



# **ISLANDMAGEE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **SAFEGUARDING and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



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## 1. Child Protection Ethos

**We in Islandmagee Primary School have a responsibility for the pastoral care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.**

In doing so we are compliant with the legislation and policy framework in Northern Ireland. The legislative framework for Northern Ireland's child protection system is set out in [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#). This sets out parental responsibilities and rights and the duties and powers public authorities have to support children.

The creation of the regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNi) was set out in law in the [Safeguarding Board Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#). This also established five Safeguarding Panels to support the SBNis work at a Health and Social Care Trust level (HSCT).

The [Children's Services Co-operation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#) requires public authorities to co-operate in contributing to the wellbeing of children and young people, in the areas of:

- physical and mental health
- enjoyment of play and leisure
- learning and achievement
- living conditions, rights, and economic wellbeing.

Under Section 5 of the [Criminal Law Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1967](#), it is an offence not to report a 'relevant offence' to the police. This includes offences against children.

The key principles reflected in the legislative and policy framework is manifest in DE guidance on safeguarding which the school is required to be compliant.

We are an Operation Encompass school. Please see appendix 7 for information.

## 2. Key Principles of Safeguarding

- The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools (updated September 2023), Circular2017/04 (amended September2019; updated June 2020; updated September 2023) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017; amended 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022).

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy.

- It is a child's right to **feel safe at all times**, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.

## 3. Other Relevant Policies

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. The child protection therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies, documentation and risk assessments including those relating to:

- Attendance
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Intimate Care
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- E-Safety

**These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the school office or visit the school website at [www.islandmageeps.co.uk](http://www.islandmageeps.co.uk)**

## **4. The School Safeguarding Team including specific roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 School safeguarding team**

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors (Mr William Kane)
- Designated Governors for Child Protection (Rev. Peter Bovill / Miss Marie Kane)
- Principal (Mrs Arlene Cambridge)
- Designated Teacher (Mrs Alice Wolfe)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Julie Lowry)

The main role of the team is to:

- Monitor and periodically audit the safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school
- Identify any actions required to address audit findings or ETI inspection of its safeguarding/child protection arrangements
- Provide support for the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities.

### **4.2 Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chair of the Board of Governors is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a Child Protection policy is in place and that a safeguarding ethos is maintained in the school
- Ensuring that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Ensuring that Governors receive relevant training in Child Protection and Recruitment and Selection
- Assuming lead responsibility in the management of a complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive regular updates in relation to child protection activity including a full written annual report
- In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.
- The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the Record of Child Abuse Complaints against staff members even if there have been no entries.

### **4.3 The Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors as a body must ensure that the school fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance including:

- Ensuring that safeguarding/child protection is a standard item on the agenda of Board of Governor meetings
- Approving the school's child protection policy annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.
- Ensuring that there is a time-tabled review (every 2/3 years) of all other safeguarding policies and that they are presented to the BOG for approval.
- Receiving annual child protection reports.
- Ensuring there is a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- Attending relevant child protection/safeguarding training for Governors

### **4.3 Designated Governor for Child Protection.**

The Board of Governors delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to advise the governors on: -

- The role of the designated teachers.
- The content of child protection policies.
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school.
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report.
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

### 4.3 Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all relevant DENI guidance in relation to child protection and safeguarding in particular 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools' - DE 2017 (updated September 2023) is implemented within the school
- Enabling the Board of Governors fulfil their Child Protection duties by keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to child protection and ensuring the inclusion of child protection activities on their agenda
- Maintaining and securely storing the *School Record of Child Abuse Complaints* and to make it available at least annually to the Board of Governors.
- The appointment of suitable staff to posts (teaching and non-teaching) within the school and the appointment of suitable teaching staff to the roles of Designated and Deputy Teacher for Child Protection
- Ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedures every 2 years.
- Managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

### 4.4 Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. They must also appoint a Deputy Designated Teacher who as a member of the Safeguarding team will actively support the Designated Teacher in carrying out the following duties:

- Providing child protection training for all teaching and non-teaching staff (whole school training) to be delivered a minimum of once every two years
- Taking lead responsibility for the development and annual review of the school's child protection policy
- Promoting a child protection ethos in the school
- Acting as a point of contact for staff (and parents) in relation to child abuse concerns
- Liaison with the Principal and Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected Child Abuse
- Making referrals to other agencies, with the Principal's knowledge



- Maintaining and securely storing appropriate child protection records
- Attending child protection case conferences and other relevant case planning meetings where appropriate and practicable
- Providing an annual report to the Governors on child protection activity

The Deputy Designated Teacher will deputise for them in their absence.

