarding or child protection concern becomes clear;
  - It helps schools monitor and manage their safeguarding practices. Furthermore, in any inspection it will be important to provide evidence of robust and effective safeguarding policy and practice.
2. A record of a concern, suspicion or allegation should be made at the time or as soon as possible after the event. (N.B. It is not advisable to make a written record whilst a child is disclosing abuse, as this may deter the child from speaking).



3. Records should be factual, using the child's own words where a disclosure is made. Professional opinion can be given, but should be supported by stating the facts and observations upon which the opinions are based. (N.B. expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds).
4. All records should be dated and signed, with the name of the signatory clearly printed, and filed in chronological order.
5. It is useful to have a pro forma for recording information/concerns. This can ensure that essential information is not overlooked. A sample is included in this document.
6. Any handwritten notes made immediately after the event, for example a disclosure, can act as evidence of them having been written at the time in any future court case. Therefore, these should not be destroyed if the details are recorded more formally at a later time, but instead kept securely attached to the child protection concern forms used by the school.
7. All recorded child protection concerns must be passed to the Designated Child Protection Teacher as soon as possible. The Designated Teacher will need to make a professional judgement about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with local child protection procedures.
8. The common law of confidentiality, Data Protection and Human Rights principles must be adhered to when obtaining, processing or sharing personal or sensitive information or records. (*Refer to Information Sharing Protocols and Guidance*). In summary, the Data Protection Act requires that records should be accurate, relevant, kept up to date and securely and kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were made.
9. It is important to make it clear to pupils that any disclosure they make will be treated with sensitivity but may need to be shared with other professionals if it is considered necessary to protect the child or someone else from harm.

### **How should schools keep child welfare and child protection records?**

10. All records of child protection or child welfare concerns, disclosures or allegations are to be treated as sensitive information and should be kept together, securely and separate from the child's general school records. The information should be shared with all those who need to have it, whether to enable them to take appropriate steps to safeguard the pupil or to enable them to carry out their own duties, but it should not be shared wider than that.
11. These records must be stored in a secure (i.e. locked) filing cabinet, accessible through the Designated Child Protection Officer or their deputy.

12. The pupil's general school record file should be marked to indicate that additional information is held about the child. All staff that may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means and who to consult if they see this symbol.

13. A child protection file will be started for an individual pupil as soon as the school is aware of any child protection concerns about that pupil. This may arise in a number of ways e.g.:

- a. If a member of staff raises a concern about the welfare or well-being of a pupil – this should be recorded in writing (see below for guidance)
- b. If information is forwarded to the school by a previous school attended by the pupil
- c. If the school is alerted by another agency (eg health; social care) of child protection concerns about that pupil

14. Members of staff should make a written account of any concern they have regarding the welfare or well-being of a pupil, using the school's pro forma for this. This record should be passed as soon as possible to the Designated Child Protection Officer. Concerns which initially seem trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information later, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation with the Designated Officer, or could lead to matters being heard in court. If there hasn't been a specific incident that causes concern, try to be specific about what it is that is making you feel worried.

15. The record pro forma should include:

- A record of the pupil's details: name, date of birth, address and family details
- Date (including year) and time of the event/concern;
- the nature of the concern raised;
- the action taken and by whom.
- Name and position of the person making the record

In the case of disclosure, the record should also include:

- as full an account as possible of what the child said;
- an account of questions put to the child;
- time and place of disclosure;
- who was present at the time of disclosure;
- the demeanour of the child; where the child was taken and where returned to at the end of disclosure

16. If the Designated Officer makes a referral to Social Care, this should be confirmed in writing in accordance with the DSCB Protection Procedures.

17. The pupil's child protection file should contain:

- Any concerns recorded by staff
- Any child protection information received from previous schools or other agencies
- Copy of any referral by the Designated Officer to Social Care
- In the case of a child on the Child Protection Register, notes of any Child Protection case conferences or Core Group Meetings etc.
- If any information is removed from a file for any reason, a dated note must be placed in the file indicating who has taken it, why and when.

### **How long should the child protection record be kept?**

18. The school should retain the record for as long as the pupil is of compulsory school age. See para 20 below for guidance on records of school leavers.

