

**Creavery Primary School**

# **Child Protection Policy**

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## INTRODUCTION

The governors and staff of Creavery Primary School fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999) and the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration*. The 'paramourncy' of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our 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 issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
3. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

## THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT CREAVERY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chair of Governors: Mr Sam Hall

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: **Ms Helen Bonar**

Principal: **Miss L Dunwoody**

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Miss Louise Dunwoody**

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Mrs Pauline Davison**

### WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order)

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.' (ACPC, 2005)

#### Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse** – is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful 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. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

**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 another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

**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 to look at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

**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. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing / begging

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 is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in Creavery Primary School

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

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 bully and the victim will be personally contacted when bullying has been identified.

Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the DT for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or a group of small children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will

have a personal response from the DT within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of privileges in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures.

## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

The designated teacher for child protection (DT) is **Miss Louise Dunwoody**.

In her absence **the deputy designated teacher for child protection (DDT) Mrs Pauline Davison** will assume responsibility for child protection. On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDT is in the school another teacher will assume responsibility for child protection, (the DT can always be contacted by phone).

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly**.

**He/she should not investigate** – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.

The DT will discuss the matter with the DDT as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT, in consultation with the DDT, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection at the NEELB, or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the DT will inform:

- Social Services
- NEELB's Designated Officer for Child Protection

**(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION').**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the DDT if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal). Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DDT must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

## **ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT) AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER (DDT)**

The DT:

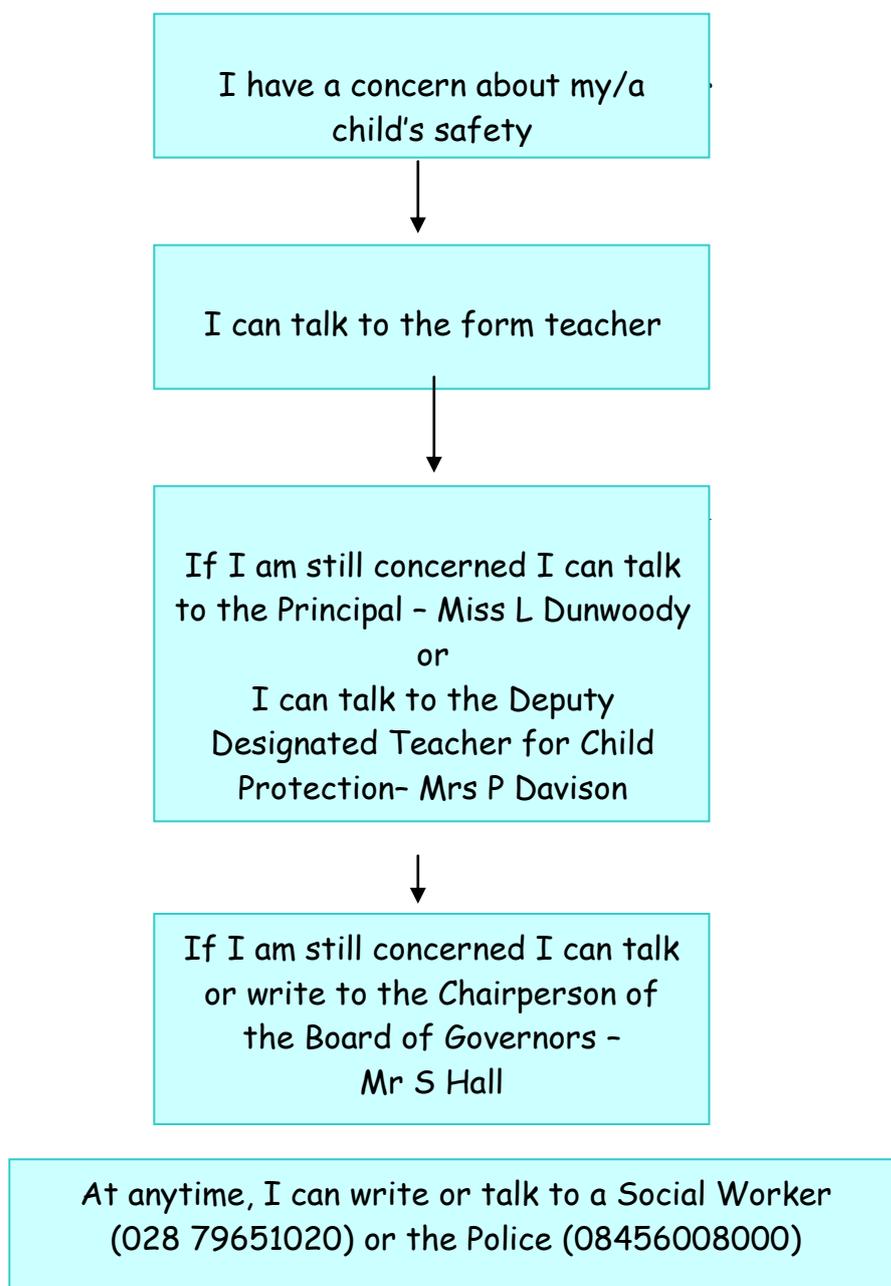
- To provide training to all school staff including support staff
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for recordkeeping of all child protection concerns
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI Public Protection Units
- Liaising with NEELB Designated Officers for Child Protection
- The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school's child protection policy
- Ensures parents receive a copy of the child protection policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made to Social Services and the role of the school regarding this
- Promotion of a child protection ethos in the school
- Holds regular meetings with the Designated Governor for Child Protection so that she can report back to the governors
- Maintains all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by the DT and DDT as appropriate)

