

# St. Oliver Plunkett PRIMARY SCHOOL



# Child Protection Policy

February 2023

Review Date  
February 2025

Child Protection

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. W. J.', written over a horizontal line.

Chairperson of BOG

01/02/23

Date

## Article 6

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Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

### Introduction

1. The Child Protection policy is an intrinsic part of the overall pastoral programme of the School and aims to ensure that the welfare of all children in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School is safeguarded and their safety preserved. The ethos of a “listening” school with its emphasis on openness and honesty of communication between School Management Team and staff, teacher and teacher, teacher and parent, teacher and pupil, parent and pupil and pupil and pupil is the cornerstone of ensuring such safety. Children who feel threatened in any way are encouraged to speak out to another person and the school’s ethos, pastoral programme and administrative structures are designed to ensure that opportunities for and encouragement towards such openness is paramount. The emphasis on the caring role of the teacher and the centrality of good relationships inherent in our school vision places considerable responsibility on all teaching staff to be alert to the risk of emotional abuse of children, such as persistent sarcasm, verbal bullying or severe and persistent negative comments and actions. Equally, it is incumbent upon the school to ensure that the protection of children is at a maximum by reducing the likelihood of physical or sexual abuse within school. All members of staff are thus encouraged to reflect on every aspect of their contact with children so they will promote an atmosphere in which trust and openness can do much to detect the potential abuse of children while sensitive and sensible professional behaviour towards pupils will significantly reduce the risk of allegations against staff being made. At the heart of the school policy is the belief that, as a Christian community, all those in the school - pupils and staff - should be accorded the dignity that comes from their baptism in Christ and that all relationships should, therefore, reflect the teaching of Christ. This Policy sets out guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

### 2. PRINCIPLES

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection” (DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees’ Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

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

- It is a child’s right to feel safe at all times; to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure 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.

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### 3. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

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

- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits                      Risk Assessment
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- Use of Video Cameras & Photographs
- E- Safety
- Intimate Care
- Attendance Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to obtain a copy should contact the School Principal or visit the school website.

#### 3.1 Aims

The specific aims of the policy are:

- To enhance the pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence, assertiveness and personal safety by developing appropriate skills to make reasoned, informed choices, judgements and decisions through a pastoral programme, offering opportunities for class and group discussion of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of tolerance and trust.
- To ensure that staff and parents are well-informed about Child Protection issues and that staff are familiar with procedures for reporting concerns, their duty of care and responsibility to report and the various indicators of child abuse and neglect
- To provide a model for appropriate and effective communication between children, teachers, parents and other adults working with children
- To integrate the key concepts of Child Protection in the school curriculum, through units of work in the pastoral programme
- Intimate care is provided for students when needed (**See Intimate Care Policy**)
- To monitor children's welfare and physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.

### 4. SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors: Mr. Bobby Whoriskey
- Designated Governor for Child Protection: Mr. Bobby Whoriskey
- Principal: Mr. Eamonn Moore
- Designated Teacher: Mr. Eamonn Moore
- Deputy Designated Teacher: Mr. James Lagan

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### **The main role of the team is to:**

- Monitor and periodically audit the safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school
- Identify any actions required to address audit findings or ETI inspection of its safeguarding/child protection arrangements
- Provide support for the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities.

## **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5.1 The Board of Governors**

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Child Protection and Recruitment & Selection training provided by the Education Authority Western Region Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the Education Authority Western Region Governor Support and Human Resource departments;
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the school Principal;
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity.

### **5.2 The Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The Designated Governor will provide the Child Protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

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

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### 5.3 The Board of Governors

Board of Governors, as a body, must ensure that the school fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities, in keeping with current legislation and DENI guidance including:

- Ensuring that safeguarding/child protection is a standard item on the agenda of BOG meetings;
- Approving the Child Protection Policy at least every two years in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Ensuring that there is a time-tabled review every 2/3 years of all other safeguarding policies and that they are presented to BOG for approval;
- Ensuring that confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis;
- Receiving annual child protection reports;
- Relevant Child Protection training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same.