#### 4.5 School Staff

Teachers, Classroom Assistants, and other Support staff in school see children on a daily basis over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and a child may choose to disclose to them allegations of abuse.

Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal. In addition, class teachers should also keep the Designated Teacher informed in writing or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse. A pro-forma for reporting a concern or disclosure is included in the appendices.

If a member of staff does not feel their concerns are being taken seriously or action to safeguard the child is not being taken by professionals and the child is considered to be at risk of continuing harm then they should speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Principal, Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or to Social Services.

#### 4.6 Parents

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's well-being.
- making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school
- familiarising themselves with the schools safeguarding policies e.g. Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies.
- reporting to the school office when they visit the school
- sharing any concerns they may have in relation to their child with the school.

## **5. Definition of Harm**

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals

### **(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016; refreshed 2017)**

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation

The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child. The main types of abuse as well as their physical and behavioural indicators are included in the **appendices**.

## **6. Responding to a Safeguarding concern**

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm (<sup>1</sup> Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016, refreshed August 2017))

### **6.1 Guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a child protection nature.**

**Receive** – listen to what the child says, without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said, making brief cursory notes. These notes should be retained.

**Reassure**- ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and his/her interests will come first. **No promise of confidentiality can or should be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.**

**Respond**- respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether you need to refer the matter. Use open questions e.g. anything else to tell me? Do not interrogate or ask leading questions- this may invalidate your evidence and that of the child in any later court proceedings. Do not criticise the perpetrator- the child may love this person and reconciliation may be possible. Explain what you must do next and to whom you must talk.

**Record**- make notes at the time and write these up as soon as possible afterwards. Note the time, date, place, people present as well as what *is seen and* said. Record key phrases/words used, noticeable non-verbal behaviour and any physical injuries. Under no circumstances should a child be photographed or a child's clothing removed. **Do not destroy** original notes.

**Report**- refer the matter to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher. Respect confidentiality i.e. the matter should only be discussed on a need-to-know basis.

### **6.2 How a Parent can make a Complaint**

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal. If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local

Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in the **Appendix 3**.

### **6.3 Where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff including volunteers**

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly. **He/she should not investigate**- this is a matter for Social Services- but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. He/she will discuss the matter with the Principal and may also seek advice or clarification from the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or from Social Services (Gateway Team). Where it is evident that a young person has been or is at risk of being abused and/or a criminal offence may have been committed then the school must make a referral.

Referrals to Social Services will be made by telephone in the first instance and within 24 hours will be followed by the completion of a UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form. This form should be sent to [spoe.referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:spoe.referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net) A copy of the UNOCINI form will be placed in the school's child protection file.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in the **Appendix 4**.

### **6.4 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff or a Volunteer**

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal, then the Designated Teacher should be informed, and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in appendix 5 will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance (DE Circular 2015/13).

## **7. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Other Social Services Meetings**

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences, core group or family support planning meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with their child protection plan.

## **8. Consent from Pupils and Parents**

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person, or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person has been sought and is withheld we will consider and where possible respect their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe, based on the information available, that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

## **9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns, we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

## **10. Record Keeping/Transfer of Records**

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE policy on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored until the child is 30 years old.

When a child moves to another school a copy of his/her child protection file, if one exists, will be transferred to the receiving school. This process will be followed by the

Designated Teacher in the school of origin who will transfer the file (minus third party information) to the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

### **11. Safeguarding in the Curriculum**

The school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Furthermore, pupil information posters prominently displayed includes information directing a pupil on how to seek help, advice and support within the school and from external agencies and professionals.

