



# **Saint Mary's Primary School Killyleagh**

## **Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy**

Policy reviewed and updated by staff — March 2022

Policy reviewed and ratified by Governors-

Signature of Chair \_\_\_\_\_

## **Introduction**

We in St Mary's Primary school fully recognise our responsibilities for Child Protection. We are committed to ensuring every child can enjoy the right to live his/her life from harm or abuse, or potential harm or abuse; by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, which values individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our children can learn and develop to their full potential.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school -teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers- has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

## **Safeguarding is defined by**

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with preventative education and activities which enable children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is promoted. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection, which refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

(DoH 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children & Young People' 2017)

## **Principles**

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 Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, the Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011, the Public Service Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016, the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017) , Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020 and subsequent action plans, the Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Prevention in Partnership and the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) Safeguarding and Child Protection A Guide for Schools -Update (Revised Circular 2017/04 issued September 2019)

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

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount.
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard.
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together.
- Partnership
- Prevention
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances
- Protection
- Evidence-based and informed decision making.

## **Other Relevant Policies**

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy

- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Educational Visits
- E-Safety Policy
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care
- Managing a Critical Incident
- Pastoral Care
- Privacy Notice
- Records Management Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Special Educational Needs
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Use of Safe Handling/Reasonable Force
- Volunteers Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing a copy should contact the Principal or visit the school website at [www.stmarysps.killyleaagh.com](http://www.stmarysps.killyleaagh.com)

## **Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools**

Everyone in education plays a part in keeping children and young people safe from harm and abuse. All staff in a school, both teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to ensure the protection and welfare of children are paramount. This also extends to any volunteers accepted to work in the school during hours when pupils are on the premises.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their school.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedures 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.
- The school ensures that other safe guarding policies are reviewed at least every three years, or as specified in relevant guidance.

- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff (Extended Schools staff) and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters. This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any other initiatives undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- 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 2016/20 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

## **School Safeguarding Team**

As best practice, in the best interest of the children as a support for the Designated teacher we at Saint Mary's have established a Safeguarding Team.

The following are members of the school safeguarding team

- Chair of the Board of Governors & Designated Governor for Child Protection (Mrs C. Clark)
- Principal/Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Martin)
- Designated Teacher (Mrs Hagan) (ICT Co-Ordinator)
- SeNco Miss O ' Riordan (when appropriate)

This safeguarding team is a vehicle for ensuring effective co-ordination and co-operation between the key individuals responsible for safeguarding throughout the school.

The responsibilities of the team will include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school.
- Support for the Designated Teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training- including refresher training- in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.
- Review child protection/safeguarding practices annually using the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) pro-forma entitled 'Guidance for the evaluation of child protection/safeguarding.'

## **The Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chairperson of the BoG plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

In the event of a safeguarding and 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, employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

## **Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The BoG will delegate a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to be able to:

- Advise the Governors on the role of the Designated teacher.
- Advise the Governors on the content of child protection policies

- Advise the *Governors* on the content of a code of conduct for adults within the school
- Advise the *Governors* on the content of the termly updates and the full Annual Designated Teacher's Report
- Advise the *Governors* on recruitment, selection, vetting of staff.

## **The Principal**

The Principal as the *Secretary* to the Board of *Governors* will assist the Board of *Governors* to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties by

- Informing the *Governors* of any changes to guidance, procedures or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring that any circulars and guidance from Department of Education is shared promptly.
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of *Governors* meetings (termly updates & annual report)
- Assuming the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal has delegated responsibility for:-

- Establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school.
- The appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers posts.
- Ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction process.
- Ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

## **The Designated Teacher**

Every school is required to have a Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher with responsibility for child protection. The role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Make referrals to social services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of *Governors* regarding child protection.

## **The Deputy Designated Teacher**

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities.

It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that she may develop enough knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required.

## **The Class Teacher, Classroom Assistant and Other Supportive Staff**

All staff have a responsibility to safeguard and protect children. Teachers, Classroom Assistants and other Support Staff 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.

All staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/ Deputy teacher for Child Protection;
- listen to what is being said and support the child
- act promptly
- keep the Designated Teacher informed through the written "Record of Concern" proforma (Appendix1A) or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions
- avail of whole school training and relevant training safeguarding children
- Familiarise themselves with Appendix 7- guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a Child Protection nature

## **The Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers should play their part in Child Protection/Safeguarding by:

- Informing the school if their child has a medical condition or educational need.
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety and wellbeing of a parent or a child.
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- Informing the school of any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- Familiarising themselves with the Attendance Policy, Behaviour Management and Discipline policy, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying policy, Safe Handling, Special Educational Needs, First Aid and Administration of Medicines, Health and Safety Policy, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Intimate Care, E-Safety Policy and Educational visits.
- Parents should contact the school if their child is absent and send in a note on the child's return to school.
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school
- Raising concerns, they have in relation to their child with the school.
- Ensuring that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.

The process for a parent who has a potential safeguarding or child protection concern is set out in Flowchart 1 in Appendix 4.

## **Child Protection Support Services (CPSS)**

The CPSS is a regional service for schools, based within the EA Directorate of children and Young People's Service.

The CPSS primary role is to provide:

- Daily helpline to advise, guide and support DTs/DDT/Principals in relations to concerns about individual children with safeguarding/child protection concerns and on wider policy and training matters.
- Initial, refresher and cluster group training on child protection issues.
- Support visits to school where required.
- Advice and guidance on assessing and managing children who pose a significant risk of harm to themselves, other pupils and staff.
- Dissemination of new information on training, DE circulars and guidance.