### 5.4 The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:

- DENI 1999 / 10 is implemented within the school;
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed;
- That all staff receive Child Protection training;
- That all concerns about possible abuse are taken forward in the appropriate manner;
- That complaints or allegations against school staff are appropriately managed;
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and the Board of Governors) are kept informed;
- That the Education Authority Western Region Designated Officer for Child Protection and/or CCMS are consulted and kept informed as appropriate;
- That a record of Child Abuse Complaints is maintained and made available at least annually to the Board of Governors;
- That the school's Child Protection records are securely stored and permanently preserved;
- That Child Protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings (termly updates & annual report);
- That the school Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy at least once every 2 years;
- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

### 5.5 The Designated Teacher (And Deputy)

The Designated Teacher and Deputy must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role;
- Organise Child Protection training for all teaching and non-teaching staff (whole school training) to be delivered a minimum of once every two years;
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy;

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- Act as a point of contact for staff (and parents);
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents;
- Make referrals to Social Services (Gateway Team) or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate;
- Liaise with the Education Authority Western Region Designated Officers for Child Protection;
- Maintain records of all Child Protection concerns;
- Keep the school Principal informed;
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection.

### 5.6 The Class Teacher

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

The teacher must:

- Listen to what is being said and support the child;
- Make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child;
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed through the written "Record of Concern" or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions;
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children;
- Act promptly.

#### 5.6a Non-Teaching Staff:

##### **Classroom Assistants / Administrative Staff / Caretakers / Cleaners / Canteen Staff**

It can be likely that a member of the non-teaching staff can be in regular contact with children and may notice indicators of abuse. If you have concerns:

- Listen to what is being said and support the child;
- Make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child;
- Act promptly;
- Inform the Designated Teacher.

### 5.7 Parents

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;

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- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
- Providing the school with written evidence i.e. a Court Order to support any request to the Principal for changes to arrangements for contact with their child;
- Informing the school of any changes of address, contact details or living arrangements for their child e.g. child going to live with a relative;
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school;
- Sharing any concerns they have, in relation to their child, with the school.

### 6. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

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

#### 6.1 Definition of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

#### 6.2 Categories of Abuse

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

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

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



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

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.

### 6.3 Identifying Abuse:

Teachers and non-teaching staff are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. *Such symptoms may be due to a variety of causes and these may be identified with some sensitive questioning by the designated teacher*, but the following symptoms should be noted:

- bruises, particularly of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks and burns - may be apparent when children change their clothes for P.E. or games
- inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition – may be signs of physical neglect
- excessive dependence or attention-seeking - may be an indication of emotional abuse  
physical signs, withdrawal, inappropriate sexual behaviour and precocity - may be indicators of sexual abuse

Victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties but the signs described above can do no more than give cause for concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. More detailed indications of abuse are to be found in the document “Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection” with which all teachers should be familiar. Copies are available from Mr. Moore. Members of staff concerned that such abuse has occurred must report this immediately to **Mrs Ferguson, Mrs Curran or Mr Moore**. Where a child approaches a member of staff to confide in him/her any information likely to lead to suspicion of child abuse, the member of staff must recognise that, in order to protect the child, confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action by involving others in the child’s best interests. ***No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.***

### 6.4 Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a child protection nature.

**Receive** – listen to what the child says, without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said, making brief cursory notes. These notes should be retained.

**Reassure**- ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and his/her interests will come first. **No promise of confidentiality can or should be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.**

**Respond**- respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter. Use open questions e.g. anything else to tell me? Do not interrogate or ask leading questions- this may invalidate your evidence and the child’s in any

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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.

### **7. Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse.**

#### **Children Who Sexually Abuse Others or Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour**

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in section 7.2 of this policy 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 Western Region 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 a risk management plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved.

##### **7.1 How a parent can make a complaint**

At St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, we aim to work closely with the parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern, they can talk to the class teacher or the Principal/Designated teacher for Child Protection. If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in Appendix 2.

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

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate – this is a matter for the Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with him/her and make full notes. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported, the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated Teacher may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information or from others who may have relevant information. The Designated Teacher may also consult with the Education Authority

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Western Region Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services (Gateway Team) before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.

The consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought prior to making a referral to Social Services. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

Where consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person is sought to make a referral to Social Services, we will explain at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why and seek their agreement to making the referral. In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person is withheld, we will consider and where possible respect their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

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

This procedure, with names and contact numbers, is shown in Appendix 3. The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a Child Protection nature.