### **12. Safe Recruitment Procedures**

All staff, paid or unpaid, who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance. There may be occasions when volunteers or visitors may sometimes be unvetted by the Education Authority. In such cases volunteers or visitors will be required to provide an undertaking that they must:

- Adhere to a code of conduct for volunteers and visitors
- Agree to be supervised by an appropriate agent of the school during the time they are in the school

### **13. Code of Conduct for all Staff Paid or Unpaid**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers to this policy.

### **14 Staff Training**

When new staff or volunteers start at the school, they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and regular refresher training. The Principal, Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend child protection training courses specific to their roles which is provided by the Education Authority's Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

## **15. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection and approved annually by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the school's staff induction and training programme and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team.

## Appendix 1.

### Islandmagee Primary School Note of Concern Record Form



#### Logging a concern about a child's safety and welfare

Complete and report to Designated Teacher for Child Protection or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection on day of incident or concern.  
Refer to safeguarding flowchart.

Your name (PRINT IN FULL)

Your position / relationship to school

Please indicate by circling as appropriate

**SPECIFIC INCIDENT / SAFETY OR WELFARE CONCERN**

Child's name:

Date and time of any incident:

Date and time of writing:

Record the following factually: What are you worried about? Who? Where? When? (date and time of incident) Any witnesses? If recording a verbal disclosure by a child use their words.

Any other relevant information (distinguish between fact and opinion). Previous concerns etc.

Person completing report (signature and date)

To be completed by Designated Teacher for Child Protection / Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Date and time received and from whom:

Signed:



## Appendix 2 Types of Abuse and Physical/Behavioural Indicators

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that without such, is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

**(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017)**

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• looks very thin, poorly and sad</li><li>• constant hunger</li><li>• lack of energy</li><li>• untreated medical problems</li><li>• special needs of child not being met</li><li>• constant tiredness</li><li>• inappropriate dress</li><li>• poor hygiene</li><li>• repeatedly unwashed</li><li>• smells</li><li>• repeated accidents, especially burns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tired or listless (falls asleep in class)</li><li>• steals food</li><li>• compulsive eating</li><li>• begging from class friends</li><li>• withdrawn</li><li>• lacks concentration</li><li>• misses school medicals</li><li>• reports that there is no carer is at home</li><li>• low self-esteem</li><li>• persistent non-attendance at school</li><li>• exposure to violence including unsuitable videos</li></ul>

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

**(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017)**

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing</li><li>• grip marks on arms</li><li>• slap marks</li><li>• human bite marks</li><li>• welts</li><li>• bald spots</li><li>• unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like)</li><li>• unexplained fractures</li><li>• lacerations or abrasions</li><li>• untreated injuries</li><li>• bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion</li><li>• injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• self-destructive tendencies</li><li>• aggression to other children</li><li>• behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive)</li><li>• appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults</li><li>• improbable excuses to explain injuries</li><li>• chronic runaway</li><li>• uncomfortable with physical contact</li><li>• coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home</li><li>• clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body</li><li>• violent themes in artwork or stories</li></ul>

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017)**

<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioural Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well below average in height and weight, "failing to thrive"</li> <li>• poor hair and skin</li> <li>• alopecia</li> <li>• swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet</li> <li>• recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling</li> <li>• sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• signs of self-mutilation</li> <li>• signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)</li> <li>• extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apathy and dejection</li> <li>• inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations</li> <li>• rocking/head banging</li> <li>• inability to play</li> <li>• indifference to separation from family</li> <li>• indiscriminate attachment</li> <li>• reluctance for parental liaison</li> <li>• fear of new situation</li> <li>• chronic runaway</li> <li>• attention seeking/needy behaviour</li> <li>• poor peer relationships</li> </ul>

