

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy - Summary

## A Guide for Parents



### Aims

St. John's Primary School aims to establish a caring environment within which the academic, personal, social and spiritual potential of each child will be developed. The pastoral care dimension permeates all school activities.

We have primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment.

### Principles

Our Child Protection Policy is based on the following principles:

- The child's welfare must always be paramount.
- Children must always have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect but a proper balance must be struck between ensuring this and protecting children.
- Every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and have proper care given to their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

### School Safeguarding Team

- The Chair of the Board of Governors: **Dean Kevin Donaghy**
- The Designated Governor for Child Protection: **Mrs M Donaghy**
- The School Principal: **Mrs L McKnight**
- The Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Mrs S McLaughlin**
- The Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Mrs L McKnight**

***Members of the team have clear roles and responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of pupils within the school and these are detailed in our full Child Protection Policy.***

### In order to protect our pupils at St. John's we will adhere to the following procedures:

- All staff teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers will have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect is suspected.
- All staff and volunteers will undergo vetting procedures in order to maintain the highest standard of professional care towards our children.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff will attend a Child Protection training programme organised by the Designated Teacher.
- Children will be supervised at all times while in the school grounds.
- All visitors to the school must report to the secretary's office.

## **Conduct of Staff**

The conduct of staff towards the children must be above approach at all times. In safeguarding the welfare of the children, the staff must never abuse their position of trust. Staff should be alert to any suspicion of physical or sexual abuse. They should also be aware of the negative aspect of emotional abuse in the form of persistent sarcasm or verbal bullying. Members of staff should ensure that their conduct with the children could never be perceived or alleged as abusive.

## **Staff Training**

Both teaching and ancillary staff have been trained by the Designated Teacher (Mrs McLaughlin) and this training will be updated biannually. The subject will also be addressed in the induction of newly appointed staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

## **Types of Abuse**

**Child Abuse may take a number of forms, including:**

**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. *Symptoms may include hunger, inadequate clothing, constant lack of cleanliness, regular tiredness or failure to thrive.*

**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. *Symptoms may include unexplained injuries, bruises or burns, especially repeated ones. There may be a refusal to explain these and/or fear of physical contact.*

**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. *Symptoms may include delays in physical, mental and emotional development and unexplained fears.*

**Sexual Abuse:** confirmed or suspected sexual exploitation of a child: where any adult touches child's private parts in a way which makes the child feel unhappy and embarrassed. Symptoms may include an unusual sexual awareness (evidenced in behaviour, conversation or in artwork) or affection expressed sexually which appears inappropriate to the child's age. The child may, on the other hand, appear unusually withdrawn and unhappy.

**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.

**All the above definitions are from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (2017)**

[www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland)

## **Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying is a highly distressful and damaging form of abuse and will not be tolerated in our school. All staff will be vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and support both the victim and the bully. In addition, all staff will aim to prevent bullying by raising awareness with pupils, staff and parents about bullying, its forms and consequences.

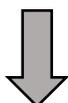
## Summary of Procedure

All staff at St. John's P.S. will ensure that all children are aware of who they can talk to if they are sad, worried, being bullied or have any other concerns. Any member of staff who knows or suspects about any form of abuse has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Designated Teacher or Principal. Where non-teaching staff are alerted to the possibility of abuse, they should inform the class teacher immediately.

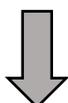
The Designated Teacher, **Mrs McLaughlin**, shall be the person with special responsibility for dealing with cases of suspected child abuse and in her absence the, Deputy Designated Teacher, **Mrs McKnight**.

The following diagram shows the procedures we are required to follow and is based upon the procedure described in **DE's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools.' September 2019.**

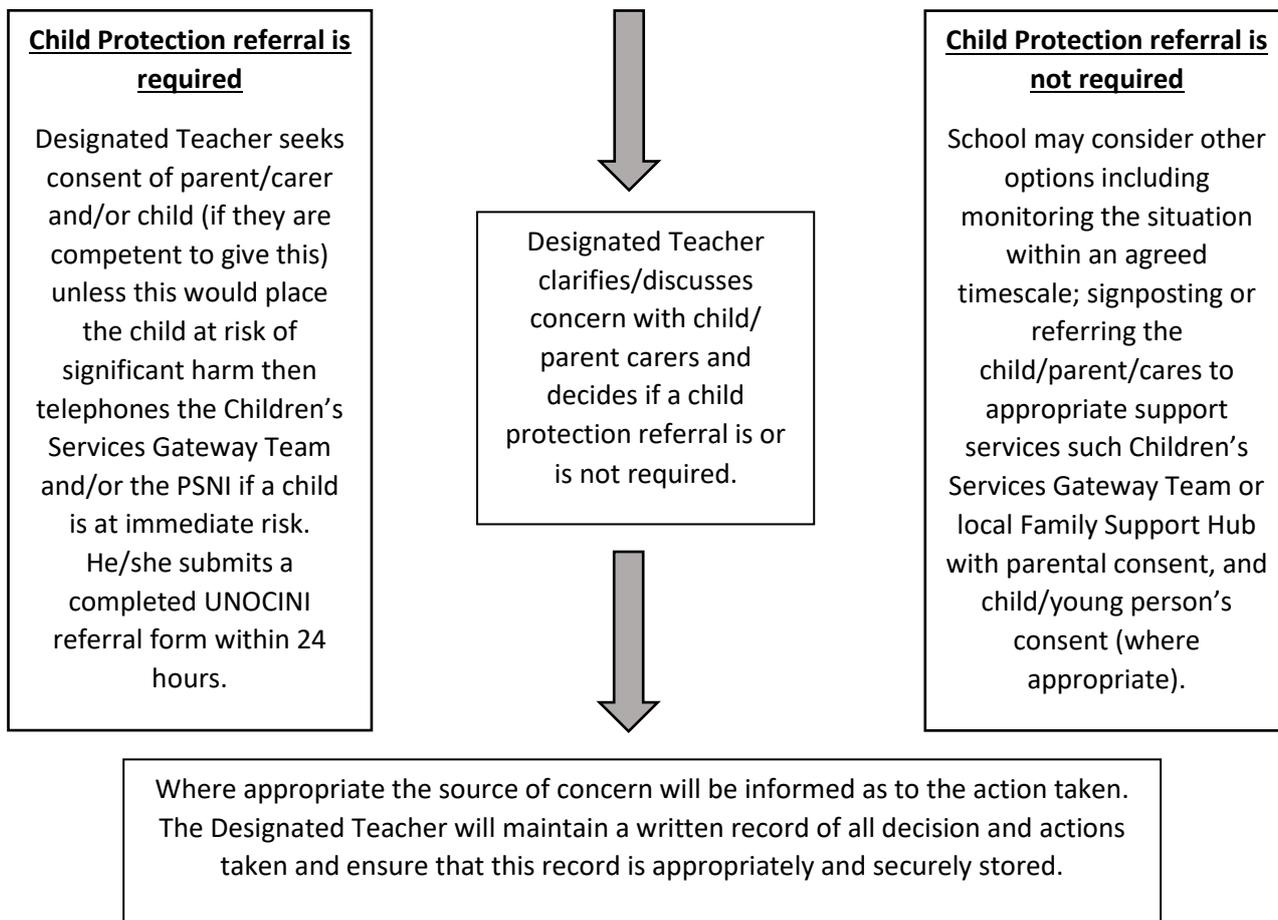
**Member of staff completes the note of concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.**



**St. John's Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher**



**Principal informed and consulted 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.**



***It should be noted that information given to a member of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held in confidence. In the interest of the child, staff will need to share this information with other professions. However, only those who need to know will be told.***

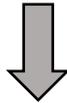
## **Allegations against Staff**

Any complaints made that a member of staff has abused a pupil will be thoroughly investigated using the appropriate Child Protection Procedures. Advice will immediately be sought from the Education Authority Southern Region Designated Child Protection Officer, and Social Services. Preliminary enquiries will be carried out. These enquiries will have regard to the welfare of the child concerned and of the other children in the school, to the efficient functioning of the school and to the right of the individual against whom the complaint was made.

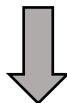
## **How a parent can share a concern**

If you have any concerns about your child's safety you should use the following procedures to make a complaint:

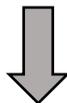
**I have a concern about my child's welfare or safety.**



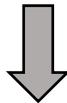
**I can talk to the class teacher.**



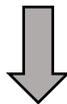
**If I am still concerned I can talk to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection**



**If I am still concerned I can talk/write to the Chair Person of the Board of Governors.**



**If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman Tel: 0800 343 424.**



**At any time I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team or the PSNI Central Referral Unit at 028 90 259299**

**St. John's Primary School is committed to the provision of a high quality education for all pupils and high standards to all whom it serves. We believe that the fostering of trust and good relationships with the parents/carers of our pupils is important. A close partnership between home and school should help ensure that all our children learn and develop to their full potential in a caring, supportive and safe environment. Good communication is essential if we are to achieve this.**

## **It is important that parents/carers understand that they are required to inform the school if:**

- their child has a medical condition or educational need.
- there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or well-being of a parent or child.
- there is any change in a child's circumstances for e.g. change of address, contact details, name, parental responsibility.
- there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- their child is absent from school and send in a note on the child's return to school.
- All visitors to the school must report to the main entrance/secretary's office.