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stay calm</li><li>• Listen</li><li>• Accept</li><li>• Reassure</li><li>• Explain what you are going to do</li><li>• Record accurately</li><li>• Seek support for yourself</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Panic</li><li>• Promise to keep secrets</li><li>• Ask leading questions</li><li>• Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily</li><li>• Delay</li><li>• Start to investigate</li><li>• Do Nothing</li></ul>

### **7.3 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff (DENI Circular 2015/13 explains fully)**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal/Designated Teacher (or the Deputy Designated Teacher if the Principal or DT is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated teacher).

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If a complaint is made against the Principal/Designated Teacher, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed and he/she will ensure that necessary action is taken.

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

The investigation and management of such a complaint will take place in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education and the relevant agencies involved. In the exercise of its duties towards pupils and staff appropriate levels of support will be provided to both the child and the staff member concerned. This may involve the provision of external support services.

### **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff Circular 2015/13**

#### **7.4 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a volunteer**

Any complaint about the conduct of a person working in the school in a voluntary capacity should be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is on the school's staff, and the above procedures followed. If the Principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer should be terminated immediately.

## **8. ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCES AND CORE GROUP MEETINGS**

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conference or core group meeting convened by the Western Health & Social Care Trust and, where possible, a school representative will be in attendance. A written report will be provided for these meetings and will be compiled, after discussion with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle, on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored in line with what has been agreed in each child's Protection plan.

### **8.1 Children Looked After**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the Trust looking after the child. The DT has details of the child's social worker.

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies and, where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. However, only those who need to know will be told.

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We will explain to children, young people and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

### **10. RECORD KEEPING**

All Child Protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is received by the school and is not referred to Social Services – or if it is referred and Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register – a record on the child's file will be permanently preserved and a confidential copy will be sent to any school to which the child subsequently transfers.

If the Social Services inform the school that child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, a record of this fact and associated documentation from the Social Services will be maintained on the child's file while he or she continues to attend our school.

When the child's name is removed from the Child Protection register, then all Social Services records will be destroyed and only the school records retained for permanent preservation. Should a child transfer to another school whilst their name is on the Child Protection Register, then we will inform the receiving school that his/her name is on the register and the name of the child's social worker. All Social Services records held by us, in relation to the child, will then be destroyed. The school's own Child Protection records, in relation to the child, will be held in secure and confidential storage for permanent preservation.

### **11. OPERATION ENCOMPASS**

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

When the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day, to share this information with a member of the safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete the online Operation Encompass training, so they able to take these calls.

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Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

### **12. VETTING PROCEDURES**

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

### **13. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF PAID OR UNPAID**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. The school has a Code of Conduct for Staff which is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct.

### **14. STAFF TRAINING**

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and Procedures, with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic Child Protection awareness training and biannual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher; Deputy Designated teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will, also, attend relevant Child Protection training courses.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school, they will be briefed on the school Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given a copy of the policy which includes what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused.

#### **Staff and Governors**

All governors are familiar with the DE "School Governors Handbook on Child Protection". The school complies with the statutory requirements on vetting of all staff and governors, employment of substitute teachers and recruitment of staff in accordance with 2006 Circulars. The Board receives an annual report on Child Protection and maintains records of any suspicions or allegations of abuse by staff. Staff receive annually a copy of the Child Protection Policy and appropriate training from the Designated Teacher. Members of staff are specifically made aware of the Sexual Offences Act 2003: a new criminal offence of abuse of trust and a new offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming.

#### **On-Line Safety**

Online safety messages are integrated across the curriculum for pupils in all Key Stages.

- Online safety messages are distributed amongst pupils, staff, parents/carers and the wider community.

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- The school's leadership and management have clearly prioritised online safety and safeguarding across all areas of the school.
- Knowledge is shared amongst staff and there are good capacity-building opportunities.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy**

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

The School Management Team and designated teachers will conduct an annual review of the child protection procedures and policy statements each May to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Parents are free at any time in the course of the year to suggest improvements/amendments to the procedures for consideration at the next review meeting. Parents are also consulted biennially via questionnaire on the school's Child protection procedures. The Principal and Vice-Principal will keep parents informed, through the school prospectus or Governors Report, of the School's Child Protection Policy. Parents may view the policy on the school website or they can obtain a printed copy free of charge, on request from the school.

## **15. THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

Throughout the school year, Child Protection issues are addressed through assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main hall and relevant information in each resource area which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in the staff room.

### **15.1 EXTENDED SCHOOLS PROGRAMME**

The School provides/funds for the extended schools activities and this policy also applies to the pupils and staff engaged in these activities.