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017)**

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs</li> <li>• bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas</li> <li>• torn, stained or bloodied underclothes</li> <li>• chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches</li> <li>• difficulty in walking or sitting</li> <li>• frequent urinary infections</li> <li>• avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers</li> <li>• unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague</li> <li>• anorexia/gross over-eating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what the child tells you</li> <li>• withdrawn</li> <li>• chronic depression</li> <li>• excessive sexual precociousness</li> <li>• seductiveness</li> <li>• children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal</li> <li>• over concerned for siblings</li> <li>• poor self-esteem</li> <li>• self-devaluation</li> <li>• lack of confidence</li> <li>• peer problems</li> <li>• lack of involvement</li> <li>• massive weight change</li> <li>• suicide attempts (especially adolescents)</li> <li>• hysterical/angry outbursts</li> <li>• lack of emotional control</li> <li>• sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in schoolwork or behaviour</li> <li>• inappropriate sex play</li> <li>• repeated attempts to run away from home</li> <li>• unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's artwork or stories</li> <li>• vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation</li> <li>• promiscuity</li> <li>• exposure to pornographic material</li> </ul>

**Exploitation** Child sexual exploitation is a form of child **sexual abuse**. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS 2016 (revised August 2017)**

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity **in return for something** they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible ‘rewards’ OR ‘benefits’ such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

**The potential indicators of CSE can include, but are not limited to:**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc without plausible explanation
- Leaving home/care without permission
- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care
- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return
- Truanting from school
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections
- Concerning use of the internet
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis
- New peer groups
- Significantly older ‘boyfriend’ or ‘girlfriend’
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Low self-esteem
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse

Whilst these indicators can be usefully used to identify potential risk, it is important to note that their presence does not necessarily mean that CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence, mean that it is not.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

**(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017)**

**A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.**

### **Child Abuse in Other Specific Circumstances**

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is not defined as a category of abuse within the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The policy does however state that the damage inflicted by bullying behaviour can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and at the extreme cause them significant harm (including self-harm).

The procedure for referral and investigation of abuse may therefore be implemented in certain circumstances such as when anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective; the bullying behaviour is persistent and severe resulting in the target of the bullying suffering/likely to suffer significant harm; there are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the child exhibiting this behaviour suffering/likely to suffer significant harm or where concerns exist in relation to the parents/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child (either the target or the child exhibiting this behaviour).

#### **Children Who Sexually Abuse Others or Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour**

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken, and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved.

**The above guidance follows DE Circular 2022/02 Children Who Display Harmful Sexualized Behaviour.**

## **Indecent Photographs**

The offence of taking indecent pictures of children under 18 years can apply in a situation where a pupil has taken an indecent picture using a mobile phone of others under 18 years of age. It is also an offence to distribute, possess with intent to distribute or show such photographs to others. In such circumstances the PSNI and Social Services will be contacted. The school also has an e-safety/ mobile phone and electronic devices (or similarly named policies) which has/have been circulated to parents and pupils and which is available from the school.

## **Young Person whose Behaviour places him/her at Risk of Significant Harm**

A child whose own behaviours e.g. self-harming behaviour, leaving school without permission etc. places him/her at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse however it may still reach the threshold for referral on Child Protection grounds. The decision to initiate child protection procedures is a matter for professional judgement and each case will be considered individually with advice sought from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection. The criminal aspects of such cases will be dealt with by the PSNI.

## **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

Is defined as threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion gender, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.' **(Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland a Seven Year Strategy: March 2016)**

## **Sexual Violence and Abuse**

Is defined as 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual /online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).'

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

**(Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland a Seven Year Strategy: March 2016)**

A child may live in a family where there is domestic abuse or a young person may be in a relationship where they become the subject of domestic abuse. In high-risk cases involving domestic abuse Social Services and/or the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection will contact the school in order to help assess the child/young person's needs and to ensure that he/she is receives appropriate support.

## **Gender Identity - Gender Variant/Transgender young people**

Being transgender is a recognised medical condition known as Gender Dysphoria or Gender Identity Disorder. Transgender is separate from LGB. This school will work collaboratively with parents, other services and most important the young person him/herself to support him/her in progressing through their school life showing due regard to their needs.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows people who have lived in their preferred gender for at least 2 years to apply for a gender recognition certificate (GRC) and, if a UK Citizen, a new birth certificate.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

### **Multi-agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation. DFP 2014**

Schools should be aware of some of the following in identifying who could be at risk.