DDT:

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required

## HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CHILD PROTECION CONCERN

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:



## **CREAVERY PRIMARY SCHOOL'S VETTING PROCEDURES**

The school's vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in DE circulars 2006/06, 2006/07, 2006/08, 2006/09, 2008/03 and 2012/19. Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF**

The code of conduct is known to all staff – permanent and non-permanent and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is set out in Appendix 2

## **THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm of our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protections.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for Personal and Social Development which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in the Use of Reasonable Force Policy, in accordance with guidelines from NEELB. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. This is in line with the Team Teach training all staff have received from the NEELB.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

## **THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

Our policy on the internet and digital technologies is set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

No photos or videos can be taken of children without the parent's/guardian's written permission. Permission also needs to be gained to show these photos in newspapers and the website.

## **EDUCATIONAL TRIPS / VISITS**

All educational trips will be carried out in line with NEELB's document on Educational Visits 2009. No child can leave the school grounds without written permission from the parent. A letter will be sent to the parent before the trip stating where the trip is to, the purpose of it, how the children will travel and what they need to bring. A risk assessment must be carried out for every trip before leaving the school. Pupil:teacher ratios will be kept as low as possible.

## **EXTENDED SCHOOLS PROGRAMME**

To develop the child fully children are given the opportunity to participate in an after school programme. This programme runs in lots of 6 weeks. Written permission must be gained from the parents for these activities. When an external body comes to lead these activities their relevant qualifications are checked and they are police checked. Two people must always be left on the school premises at any one time.

## **REVIEWING OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Our Child Protection policy is reviewed by the Governors annually and provided to parents every two years. Parents of new children are provided with this policy on entry into the school. The policy can be accessed on our website.

## **INTIMATE CARE POLICY**

Our Intimate Care Policy is reviewed annually by the Governors. A copy of this may be obtained from the website.

**Date ratified by BOG:**

**Date of next review:**

## Appendix 1

### GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other support staff in Creavery primary School and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the school.

It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken, through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

#### Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, either

1. Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or
2. Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips; residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Formal arrangements as to selection and vetting should not be required for volunteers who are involved outside school hours and who do not have unsupervised contact with pupils. These would include fund raisers, people using school premises for meetings etc.

