

Larne & Inver Primary School



Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy

WEBSITE VERSION

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CHILD PROTECTION ETHOS

It is the policy of Larne and Inver Primary School to safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from all forms of harm whilst in our care.

Larne and Inver Primary School has a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. In line with the 'vision and aims' of our school, we seek to provide a ***'safe and happy environment where all children are cared for and treated in a manner which encourages positive and varied learning experiences at all times'***.

Our arrangements for Pastoral Care in school should therefore reflect the promotion of these aspects of our vision and cover the necessary procedures for child protection. These are prominently displayed on our 'Family Tree' noticeboard outside the reception area and the associated procedures are displayed in every classroom.

All staff, 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.

In doing so we are compliant with the legalisation and policy framework in Northern Ireland. The legislative framework for Northern Ireland's child protection system is set out in The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. This sets out parental responsibilities and rights and the duties and powers public authorities have to support children.

The creation of the regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) was set out in law in the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This also established five Safeguarding Panels to support the SBNI's work at a Health and Social Care Trust level (HSCT).

The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 requires public authorities to co-operate in contributing to the wellbeing of children and young people, in the areas of:

- physical and mental health
- enjoyment of play and leisure
- learning and achievement
- living conditions, rights, and economic wellbeing.

Under Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, it is an offence not to report a 'relevant offence' to the police. This includes offences against children.

The key principles reflected in the legislative and policy framework is manifest in DE guidance on safeguarding which the school is required to be compliant.

This policy is based upon the DENI guidelines – ‘**Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools**’ (DENI 2017/04) and, also, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) which states that:

“when organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration” (Article 3)

This policy is also based on the Education Authority’s Child Protection Policy template – September 2018.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) states that the most important right for a child is the right to protection:-

‘Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them (Article 19).

This policy also represents the content of ‘**Area Child Protection Committees – Regional Policy and Procedures**’ (2005) which was amended in 2008.

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, “Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

The following principles form the basis of this 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 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.
- the child or young person’s welfare is paramount;
- the voice of the child or young person should be heard;

- parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together;
- partnership;
- prevention;
- responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- protection; and
- evidence based and informed decision making.

OTHER RELAVANT POLICIES

Our 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:

- Attendance Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Managing Behaviour Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Health & Safety Policy
- Educational Visits
- Intimate Care
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Data protection policy
- Privacy Notice
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disposal of Records Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Administration of Medication in School Policy
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies Policy
- E Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct (Staff)

These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact Mr Patterson (Principal).

DEFINITIONS – SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

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 is a part of Safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm.

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland –DHSSPS 2016)

AIMS

As part of our pastoral care in Larne and Inver Primary School, we aim to support each child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence. Our approach to Child Protection therefore aims to:

- Encourage all children towards a positive self-image.
- Help children to view themselves as part of a community and, by example, to nurture children's abilities to establish and sustain relationships with families, peers, adults and the world outside.
- Provide time, space and opportunities for children to openly explore, discuss and develop the key concepts of child protection with peers and adults, in a secure environment.
- Equip children with appropriate tools to make reasoned, informed choices, judgements and decisions.
- Provide a model for open and effective communication between children, teachers, parents and other adults working with children.

Our Safeguarding Programme is regarded as central to the wellbeing of every individual and is seen as an intrinsic part of all aspects of the curriculum. We seek to achieve this by:

- Providing adequate and appropriate staffing and resources to fulfil the children's needs.
- Creating an environment within the classroom/school in which every child is valued as a member of the community; all members of the community should be sensitive and responsive to the needs of others.
- Allowing a variety of opportunities, appropriate to the age of the children, for class and group discussion of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance.
- Integrating the key concepts of child protection within the existing curriculum, allowing for continuity and progression through the Key Stages.
- Providing resources and materials for safeguarding issues e.g. road safety.

DUTY OF CARE

<p><u>4 Cs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care • Concern • Communication • Confidentiality 	<p>All staff have a Duty of <u>C</u>are to Listen to/report any <u>C</u>oncerns that they may have and to <u>C</u>ommunicate these to the appropriate personnel, keeping the facts <u>C</u>onfidential.</p>
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The school must always safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. The conduct of all staff must also be above reproach. Any abuse of a position of trust will be regarded with the utmost gravity.

The purpose of the following procedures for Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in Larne and Inver Primary School – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. **The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of every child.**

Consequently, this policy links to every aspect of school life, including Extended Schools provision, Extra Curricular activities and Shared Education activities.

The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school as we are aware that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

CHILD ABUSE/HARM

Definition of a child

A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in 'The Children (NI) Order 1995'.

What is child abuse/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)

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.

Child abuse/harm can take many forms –

- **Physical**
- **Emotional**
- **Neglect**
- **Sexual**
- **Exploitation**

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.' DHSSPS 2016 (Revised May 2017)

Physical 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.

Symptoms may include:-

Bruising of different ages (on back, buttocks, upper arms, around the ears), bruising of different shapes, implausible or no explanation for injuries, lacerations, burn marks, bite marks, nail scratches, untreated injuries, reluctance to go home, self destructive tendencies, risky behaviours, fear of physical contact (shrinking back).

Emotional Abuse:

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 deliberately conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, 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. 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 and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Symptoms may include:-

Withdrawn, uncommunicative, unable to accept praise, developmental delay, poor peer relationships, bed wetting/soiling, clinging, attention seeking behaviour, disruptive behaviour, self-destructive, bullying/threatening or risky behaviours, reluctance for parent liaison.

Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm to their health and/or development. 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 due to no apparent medical reason). Children who are neglected often suffer from other types of abuse.

Symptoms may include:-

Unkempt appearance, poor hygiene, underfed (always hungry), left to get out to school while a parent is working, always going home to an empty house, inadequate supervision, constant tiredness, failure/delay in seeking medical attention

Sexual Abuse:

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, 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.