19. If the pupil transfers to another school, the school must transfer the child protection file to the next school as set out below.

20. If the pupil is removed from the roll to be home educated, the school must copy the child protection file to the Local Authority covering the area where the child lives.

21. Current guidance from the Records Management Society is that when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age, the last school attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It should then be shredded.

### **Who should have access to child protection records or information?**

#### **School staff**

22. The secure filing system should be easily available to the Designated Officer or their deputy or others as set out at para 11 above. A locked filing cabinet will usually be adequate.

23. It is highly unlikely that all members of staff need to know the details of a case, or that there should be widespread access to the records. Access to, and sharing of, information should be on a need-to-know basis, decided on a case-by-case basis. Consideration must also be given to *what* needs to be shared. Generally speaking, the closer the day-to-day contact with the child, the more likely the need to know an outline of the case. Essentially, if someone receives information *in her/his professional capacity* and the person giving that information *believes* it will be treated securely, and that belief is reasonable, then the recipient of the information will be under a duty to treat it securely.

## **Pupils and their parents**

24. The child who is the subject of a child protection record has a right to access their personal record, unless to do so would affect their health or well-being or that of another person, or would be likely to prejudice an ongoing criminal investigation.
25. Parents (i.e. those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's child protection file, on behalf of their child, with the same exceptions as apply to the child's right to access to the records. Note that an older pupil may be entitled to refuse access to their parents. The school should take advice about sharing information with parents if they have particular concerns about doing so. However, it is generally good practice to share all information held, unless there is a valid reason to withhold it, e.g. if to do so would place the child at risk of significant harm. If a parent makes a request to access the records on a child's behalf, this should be done in writing.

## **Other professionals**

26. Child protection information should not ordinarily be shared with agencies other than Social Services, Health, the Police, or the LA – as described in local procedures. Generally, in terms of compliance with the Data Protection Act, obtaining informed consent of the subject would legitimise information sharing, however, this is not always practicable. Information should not be released to solicitors on request – always seek the advice of the LA's legal service in such cases.
27. References by name to children other than the pupil who is the subject of the record should be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual/s concerned (or their parents/carer on their behalf). Care should be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.
28. If the record to be disclosed contains information about an adult professional, that information can be disclosed if it relates to the performance by that person of their job or other official duties e.g. a reference to a teacher in their teaching role or a school nurse in their nursing role. However, if the reference refers to that individual's private life, it should be removed (unless this relates to a child protection matter which is relevant to the record to be disclosed).

## **Transfer of Records**

29. When a pupil transfers from one school to another, their child protection record (if any) should be forwarded to the new school without delay, separate from their main pupil file. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is safe as possible.

30. However, always ensure that you keep a copy of the child protection file for your records. You may be asked to supply information of your/school's involvement at a later date and you will be reliant on having that information to hand.
31. If a pupil with a child protection record leaves your school without a forwarding address for home and new school inform your Education Welfare Officer without delay and enquiries will be made. If no contact is received from a new school within 10 school days, inform your EWO and pupil tracking procedures will be instigated if the child's whereabouts are still unknown.

### **Guidance when making a record of a child protection incident or concern**

- You won't know when making child protection note, who will eventually have access to it, or when. It may be consulted months or even years after it was written. Always bear in mind that someone who is a complete stranger to you and your school may need to read your record at some stage in the future.
- Ideally, logs of incidents should be typed. Hand written notes should be clearly legible and written in ink. All notes and reports must contain the following:
  - Date of the incident
  - Date and time of the record being made (remember to include the year)
  - Name and date of birth of the child(ren) concerned
  - A factual account of what happened, and the location where the incident took place (include the actual words spoken by the child where possible)
  - A note of any other people involved e.g. as witnesses
  - Action taken, and any future plans e.g. monitor and review
  - Any other agencies informed?
  - Printed name of the person making the record
  - Job title of the person making the record
  - Signature (print name alongside)
- You should identify the source of your information e.g. 'Ms Terry, a teaching assistant, told me that....' Or 'I saw Rowan in the playground at break time...'
- Information should be factual or based on fact. Record what you saw, heard etc. and try not to be vague or woolly (e.g. 'Jenny was crying and rocking' rather than 'Jenny was upset').
- Distinguish clearly between fact and your professional opinion. When recording your professional opinion, make it clear what your opinion is based on (e.g. 'Harry ran and hid under the table when his mother arrived to take him home, and clung to me when I tried to get him out. He appeared to be frightened.')
- Make a note of what you have done with the information (e.g. 'I consulted the Headteacher, Mr Wilson, and he said he would...')
- Try to avoid specialist jargon (e.g. 'he is on SEN stage 3') which someone from another agency would not necessarily understand.