**Educational Trips - See Appendix 7**

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**All school trips must be accompanied by a risk assessment**

- The planning and organisation of all educational visits, particularly those of a residential nature, must include precautions to protect children from abuse such as racial, sexual or physical harassment from either adults or other children.
- Educational visits must adhere to our school's existing policy documents on Child Protection.
- This policy has been developed in order to underpin the planning and implementation processes required for the successful and safe completion of educational visits.
- The aim of this policy is to assist those involved in the planning and management of educational visits, through the identification of roles and responsibilities, the clarification of procedures and the exemplification of good practice.
- The successful planning and implementation of an educational visit requires a contribution from a number of key personnel.
- Careful co-ordination and clarity of roles are vitally important.

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School will seek consent for all visits by pupils:

- to visit the local library
- for children in P6 and P7 to participate in weekly swimming lessons
- for any day visits outside the school involving pupils from P1 to P7
- for after-school activities, through the Extended Schools Programme, that are in or off school premises
- for children to participate in any sporting activities outside the school
- for children to represent the school at academic events and quizzes
- for residential visits



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### Appendix 1 Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers

#### Introduction

This Code of Conduct is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. It is built on the premise that staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. However, it is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff.

#### 9.1 Private meetings with pupils.

- a. Staff should be aware of the possible misconceptions or potential risks which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that in the normal course of school life there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. While it may be appropriate to use a sign indicating that the room is in use it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- c. If a member of staff has concerns that a private interview with a pupil may be misinterpreted or may give rise to concern he or she should ensure that another adult (or if this is not possible another pupil) is present or near by.
- d. Staff should be mindful of the potential risks involved in the use of social networking sites accessed by pupils.

#### 9.2 Physical contact with pupils.

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e. Staff who need to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- f. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- g. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Vice-Principal (Pastoral).
- h. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be

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usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

### **9.3 Choice and Use of Teaching Material**

- a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.
- c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

### **9.4 Relationships and Attitudes**

Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

### **9.5 E-Safety and Internet Use**

- a. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the school's E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times.
- b. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- c. Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others.
- d. Contact with students should only made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate.
- e. Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school's procedures on school equipment.

### **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. It is therefore important that staff exercise judgement and seek advice if unsure about a situation.

From time to time, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions.

**Appendix 2**

**Types of Abuse and Physical/Behavioural Indicators**

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs - whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter - that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development. Children who are neglected often, also, suffer from other types of abuse. **(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2015)**

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

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. **(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

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

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also, sometimes, called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s

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emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers. **(Co-operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

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

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or for the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. **(Co-operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioural Indicators</b>
Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons, especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	What the child tells you; withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; self devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents);

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>hysterical/angry outbursts;</li><li>lack of emotional control;</li><li>sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour;</li><li>inappropriate sex play;</li><li>repeated attempts to run away from home;</li><li>unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories;</li><li>vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation;</li><li>promiscuity;</li><li>exposure to pornographic material.</li></ul>
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**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. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories, as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse. (**Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016**)

**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.**

### Child Abuse in Other Specific Circumstances

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is not defined as a category of abuse within the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The policy does, however, state that the damage inflicted by bullying behaviour can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self harm).

The procedure for referral and investigation of abuse may, therefore, be implemented in certain circumstances such as when anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective; the bullying behaviour is persistent and severe, resulting in the target of the bullying suffering/likely to suffer significant harm; there are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the child exhibiting this behaviour suffering/likely to suffer significant harm or where concerns exist in relation to the parents/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child (either the target or the child exhibiting this behaviour).

### **Children Who Sexually Abuse Others or Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour**

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in **section 7.2** of this policy 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.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.' (**Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016**)

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 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;
- Truanting 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';

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- 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.

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.

### **Indecent Photographs**

The offence of taking indecent pictures of children under 18 years can apply in a situation where a pupil has taken an indecent picture using a mobile phone of others under 18 years of age. It is also an offence to distribute, possess with intent to distribute or show such photographs to others. In such circumstances, the PSNI and Social Services will be contacted. The school also has an e-safety/ mobile phone and electronic devices (or similarly named policies) which has/have been circulated to parents and pupils and which is available from the school.

### **Young Person whose Behaviour Places Him/Her at Risk of Significant Harm**

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 as defined in Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). 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.

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

Is defined as '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.' (**Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016**)

### **Sexual Violence and Abuse**

Is defined as '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. (**Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016**)

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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.