Symptoms may include:-

Inappropriate sexually explicit language/behaviour, inappropriate flirtatious/seductive behaviour, low self-esteem, isolation, overly protective of siblings, disruptive behaviour, tantrums, school absenteeism, unexplained pregnancy, reluctance to go home

Exploitation:

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)

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, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking.

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity **in return for something** they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

The potential indicators of CSE can include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone, gifts etc without plausible explanation;
- Leaving home/care without permission;
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving;
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care;
- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances;
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return;
- Truancy from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Concerning use of the internet;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis;
- New peer groups;
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend';
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Low self-esteem;
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less);
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair;
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse.
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late

Whilst these indicators can be usefully used to identify potential risk, it is important to note that their presence does not necessarily mean that CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence, mean that it is not.

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 **(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. They *may give rise to concern but are not, in themselves, proof that abuse has occurred.*

Also it must be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described above.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse which may take place on a **single occasion or repeatedly over time**. All school staff are trained to observe outward symptoms which may be due to child abuse.

It is always preferable to **prevent abuse** from starting or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage.

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in **Larne and Inver Primary School** are aware of and have therefore included them as follows -

Grooming

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 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.

If the staff in Larne and Inver primary School become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures.

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 Larne and Inver Primary School 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 and E Safety policies. 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**
2. **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress**

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.

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 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individuals consent.

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.

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

Domestic and Sexual violence and abuse can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children.

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

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

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

Sexual Violence and Abuse

'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).'

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

A child may live in a family where there is domestic abuse or a young person may be in a relationship where they become the subject of domestic abuse. In high risk cases involving domestic abuse Social Services and/or the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection will contact the school in order to help assess the child/young person's needs and to ensure that he/she receives appropriate support.

It is recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence may not necessarily directly harm children in a physical/sexual way but can obviously affect them through neglect or emotional harm resulting from it. Staff are aware that this can not only have an effect on a child's home learning but also on their behaviour and attitude to learning in school.

Symptoms may be present as for some or all of the above forms of abuse. Indicators could be –

Nervousness, low self-worth, disturbed sleep patterns, nightmares/flashbacks, stress, stomach pain, bed wetting, temper tantrums, aggression, withdrawal, truancy, alcohol and drugs, bullying

These symptoms can lead to a child/ young person being misdiagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive. If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information to Social Services

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.

Relevant staff have been trained through the two day course organised by Women's Aid: Developing Social Guardians - Helping Hands' and this material is used in school as part of the PDMU preventative curriculum.

The Designated Teacher consults with the relevant EA staff regarding MARAC meetings.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

Bullying

‘**Bullying** includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of any verbal, written or electronic communication, any other act (e.g. physical or omission), or any combination of those, by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.’ (Addressing Bullying In Schools Act Northern Ireland 2016)

All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both the victim and bully will be personally contacted if bullying behaviour is identified. Sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case and will be in line with our **Managing Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies**.

Children Who Sexually Abuse Others or Display Sexually Harmful 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 is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as ‘healthy’, ‘problematic’ or ‘sexually harmful’.

Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting.

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

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. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2016/05 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 managing behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and in our school we will refer to our child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the EA procedures will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved.

The above guidance follows DE Circular 2016/05 subject Children Who Display Harmful Sexualized Behaviour.

Gender identity issues and sexual orientation

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

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

Being transgender is a recognised medical condition known as Gender Dysphoria or Gender Identity Disorder. Transgender is separate from LGB. If required, this school will work collaboratively with parents, other services and most importantly the young person him/her self to support him/her in progressing through their school life showing due regard to their needs.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows people who have lived in their preferred gender for at least 2 years to apply for a gender recognition certificate (GRC) and, if a UK Citizen, a new birth certificate.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls.

FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic 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.

(Multi-agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation. DFP 2014)

Our staff is aware of the following in identifying who could be at risk -

- Being a girl aged 5 - 8 within a community where FGM is practised
- Prolonged return to country of origin for summer break – giving sufficient healing time before return to school
- Female elder visiting from a country of origin
- Child may tell other children about it
- A girl may disclose that she is to have a 'special procedure' or attend a special occasion to 'become a woman'
- Parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period

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.

As for all concerns, these should be reported to Ms McBurney or Mr Patterson immediately.

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 Larne and Inver Primary School, we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, we will contact the PSNI immediately.

Where we are made aware or have a reasonable suspicion that a child attending this school is being forced into marriage we will report this on as appropriate to the relevant agencies. We will be mindful of the following in relation to a child:

- Absence and persistent absence
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins
- Change in behaviour, performance or punctuality
- Being withdrawn from school for 'home schooling' and not receiving suitable education at home
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- Sudden announcement of engagement

We also recognise that there is a danger in involving the family of the child concerned and alerting them to the fact that the school and others are aware and will act to protect the child.

(The Right to Choose: Statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage. DFPNI 2012)

Self-Harm and Suicide

It is most helpful to consider self-harm as a continuum, ranging from behaviour which has a strong suicidal intent (for example, some kinds of overdose) to behaviour which is intended to help the person stay alive (such as cutting)' - **John Coleman 2004**

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

Self-harm is often a means by which a child can release the tension caused by their anxiety, grief or anger. It can also be seen as a means of communication, to tell themselves and others that they need help. It helps them feel they have a level of control over something in their lives – making 'real' the emotional pain they are unable to express.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours. It is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

It is our policy that in instances where a child expresses suicidal ideation or self-harm or discloses that he/she has self-harmed, we will contact the parents immediately and ask them to take their child to their GP for assessment.

A child whose own behaviours e.g. self-harming behaviour, leaving school without permission etc. places him/her at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse. However it may still reach the threshold for referral on Child Protection grounds. The decision to initiate child protection procedures is a matter for professional judgement and each case will be considered individually with advice sought from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection. The criminal aspects of such cases will be dealt with by the PSNI.