- Support in developing or reviewing the school's child protection policy.
- Follow up to ETI inspections where safeguarding/child protection is identified as an area for improvement.
- Offer training to the Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection in relation to their statutory safeguarding/child protection responsibilities.
- Offer support, advice and training to other services within the EA.
- Assist EA Human Resource Managers in dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other EA officers/employees.
- Liaise with Social Services and PSNI where appropriate.

Represent the education sector at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings which are co-ordinated inter-agency response to domestic violence and abuse.

## **Vetting Procedures**

The selection and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in close proximity with children, in either a paid or unpaid capacity on our school.

For all reasonable steps to be taken to employ and engage suitable staff to work with the children in our care, we follow the guidance provided by the Department of Education on pre-employment checking and safe recruitment practices. Saint Mary's has adopted the new arrangements for the vetting and checking of staff prior to appointment or volunteering within the school.

All staff whether paid or unpaid are inducted in our Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy.

**All circulars consulted are outlined in Appendix 9**

## **What is child abuse?**

Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in communities, agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Child abuse can manifest in several ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse. Those working with children and young people must have an awareness and understanding of the nature and prevalence of different manifestations within their practise area.

It is always preferable to prevent abuse, or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Through their day-to-day contact with individual children all staff and volunteers at St Mary's are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development.

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm. 'Harm' means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development, and the question of whether harm is significant is determined in accordance with Article 50 (3) of the Children (NI) Order 1995.

Staff at St Mary's should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations including reporting of offences - Section 5 of the **Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence. This includes crimes against children.

Observations of signs and symptoms of possible abuse can do no more than give rise to concern-they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. It must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. However, teachers

and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are repeated regularly.

Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, they must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher who has specific responsibility for child protection.

**The designation of a teacher for this purpose should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed,** including those in cases where an allegation is made against any member of the school's staff, teaching or non-teaching.

Appendix 6 - Flowchart 3

It is imperative that any disclosure of a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk is reported **immediately** to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk of the child at home.

Pupils who are the victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties which may require a Holistic assessment of needs to determine appropriate level and type of intervention.

## **Categories of Abuse**

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often suffer from other types of abuse.

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

**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 or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving the 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 males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**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.

**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labor, slavery, servitude, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities, but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.



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

The following definitions of abuse are taken from the DoH publication 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (March 2016).

**Grooming** of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the family, friends or community and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

Adults may misuse online settings e.g chats rooms, social and gaming environments and other form of digital communications, to try and establish contact with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared.

Staff in St Mary's should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible before harm occurs.

Staff should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children and may be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given, and advice should be sought to consider if these young people should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm and referrals made to the appropriate agencies.

**Child Sexual Exploitation** CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Staff in St Mary's should be alert to signs that may indicate child sexual exploitation and take action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

## Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

### 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.

When the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day, to share this information with a member of the safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It 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 the online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:-

#### Domestic Violence and Abuse

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'

#### Sexual Violence and Abuse

'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).

Domestic violence can include violence inflicted on, or witnessed by, children. The wide adverse effects of living with domestic violence for children must be recognised as a Child Protection issue. The effects are linked to poor educational achievement, social exclusion and to juvenile crime, substance misuse, mental health problems and homelessness as a result of running away.

**If there are concerns of the presence of domestic abuse, the school is obliged to make a referral even if the incident occurs when children are not in the home. (Women's Aid)**

**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.**

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. 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.

FGM is a form of child abuse and as such, staff at St Mary's have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies through agreed and established school procedures.

**Forced Marriage** is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and if the staff of St Mary's has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, the Child Protection Support Services (CPSS) will be contacted immediately.

(Signs of abuse are outlined in Appendix 2)

### **Children with increased vulnerabilities**

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English and sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see these in Appendix 3

### **Child Protection in Other Specific Circumstances**

#### **Bullying (See Anti-Bullying Policy)**

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St Mary's Primary School. Cyber-bullying is considered within the schools overall Anti-Bullying Policy. Our Anti-Bullying Policy is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

#### **Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour**

Learning about sex and sexually behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships.

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred. Whether a child initiated harmful sexually behaviour, has been harmed themselves, or both, it is important to apply principles that remain child centred. Harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children must be recognised as damaging to both the child who has alleged to have been harmed and the child who has allegedly caused the harm. Their needs should be considered and supported through the AIM Risk Assessment and Management Plan process (RAMP 2021) for Education Settings where there are concerns about sexual behaviours from the AIM Education Guidance (Carson & Aujla, 2021) The EA CCPS Designated officers for Child Protection have been trained in the use of AIMS checklists. Contact with CCPS will assist with completion of the appropriate AIM checklist and agree initial decision making and management within St Mary's.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours- Hackett's (2010) continuum provides a useful continuum of sexual behaviours ranging from normal, inappropriate, problematic or abusive/ violent. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however the staff of St Mary's will consider its appropriateness within the school setting. This may be an opportune time for teachers to positively reinforce appropriate behaviour.

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction

that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education to the pupil. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concerns advice from the EA CPSS may be required. The CCPS will advise if contact with the PSNI or Social Services is required.

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in Circular 2022/02 Children who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour 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 a E.A. 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 a risk management plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved.

### **What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?**

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- There is no informed consent by the victim; and or
- The perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim.

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

- Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching
- Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older-particular if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

### **What is Technology Assisted Harmful Sexualised Behaviour (TA-HSB)?**

Children are living on an online world and so it is essential that all work with children takes this element of their lives into consideration. Technology Assisted Harmful Sexualised Behaviour refers to one or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts - using the internet and/ or any image-creating/ sharing or communication device- which is considered inappropriate and or harmful given their age or stage of development.