- Being a girl aged 5 - 8 within a community where FGM is practised
- Prolonged return to country of origin for summer break – giving sufficient healing time before return to school
- Female elder visiting from a country of origin
- Child may tell other children about it
- A girls may disclose that she is to have a 'special procedure' or attend a special occasion to 'become a woman'
- Parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period

## **Forced Marriage**

Where we are made aware or have a reasonable suspicion that a child attending this school is being forced into marriage, we will report this on as appropriate to the relevant agencies. We will be mindful of the following in relation to a child:

- Absence and persistent absence
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins
- Change in behaviour, performance or punctuality
- Being withdrawn from school for 'home schooling' and not receiving suitable education at home
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- Sudden announcement of engagement

We also recognise that there is a danger in involving the family of the child concerned and alerting them to the fact that the school and others are aware and will act to protect the child.

### **The Right to Choose: Statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage. DFPNI 2012**

## **Self-Harm and Suicide**

It is most helpful to consider self-harm as a continuum, ranging from behaviour which has a strong suicidal intent (for example, some kinds of overdose) to behaviour which is intended to help the person stay alive (such as cutting)' - **John Coleman 2004**

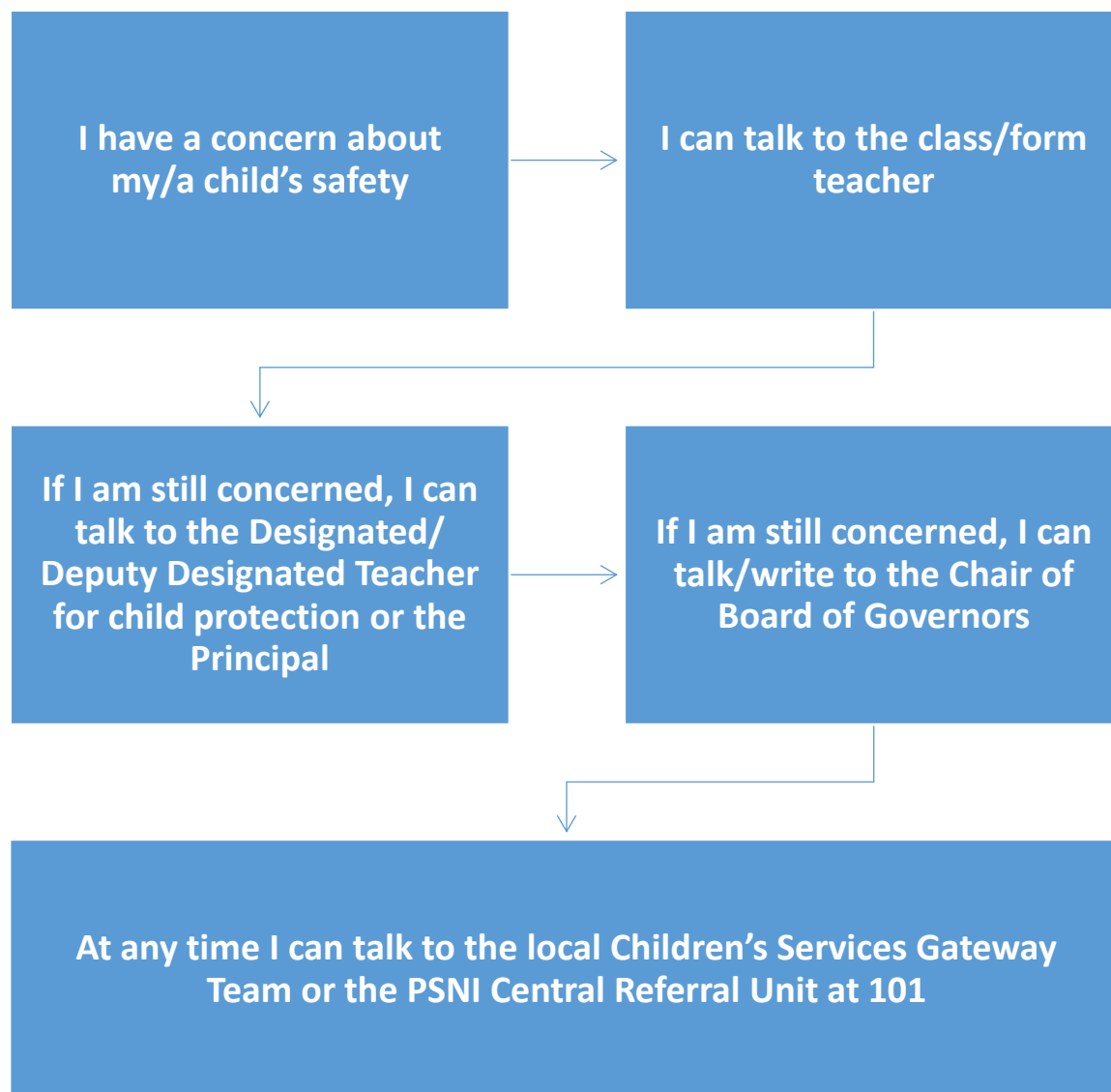
Self-harm is often a means by which a child can release the tension caused by their anxiety, grief or anger. It can also be seen as a means of communication, to tell themselves and others that they need help. It helps them feel they have a level of control over something in their lives – making 'real' the emotional pain they are unable to express.

