

# St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Signed (Chair of the Board of Governors):	<i>Oonagh Donnelly</i>
Signed (Principal):	<i>Barry Conroy</i>
Agree Date:	March 2024
Review Date:	March 2025

## CONTENTS

1. Child Protection Ethos
2. Key Principles of Safeguarding
3. Other Related Policies
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Child Protection Definitions
6. Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns
7. Consent
8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing
9. Record Keeping
10. Safe Recruitment Procedures
11. Code of Conduct
12. Staff Training
13. Operation Encompass
14. Safeguarding and The Preventative Curriculum
15. Monitoring and Evaluation
16. Contacts and Phone Numbers

Appendix 1: Note of Concern

Appendix 2: Profile of Concerns

Appendix 3: Specific Types of Abuse

Appendices 4: Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Appendix 5: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

Appendix 6: How a Parent Can Make a Complaint

Appendix 7: Procedure Where The School Has Concerns about Possible Abuse

Appendix 8: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

Appendix 9: Staff Code of Conduct

## 1. CHILD PROTECTION ETHOS

*St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit aims to establish a caring, supportive and safe environment within which the academic, personal, social and spiritual potential of each child will be developed. We have a primary responsibility for the pastoral care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care.*

*All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed.*

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy sets out guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected, and outlines referral procedures within St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit.

## 2. KEY PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING

The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in:

- ❖ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- ❖ The Children (NI) Order 1995
- ❖ Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI (2017)
- ❖ Safeguarding and Child Protection: A Guide for Schools (Circular 2017/04; amended September 2019, updated June 2020)
- ❖ SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017)

In particular, we believe that every child has ***the fundamental right*** to be safe from harm, and that proper care should be given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being by those looking after them.

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy and underpin the guidance which we follow:

- ❖ “The child’s welfare must always be paramount; this overrides all other considerations.” (The Children (NI) Order 1995)
- ❖ It is a child’s right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
- ❖ A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; where there is a conflict, the child’s interests must always come first.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together.
- ❖ Partnership.
- ❖ Prevention.

- ❖ Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances.
- ❖ Protection.
- ❖ Evidence based and informed decision making.

*Effective Safeguarding activity will:*

*Promote the welfare of the child and young person*

*Prevent harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention*

*Protect children and young people from harm when this is required.*

*The welfare of children and young people must be promoted and they must be given every opportunity to develop to their full potential, free from harm through abuse, exploitation and neglect.*

*(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI, version 2 August 2017)*

### **3. OTHER RELATED 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
- ❖ Complaints Policy
- ❖ First Aid and the Administration of Medicines Policy
- ❖ Health and Safety Policy
- ❖ ICT Acceptable Use and E Safety Policy
- ❖ Intimate Care Policy
- ❖ Pastoral Care Policy
- ❖ Positive Behaviour Policy
- ❖ Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- ❖ Special Educational Needs Policy
- ❖ Use of Reasonable Force / Safe Handling Policy
- ❖ Use of Mobile Phones / Cameras

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

Parents will be made aware of the school's responsibilities and procedures with regards to Child Protection in the "Child Protection: A Summary" pamphlet, which will be issued at least once every two years.

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **THE SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The following are members of the School's Safeguarding Team:

**Principal:**

**Mr. Barry Conroy**

**Designated Teacher for Child Protection :**

**Mrs. Mairead McGarvey**

**Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection :**

**Mrs. Kim Mullin**

**Chair of the Board of Governors:**

**Mrs. Oonagh Donnelly**

**Designated Governor for Child Protection:**

**Mrs. Kathryn Doherty**

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.