Identification of harmful sexual behaviours and analysis of any attending risks is based on multi-agency risk assessments and analysis. The EA CCPS supports the school Principal and Designated Teacher for Child Protection in managing the process which includes the Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) and Safety and Support Plan and communicating with partner agencies where appropriate (primarily Social Services, the Youth Justice Agency and the PSNI).

### **E-Safety/Internet Abuse**

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. Whilst in St Mary's children search the internet using a filtered internet service provided by C2K. Pupils are taught to follow SMART Tips produced by Northern Ireland Area Child Protection Committee and participate in Safer Internet Day annually. The Digital Leaders at St Mary's have designed their own online safety mascot 'Smart Shark' to promote the message

of how to stay safe online. St Mary's audits their current online safety provision using the 360 degree safe website as recommended in DE Circular 2016/27 Online Safety and is working towards achieving the Digital Schools Cyber resilience and Internet safety award. All teaching and non-teaching staff can recognise and are aware of online safety risks. Online safety messages are integrated across the curriculum for pupils in all Key Stages. All pupils and their parents are asked to agree to an acceptable usage of internet policy and a digital and video images of pupils' agreement prior to any internet use or images be taken. Our E-safety Policy is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges the schools' responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and our responsibility in teaching pupils how to act responsible and keep themselves safe.

## **Indecent Photographs**

The offence of taking indecent pictures of children under 18 years can apply in a situation where a pupil using a mobile phone or other electronic device has taken a rude picture of other children. It is also an offence to distribute, possess with intent to distribute or show such photographs to others. In such circumstances the PSNI will be contacted. The school will not investigate the alleged incident.

## **Talking to children where there are concerns about possible abuse**

### **See Appendix 7**

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's non-teaching staff see such signs, he/she should immediately bring them to the attention of the either the class teacher or the Designated Teacher, and it may be appropriate for the necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher.

Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family are in need of intervention by statutory, voluntary or community based services through a 'child in need' referral (with parental consent).

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some circumstances talking to the child will quickly clarify initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred, and point to the need for an immediate referral. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore be kept to a minimum.\*

- Staff should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- Staff should not therefore, ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?".
- The priority at this stage is to actively listen to the child and not to interrupt or try to interrupt if he/she is freely recalling significant events, and as soon as possible afterwards to make a record of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher, using the template Note of Concern APPENDIX 1A (taken from DENI Circular Child protection: Record keeping in Schools' Circular 2016/20. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail.
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used.

- Staff should not give the child or young person undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should of course, reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.
- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.
- Staff should **not** ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

## **Child displaying Symptoms of, or School alerted to, Possible Abuse**

### **(Refer to Flowchart 2) Appendix 5**

In all cases where symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or the welfare of the child, the teacher or other member of staff should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher. A parent or carer may also give information to a member of staff of the school, or by a person working in the school in a volunteering capacity. **The person making the complaint should be advised of their responsibility to refer to the Local Health and Social Trust Gateway Team the school must identify who the concern was made by when referring to Gateway.** The staff member should also inform the Designated Teacher responsible for child protection matters in the school who will refer, if necessary, to the appropriate statutory authorities.

In order to form a view on whether a child or children may indeed be being abused, or at risk of possible abuse, the Principal or Designated Teacher may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information, or from others who may have relevant information.

The Principal or Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the CPSS-Designated Officer for Child Protection at the EA.

(Guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of child protection are outlined in **Appendix 7.**)

## **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse made Against a Member of Staff**

### **(Refer to Flow Chart 3) Appendix 6**

Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures in DENI Circular 2015/13 should be followed.

In all decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration and the child should be listened to and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed. In some cases, this may require consideration of suspension as a precautionary measure.

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) order 2003 places a statutory duty on BoG to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. In order to fulfil these responsibilities governors are obliged to acknowledge and work with the relevant guidance issued by DE and DoH.

The Principal and BoG have a duty of care for the welfare of pupils and any allegations need to be effectively evaluated and managed. However, as employers, they also have a duty of care to their staff and should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

**All allegations should be reported immediately,** to Mrs Martin the Principal who will be the Lead Individual and handle the management of the allegation from the onset. If a complaint is made against the Principal, Mrs

Hagan the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of governors Mrs C. Clark who will be the Lead Individual and she will assure that necessary action is taken.

In the interest of all involved the issue should be dealt with as a priority and unnecessary delays should be avoided. Every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity must be made. Allegations should not be shared with other staff or children.

All allegations of a child abuse nature **must** be recorded in the hard backed and bound Record of Child Abuse Complaints book which must be retained securely. A record of this should be placed on the relevant pupil's Child Protection File in line with recommendations in DENI Circular 2016/20 Child Protection; Record Keeping in Schools.

## **Process for Referral**

Responsibility for referral of suspected abuse cases lies with the Designated Teacher who will have a good working relationship with colleagues from other agencies, especially Social Services and the Police. Understanding the needs of children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) is a framework to support professionals in assessment and planning to better the needs of children and their family.

The UNOCINI model is used to enable practitioners and their agencies to communicate their concerns about children using a common format, language and understanding of the level of need, concern or risk for all children across Northern Ireland.

The UNOCINI assessment framework is intended to be used by all professionals working with children as a tool to help them identify the needs of children at an early stage.

The UNOCINI referral form must be completed whenever staff wish to refer a child or young person to children's social service for support, safeguarding or a fuller assessment of a child's needs. If the Designated Teacher, Principal or DDT is concerned that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, then an **urgent** referral to children's social service through the local Gateway Service must be made.