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

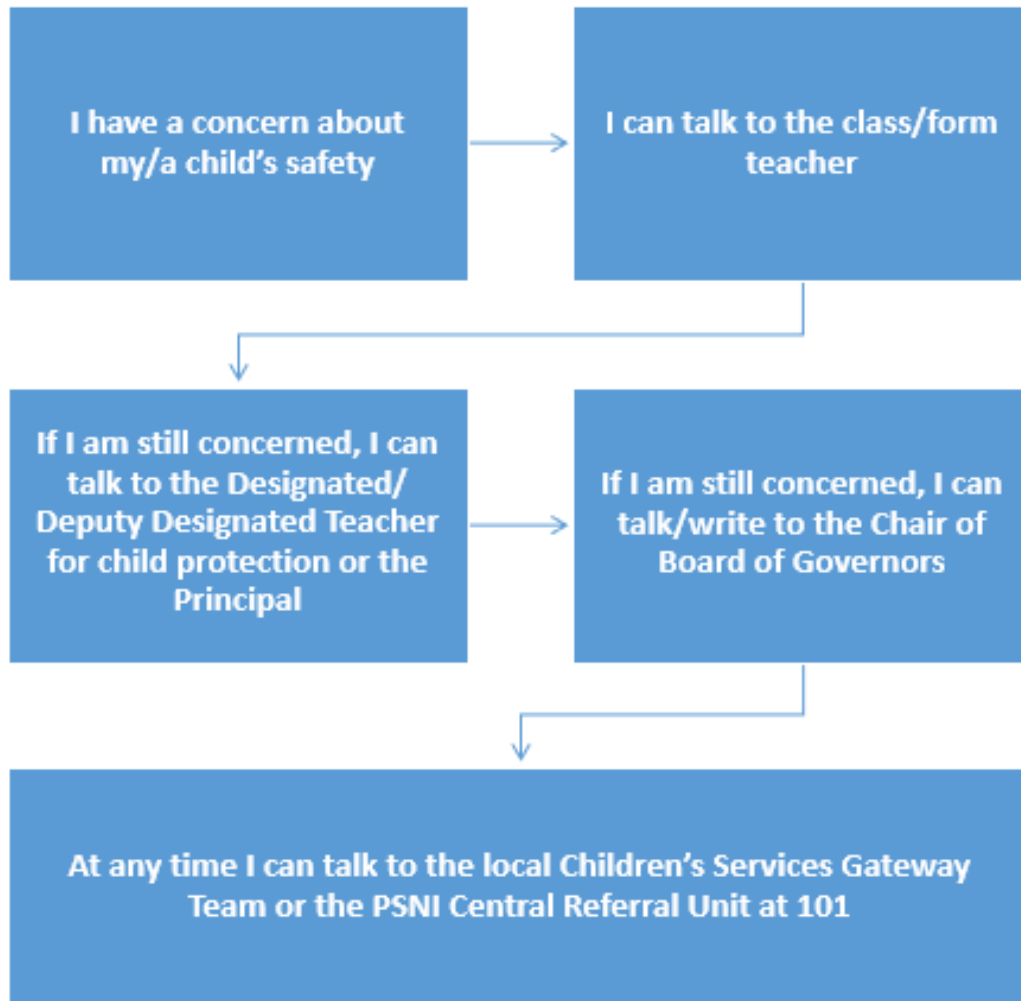
Female Genital Mutilation is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

Female Genital Mutilation is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.



**Appendix 3: Procedure for parents who wish to raise a Child Protection Concern**

**If a Parent Has a Potential Child Protection Concern Within the School**



If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school's complaints policy. This policy should culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