The roles and responsibilities of everyone concerned with Safeguarding and Child Protection in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit are detailed below:

### **THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER)**

- ❖ To ensure that all staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection.
- ❖ To provide training for all teaching and non-teaching staff at least once every two years and to bring the St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit Child Protection Policy to the attention of all staff.
- ❖ To promote a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- ❖ To make referrals to Social Services (Gateway Team) or PSNI Public Protection Unit, where appropriate.
- ❖ To liaise with the Principal and EA Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected Child Abuse.
- ❖ To ensure that the school is represented at Child Protection conferences and other relevant case planning meetings.
- ❖ To keep records of all child protection concerns.
- ❖ To maintain a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg. Family Support Hubs.
- ❖ To provide written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection issues, including a written annual report.
- ❖ To review the school's Child Protection Policy annually and in line with legislation; review and issue the summary of the Child Protection Policy to parents.
- ❖ To be a key professional support, together with the Principal, to members of staff, to whom pupils have disclosed abuse.

### **THE PRINCIPAL**

- ❖ To ensure that all relevant DENI guidance in relation to child protection and safeguarding in particular "*Safeguarding And Child Protection In Schools 2017/04*" is implemented within the school.
- ❖ To enable 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 timely inclusion of child protection activities on their agenda.
- ❖ To ensure 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 Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- ❖ To ensure that parents receive a copy (at intake) and summary (at least once every two years) of the Child Protection Policy.
- ❖ To manage child protection concerns relating to staff.

### **THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

- ❖ To ensure the appointment of Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers as well as a Designated Governor.
- ❖ To ensure that the school fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance.

- ❖ To ensure that safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors, including refresher training.
- ❖ To ensure that the school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually, and that parents receive a summary copy of the Child Protection policy at least once every two years.
- ❖ To ensure that the school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years, and that a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying are maintained.
- ❖ To ensure 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.
- ❖ To receive termly reports of child protection activities and a written annual report.
- ❖ To ensure that all school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19.
- ❖ To ensure that there is a Code of Conduct for all adults working in the school.

### **THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

- ❖ To ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment.
- ❖ To ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy.
- ❖ To ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Child Protection and Recruitment and Selection training.
- ❖ To ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- ❖ To assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the school Principal.
- ❖ To ensure that the Board of Governors receive regular updates and a full written annual report in relation to Child Protection activity.

### **THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

- ❖ To advise Governors on the role of the Designated/Deputy Designated Teachers.
- ❖ To advise Governors on the content of the Child Protection Policy, a Code of Conduct for adults within the school and the termly updates and annual report.
- ❖ To advise Governors on recruitment, selection and vetting of staff.

### **THE SCHOOL STAFF**

- ❖ To refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- ❖ To listen to what is being said in the event of a disclosure, and support the child; to act promptly.
- ❖ Use the “Note of Concern” to make a concise written record of a child’s disclosure using the actual words of the child. (**Appendix 1**)
- ❖ To keep the Designated Teacher informed through the written “Profile of Concern” proforma (**Appendix 2**) 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, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

- ❖ To avail of whole-school training and any other relevant training regarding safeguarding children.

### **THE SUPPORT STAFF**

- ❖ If any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member, they should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made and any further necessary action will be taken.

### **THE PARENTS**

- ❖ To inform the school if their child has a medical condition or educational need.
- ❖ To inform the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school.
- ❖ To inform the school if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- ❖ To let the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home.
- ❖ To familiarise themselves with the school's Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Acceptable Use of the Internet and Child Protection Policies.
- ❖ To report to the office when they visit the school, and sign their name in the signing-in book.
- ❖ To raise concerns that they have, in relation to their child, with the school.
- ❖ To inform the school 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.

**The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.**

More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at:  
[www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection)

## **5. CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS**

### **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)**

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

**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.

**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 opportunities 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.

**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.

**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 also suffer from other types of abuse.

**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 labour, slavery, servitude, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

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.

### **SPECIFIC TYPES OF ABUSE**

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we, in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit, are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy. Please see **Appendix 3**.

### **CHILDREN WITH INCREASED VULNERABILITIES**

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English or sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see **Appendix 4**.

### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE**

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 definition of signs and symptoms of abuse from the SBNI Regional Core Policies and Procedures guidance are detailed in **Appendix 5**.