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person 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 or 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 consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

In instances where consent is sought but refused, a referral should be made, and a record maintained of the reason for that decision and the action taken.

## **Confidentiality & Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "**in confidence**". In the interests of the child, all staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies and where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. However, only those who need to know will be told.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will consider what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the School Data Protection Policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

## **Record Keeping**

In accordance with DENI guidance Circular 2020:07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in School we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in St Mary's are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DENI guidance on the disposal of child protection records, these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriate password protected.

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, who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The Note of Concern and any further details discussed should be signed and dated by both parties to confirm the information is accurate. The person who reports the matter must treat the matter in confidence.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for recording pro-formas used to record concerns.

## **Code of Conduct for all staff- Paid and 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. The school has a code of conduct for staff which is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the educator sector. Rather it is intended to assist staff by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering them guidance on conduct. The Code cannot address every possible circumstance in which staff might find themselves, however it is intended that staff will be mindful of the Code which will raise awareness of issues and situations which can potentially arise. In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their safe practice.

**The school code of conduct is included in Appendix 8**

## **Staff training**

St Marys Primary school is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on policy; basic child protection/ safeguarding training and annual refresher training and procedure with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. The Principal/Deputy Designated Teacher, Designated Teacher; Chair of the Board of



Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses. Child Protection training for school governors has three specific strands-

- Initial Child Protection Awareness Training as part of the induction programme for all new governors.
- Child Protection Training from the CPSS for Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection in order that they can assist the full Board of Governors with their child protection governance. This is completed during each term in office (every four years).
- Training on recruitment, selection and vetting which incorporates child protection legislation and DE guidance for all governors who will be sitting on interview or teacher appointment panels

## **Guidance for Volunteers**

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the School Child Protection Policy and code of conduct and given a copy of the policy which includes what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused. Volunteers/pupils on long term placements who work unsupervised are required to have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) from Access NI. Criminal record checks are carried out by Access NI in line with the DE Circular 2013/01. Volunteers/ pupils on short term work experience who work under supervision are not required to obtain an EDC due to the supervision meeting the statutory standard as set out in the DE Circular 2012/19 and DE Circular 2013/01.

## **Guidance for Visitors**

Visitors to St Mary's, such as parents (members of the PTA), suppliers of goods and services to carry out maintenance etc do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors will be managed by the staff of St Mary's and their access to areas and movement within the school will be restricted as needs required.

- Visitors will be met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school by school staff.
- If appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school.
- Where possible, escorted by a member of staff/representative.
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- If delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

## **The Preventative Curriculum**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communications with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. An awareness of "stranger danger"; an understanding of how to respond to perceived threats; care in regards to e-safety; and the development of standards of behaviour that are appropriate for primary school children are all reinforced through the school's work on PDMU within the Northern Ireland Curriculum. They are also the focus of assemblies, visits from outside professionals and on-going guidance opportunities as they arise.

In the classroom, regular Circle Time sessions are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the entrance hall and relevant information in each classroom, which provides advice, images of Safeguarding Team and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a staff allegation is in the staff room.

Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues:

- The NSPCC visits the school every 3 years and provided information on a range of child protection issues through Assemblies, talks, role - plays, puppets shows and resources.
- The 'Bee Safe Initiative' (Local Council) for Year 7
- Primary Five pupils take part in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service talks on Fire Safety.
- Circle Time in all classes
- The PDMU Curriculum
- The whole school participates in Safer Internet Day
- Internet Safety Workshop for parents and children (PSNI)
- The RSE Curriculum
- The whole school participates in "Anti -Bullying Week" activities (NIABF)
- The whole school participates in Action Cancer for schools programme`
- The whole school participates in the Daily Mile programme (Local Health Trust)
- The whole school participates in the 'Sustrans' programme.
- The whole school participates in Konflux Internet Safety drama workshop.
- The whole school participates in World Mental Health Day,
- The Well Being Team made up of representatives from The School Council.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that all children know there are adults in the school with whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for Personal and Social Development which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.

## **Physical Restraints**

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in a separate policy, "Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling", in accordance with guidelines from EA and CCMS.

## **Health and Safety**

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

## **E- Safety**

Our policy on E-Safety and digital technologies is set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet (connected to the internet through the c2k filtered network and wifi filtered system) and digital technologies. Specifically, it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

### **Photography and Images of Children**

All parents are asked at the start of the academic year to consent to their child's photographs being taken and displayed within the school, occasionally in newspapers or on the school website, social media pages.

All staff are informed of children who MAY NOT have photographs taken or displayed.

### **Educational Trips and Visits**

Saint Mary's Primary School has a separate policy on Fieldwork and Educational Trips, as in accordance with Educational Visit, Best Practice (2009)

### **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

Should any adult in the school find themselves in the rare position of being the only adult in the school and in need of immediate safeguarding advice, they should use the contacts below (in the given order) to seek help.