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

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

- **Children with a disability**

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

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

- **Children with limited fluency in English**

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

Our Designated Teachers work with the SEN co-ordinators along with school staff, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service, to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. We 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]

- **Looked After Children**

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

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

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

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

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

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

- **Young people in supported accommodation**

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

- **Young people who are homeless**

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

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

Separated children and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver.

Unaccompanied children and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.

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

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

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

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

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

- **Boarding schools and residential settings**

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

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

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

Children/young people's behaviours

- **Peer Abuse**

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

PROCEDURES

There is a range of circumstances that would invoke Child Protection procedures:

- A child makes a disclosure to a member of staff.
- A member of staff has concerns about a child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time.
- A parent expresses concern about the safety of a child.
- Other sources of concern e.g. Social Services etc.

Staff should bring their concerns immediately to the attention of the Safeguarding Team:

- **Mr Patterson (Deputy Designated teacher, Principal and Chairperson)**
- **Ms McBurney (Designated teacher)**
- **Ms Sharp (Chairperson of BOG)**
- **Miss Edge (Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance)**
- **Mr G Campbell (Vice Chairperson of BOG)**
- **Mrs Boyd (SENCO) as required**
- **Mr Dunlop (UICT Coordinator) as required**
- **Mrs Black (Vice-Principal) as required**

CONFIDENTIALITY

Relationships within our school are built on trust and often on confidentiality which forms the basis for creating a secure and caring environment and which fosters learning and personal development. As a staff, where abuse or neglect is suspected, it is our professional and legal responsibility to share relevant information with other professional agencies.

In any incident, the **child's welfare** must be always be paramount; this overrides all other considerations.

Therefore, no promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged although staff can and should reassure the child that the information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.

In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

The class teacher or the designated teachers for child protection should **seek clarification from the child, preferably in the presence of another adult.**

It is not the responsibility of the teachers and other education staff to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse, or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child's family or other carers.

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

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

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

The Board of Governors will ensure that all staff are clear about the standards of behaviour expected of them. Staff should be clear that there are acceptable boundaries of physical contact with pupils.

This does not relate to the normal physical contact which may be made between pupil and adult e.g. helping the child change for PE or demonstrating techniques, helping with music or science activities, comforting a sick or distressed pupil, or giving first aid.

Our policy details the eventuality of an adult having to use physical force to control or restrain a pupil. It is anticipated that it will be very rare for such restraint to be exercised.

This summary sets out the occasions when such restraint may take place and they refer to any adult in lawful charge of pupils during, or after the school day, on or off the school premises e.g. school outings or sports' visits.

Physical restraint or force will only be used in self-defence or when:

A pupil is in danger	e.g. Near a roadside or other hazard Misusing equipment in a dangerous manner
A pupil is at risk of injury	e.g. Fighting Trying to leave school unofficially Causing criminal damage
A pupil refuses to cooperate	e.g. Refuses to obey an order from an adult thus putting themselves and others in danger Disrupts good order

Any force which is used will be the minimum required and will be dependent upon the age, sex, size and physical attributes of the pupil. This force may involve blocking a pupil's path, holding back or leading by the arm. This force will not include holding by the hair or ear, slapping or kicking. In the event of any physical force being used by an adult then a detailed written report (**as detailed in the Reasonable Force Policy**) will be completed and given to the Pastoral Care teacher. These reports will be kept in an Incident File and this will be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors. Records will be kept for 35 years.

INTIMATE CARE

It is essential that every child is given the opportunity to exercise choice, appropriate to their age, whilst also ensuring that care is given as gently and sensitively as possible. Staff should always bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position.

If a child requires intimate care, then the child's parent or guardian will be notified. If a child has special needs, then details of particular care required may need to be explained on the child's education or care plan. This will be done in consultation with the parents and any medical agencies that may be involved with a child's care plan. Written permission for intimate care is requested when children start school.

Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young person's right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times. Further details are provided in our **Intimate Care Policy**.

THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The school includes within its curriculum, elements which support pupils in their physical and emotional well-being and which aid pupils in learning to manage their general interests and personal relationships. These often occur in the general course of lessons but we also have a Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) policy that allows each class to address issues of health and well-being appropriate to them in line with curricular documentation. Class circle time and assemblies are used to support this work and outside agencies such as NSPCC and PSNI give presentations on Stranger Danger, Drugs etc.

Special Days ensure that the whole school community can focus on caring for ourselves and others in a positive way whilst being aware of abuse etc that others may suffer –

- BLUE Day (Be Loving and Understanding to Everyone) – Anti Bullying/Friendship
- Safer Internet Day
- Comic/Sport Relief
- Children In Need
- Sports Day and Sponsored Sports Activity Day/Fit Fortnight
- Sponsorship of children through Compassion UK and 'Stand By Me' charities

With regards to helping prevent child abuse, the school will also contribute by –

- ensuring that pupils have sufficient knowledge about themselves to be able to understand what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact;
- enabling children to become aware of strategies which they may use to protect themselves from possibly abusive situations;
- delivering a programme of Personal Development & Mutual Understanding.

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)

1. 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. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.
2. Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues: School visitors e.g. fire fighters, police etc. health visitor parent programmes.

Posters are clearly displayed around school to remind children not to open doors to strangers and to ensure that all visitors follow the correct procedures e.g. to sign in and out of school and to wear the appropriate identification badges. This is also made clear to parents in our 'Health & Safety Parental Summary'.

Online safety (including social networking) has now become a huge issue in society and all children receive age appropriate lessons and advice through our curriculum. Posters are clearly displayed around school to provide additional advice and parents receive advice and support through our E Safety leaflets and preventative activities linked to our school website. School advises parents to supervise their children online at all times and to regularly check their children's mobile phones.