It is our policy that in instances where a child expresses suicidal ideation or self-harm or discloses that he/she has self-harmed, we will contact the parents and ask them to take their child to their GP for assessment.



## APPENDIX 3

### If a Parent Has a Potential Child Protection Concern Within the School

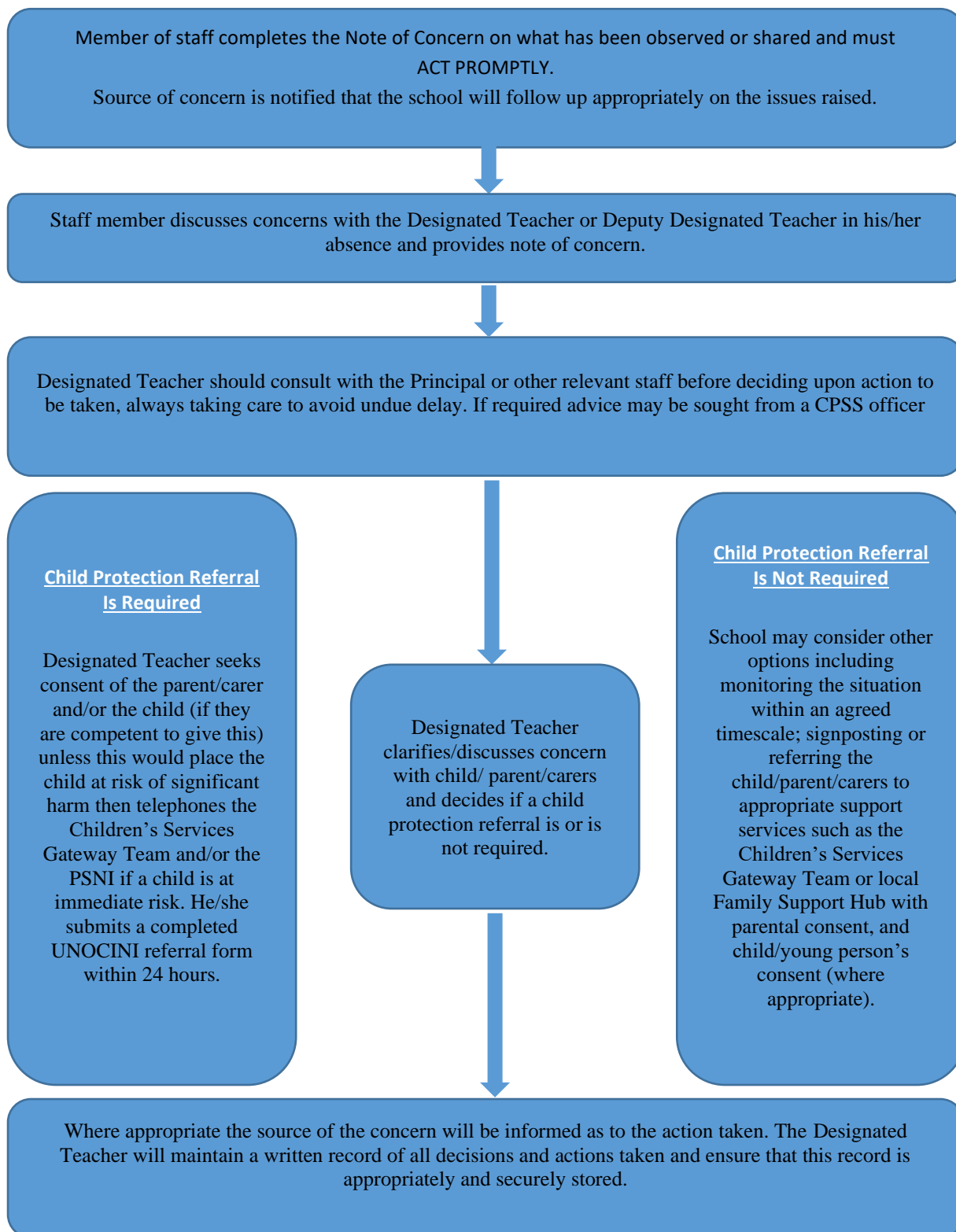


If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school's complaints policy. This policy should culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

If a parent has a concern about a child's safety or suspect child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.