## **6. RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS**

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)**

### **HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT.**

In St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit, we aim to work closely with parents and guardians in supporting all aspects of the 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, or any member of the school's Safeguarding Team – the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher or the Principal.
- ❖ If they are still concerned, they can 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 Central Referral Unit. (Flowchart-**Appendix 6**)

### **WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS CONCERNS OR HAS BEEN GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL STAFF**

In St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit, 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 will complete a Note of Concern (**Appendix 1**) and must act promptly. He/she will not investigate – this is a matter for Social Services – but should discuss these concerns with the Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher if he/she is not available.

The Designated Teacher will consult with the Principal or other relevant staff always taking care to avoid due delay. If the Principal is not available, advice may be sought from an Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection. The Designated Teacher may also seek clarification from the child or their parent/carer.

- ❖ The teacher or other member of staff consults the Designated Teacher.
- ❖ A written record is made on the Note of Concern. The record should be factual, objective in nature and include what was seen, heard or reported and the place and time of who was present. The record is given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher.

- ❖ The Designated Teacher may consult with the Principal. The Designated Teacher may seek advice from the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or from Social Services (Gateway Team). A decision is made as to whether the matter should be referred to Social Services.
- ❖ If a child protection referral is not required, the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child's consent.
- ❖ If a child protection referral is required, the Designated teacher will seek consent from the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.
- ❖ The Designated Teacher will telephone the Social Services Gateway Team, and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form.
- ❖ (Flowchart – **Appendix 7**)

### **DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE**

The following are 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 or not 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 the child's in any later court proceedings. Do not criticise the perpetrator- the child may love this person and reconciliation may be possible. Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to 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. Respect confidentiality i.e. the matter should only be discussed on a need to know basis.

Do	Don't
<p>Stay calm.</p> <p>Listen to what the child says.</p> <p>Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret.</p> <p>Accept.</p> <p>Reassure.</p> <p>Explain what you are going to do.</p> <p>Record accurately.</p> <p>Seek support for yourself.</p>	<p>Panic.</p> <p>Ask leading questions.</p> <p>Put words into the child's mouth.</p> <p>Promise to keep secrets.</p> <p>Ignore the child's behaviour.</p> <p>Remove any clothing.</p> <p>Delay.</p> <p>Start to investigate.</p> <p>Do nothing.</p>

### **COMPLAINTS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF STAFF OR A VOLUNTEER**

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal or Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. The procedure as outlined in **Appendix 8** will be followed.

### **COMPLAINTS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY THE PRINCIPAL**

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. She will then inform the Chair of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with CCMS.

### **COMPLAINTS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

If the Designated Teacher is suspected of abuse, the Principal must be informed immediately and he will then inform the Chair of the Board of Governors. They will ensure what action is required in consultation with CCMS.

## **7. CONSENT**

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 on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

## **8. 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 an only ‘need to know’ basis. No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns, 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)

## **9. RECORD KEEPING**

In St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit, all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher / Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records, these records will be stored until the child is 30 years old.

If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

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.

## **10. SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

## **11. CODE OF CONDUCT**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff, either paid or unpaid, must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child 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 which has been approved by the Board of Governors. **(Appendix 9)**

## **12. STAFF TRAINING**

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. When new staff or volunteers start at the school they receive basic child protection awareness training and are given copies of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. All staff receive annual 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.

## **13. 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 make contact with 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.](#)

#### **14. SAFEGUARDING AND THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. (2017/04)

Our 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.

In the classroom, the PDMU and RE curriculum address a variety of safeguarding issues. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resilience of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

Throughout the school year, child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection noticeboard in the entrance hall and in the Nursery foyer. These provide advice and display child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent can make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in the school staffroom.