There are also many other Safeguarding and Child Protection matters regarding **U.I.C.T.** (Using Information & Communications Technology) including the use of the School Website, Internet Safety and photographs. These are highlighted in our U.I.C.T. and E Safety/Digital Technologies Policies but a summary is provided below

-

- Permission is requested from parents/guardians before photographs or images of pupils are taken and used for use in school, publicity or on the school's website.
- No names and photographs that identify individual children will appear on the website. Only photographs of children with parental consent will appear on the school's website.
- Larne and Inver Primary School has an E Safety Policy which addresses relevant Safeguarding and Child Protection issues.
- Larne and Inver Primary School uses the filtered Internet Service provided as part of C2k.
- Computers with Internet access for pupils are only available in areas which are in full view of staff circulating in the area.
- While using the Internet at school, pupils should, where possible, be supervised. However, when appropriate, pupils may pursue research independent of staff supervision if they have been granted permission. In all cases, pupils will be reminded of their responsibility to use these resources in line with the school policy on acceptable use.
- The staff of Larne and Inver Primary school will ensure that the pupils understand how they are to use the Internet appropriately and why the rules exist.
- Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. While privacy is respected, users must not expect files stored on C2K to be absolutely private.
- Pupils are discouraged from bringing their mobile phone to school. If a phone is brought into school by a pupil, it is our policy that it should remain switched off during the time the pupil is on the school's premises. If a parent needs to contact a child this should be done by contacting the school office. If a child needs to contact a parent/guardian, the school will make the necessary arrangements.

REPORTS AND RECORD KEEPING (Ref: DENI 2016/20)

An important part of our Safeguarding and Child Protection programme is the gathering, storage and access to information as appropriate, as evidenced by:

1. Meetings to discuss 'at risk' children involving relevant staff members.
2. School records, personal details and health information being kept up-to-date and passed on at the end of each academic year.

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files for each relevant child in a locked filing cabinet. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by Ms McBurney (Designated Teacher) or Mr Patterson (Deputy Designated Teacher).

An up-to-date record of potential breaches of online safety will also be recorded in an Online Safety Risk Register. This record will be a hard-backed book that will be kept in the locked filing cabinet.

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

Notes or records are factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They include details of the place and time and who was present and are given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

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/young person'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 phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form. Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

Record Keeping for Complaints

The Principal will ensure that proper records, dated and signed, are kept of all complaints or information received and of all concerns about possible abuse noted by staff or parents. The written record should be provided by the member of staff or parent who received the information/or has concerns.

The school has an 'Initial Note of Concerns' form which is used by all staff members who have any concerns whatsoever regarding Child Protection matters. This is signed by the parent/staff member who reported the matter and counter signed by the Designated Teacher and Principal.

The Principal or designated teacher will supplement this record with:

1. The details of advice sought - from whom, against whom and when
2. The decision reached
3. If the matter was referred to a third party e.g. Social Services - how, when and by whom
4. If the matter was not referred - reasons why
5. When, by whom and how the person who made the complaint or gave the information is told of the decision

All records will be signed and dated by the Principal, countersigned by the designated teacher and kept in the locked cabinet.

Larne and Inver Primary School adheres to the DENI Guidance: September 2016/20: Record Keeping in Schools: Child Protection

"Where a complaint is made about a member of staff, and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record will be entered by the Principal in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints Book, maintained for the purpose and kept in a secure place. DENI Circular 2015/13:

- *The date and brief details of the nature of the complaint, ensuring that a staff member's name is never used – instead using the TR Number*
- *By whom and against whom it was made;*
- *If the complaint was formally referred, to whom it was referred, and the date of referral;*
- *If the complaint was dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.*
- *A record of the complaint should be placed on the relevant child's child protection file*
- *The BOG should be informed to ensure they comply with their statutory responsibilities*
- *The record should be signed and dated by the Principal, unless the complaint is against the principal in which case the Chair of BOG should sign the book*
- *It is essential that the Designated Teacher numbers the pages in the complaints log so that no pages can be torn out.*

Unless the member of staff is completely exonerated, the record should be kept indefinitely.

Reports for Child Protection Conferences

Reports should focus on the child's educational progress and achievements, attendance, behaviour, participation, relationships with other children and adults within the school and, where appropriate, the child's appearance. It may include what is known about the child's relations with his or her family and the family structure.

- Reports should be objective and based on evidence.
- They should therefore contain only fact, observations and reasons for concerns.

Reports will be made available to the child's parents and may be used in court. All reports should be checked and signed by the designated teacher.

The school will be informed by Social Services if any child has or is placed on the Child Protection Register and will monitor the child accordingly.

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.

Maintaining Records for Transfer

If a matter or complaint is not referred to a third party e.g. Social Services (i.e. the child is not placed on the Child Protection Register) –

- school will maintain the record on the child's file until he/she is 30 years old and 'pass on' any relevant notes to the next school

If a matter or complaint is referred to a third party e.g. Social Services and the child is placed on the Child Protection Register –

- school will maintain a file with documentation from the third party e.g. Social Services and relevant notes made by school
- school will notify the transferring school, destroy all third party information in the child's file but 'pass on' any relevant notes made by school
- school will notify the child's Case Co-ordinator in Social Services who will then liaise with the other school

If a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register, Social Services will inform the school, all Social Services records will be destroyed and school records maintained.