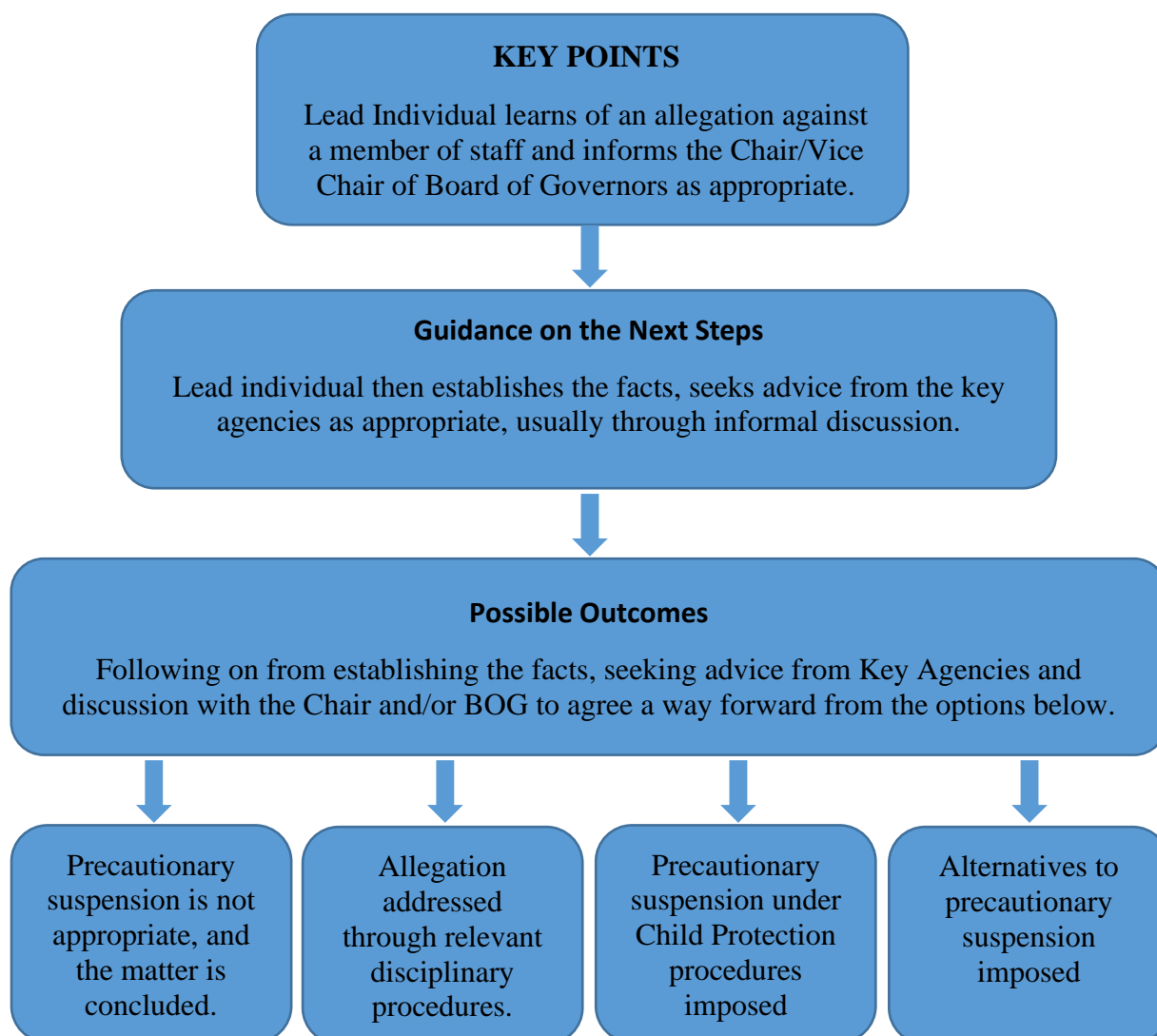
## APPENDIX 4

### Procedure Where the School Has Concerns, or Has Been Given Information, about Possible Abuse by Someone Other Than a Member of Staff



## APPENDIX 5

### Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff



## **Appendix 6**

### **Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools**

#### **Objective, Scope and Principles**

This Code of Conduct, which applies to all staff and volunteers, is designed to give guidance on the standards of behaviour which should be observed. School staff and volunteers are role models, in a unique position of influence and trust and their behaviour should set a good example to all the pupils within the school. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It is merely for guidance and specific breaches of the Code must not be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

The Code includes sections on:

- Setting an Example
- Relationships and Attitudes
- Private Meetings with Pupils
- Physical Contact with Pupils
- Honesty and Integrity
- Conduct Outside of Work
- E-Safety and Internet Use
- Confidentiality

#### **1. Setting an Example**

1.1 All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times, and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.

1.2 Staff and volunteers must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

#### **2. Relationships and Attitudes**

2.1 All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times and sexual relationships with pupils are not permitted and will lead to criminal conviction.

2.2 Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school: perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.

2.3 Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner, which within the context of this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as: acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders; co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service; respect for school property; taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises; being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers; respect for the rights and opinions of others.

### **3. Private Meetings with Pupils**

3.1 It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place. As far as possible, staff and volunteers should conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with an open door and ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

### **4. Physical Contact with Pupils**

4.1 To avoid misinterpretations, and so far, as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.