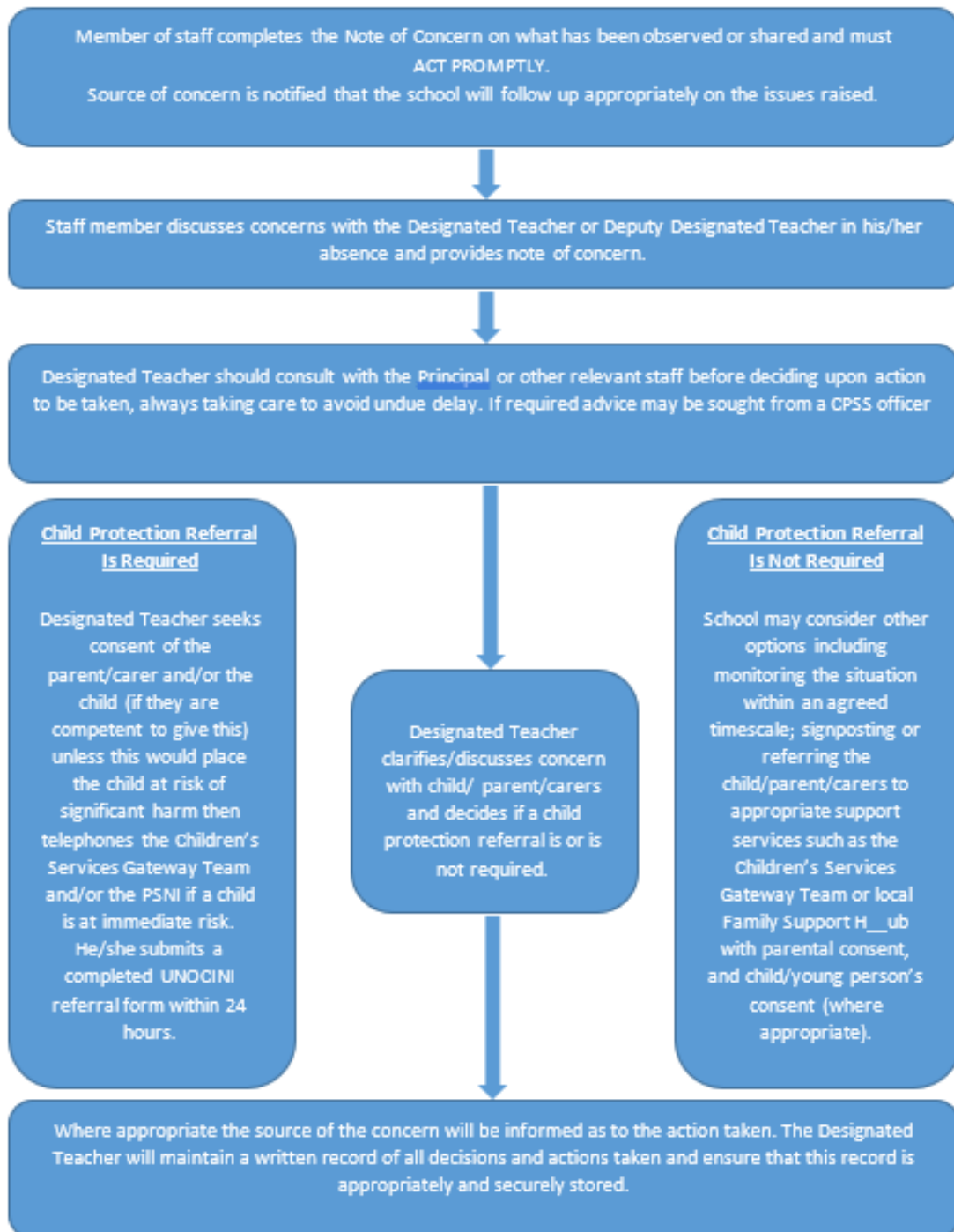
If a parent has a concern about a child's safety or suspect child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.