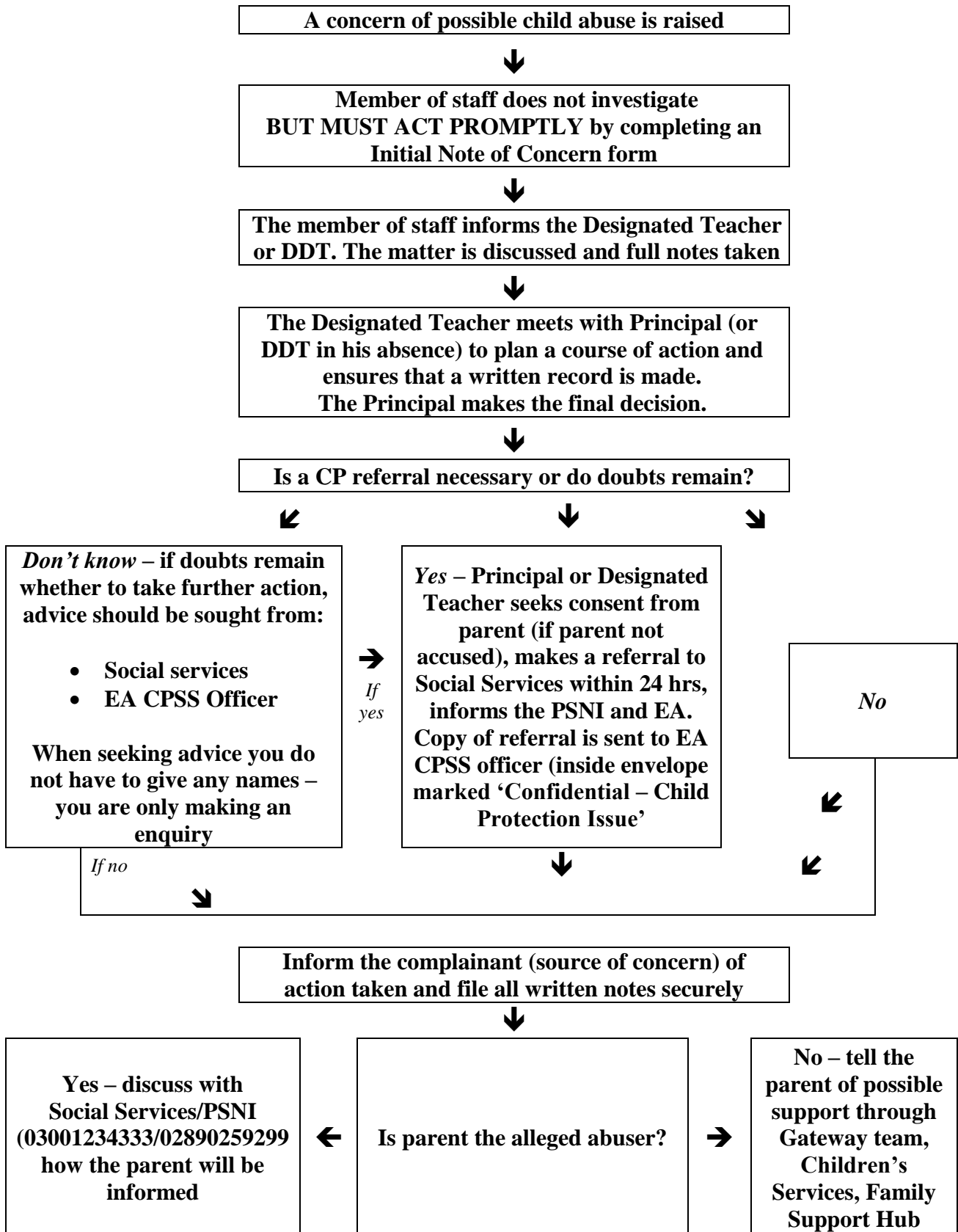
Clarification should be sought from the Designated Officer at the EA on any matters relating to Child Protection.

When a child moves to another school a copy of his/her child protection file if one exists will be transferred to the receiving school. This process will be followed by the Designated Teacher in the school of origin who will transfer the file (minus third party information) to the Designated Teacher in the receiving school. (EA 2018)

No Child Protection files or information are stored on the c2k system.

**PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OR CONCERN OF POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOL BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF STAFF
(DDT and Principal – Mr Patterson Designated Teacher – Ms McBurney)**

Figure 1



REFERRALS

If there are concerns that a child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.

The Principal and Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection or the 'Single Point of Entry' team social worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is the first priority.**

Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child/young person, should, where practicable, be discussed with the parent and consent sought for a referral to children's social services in the local HSC Trust, unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child/young person at further risk through delay or undermine any criminal investigative process (for example in circumstances where there are concerns or suspicions that a crime has taken place); or there is concern raised about the parent's actions or reactions. The communication/language needs of the parents/carers should be established for example in relation to disability/ethnicity and the parent's/carer's capacity to understand should be ascertained. These should be addressed through the provision of appropriate communication methods, including, where necessary, translators, signers, intermediaries or advocacy services.

Effective protection for children/young people may, on occasions, require the sharing of information without prior parental/carer consent in advance of that information being shared.

Where staff decide not to seek parental consent before making a referral to children's social services in the local Health and Social Care Trust or the police, the reason for this decision must be clearly noted in the child/young person's records and included within the verbal and written/UNOCINI referral.

When a referral is deemed to be necessary in the interests of the child/young person, and the parents/carers have been consulted and do not consent, the following action should be taken:

- the reason for proceeding without parental consent must be recorded;
- the withholding of permission by the parent/carer must be included in the verbal and written referral to children's social services;
- the parent/carer should be contacted to inform them that, after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

Staff making a referral may ask for their anonymity to be protected as far as possible because of a genuine threat to self/family. In such instances this anonymity should be protected with an explanation to the staff member that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information may become the subject of court processes.

STEP 1

In a case where the child is not considered to be at immediate or significant risk, the Designated Teacher will make a written referral to Social Services by completing pages 1-8 of the UNOCINI Proforma.

In a case where the child is considered to be at immediate or significant risk, a telephone referral should be made to the 'Single Point of Entry' Team or the PSNI Public Protection Unit by the designated teacher for child protection or by the deputy designated teacher for child protection. (A telephone referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours).

A UNOCINI may be completed electronically and securely emailed (password protected) to the 'Single Point of Entry' team.

