

Gaelscoil Aodha Rua

Polasaí ar Chosaint Leanaí

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2017/18



1. Child Protection Ethos

We in Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care. We will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities and encouraged to reach their full potential. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

2. 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 Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection" (DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

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

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

3. Other Relevant Policies

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

- Collection Policy
- Permission Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Policy on Special Educational Needs
- Guide book on Educational Visits
- The Administration of Medicines Policy
- Images Policy
- Safe Use of the Internet
- Policy on Intimate Care

4. School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Designated Teacher - Móna Uí Dhochartaigh & Caitlín Andarsan
- Deputy Designated Staff Member – Clíona Molloy & Laoise Ní Choinn
- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Aisling Uí Choinn
- Chair of the Board of Governors – Micheál Ó Máirtín

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Safeguarding

The designated teacher and deputy designated teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and roles of all personnel.
- Organise training for all staff (annual whole school training).
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents.
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents.
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate.
- Liaise with the Southern Education & Library Board's Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Maintain records of all child protection concerns.
- Keep the School Principal informed.
- Provide a written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.
- Ensure that the Child Protection notice-board is up to date.

5.2 The Principal

The Principal / Acting Principal (Móna) must ensure that:

- DENI 1999 / 10 is implemented within the school.
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed.
- That all staff receive child protection training.
- That all staff, working in both paid and voluntary capacities are vetted in accordance to DE regulations.
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner.
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed.
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors' meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided.
- That the school child protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a summary of this policy at least once every year.
- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

- That all groups using the school premises in the evening for community activities are provided with and follow the guidance contained in the school Child Protection policy.
- That all persons, both paid and unpaid, who are involved in community run afterschool activities have undergone appropriate vetting checks through Access NI.
- That copies of Access NI enhanced check certificates are held in the school for all persons involved in community afterschool activities, if those persons are to be in contact with children under the age of 18 during their community activities.

5.3 The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Designated Governor will provide the child protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

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

5.4 The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment.
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy.
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the Education Authority Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the Education Authority Governor Support and Human Resource departments.
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity.
- Ensure that the guidelines as laid out in the 'Community Use of Schools' circular has been implemented by the Principal in the case of all community afterschool activities.

5.5 Other Members of School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse.

Remember the 5 Rs: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer

The member of staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection;

- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child,
- act promptly,
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the **actual words** of the child (**Appendix 1**)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children,
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures,
- **Not** investigate and **Not** ask leading questions.

In addition, the Class Teacher should:

- Keep the Designated Teacher/Principal informed 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 bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

5.6 Parents

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, or those designated to do so, intends to pick up the child after school; (Ref: Policy on Collection of Children)
- letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
- keeping the school informed of any changes in family circumstances which may impact on the emotional well-being of the child, or which may alter the custodial arrangements or persons with parental responsibility for the child.
- familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet Safety and Child Protection Policies;
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

5.7 The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure that:

- the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- relevant Child Protection training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same,

- confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

6. What Is Child Abuse?

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). 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.

6.1 Definition of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.

6.2 Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Domestic Violence

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of Domestic Violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is an incident or a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over

6.3 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

Physical Abuse

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<p>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</p>	<p>Self destructive tendencies; aggressive 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; come to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories</p>

Emotional Abuse

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<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>

Neglect

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<p>Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.</p>	<p>Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.</p>

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
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.	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.

7.0 Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse

7.1 How a Parent can make a Complaint

At Gaelscoil Aodha Rua we aim to work closely with the parents/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 the Principal / Designated teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2** and will be displayed in a prominent area within the school.

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

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate – this is a matter for Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher and full notes should be made. These notes or

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

The designated teacher and principal will decide, whether, in the best interest of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately. The designated teacher and our designated Governor will be contacted for advice at this stage.

The designated teacher may also consult with the Southern Education & Library Board's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made, the designated teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. He/she will also notify the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team with a copy sent to the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 3**.

7.3 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal / Designated teacher). If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that necessary action is taken. If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of this volunteer will be terminated immediately.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Child protection procedures as outlined in **Appendix 4** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance. Names and contact numbers are also detailed in the appendix.

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

8. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

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

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

10. Record Keeping

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns, we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

11. Vetting Procedures

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

12. Code of Conduct for all Staff Paid or Unpaid

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

The school's code of conduct is available on request.

13. Staff Training

The Designated and Deputy Designated Officers and Designated Governor for Child Protection & Safeguarding are training every 3 years by the Child Protection team at Education Authority. An annual audit is carried out each year to identify those who need to update / refresh their training and this is sent to the Education Authority Child Protection team, who in turn facilitate training as required. All school staff, both teaching and non-teaching receives 'in-house' training on Child Protection and Safeguarding at the beginning of the school year – facilitated by the Designated Officer. All newly appointed staff and volunteers will receive Child Protection awareness training and copies of all associated policies as part of their staff induction.

14. The Preventative Curriculum

In the classroom, regular PDMU lessons and 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 school assemblies and there is **a permanent child protection notice board in the main hall**, which provides advice 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 teacher allegation is also on display.