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Child Protection Support Service (9am-5pm)   | 028 95985590               |
| Duty Social Worker (South Eastern)   | 0300 1000 300              |
| Out of Hours Duty Social Worker (all areas)  | 028 9025 9299              |
| Childline:   | 0800 1111                  |
| Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline NSPCC:  | 0800 389 1701              |
| PSNI: (8am-6pm Mon-Fri; 9am-5pm Weekend and public holidays)                                       | 02890 259299               |
| 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline:   | 08088021414                |
| NSPCC Adult Helpline:  | 08088005000<br>Text: 88858 |
| Regional Emergency Social Work Services (RESWS)<br>5pm-9pm Mon-Thu; 5pm on Friday to 9am on Monday | 028 95049999               |

### Useful websites:

|  |
|--|
| <p><a href="http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk">www.familysupportni.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.nspcc.org">www.nspcc.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.addictionni.com">www.addictionni.com</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.getsafeonline.org">https://www.getsafeonline.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/pupils-and-parents/pupils.htm">www.deni.gov.uk/index/pupils-and-parents/pupils.htm</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/4/schedule/1/paragraph5">www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/4/schedule/1/paragraph5</a></p> |
|--|

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by St Mary's Primary School's core safeguarding team. The policy's effectiveness will be evaluated in the event of a change of legislation, training or following an incident

|                              |                   |  |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Last Reviewed</b>         | <b>June 2021</b>  |  |
| <b>Reviewed</b>              | <b>March 2022</b> | Updated to:<br>Reflect changes in staff<br>SeNCo changed to Miss O' Riordran<br>Reflect Circular 2022/02: Children who display harmful sexual behaviour (Page 11-12)<br>Reflect Circular 2020:07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools |
| <b>Date Ratified by BOG:</b> |                   |  |
| <b>Date of next review:</b>  |                   |  |

**Appendix 1A(Pages 21- 23)**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Note of Concern**

**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

|  |
|--|
| Name of Pupil:   |
| Year Group:  |
| Date, time of incident / disclosure:   |
| Circumstances of incident / disclosure:  |
| Nature and description of concern:   |
| Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom: |

Action taken at the time:

Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:

Any further action taken:

Written report passed to Designated Teacher:

Yes:

No:

If 'No' state reason:

Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:

Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file

If 'No' state reason:

Name of staff member making the report: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1B



### St Mary's Primary School

#### CHILD PROTECTION UPDATED RECORD (Form C)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Year Group \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance in current school years \_\_\_\_\_ days out of possible \_\_\_\_\_ days

---

ATTAINMENT LEVELS/EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

INTELLECTUAL ABILITY (e.g. below average/average/above average)

PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

PRESENTATION OF WORK, INCLUDING HOMEWORK

PARTICIPATION IN TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## Appendix 2

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:</b></p>   | <p><b>Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:</b></p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Constant hunger/cramming food/storing food</li> <li>• Inadequate/inappropriate clothing</li> <li>• Constant tiredness</li> <li>• Exposed to danger/ lack of adequate supervision</li> <li>• Untreated illness</li> <li>• Lack of peer relationships</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing/begging</li> <li>• Chronic poor attendance (without valid cause)</li> <li>• Inappropriate attachment/clinginess</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying of others</li> <li>• Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn</li> <li>• Difficulty in forming/maintain relationships with others</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Signs of mutilation/self-harm</li> <li>• Attention seeking</li> <li>• Chronic runaway/frequent absconding</li> <li>• Wetting and soiling</li> <li>• Sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:</b></p>  | <p><b>Possible signs or symptoms of domestic abuse include:</b></p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruise in places difficult to see/mark e.g. behind ears, groin</li> <li>• Human bite marks, welts or bald spots</li> <li>• Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions</li> <li>• Untreated injuries</li> <li>• Self-destructive tendencies</li> <li>• Chronic runaway/frequent absconding</li> <li>• Fear of going home</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They may become anxious or depressed.</li> <li>• They may have difficulty sleeping.</li> <li>• They may have nightmares or flashbacks.</li> <li>• They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches.</li> <li>• They may start to wet their bed.</li> <li>• They may have temper tantrums.</li> <li>• They may behave as though they are much younger than they are.</li> <li>• They may have problems at school, or may start truanting.</li> <li>• They may become aggressive.</li> <li>• They may internalise their distress and withdraw from other people.</li> <li>• They may have a lowered sense of self-worth.</li> <li>• Older children may start to use alcohol or drugs.</li> <li>• They may begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves.</li> <li>• They may develop an eating disorder.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:</b></p>  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruised or sore genitals</li> <li>• Genital infection</li> <li>• Difficulty in walking or sitting</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Chronic Depression</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Personality changes</li> <li>• Fear of going home/absconding</li> <li>• Acquiring money or belongings without explanation</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                            |   |



| Possible signs or symptoms of CSE  | Warning signs within the school environment for Forced Marriage  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation</li> <li>• Truanting/leaving school without permission</li> <li>• Persistently going missing or returning late.</li> <li>• Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving.</li> <li>• Change in mood-agitated/stressed</li> <li>• Appearing distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.</li> <li>• Physical symptoms e.g bruising; bite marks</li> <li>• Collected from schools by unknown adults or taxis.</li> <li>• New peer groups</li> <li>• Significant older boyfriend or girlfriend</li> <li>• Increasing secretiveness around behaviours.</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)</li> <li>• Self-harm and other expressions of despair</li> <li>• Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence and persistent absence.</li> <li>• Request for extended leave or absence/ failure to return from visits to country of origin.</li> <li>• Surveillance by siblings or cousins.</li> <li>• Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.</li> <li>• Poor exam results</li> <li>• Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home.</li> <li>• Not allowed to attend extra curricular activities.</li> <li>• Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger.</li> <li>• Prevented from going on to further/higher education.</li> </ul> |

## Appendix 3

### Dealing with Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

- **Children with a Disability**

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and those working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues.

Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

- **Children with limited fluency in English**

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

Designated Teachers should work with their SEN co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer pupils, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. All schools should try to create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

- **Looked After Children**

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then make arrangements for the child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily. It is important that the views of children, young people and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the looked child are taken into account when decisions are made.