The form can be downloaded from www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/unociniforms.doc and posted to -

Referral Gateway Team, Oriel House, 2-8 Castle Street, Antrim, BT41 4JE

STEP 2

A copy of the written referral should be posted to the EA's designated officer for child protection.

(This will be done in a sealed envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION')

The Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Board's Designated Officer or appropriate senior social worker before a formal referral is made. Provided that no child is identified by name, the case and its circumstances may be discussed with complete confidentiality and with the full understanding that Social Services cannot be further involved until a formal referral is made.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

When an allegation against a member of staff is made regarding child abuse, the complaint will be investigated thoroughly.

- The Principal will be informed immediately.
- The alleged abuser will be informed of the allegations in due course.
- In the case of the allegation being made against the Principal, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board of Governors, alongside the Designated Child Protection Governor, will be informed immediately.
- A thorough investigation will be carried out.
- Appropriate action will be taken following the investigation and having sought advice from the Education Authority as per DE Circular 2017/04

Where the Designated Teacher is suspected to have abused a child, or such an allegation is made, **the member of staff who is made aware of the possible offence should inform the Principal immediately**, who will instigate the normal reporting procedures.

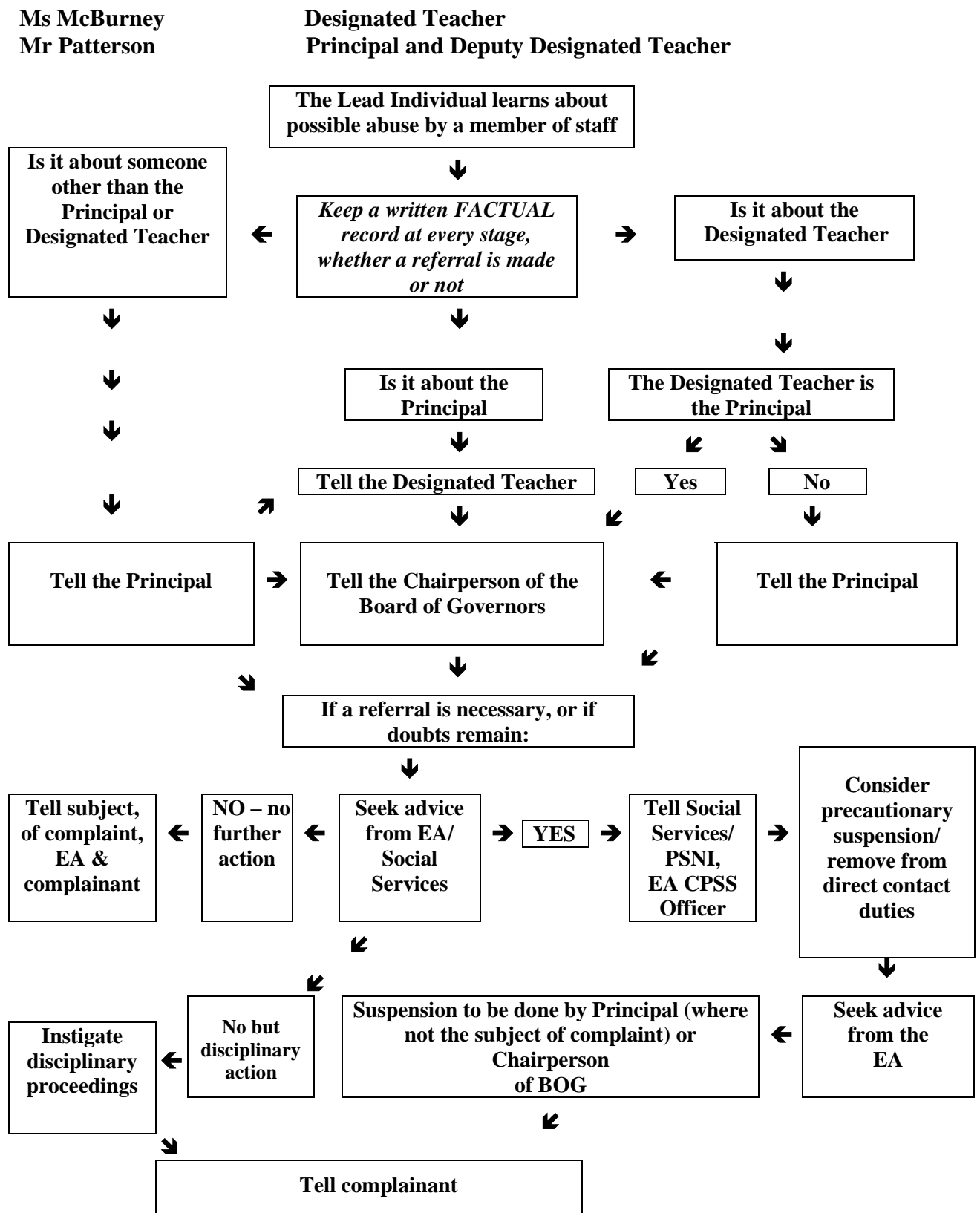
Where the **Principal is suspected**, or an allegation is made against him or her, **the matter should be reported to the Designated Teacher** (where this is not the Principal), and he or she should report the matter immediately to the chairperson of the Board of Governors, Social Services (or, as the case may be, to the police) and the Designated Officer of the Education Authority.

Where the **Principal is the Designated Teacher**, the matter should be reported by the member of staff who is made aware of the possible offence, to Social Services (or, as the case may be, to the police), the chairperson of the Board of Governors, and the Designated Officer of the Education Authority.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the Safeguarding Team will consult with the Designated Officer for Child Protection and Human Resources to help decide upon the most appropriate course of action.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF (INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS)

Figure 2



DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools.

A Lead Individual to manage the handling of an allegation should be identified from the outset, normally the Principal or a designated senior member of staff.