Other initiatives which address safeguarding issues:



- ❖ Mrs. McGarvey and Mrs. Mullin visit all classrooms in September to make all children aware of whom they can share concerns.
- ❖ Primary 1-7 use the “Living Learning Together” programmes to deliver PDMU and safety topics.
- ❖ Primary 1-7 display and use DOE Road Safety calendars and HSENI Avoid Harm on the Farm calendars in each classroom.
- ❖ NSPCC visit regularly and provides information on a range of Child Protection issues through assemblies, talks, role plays and puppet shows.
- ❖ PSNI visit and give talks on Road Safety and Stranger Danger.
- ❖ Primary 1 explore the topic: People Who Help Us.
- ❖ Primary 5 pupils take part in the NI Fire and Rescue Service talks on Fire Safety.
- ❖ Primary 7 participate in the Cycling Proficiency Programme.
- ❖ Primary 7 participate in the ‘Bee Safe’ Activity day, organised by the Health Promotion Agency and WHSS.
- ❖ Children in all classes complete activities to celebrate Children’s Mental Health Week, Anti-Bullying Week and Internet Safety Week.
- ❖ PSNI give talks to parents on Internet Safety and Drugs Awareness.

## **15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and the Safeguarding Team, and approved 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.

The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **16. CONTACTS AND PHONE NUMBERS**

### **EA**

Sharon McGarrity; Martin McQuaid; Patricia Houston (Designated Officers)

1 Hospital Rd., Omagh.

Tel. 028 95985590

[sharon.mcgarrity@eani.org.uk](mailto:sharon.mcgarrity@eani.org.uk)

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### **WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST**

Gateway Team

Tel. 028 71314090

### **PSNI**

Central Referral Unit

Tel. 101

### **FAMILY SUPPORT HUB**

Tel. 028 82259495

**Appendix 1**



**CONFIDENTIAL**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**

**St. Oliver Plunkett PS & Nursery Unit**

**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
Yes                      No
If 'No' state reason:

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

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

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

## Appendix 2



### St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit

#### PROFILE OF CONCERNS

Child's Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Details of Concern	Signature

## Appendix 3

### SPECIFIC TYPES OF ABUSE

**Grooming** of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, 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. chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms 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. Those working or volunteering with children or young people 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. Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and 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 to any punitive approach or 'criminalising' young people who may, themselves, still be victims and/or acting under duress, control, threat, the fear of, or actual violence. In consultation with the PSNI and where necessary the PPS, HSC professionals must consider whether children used to groom others should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm.

If the staff in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures. The HSCT and PSNI should be involved as early as possible to ensure any evidence that may assist prosecution is not lost and to enable a disruption plan to reduce the victim's contact with the perpetrator(s) and reduce the perpetrator(s) control over the victim to be put in place without delay.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** 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 version 2.0 2017).

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited.

CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males. While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, **the majority of CSE victims are living at home.**

### **Statutory Responsibilities**

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

### **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse**

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year 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).' Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

**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, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy. Where there is

a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM this should be reported to the PSNI without delay. Contact can be made directly to the Sexual Referral Unit (based within the Public Protection Unit) at 028 9025 9299. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, referral should be made to the relevant HSCT Gateway Team.

**Forced Marriage** A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and if in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

### **Children Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

Learning about sex and sexual 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. As a school we 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. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It must also be borne in mind that 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.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as normal, inappropriate, abusive or violent. Normal sexual behaviour will generally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. Inappropriate 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. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. The CPSS will advise if contact with PSNI or Social Services is required. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2022/02 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

### **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 - particularly 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.

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.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and we will follow the procedures in the child protection policy and, seek support from the EA CPSS.

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

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

- Content Risks: the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.
- Contact risks: the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.
- Conduct Risks: the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.
- Commercial Risks: the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

We, in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit, have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and will be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like.

The school's actions and governance of online safety are reflected clearly in our safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

**Sexting** is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

1. **Sexting between individuals in a relationship**

Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. We may also seek advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of a sexual image.

2. **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress**

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is **not forwarded to anyone else**. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent. For further information see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures of the school will be followed.