A member of school staff will attend LAC meetings and will provide a written report. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

- **Children / young people who go missing**

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family

home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and young people may have been abused.

School staff will work in partnership with those who look after the child or young person who goes missing and, if appropriate, will complete a risk assessment. Current school policies will apply e.g. attendance, safeguarding, relationships and sexuality education.

- **Young people in supported accommodation**

Staff will work in partnership with those agencies involved with young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation and will provide pastoral support as necessary.

- **Young people who are homeless**

If we become aware that a young person in our school is homeless we will share this information with Social Services whose role is to carry out a comprehensive needs and risk assessment. We will contribute to the assessment and attend multi-disciplinary meetings.

- **Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children and young people**

**Separated children** and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver. **Unaccompanied children** and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.

**Child Trafficking** is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation.

If we become aware of a child or young person who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking we in School Name will immediately follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures

- **Children of parents with additional support needs**

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action school staff take to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children's social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist us in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will give consideration to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

- **Gender identity issues and sexual orientation**

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

- **Boarding schools and residential settings**

Children in the above settings are particularly vulnerable to abuse. We will ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and trained in accordance with DE guidance.

- **Work experience, school trips and educational visits**

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE guidance on educational visits, school trips and work experience to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

### **Children/young people's behaviours**

- **Peer abuse**

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all school staff should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and, where necessary, should contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

- **Self-harm**

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a

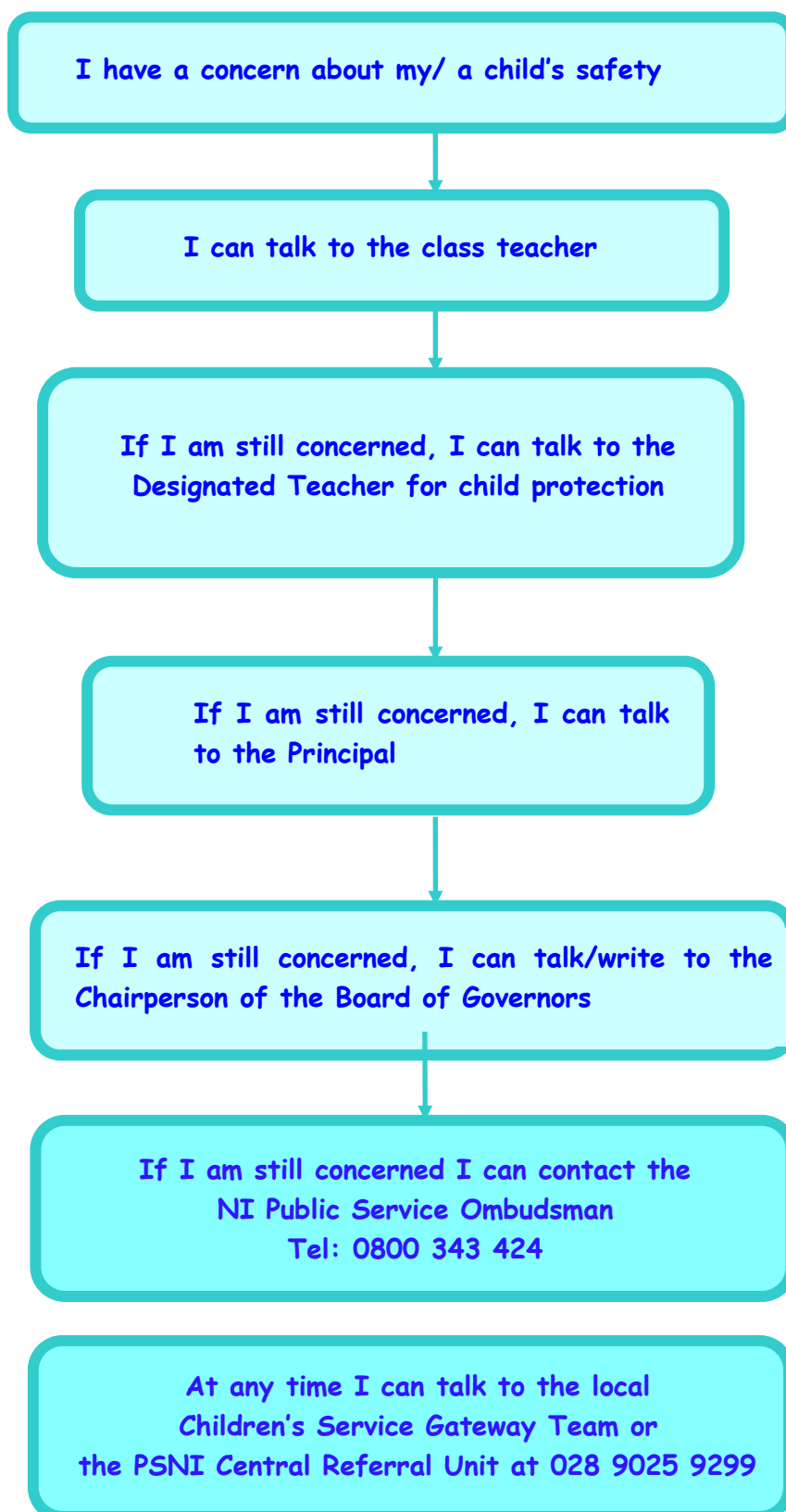
member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

- **Suicidal ideation**

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child or young person who presents as being suicidal as it is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