LIABILITY FOR TEACHERS AND NON TEACHING STAFF

Any teacher or other member of staff who complies with the procedures as set out by the EA and embodied in this policy in relation to making a report of suspected child abuse, is acting within the course of his/her employment and in such circumstances where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the full support of the EA, the Board of Governors and the Principal and will not be legally or financially liable.

SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

All of our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks and have also adopted a Code of Conduct regarding our behaviour towards pupils.

APPOINTMENTS, INDUCTION OF NEW STAFF & STAFF TRAINING

Board of Governors – at least one school governor serving on an interview panel or committee established for the purpose of recruiting or selecting staff for appointment to Larne and Inver Primary school is trained in “Child Protection & Recruitment and Selection” within the past four years.

On appointment, all staff should be made aware of Child Protection Procedures and meet with the Designated Teacher.

Staff Vetting – All staff, paid or unpaid in our school will have been subject to a criminal background check, in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance, to ensure suitability to have access to our children.

Substitute Teachers – Larne and Inver PS will only employ as substitute teachers, those who are on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register.

Volunteers – all volunteers, including parents, working in any capacity in our school or supervising on school trips can be vetted by ‘AccessNI’ as per DENI circulars 2012/19, 2013/01. All completed forms are returned to the Education Authority’s Legal/Insurance Branch. The school is then notified regarding a volunteer’s suitability.

The EA will offer appropriate In-service Training on child abuse issues for the Designated & Deputy Designated Teachers.

Through CASS, the EA will assist the school in developing appropriate programmes of personal and social development which will contribute to the prevention of child abuse.

If in any doubt, the Principal or Designated Teacher will contact the EA

Volunteers: Claims and Legal Department

Paid Staff: Human Resources

KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN CHILD PROTECTION

The **Designated Teacher** has responsibility for:

- Availing of training so that she is aware of duties, responsibilities and role
- Promoting a child protection ethos within the school, ensuring that all teaching and non teaching staff, full-time, part-time or temporary, are aware of the procedures to be followed if they suspect an incidence of child abuse.
- Co-ordinating action by staff in cases of suspected child abuse and reporting to the appropriate Social Services Officer and to the EA's Designated Officer/s
- Ensure that the school maintains child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.
- the school has an anti-bullying policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;
- Ensuring that all records are kept securely
- Ensuring that information is passed on to staff when and where it coincides with the best interests of the child.
- Regularly updating the deputy designated teacher/principal on ongoing concerns.
- Attending case conferences called by Social Services if class teacher is unavailable, or to furnish written information as requested
- Providing child protection training for all teaching and non-teaching staff (whole school training) to be delivered a minimum of once every two years and to include the effective induction of all adults before they meet any children and to be signed and dated by each participant
- To seek advice from the EA Designated officer
- To make referrals to Social Services or PSNI as appropriate
- To take the lead in the development of the school's child protection policy
- To ensure that every parent has access to the child protection policy at all times and receives an appropriate copy every two years. The policy may be translated as appropriate.
- To notify the Chair of Governors in the event of an allegation against the Principal
- To participate in child protection induction and refresher training provided by CPSSS
- To liaise with outside agencies as appropriate e.g. Family Support Hubs, Social Services, PSNI etc
- To ensure that all members of the Board of Governors have been given copies of all relevant Child Protection documents i.e. circulars, policies, guidance etc.
- Annually (at least) reporting to the Board of Governors, including a report on any 'Child Abuse' complaints against members of staff, to be signed accordingly by the Chairperson (even when no complaints are received) in the 'Record of Child Abuse Complaints' book and recorded appropriately in the minutes. The Annual Report will include the number of referrals made and any training that has been completed.

The Deputy Designated Teacher will deputise for them as required.

Staff Members

All members of staff have a copy of 'Child Protection Guidelines for Staff' which outlines all of the appropriate roles, responsibilities and procedures to follow in order to keep everyone safe.

In summary -

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse. They should remember the 5 Rs: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer.

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.

Members of staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal
- 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
- 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
- **Not** ask leading questions

In addition, the class teachers should: keep the Designated Teacher informed 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 and concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

Social Services

Social Services have a statutory duty to investigate any case where they receive information suggesting that a child or young person may be in need of care, protection or control unless satisfied that such enquiries are unnecessary. Their objective is to ensure the safety and welfare of the child. They have a lead role in co-ordinating the work of all the agencies and professionals concerned with the child's family. A joint protocol has been established between the Social Services and the Police for investigative purposes. This will involve the police in investigating situations where a crime may have been committed.

When there is suspicion that a child has been abused, Social Services may convene a multi-disciplinary Case Conference which may involve principals or their nominees depending upon who is best placed to contribute effectively to the discussion of the child's welfare.

CPSSS Designated Officers

Personnel in the **EA** fulfil an important role in Child Protection issues in advising schools, providing training and assessing the appropriateness of current policies and procedures.

Board of Governors

'Schools should ensure that all school governors have child protection awareness training which includes reference to CSE. The designated governor for child protection should have additional, enhanced training.'

(Supporting Recommendation 39 of the Marshall report - November 2014)

The Board of Governors plays an important role and hold real responsibilities in all aspects of our Child Protection Policy. This is highlighted in our Code of Conduct for Governors which is agreed and signed by all members.

The Board of Governors are kept fully informed of issues in relation to the implementation of our Child Protection Policy and any incidents that may arise as appropriate.

The Board of Governors will be kept fully informed in relation to any disciplinary action that is necessary in relation in response to a Child Protection incident.

- The appropriate Unit Director of Social Services will be informed immediately and a confirmation in writing will be sent.
- In the case where physical or sexual abuse is alleged, the matter will be referred to the Police.
- At the same time the designated officer of the EA will be forwarded a copy.
- The Principal will be informed, (if absent).