## Appendix 4

### 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**

Children whose first language is not English/Newcomer pupils should be given the opportunity 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. DTs and other relevant school staff should seek advice and support from the EA's Intercultural Education Service if necessary. All schools should 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.

- **Pre-School provision**

Many of the issues in the preceding paragraphs will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedures in consultation with the child's parent[s]/carer[s]. Teachers, nursery assistants and other adults will come into contact with children while helping them with toileting, washing and changing their clothing. Staff in St. Oliver Plunkett Nursery Unit will follow the Staff Code of Conduct.

- **Gender identity issues and sexual orientation**

Schools should strive to provide a happy environment where all young people feel safe and secure. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. DE requires all grant-aided schools to develop their own policy on how they will address Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) within the curriculum. It is via this policy that schools are expected to cover issues relating to relationships and sexuality, including those affecting LGB&T children and young people.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBTQ+ 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 and EA 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.

## Appendix 5

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

2.1 **The first indication that a child is being abused may not necessarily be the presence of a severe injury. Concerns may become apparent in a number of ways e.g.**

- by bruises or marks on a child's body
- by remarks made by a child, his parents or friends
- by overhearing conversation by the child, or his parents
- by observing that the child is either being made a scapegoat by or has a poor relationship/bond with his parents
- by a child having sexual knowledge or exhibiting sexualised behaviour which is unusual given his age and/or level of understanding
- by a child not thriving or developing at a rate which one would expect for his age and stage of development
- by the observation of a child's behaviour and changes in his behaviour
- by indications that the family is under stress and needs support in caring for their children
- by repeat visits to a general practitioner or hospital.

2.2 There may be a series of events which in themselves do not necessarily cause concern but are significant, if viewed together. Initially the incident may not seem serious but it should be remembered that prompt help to a family under stress may prevent minor abuse escalating into something more serious.

2.3 It is important to remember that abused children do not necessarily show fear or anxiety and may appear to have established a sound relationship with their abuser(s). Staff should familiarise themselves on 'attachment theory' and its implications for assessing the bond between parents and their children.

2.4 Suspicious should be raised by e.g.

- discrepancy between an injury and the explanation
- conflicting explanation, or no explanation, for an injury
- delay in seeking treatment for any health problem
- injuries of different ages
- history of previous concerns or injuries
- faltering growth (failure to thrive)
- parents show little, or no, concern about the child's condition or show little warmth or empathy with the child
- evidence of domestic violence
- parents with mental health difficulties, particularly of a psychotic nature
- evidence of parental substance abuse

2.5 Signs and symptoms are indicators and simply highlight the need for further investigation and assessment.

### **Parental Response to Allegations of Child Abuse Which Raise Concern**

2.6 **Parents' responses to allegations of abuse of their child are very varied. The following types of response are of concern:**

- there may be an unequivocal denial of abuse and possible non-compliance with enquiries.
- parents may over-react, either aggressively or defensively, to a suggestion that they may be responsible for harm to their child.
- there may be reluctance to give information, or the explanation given may be incompatible with the harm caused to the child, or explanations may change over time.
- parents may display a lack of awareness that the child has suffered harm, or that their actions, or the actions of others, may have caused harm.
- parents may seek to minimise the severity of the abuse, or not accept that their actions constitute abuse.
- parents may fail to engage with professionals.
- blame or responsibility for the harm may be inappropriately placed on the child or an unnamed third party.
- parents may seek help on matters unrelated to the abuse or its causes (this may be to deflect attention away from the child and his injuries).
- the parents and/or child may go missing.