**Appendix 4**

**St Oliver Plunkett P.S.**

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

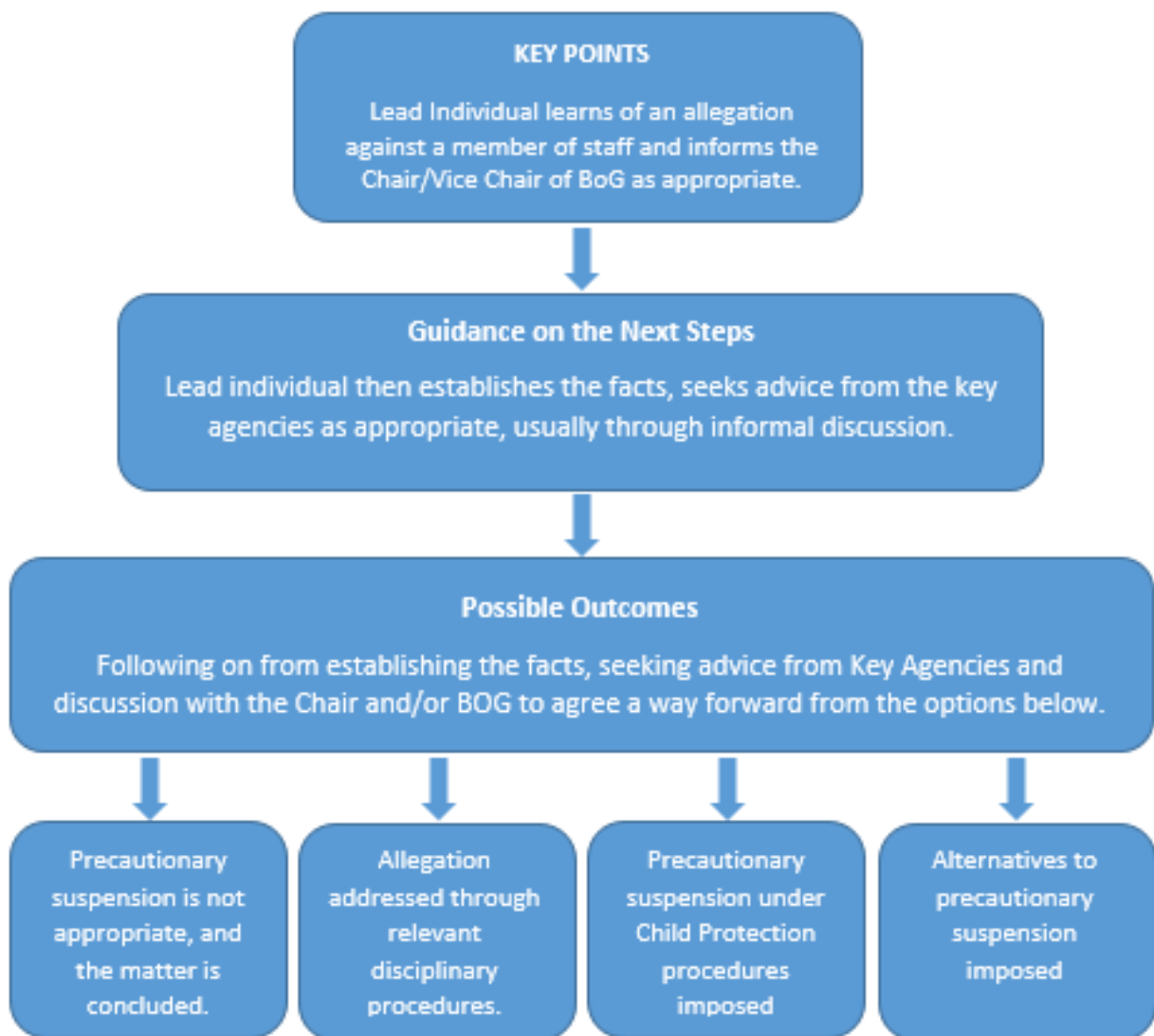
**Procedure for Reporting an Incident of Child Abuse**



**Appendix 5**

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

**Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff**



**Appendix 6**

**Nurture Units – Generic Statement for Child Protection Policy**

Our school provides a Nurture group for children whose developmental needs (social, emotional and behavioural) are such that at times they may need additional support in a smaller group. The children are supported in a classroom which has been provided with a range of suitable resources and where the staff has been trained to provide the children with a variety of experiences, opportunities and approaches to help address their specific needs. The nurture group staff will also follow the school's Staff Code of Conduct, Child Protection and other Safeguarding Policies.

## Appendix 7

### Educational Trips

#### Child Protection

**All school trips must be accompanied by a risk assessment**

- The planning and organisation of all educational visits, particularly those of a residential nature, must include precautions to protect children from abuse such as racial, sexual or physical harassment from either adults or other children.
- Educational visits must adhere to our school's existing policy documents on Child Protection
- This policy has been developed in order to underpin the planning and implementation processes required for the successful and safe completion of educational visits.
- The aim of this policy is to assist those involved in the planning and management of educational visits, through the identification of roles and responsibilities, the clarification of procedures and the exemplification of good practice.
- The successful planning and implementation of an educational visit requires a contribution from a number of key personnel.
- Careful co-ordination and clarity of roles are vitally important.

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School will seek consent for all visits by pupils:

- to visit the local library;
- for children in P6 and P7 to participate in weekly swimming lessons;
- for any day visits outside the school involving pupils from P1 to P7;
- for after school activities, through the Extended Schools Programme, that are in or off school premises;
- for children to participate in any sporting activities outside the school;
- for children to represent the school at academic events and quizzes;
- for residential visits.