4.2 Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force (Circular 1999/09 and guidance document 'Towards a Model Policy in Schools on Use of Reasonable Force').

### **5. Honesty and Integrity**

5.1 All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (e.g. a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents e.g. at Christmas or the end of the school year. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

## **6. Conduct Outside of Work**

6.1 Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school. Advice should be sought from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

## **7. E-Safety and Internet Use**

7.1 A staff member or volunteers off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's Online Safety Policy.

7.2 Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social media and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. It is preferable that any contact with pupils is made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary.

## **8. Confidentiality**

8.1 Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

8.2 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

8.3 If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

8.4 Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

8.5 The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.

## Appendix 7

### **Operation Encompass**

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will contact the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

*Full Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers is available on request from the school*

SAFEGUARDING and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY			
Document Date	Submitted to Board of Governors and Ratified	Review Date	Summary of Changes
2022	May 2022	May 2023	Update of DT and DDT, flowcharts, titles, new format, superfluous details omitted. Guided by Mary Corbett, Child Protection Officer EA
November 2022	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	January 2024	Updated by DT and DDT to include Operation Encompass information 23/11/22
February 2023	February 2023	February 2024	DT and DDT checked through policy for operation encompass and re-instated appendix 7
12 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	October 2023	October 2024	DT checked, adjusted dates for guidance and circulars.
18 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	October 2024	October 2024	DT and DDT reviewed policy.

Signed: *Mr William Kane*

(Chair of Board of Governors)



(Principal)

*Mrs Alice Wolfe*

(Designated Teacher)