Our school is a caring school and that ethos permeates everything we do. All staff make a conscious effort to treat our pupils in a caring and sensitive manner, in the hope that we would gain their faith and trust in us as carers. In turn, we hope that our pupils feel comfortable in disclosing to a staff member, if they are worried or concerned about a particular incident or about their general well-being and welfare.

All other opportunities to participate in events to raise awareness of Child Protection and Safeguarding will be utilised, if and when they arise.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

A copy of this policy will be provided to the parents of all children when they commence Rang a 1. A summary document will also be provided to all parents on an annual basis. The Board of Governors, in conjunction with staff will review the policy annually and amend it to suit the needs of the school as it grows in size, with particular reference to personnel and those with various responsibilities. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the child protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

Date of Policy Review:

Signed: _____ (Designated Teacher)

_____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

Gaelscoil Aodha Rua

Child Protection Incident Report

Child's Name: _____ DOB _____ Class _____

Details of Incident/Disclosure*

Name of Person completing the report: _____

Designation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*** Record actual words used by the child/young person**

Appendix 2

How a Parent can make a Complaint about a Child Protection Issue

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 teacher for child protection (Móna Uí Dhochartaigh / Caitlín Andarsan)



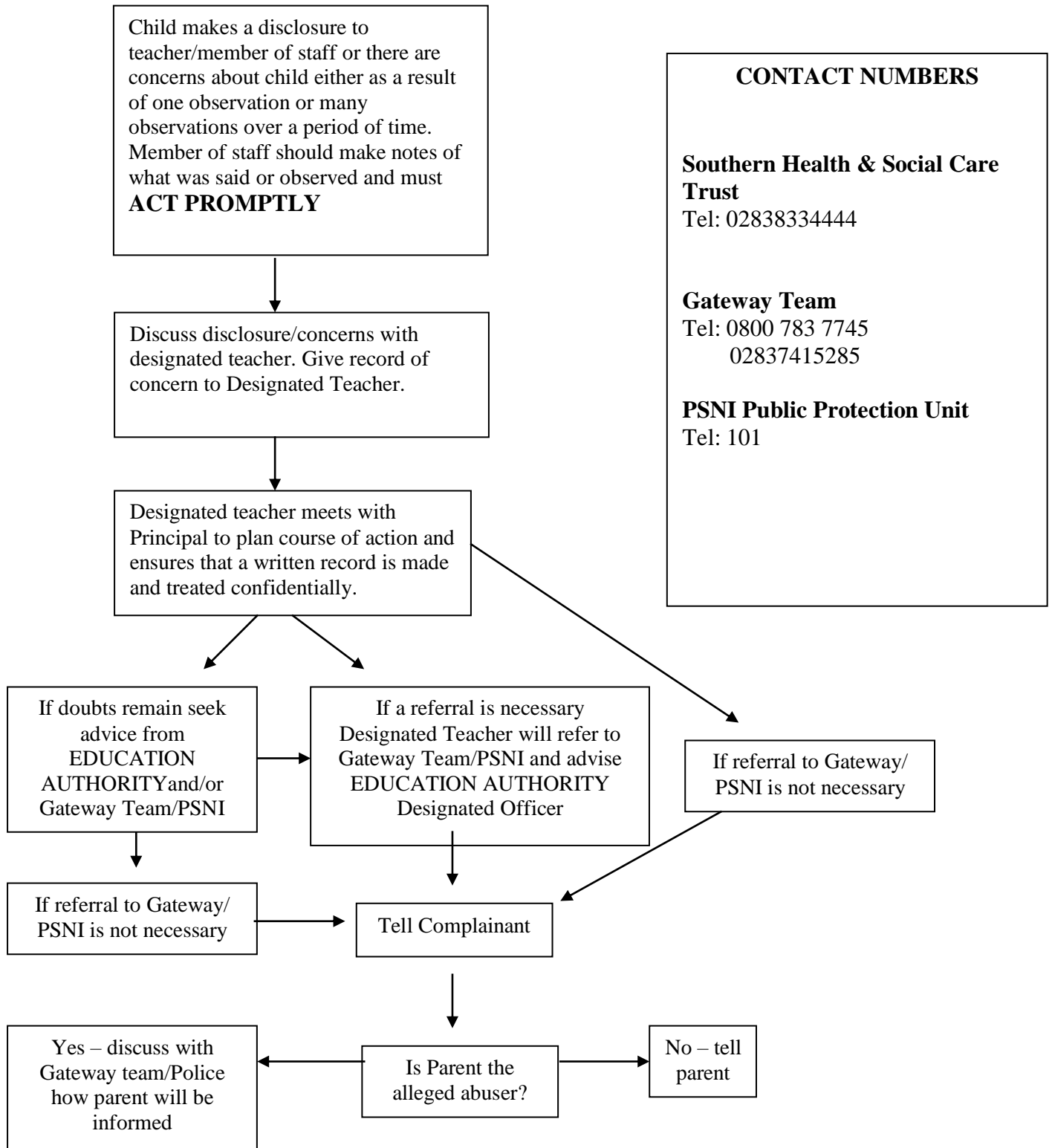
If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of the Board of Governors



At any time a parent can talk to a social worker at the
Gateway Team **Tel: 0800 7837745 / 02837415285**
or the
PSNI Public Protection Unit **Tel : 101**

Appendix 3

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



Appendix 4

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