## Appendix 4

### Flow Chart 1: How a Parent Makes a Complaint

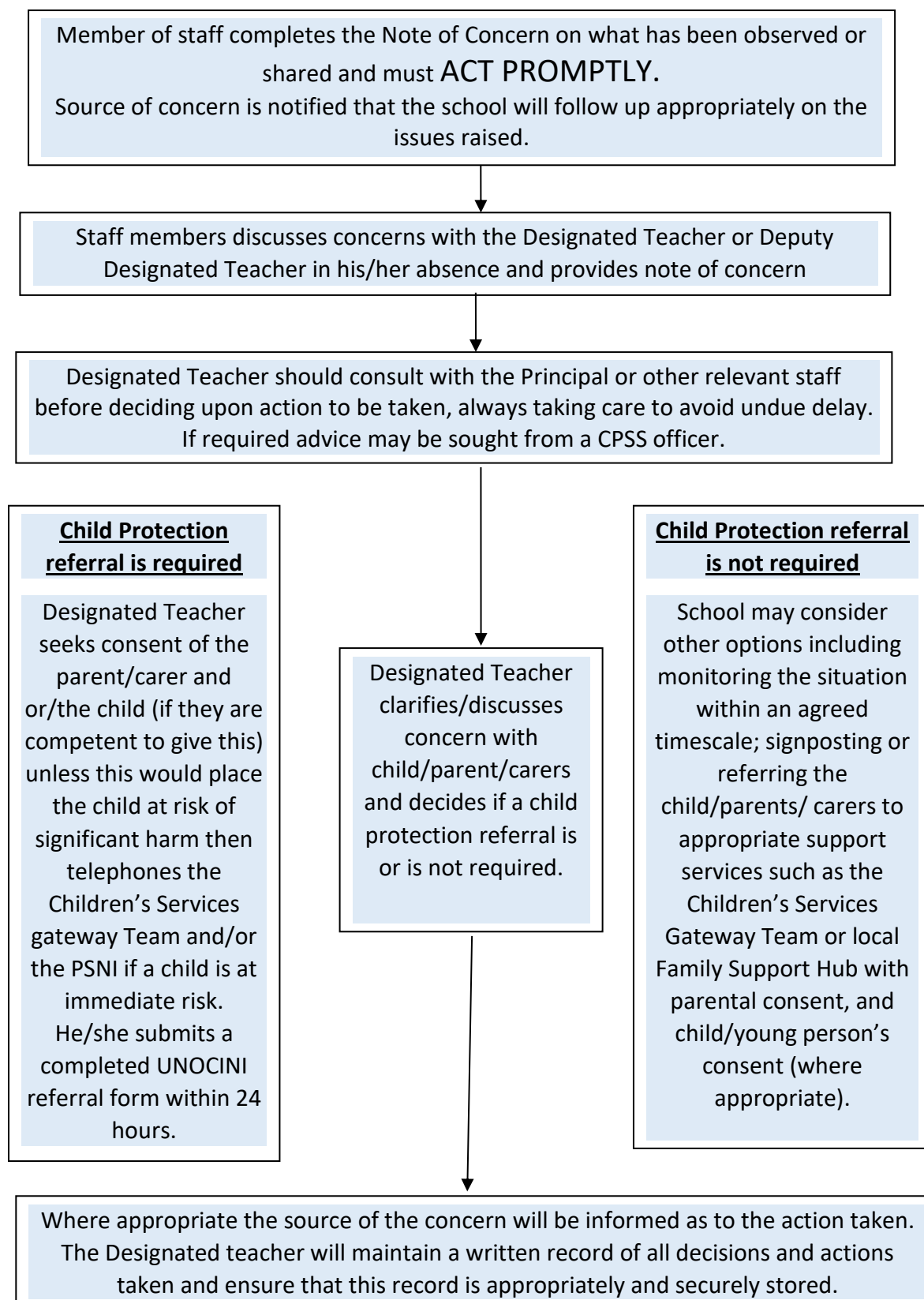


If a parent has a concern about a child's safety or suspected child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.