It is also the responsibility of the Board of Governors to ensure that –

- Every member adheres to the Code of Conduct
- The designated and deputy designated teacher are appointed
- Our school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed/updated annually
- Child Protection is on the agenda of every meeting
- attendance at relevant training by governors is up-to-date and training records are maintained
- Our school has a Staff Code of Conduct for all adults working in school
- The vetting of all staff and volunteers is completed correctly
- Receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher
- Candidates provide photographic proof of identity at interview.
- At the end of the interview, each candidate is asked if they are aware of anything in their employment or personal history which would render them unsuitable to work with children and young people. Their response should be noted in the interview notes.
- Suitable references are obtained for each successful candidate.

In addition to the above, the **Chairperson of the Board of Governors** (as part of the Safeguarding Team) has the responsibility to –

- Creates and maintains a safeguarding ethos
- Ensure that he/ she has received appropriate Education Authority training
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Ensure that all governors have taken the appropriate Strand of training in relation to safeguarding and child protection and recruitment
- Ensure that the school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that the school maintains child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.
- the school has an anti-bullying policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;
- Ensure that Child Protection is on the agenda of every meeting
- Ensure that the Board of Governors at least annually receive a child protection report and the Record of Child Abuse Complaints (about adults in the school) is presented.

When handling complaints or allegations against the Principal, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors should –

- Establish the facts (clarification process e.g. liaise with the DT, produce factual written records and follow the procedures in Figure 2 above)

The **Designated Governor for Child Protection** should avail of child protection awareness training delivered by Child Protection Support Service for Schools and take the lead in child protection issues in order to advise the Governors on:

- The role of the Designated Teachers in school
- The content of the child protection policy
- The content of the code of conduct for adults within the school
- The content of the updates and/or annual Designated Teacher's report
- The recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

School Principal

The Principal has responsibility to ensure that -

- He attends relevant Safeguarding and Child Protection training as required
- There are safeguarding systems in school which include child protection as per DENI 2017/14 guidance
- A safeguarding ethos and curriculum is promoted in school
- Everyone understands the roles and responsibilities in the safeguarding and child protection process
- Safe recruitment and selection practices are adhered to, including supporting the DT with the induction of all adults before they meet the children
- The DT is suitable and their training is up to date
- The school has an up to date policy which is readily available to all stakeholders. The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy/summary of this policy at least once every 2 years
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.
- All staff are trained in child protection procedures
- The Board of Governors is kept fully informed about safeguarding issues
- Child protection is on the agenda for each BOG meeting
- All allegations against school staff are managed effectively
- A robust Code of Conduct for staff is in place and adhered to
- All governors have taken the appropriate Strand of training in relation to safeguarding and child protection
- All staff are aware of the CareCall Service
- All parents are aware of support networks such as 'family support NI'

Parents

Parents play a vital role and share real responsibilities in ensuring the effectiveness of our Child Protection programme. The staff work alongside parents in the best interests of the child. Any concerns identified within school regarding any child will be shared with the parents. In most cases a referral to Social Services and or PSNI will be discussed with parents, unless it is considered that the child may be at risk by informing the parents.

- Parents will be made aware of the Child Protection Policy Statement through the Board of Governors' Annual Report, the School Prospectus, the Monthly newsletter and the Child Protection Summary leaflet.
- Parents will be made aware that copies of our Child Protection Policy are available on request in addition to being available to download from the school website.
- Additional information will be circulated to parents through a range of home/school communications as appropriate.
- Parents will be informed and involved, as soon as possible, in the event of a Child Protection related incident involving their child.
- Parents will be made aware that Child Protection arrangements may require cases to be referred to the investigating agencies in the interests of the child.
- Parents will be made aware of their responsibilities, including -
 - a. 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
 - b. informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school
 - c. letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home
 - d. making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child
 - e. familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Managing Behaviour, E Safety and Safeguarding Policies
 - f. reporting to the office when they visit the school
 - g. raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school

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.

Parents can also play their part in safeguarding by informing the school:

- if the child has a medical condition or educational need;
- if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child;
- if there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility;

If at any time a parent/carer wishes to raise a concern regarding Child Protection, they should adopt the procedures in the **'Raising a Concern' leaflet – available on the website and at the school office.**

Everyone in Larne and Inver Primary School has a vital role to play in the identification of Child Protection matters and in the assistance with necessary procedures. Training is provided regularly and further details of these roles can be found in the 'Guidelines for Staff: Child Protection' policy.

Most **visitors to school** are pre-arranged although some are not. They will range from specialist music peripatetic teachers to tradesmen and even parents working in school in a voluntary capacity. ***In line with our Health and Safety Policy, no child should ever open a locked door to an unknown person.*** All visitors must firstly report to the school office, 'sign in' and wear the appropriate visitors' pass and lanyard before undertaking any duties. Visitors should 'sign out' and return the Visitor's Pass and lanyard when leaving. In addition to Child Protection Procedures, this is essential in the event of an emergency so that all staff and visitors can be accounted for.

The school's policy for Visiting Speakers, Visitor's Code of Conduct and Adult Agreement form are available at the school office.

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The responsibility to monitor, review and evaluate the Child Protection Policy rests with the Board of Governors, Principal, Designated Teacher and the Pastoral Care coordinator.

The Designated officers for Child Protection from EA will also be consulted upon its review as appropriate.

This policy, by its very nature, links directly to all other school policies and guidelines.

Alongside the PDMU coordinator, monitoring of curricular content will include reviewing medium term planning and teacher consultation. Monitoring will take place on an on-going basis.

Review and Evaluation of our policy will seek to include the views of teaching staff, children, parents and governors.

Review and evaluation will take place annually as part of our School Development Plan or in response to future initiatives and in light of any Child Protection related incidents.

This policy is integral to everything that we do in Larne and Inver Primary School and should be consulted alongside every other policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the safeguarding team and approved at least every 2 years 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.

All staff and governors within the school have agreed this policy, in consultation with the relevant EA officers.