**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 also suffer from other types of abuse. **(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2015)**

<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioural Indicators</b>
Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; abnormal eating; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate clothing; poor hygiene;	Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that there is no carer is at home;

repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.	low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.
--	---

**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 2016)**

<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioural Indicators</b>
Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday	Self destructive tendencies; aggression to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories

**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 opportunities 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 2016)**

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”; poor hair and skin;  alopecia;  swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet;  recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders;  signs of self mutilation;  signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness);  extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).</p>	<p>Apathy and dejection;  inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;  rocking/head banging;  inability to play;  indifference to separation from family  indiscriminate attachment;  reluctance for parental liaison;  fear of new situation;  chronic runaway;  attention seeking/needing behaviour;  poor peer relationships.</p>

**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 2016)**



Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.</p>	<p>What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self esteem; self devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material</p>

## **Risk Factors Associated with Child Abuse**

2.76 A number of factors may increase the likelihood of abuse to a child. The following list is not exhaustive and does not preclude the possibility of abuse in families where none of these factors are evident.

### **Child**

- poor bonding due to neo-natal problems
- attachment interfered with by multiple caring arrangements
- a 'difficult' child, a 'demanding' baby
- a child under five years is considered to be most vulnerable
- a child's name or sibling's names previously on the Child Protection Register
- a baby/child with feeding/sleeping difficulties
- birth defects/chronic illness/developmental delay.

### **Parents**

- both young and immature (i.e. aged 20 years and under) at birth of the child
- parental history of deprivation and/or abuse
- slow jealousy and rivalry with the child
- expect the child to meet their needs
- unrealistic expectations/rigid ideas about child development
- history of mental illness in one or both parents
- history of domestic violence
- drug and alcohol misuse in one or both parents of the child
- frequent changes of carers
- history of aggressive behaviour by either parent
- unplanned pregnancy
- unrealistic expectations of themselves as parents.

### **Home and Environmental Conditions**

- unemployment
- no income/poverty
- poor housing or overcrowded housing
- social isolation and no supportive family
- the family moves frequently
- debt
- large family

Appendix 6

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit

Procedure for Parents who wish to raise a Child Protection Concern

I have a concern about my/a child's  
safety



I can talk to the class teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the  
Designated/ Deputy Designated  
Teacher for Child Protection

**Mrs. M. McGarvey / Mrs. K. Mullin**

or the Principal

**Mr. Barry Conroy**

If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to  
the

Chairperson of the Board of Governors,

**Mrs. Oonagh Donnelly**



At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services

Gateway Team

(Western Trust) Tel: 028 71314 090

or the

PSNI Central Referral Unit at 101

**Appendix 7**

**St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit**

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

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.  
Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.

Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.

Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.

**Child Protection referral is required**  
Designated Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours

Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/ parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.

**Child Protection referral is not required**  
School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children's Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person's consent (where appropriate).

Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken.  
The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

**Appendix 8**

**St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit**

**Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff.**

**Key Points**

Lead individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of BoG as appropriate.

**Guidance on the Next Steps**

Lead individual then establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.

**Possible Outcomes**

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or BoG to agree a way forward from the options below.

Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.

Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed

Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed

## Appendix 9

### St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit

#### Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

**Date Ratified by BOG:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Review Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Objective, Scope and Principles

In St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit, we want all our pupils and staff to feel happy, safe and secure so that they can benefit fully from their time in school and be enabled to contribute wholeheartedly to the educational experience which our school offers.

We aim, at all times, to behave appropriately and warmly towards each other and to support one another both personally and professionally. We value greatly the caring relationships which exist between staff and pupils in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit and we wish to see these maintained. It is always necessary, however, to ensure that these relationships are appropriate and professional in order that the warm and caring atmosphere which is an integral part of the community of St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit and which is so nourishing for everyone, is enabled to flourish.

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 and are 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 employees' contract of employment. It is merely for guidance and specific breaches of the Code of Conduct must not be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

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

- 1.1** All staff and volunteers who work 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 themselves school policies and procedures and should 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; f 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.

It is, however, acknowledged that it is unrealistic and unnecessary to suggest that employees should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child or a younger child may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.

**4.2** Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by 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.

**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 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. Regard should be given to the school's E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

**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.



**7.3** Photographs or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given.

**7.4** All staff are required to leave their personal mobile phones in the staffroom during the day.

## **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.