## Appendix 5

### Flowchart 2

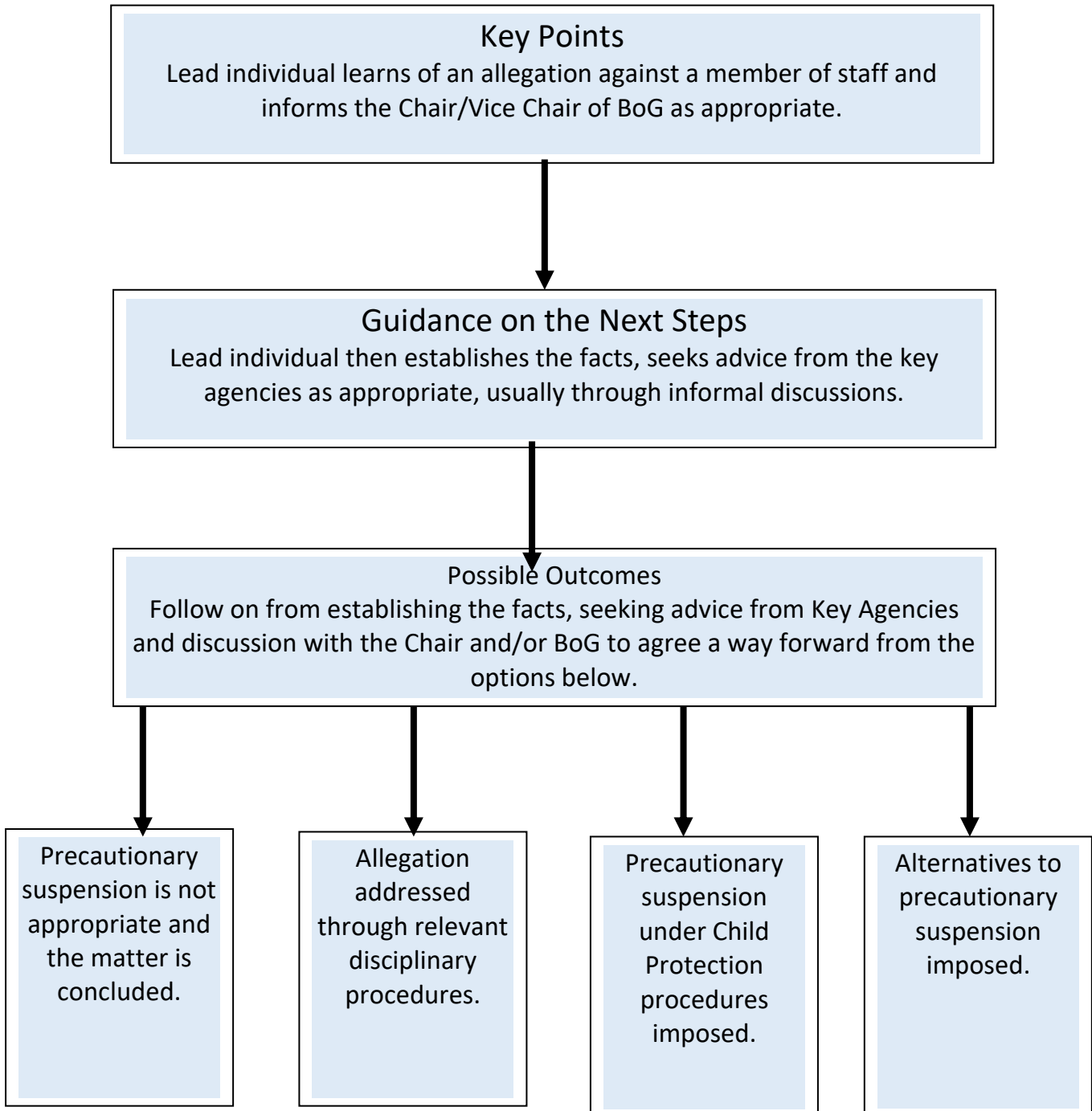
Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff



## APPENDIX 6

### Flowchart 3

#### **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff**



Taken from DENI Circular 2015/13: Dealing with Allegation of Abuse Against a Member of Staff.

*Annex G Page 26*



## Appendix 7

The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a Child Protection nature.

| Do  | DO NOT   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to what the child says</li><li>• Assure the child they are not at fault</li><li>• Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret</li><li>• Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words</li><li>• Remember not to promise the child confidentiality</li><li>• Stay calm</li><li>• Listen</li><li>• Accept</li><li>• Reassure</li><li>• Explain what you are going to do</li><li>• Record accurately</li><li>• Seek support for yourself</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask leading questions</li><li>• Put words into the child's mouth</li><li>• Ignore the child's behaviour</li><li>• Remove any clothing</li><li>• Panic</li><li>• Promise to keep secrets</li><li>• Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily</li><li>• Delay</li><li>• Start to investigate</li><li>• <b>Do nothing</b></li></ul> |

## Appendix 8

# Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools



Date Ratified by BOG: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **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 current pupils are not permitted and may 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 (eg 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 eg 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 volunteer's 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.

- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 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.
- 8.6 The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.

### **Compliance**

All staff and volunteers must complete the form in Appendix 8 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

#### **Confirmation of Compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Post Held \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.

## Appendix 9

### DENI Circulars

- DE Circular 2006/06:

#### Child Protection: Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings

- DE Circular 2006/07:

#### Child Protection: Employment of Substitute Teachers

- DE Circular 2006/08:

#### Child Protection: Training Requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels

- DE Circular 2006/09:

#### Child Protection: Criminal Background Checking of staff in Schools- programme to extend coverage

- DE Circular 2006/25:

#### Child Protection Vetting of School Governors

- DE Circular 2007/01:

#### Acceptable use of the internet and digital technologies in school

- DE Circular 2008/03:

#### Pre- Employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools- New Arrangements

- DE Circular 2008/10:

#### Employment of Substitute Teachers

- DE Circular 2010/01

#### RSE guidance

- DE Circular 2010/07

#### Learner Attendance: Absence Recording by Schools

- DE Circular 2010/18:

#### The governor's role set out in DE Governor's Handbook

- DE Circular 2011/22:

#### Internet use

- DE Circular 2012/19:

#### Pre-employment checks

- DE Circular 2013/01:

#### Disclosure and Barring Arrangements

- DE Circular 2013/16:

#### RSE policy

- DE Circular 2013/25:

#### E-safety guidance

- DE Circular 2014/14:

#### Learner participation

- DE Circular 2014/24

#### Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Guidance

- DE Circular 2014/27

#### Managing persons who pose a risk

- DE Circular 2015/13

#### Allegations of abuse Against a Member of Staff.

- DE Circular 2015/22

#### RSE guidance

- DE Circular 2015/23

#### Drugs Statutory

- DE Circular 2022/02

#### Harmful Sexual Behaviour

- DE Circular 2020/07

#### Record Keeping in schools

- DE Circular 2016/26

#### Effective educational uses of mobile digital devices

- DE Circular 2016/27

#### Online Safety

- DENI Circular Revised 2017/04 issued September 2019

#### Safeguarding and Child Protection - A Guide for Schools - Updated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website. Click on 'Circulars'  
[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)