## Appendix 2



# Referral and Threshold consultation Service

**Do you have concerns about a child?**

**Are you unsure whether to make a social care referral?**

Children and Young People's Services provide a consultation service to all professionals to consider if the concerns they have about a child or young person meet the threshold for a referral to social care.

The service will discuss the concerns you have without sharing identifying information about the child or young person, therefore consent to share information from the parents / carers is not required at this stage.

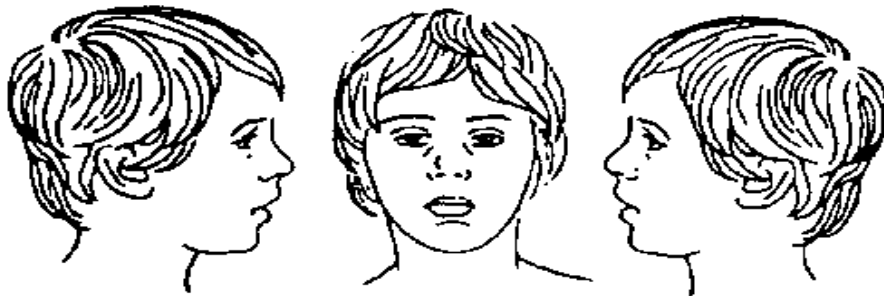
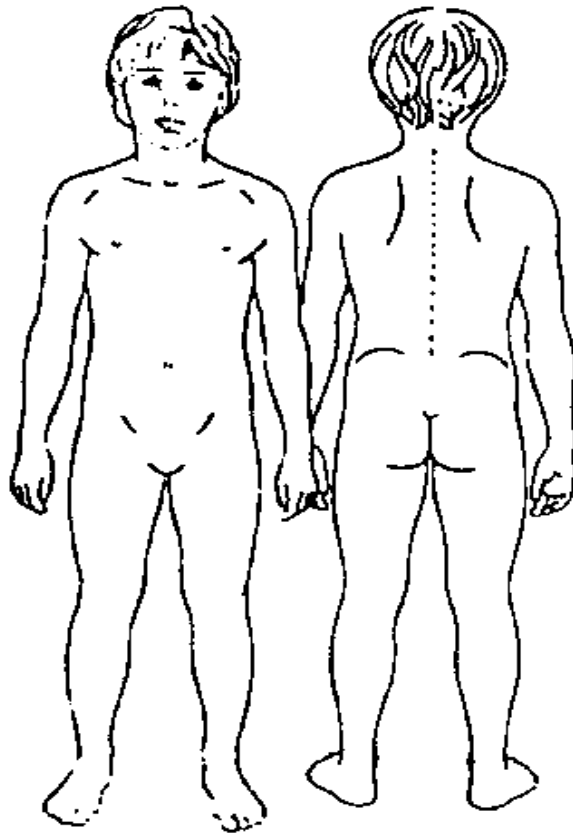
If the concerns do not meet the threshold for a social care referral, the practitioner will provide advice and signposting. This is not a referral taking facility and actual referrals will still need to be directed to local assessment teams.

You can contact the service on:

**01392 388725/386961**

# Appendix 3: Body Map

FILE NAME:			
CHILD'S NAME:			
DATE OF BIRTH:		NHS No:	



SIGNED: .....
DATE: .....

# BODY MAP INJURY DETAIL

		FILE NAME:	
	CHILD'S NAME:	DOB	NHS No:
Date/time	DETAILS OF INJURIES NOTED ON BODY MAP OVERLEAF		