#### Use of Volunteers

There are three main categories into which the use of volunteers might be grouped and to which guidance will apply:

- During school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- Outside school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- During school hours but not usually involving direct contact with pupils

#### Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance at their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

#### Initial Appraisal

As a minimum requirement all potential volunteers are asked to provide the following information:

- personal details
- qualifications and previous work with children
- a declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound-over Order
- a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for child protection
- agree to a criminal record check being carried out
- provide the name of two referees who are not family members or members of staff in the school
- attend an interview with the school Principal with proof of identity
- Undergo an annual criminal record check through Access NI (via NEELB)

No individual will be admitted to the school as a volunteer until these basic steps have been completed and the results assessed.

### **Accepting Volunteers**

Where the previous procedures have been followed as appropriate and the school is satisfied that:

- the volunteer is a suitable person to have contact with the children and has the character, skills and experience to support the work of the school in a voluntary capacity;
- well defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the volunteer to undertake and he/she is competent to undertake them;

the school will notify the individual that he/she has been accepted for voluntary duties in the school

### **The use of Volunteers**

These are the fundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

- the purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties;
- volunteers only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff and these arrangements should be such as to minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised, access to children;
- volunteers are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment;
- volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and receive appropriate training to enable them to perform these;
- volunteers are only allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers are not to be placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom;
- volunteers are not afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception might be made where a child has a medical or other condition of which all those working with the pupil should be made aware, and where agreement of the parent has been sought.

### **Health and Safety Insurance**

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety Legislation. Creavery Primary School therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees in terms of Creavery Primary Schools' obligations under the legislation.

### **Duration**

Creavery primary School places a time limit on the period of the volunteer's service. This is done where the work earmarked for the volunteer is likely to be completed within a specific period. Where a volunteer's involvement is likely to be long term, the school advises the volunteer that

he/she will be subject to a trial period, during which the Principal monitors the volunteer's effectiveness in contributing to the life and work of the school.

### **Information and Training**

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

- the policy of the school and the management authority in relation to pastoral care and child protection, including its positive behaviour policy, including rewards and sanctions, and the extent of the volunteer's authority within it; its child protection procedures
- Creavery Primary School's Health and Safety Policy

Arrangements are made for the volunteer to have a formal line of communication to the Principal for reporting issues of concern or the welfare of the children in the school.

### **School Security**

Creavery primary School has drawn on the advice from the guidance Document "Security and Personal Safety in Schools" 1997 to establish arrangements for the admission and supervision of volunteers on school premises. Particular attention is drawn to:

- The volunteer registering at the beginning of each visit

## Appendix 2

### A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF

(Pastoral Care in Schools CHILD PROTECTION 1999)

All staff and volunteers follow the core values of GTCNI, (trust, respect, integrity, honest, fairness, tolerance, commitment, equality and service) and use these core values as a reference point in all situations). They have all received a copy of our code of conduct and undergo relevant training. The Code is informed by guidance from DE.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences pupils at Creavery primary School gain from positive interaction with staff. It 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.

#### 1. Private Meetings with Pupils

Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there are 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.

Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.

Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

#### 2. Physical Contact with Pupils

As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils.

It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however to, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child may need reassurance involving physical comforting. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this in an age appropriate way.

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. Staff would follow guidelines given in the TEAM-TEACH course given by NEELB.

Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.

Staff who administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure whenever 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.*

Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or maybe, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal or DDT.

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

### **3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

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.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

### **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. Staff are aware that they are in a position of trust in relation to the children and young people at the school.

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, 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, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

## **THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

The staff of Creavery Primary School recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging or they maybe withdrawn.

Creavery Primary School will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such pupils in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

Support for all pupils in the school in developing skills in self protection and developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

- The content of the curriculum, particularly Personal Development.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school Positive Behaviour Policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse.