

Our Lady of Lourdes School Ballymoney

Caring, Sharing, Learning together to meet the future

Child Protection Policy



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The governors and staff of Our Lady of Lourdes School fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.
- 1.2 All staff and governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
- 1.3 **The aims of this policy are:**
 - 1.3.1 To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
 - 1.3.2 To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
 - 1.3.3 To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
 - 1.3.4 To emphasize the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
 - 1.3.5 To develop a structured procedure within the school, which will be followed by all members of the school community (including volunteers, students etc.) in cases of suspected abuse.
 - 1.3.6 To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the PSNI and Social Services
 - 1.3.7 To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

2.0 Procedures

- 2.1 Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with Education Authority Northern Region CCMS and Department of Education procedures. We will ensure that:
 - 2.1.1 We have designated members of staff (Miss E Gillan Mainstream, Mrs B Delargy LRC) and a deputy designated officer (Mrs J Ross) who undertake regular training.
 - 2.1.2 All members of staff develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
 - 2.1.3 All members of staff know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse.
 - 2.1.4 All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures.
- 2.2 Our procedures are regularly reviewed and up-dated.
- 2.3 All new members of staff are given a copy of our Child Protection procedures.
- 2.4 Parents will be given a copy of our Child Protection Policy annually.

3.0 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The designated teacher is responsible for:
 - 3.1.1 Adhering to the Department of Education and school procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse
 - 3.1.2 Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
 - 3.1.3 Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records
 - 3.1.4 Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records
 - 3.1.5 Ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to Social Services

4.0 Supporting Children

- 4.1 We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth. We recognise that a child in these circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated. We recognise that a child may feel self blame.
- 4.2 We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- 4.3 We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 4.4 Our school will support all pupils by:
 - 4.4.1 Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
 - 4.4.2 Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
 - 4.4.3 Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
 - 4.4.4 Notifying Social Services as soon as there is a significant concern.
 - 4.4.5 Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school.

5.0 Confidentiality

- 5.1 We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential.
- 5.2 The Headteacher or Designated Teacher will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- 5.3 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 5.4 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

6.0 Supporting Staff

- 6.1 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- 6.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the designated teacher and to seek further support as appropriate.

7.0 Allegations against staff

- 7.1 We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.
- 7.2 If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Principal.
- 7.3 The Head teacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with Education Authority Northern Region and CCMS Lead Officers for Child Protection
- 7.4 If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Principal, the designated teacher will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult with the Education Authority Northern Region and CCMS Lead Officers for Child Protection.
- 7.5 The school will follow the Education Authority Northern Region and CCMS procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which will be readily available in the school.

8.0 Whistle blowing

- 8.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
- 8.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues. (See Whistle Blowing Policy)

9.0 Physical Intervention

- 9.1 Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.
- 9.2 We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

10.0 Bullying

- 10.1 Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

11.0 Racist Incidents

- 11.1 Our policy on racist incidents is set out in our equality policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

12.0 Prevention

- 12.1 We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.
- 12.2 The school community will therefore:
 - 12.2.1 Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
 - 12.2.2 Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
 - 12.2.3 Include in the curriculum opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help

Recognising Signs Of Abuse

Definition of child abuse: Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer, an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both.

The first step in recognising abuse is the ability to entertain the possibility of abuse taking place.

SIGNIFICANT HARM

The local authority (i.e. Social Services) has a duty to investigate when there is reason to think a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

This is how we measure it.

- **HARM** is defined in the Order to mean ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development
- **ILL-TREATMENT** is defined as including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical i.e. emotional ill-treatment.
- **IMPAIRMENT OF HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT** = physical or mental development = physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, social, sexual, spiritual (P.I.L.E.S.S.S.)
- **IMPAIRMENT-** to decide whether health or development is impaired a comparison has to be made with a 'similar child'.
- **SIGNIFICANT-** relates either to the seriousness of the harm, or the implications of it.

LEVELS OF ABUSE

- **POTENTIAL** - where circumstances make abuse likely to happen
- **SUSPECTED** - where the appearance, behaviour or injury to a child or young person alerts someone to suspect that abuse has occurred or is occurring
- **CONFIRMED** - where the facts have been proven in court in criminal or care proceedings or where there has been an admission of guilt.

What Is Abuse?

Neglect

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 foods, 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.

Physical Injury

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, suffocation, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Sexual Abuse

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

Sexual activity involving a child who is capable of giving informed consent on the matter, while illegal may not necessarily constitute sexual abuse as defined for the purposes of the Children (N.I.) Order. Each case needs to be looked at individually.

Emotional Abuse

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 children

that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person.

It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

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 children to emotional abuse.

Bullying

'The actual or likely hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend himself/herself. It can take many forms but the three main types are: physical (hitting, kicking, theft); verbal (threats or name calling - including sectarian taunting); indirect (spreading rumours/excluding someone from social groups)'

Responding To Indicators Of Abuse

- Look for a cluster of indicators
- Record and date all observations of worrying marks and/ or behaviours etc.
- Seek clarification from the child and/ or parent to explain injuries, behaviours etc. (if appropriate)
- Remember you do not have an investigative role
- Seek advice from D.T.

Why Children Keep Abuse To Themselves

- Bribery and exploitation
- Violence
- Intimidation
- Fear of not being believed or of being blamed
- Confusion about what is happening to them and inability to explain
- Loyalty to parents/ other members of the family
- Difficulties in communication
- Societal taboos

Residential School Trips

- Education Authority Northern Region guidelines will be referred to.
- Residential activity venues should be registered under the 'Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations 1996'. (Refer 'Away from Home and Safe' - multi-disciplinary booklet).
- Form EVI to be completed and EA approved.
- Preparation and organisation to be completed by teacher-in-charge.
- Parents to be made aware of the purposes of the trip and all planned activities.
- Parental permission for their child's participation to be sought.
- Medical/special circumstance information to be collected.
- Adequate staffing levels to be provided.
- School's child protection reporting arrangements to be applied.
- All documentation to be kept by the teacher-in-charge.

Educational Visits (Non-residential)

- Venues to be vetted according to the categories stated on EA form EVI
- Preparation and organisation to be completed by the teacher-in-charge.
- Parents to be made fully aware of the purpose of the visit and all planned activities.
- Parental permission for child's participation to be sought.
- Adequate qualified staffing levels to be provided.
- All documentation to be kept by the teacher-in-charge of educational visits.

Curriculum

- Through the pastoral care system and within the curriculum we assist our pupils in developing their physical and emotional well-being.
- Child protection programmes;
Child protection programmes are already in place within our personal and social education/ PDMU programmes. Through these we raise each child's awareness of the possibility of abuse and knowledge of the means with which to communicate concerns.
- The development and maintenance of these programmes will be the responsibility of the designated officer.
- PSNI also work with pupils regarding age appropriate issues throughout the year.

Staff Training

Our Lady of Lourdes School recognises the need to make all staff aware of possible incidents of abuse and to recognise the signs and symptoms.

All staff are made aware of their responsibility to report incidents or concerns to the designated officer.

Inset

- Designated teacher and deputy have attended recognised training courses.
- All staff to receive training in awareness and procedures.
- All new staff to be inducted in child protection procedures.
- Training will be on-going and dictated by the school's needs, changing circumstances and legislation.

Staff Liability

Correctly following the procedures will protect staff from legal redress.

Dealing with parents in the event of suspected child abuse

Although all referrals are to be made by the designated teacher, parents may choose initially to approach the Head of Pastoral Care. In such circumstances the teacher will respond with honesty and sensitivity and refer them immediately to the designated teacher, deputy or principal.

Where a child's name is currently on the 'at risk' register, any discussion should be sensitive and honest and the parent/carer referred to the designated teacher, deputy or principal.

Recruitment and vetting procedures

All vetting procedures take account of the requirements set down in the DENI Circular 2006/6: Recruitment of people to work with children and young people in educational settings.

Vetting procedures for all staff appointed through EA procedures are carried out by the Board.

As of September, 2006 a criminal record check form will be completed annually by all members of staff and governors at Our Lady of Lourdes School and forwarded to the PSNI, via EA.

Temporary Staff

Temporary staff, teaching and non-teaching, in Our Lady of Lourdes School will be subject to checks, exactly as a permanent post-holder would be. Only teachers who are on the N.Ireland Substitute Teachers' Register will be appointed as substitute cover.

Emergencies and Exceptions

Temporary replacements for non-teaching staff may be made before a check can be carried out if no-one who has been checked is available. There are also circumstances in which a contracted employee may have to enter the premises, eg to make good repairs, without a check having been undertaken. There are also visitors entering for limited periods on an ad hoc basis, eg to make deliveries, or visitors for a meeting, who will obviously not be checked.

In such circumstances all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that:

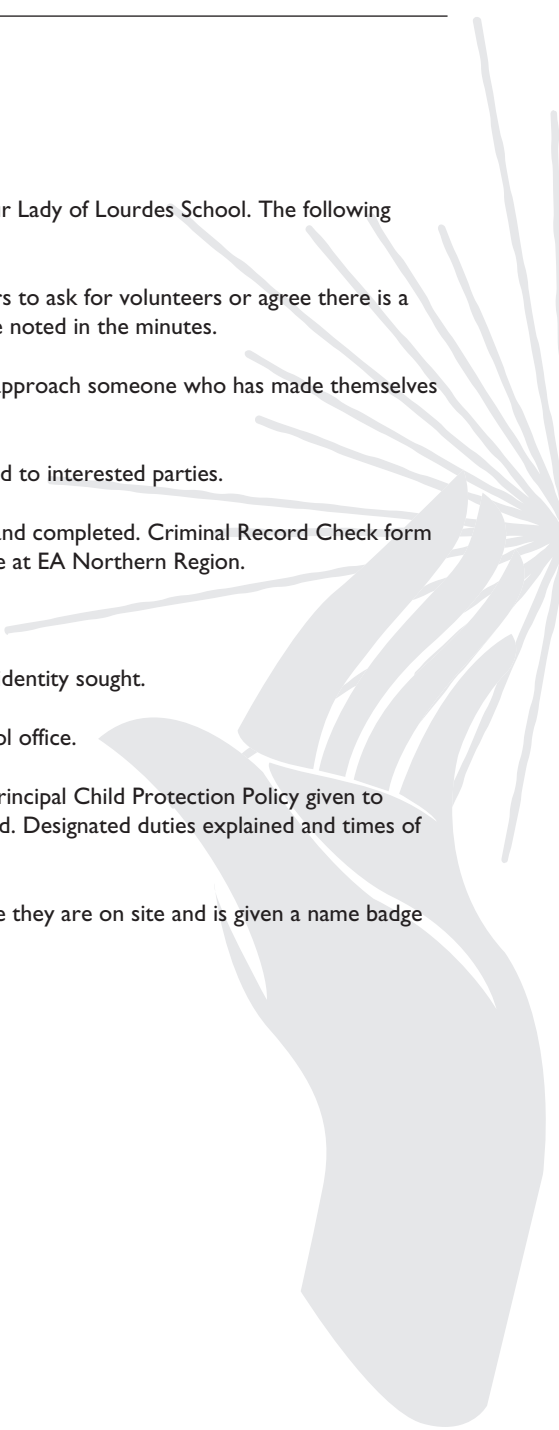
- The individual wears a visitor's badge , showing that he or she is not a member of staff
- He or she is not left unsupervised with children
- The locations where he or she has to work or visit, including access routes, are as far as possible restricted
- Visitors to meetings are accompanied to the location of the meeting
- Staff are aware of the dangers of digital media and restrict use as appropriate

The presence of unvetted people around the school is exceptional, short-term, controlled and (except for visitors) only if vetted people have been sought and are not available.

Recruitment for people working at Our Lady of Lourdes School

- Recruitment advertising and all applicants' information, including the job description and personnel specification, contain a prominent child protection statement (CCMS, EA & BOG)
- An original birth certificate and/or marriage certificate is requested at time of application (BOG)
- Applicants are asked to supply the names of two referees, including a referee from their last post where they were working with children (CCMS, EA)
- Where the job requires qualifications, proof of claimed qualifications are obtained, before confirmation of appointment (CCMS, EA)
- At least one person on the interview panel will have been trained in child protection for recruitment purposes. (This training will be extended to include everyone who sits on an interview panel at Our Lady of Lourdes School BOG)
- Interviewees are asked to bring proof of identity, ie passport, driving licence or electoral identity card (BOG)
- Both the candidate's suitability for work with children and their suitability for the advertised post is explored at interview (BOG)
- Any points of concern, such as gaps in employment history are pursued and must be satisfactorily explained (BOG)
- Independent written references in respect of the preferred applicant are always taken up (BOG)
- A pre-employment checking form is completed by the preferred applicant, requiring him or her to list any previous convictions (spent or unspent) and pending prosecutions, and to give permission for a pre-employment check to be made (CCMS, EA)
- The appointment is only confirmed after all pre-employment checks have been completed satisfactorily (CCMS, EA)
- All new staff and volunteers have an induction that includes appropriate training in Our Lady of Lourdes Child Protection Policy and procedures (Mrs M Buckley)

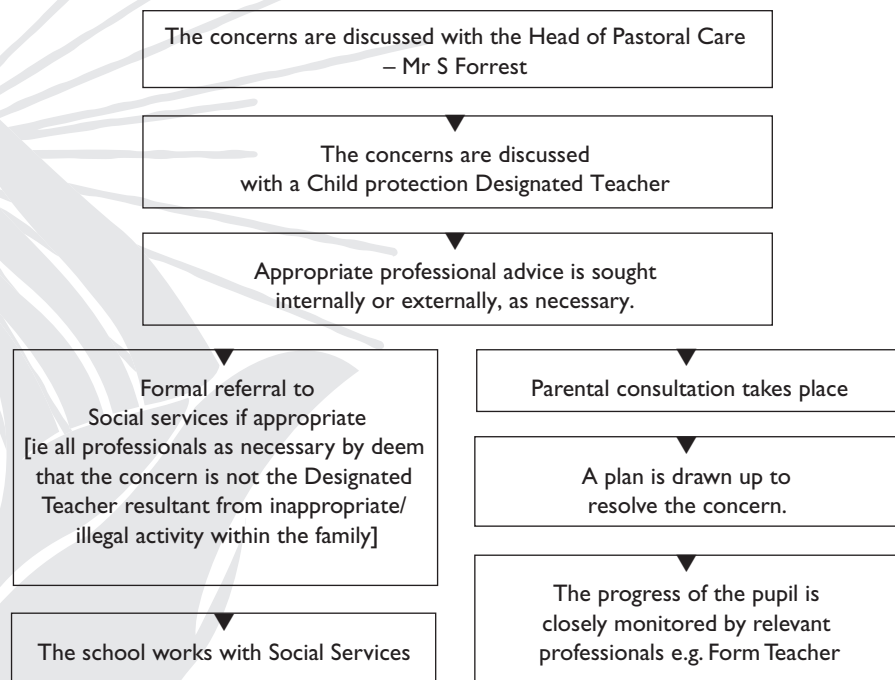
Volunteers

- Vetting procedures are carried out by Our Lady of Lourdes School. The following procedures are followed:
 - Approval sought from Board of Governors to ask for volunteers or agree there is a need for volunteers. This, if agreed will be noted in the minutes.
 - The school will canvas for volunteers or approach someone who has made themselves known.
 - Job/ duty description offered and explained to interested parties.
 - Application forms collected from school and completed. Criminal Record Check form completed and sent to Recruitment Office at EA Northern Region.
 - Two referees then sought.
 - Volunteer then interviewed and proof of identity sought.
 - National Insurance number given to school office.
 - Induction of volunteer organised by the Principal Child Protection Policy given to volunteer and procedures within explained. Designated duties explained and times of work clarified.
 - The volunteer registers in office each time they are on site and is given a name badge to wear throughout the visit.
- 

Appendix I

GENERAL CONCERNS

A member of staff concerned about the physical and/or emotional 'appearance' of the child should make detailed notes of the concerns. [An example may be a Form Teacher who notices changed behaviour, appearance, attendance/punctuality patterns.]



Appendix 2

WHERE IT IS DEEMED THAT THE CHILD IS AT RISK OF 'SIGNIFICANT HARM'

Miss Gillan/Mrs Delargy must be informed immediately when a member of staff has a concern or suspects a case of child abuse.

A detailed, factual report will be written, signed by the reporting member of staff and the designated teacher.

The designated teacher will consider the situation and decide on action to be taken (this may include referral to Social Services).

In the event of suspected cases of child abuse involving a member of staff, the person who suspects this must immediately report the concern to the designated teacher, who in turn will inform the board's designated officer. Should concerns arise involving the designated teacher, they should be expressed to the Principal.

The designated teacher will maintain records of all reported incidents and action taken. All such records will be stored for five years.

The Principal will be advised by the designated teacher of all reports and planned action. The principal will be a point of reference in the absence of the designated teacher/deputy and will follow the above reporting system.

Confidentiality - Staff should be aware that all reporting should remain confidential. No discussion should take place with any party outside the reporting system.

Points for staff to remember: • The welfare of the child is paramount • Report concerns, observations, facts. • Do not accuse • Share information only with those who need to know • When in doubt, refer

Appendix 3

DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES

RECEIVE

Listen to the child. If you are shocked by what they tell you, try not to show it. Take what they say seriously. Children rarely lie about abuse and to be disbelieved adds to the traumatic nature of disclosing. Children may retract what they have said if they meet revulsion or disbelief. Accept what the child says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking 'Why did you not tell me before?'

REASSURE

Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you. It is essential to be honest with the child, so don't make promises you may not be able to keep, for example, "I'll stay with you" or "Everything will be alright now".

Do not promise confidentiality. You have a duty to refer a child who is at risk.

Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened.

Empathise with the child – don't tell them what they should be feeling.

REACT

React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter; but do not interrogate them for full details.

Do not ask leading questions. Such questions may invalidate your evidence [and the child's] in any later prosecution in court. Instead ask open questions like "Anything else to tell me?" or "and".

Do not ask the pupil to repeat everything to another member of staff.

Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

Inform the designated |Teacher for Child Protection.

RECORD

Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper that comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible ensuring that the date, time and staff name are noted.

Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court.

Record the date time and place of any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. If the child uses their family's own private sexual words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into "proper" words.

Be objective in your recording; include statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

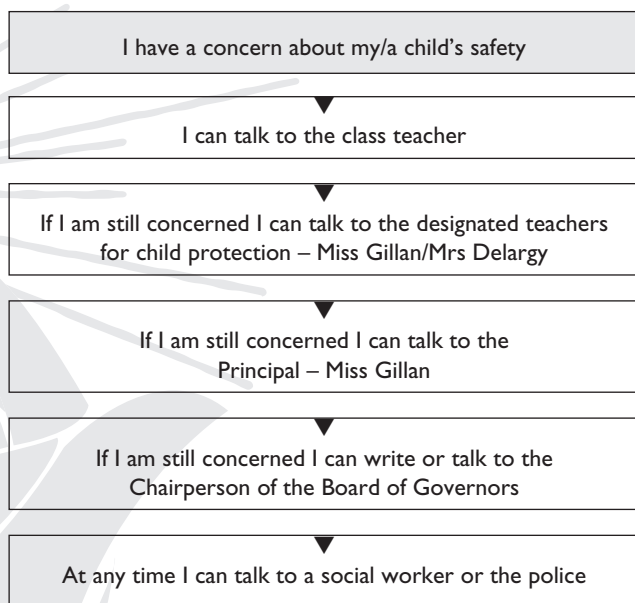
DISCLOSURE – A QUICK CHECKLIST FOR STAFF

- ✓ Reassure
- ✓ Listen but do not pressurise
- ✓ Ascertain the facts - Who? What? Where/ When? How?
- ✓ Reassure the pupil that he/she has done the right thing in telling you.
- ✓ Tell the child you will have to involve others to ensure the child's safety in the future. Tell the child who needs to be involved and why.
- ✓ Follow the school's policy on Child Protection
- ✓ Do not be surprised if you need support as you support a child. Tell the Designated Teacher how you feel. You too may need reassurance about the actions you have taken and what is happening outside of the school to support the pupil who has trusted you with information.

Appendix 4

CHILD PROTECTION

HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT





Our Lady of Lourdes School Ballymoney

Caring, Sharing, Learning together to meet the future

School Poem

You're **unique** and **one of a kind**
Your life can be what you want
Take the days just one at a time
Count your blessings not your troubles
You'll make it through whatever comes along
Don't put limits on yourself
So many dreams are waiting to be realised
Decisions are too important to leave to chance
Reach for your **peak**, your **goal**, your **prize**
The longer one carries a problem the heavier it gets
Live a life of serenity not a life of regret
Remember that a **little love** goes a long way
A lot goes forever
Remember that **friendship** is a wise investment
Life's treasures are people....together
Realise that it is **never too late**
Do ordinary things in an extraordinary way
Have **health and happiness**
Take the time to **wish upon a star**
And don't forget – for even a day
How very **special** you are

Castle Street, Ballymoney, County Antrim BT53 6JX
Tel: 028 2766 2050 / 028 2766 5079
www.ourladyoflourdesballymoney.com