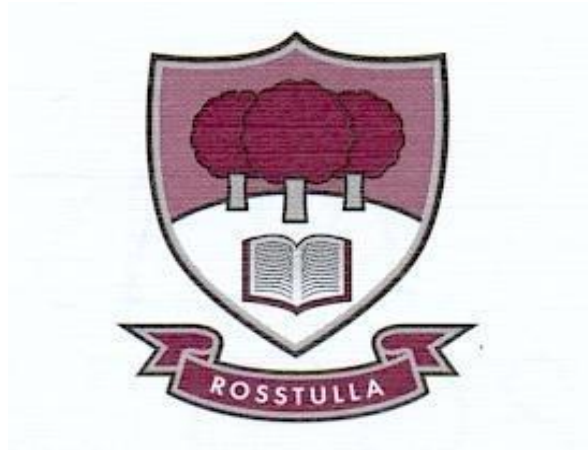


# Rosstulla School



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Agreed by Governors June 2025

Chairperson Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# 1. CHILD PROTECTION ETHOS

At Rosstulla we believe all children have the right to be safe and respected.

We all have a responsibility for the safeguarding of the children and young people in our care. Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the processes we have in place to prevent and respond to harm and for protecting children that have already suffered harm or who are likely to suffer from significant harm.

Rosstulla will carry out this duty by providing a child centred, caring, supportive and safe environment where each child is valued for their unique talents and abilities and their voice is listened to. Barriers for non verbal children are a reality, Rosstulla commits to ensuring every child has access to communication supports and will make every effort to understand non verbal communication. An environment is created where all can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

All efforts will be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

All pupils at Rosstulla will be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives and will be provided with support to do so when required. Where possible an activity will be undertaken with the consent of the child/young person to achieve their preferred outcomes. Rosstulla supports pupils from Nursery to Yr15 (Age 19). Our pupils over 18 are supported fully supported with this policy by the principles of adult safeguarding.

## **Adult Safeguarding**

For further information see:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document>

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Maximising the student's choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights.
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

“Recent safeguarding and child protection cases have highlighted the need for everyone to take responsibility for protecting children as well as the necessity for those in key positions to have a clear understanding of their role in adhering to policies and procedures” DE Safeguarding & Child Protection in Schools (Sept 24)

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in :

[UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

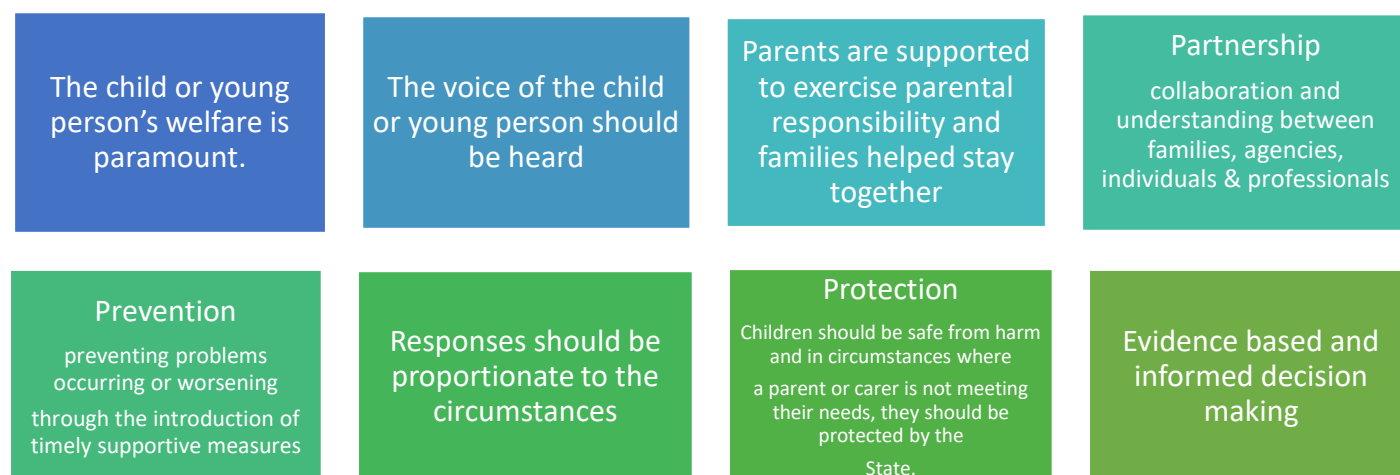
[DE Safeguarding and Child Protection in schools \(Updated September 2024\)](#)

[The Education and Libraries \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2003](#)

[Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland \(August 2017\)](#)

[The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's \(SBNI\) Policies and Procedures](#)

The following principles form the basis of our child protection policy:



## 2. RELATED POLICIES

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

Addressing Bullying Behaviours Policy	Attendance Policy	Positive Behaviour Policy (Interim)
Complaints Policy	Data protection Policy	Educational Visits Policy
E-Safety Policy	Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy	Health and Safety Policy
Intimate Care Policy	Whistleblowing Policy (Raising concern policy)	Staff Code of Conduct
First Aid and Administration of Medication Policy	The Preventative Curriculum	Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy & Curriculum

**These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the School office or visit the school website [www.Rosstulla.co.uk](http://www.Rosstulla.co.uk)**

## 3. Safeguarding and Child Protection at Rosstulla

### 3.1 SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors (Anne Magee)
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Lynda Stewart)
- Principal (Laura Matchett)
- Designated Teacher (Caroline McCarthy)
- Deputy Designated Teacher(s) (Nichola Shannon, Gillian Currie)
- The whole school community helps us provide a safe school

### 3.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Parents & Carers

- **The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents & carers who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. Support is available for families by contacting your child's teacher, the Designated Teacher, your GP, Social worker (if you have one), Gateway**
- Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school.
  - If the child has a medical condition or educational need.
  - If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
  - If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
  - If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
  - If their child is absent should inform the school via seesaw or send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence.
  - More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: [www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection)

**It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer and an additional emergency contact**

## Board of Governors must ensure

- to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in school incl. the extended school environment.
- Governor for Child Protection, Designated and Deputy Designated teachers appointed and Governors understand the designated roles.
- Safeguarding & Child protection training is given to all staff and Governors, incl induction.
- Rosstulla Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and a copy shared with parents and pupils every 2 yrs.
- Rosstulla Addressing Bullying Behaviours Policy is reviewed every four yrs. A record of all concerns of bullying type behaviours is kept.
- Safeguarding policies are reviewed every 3 yrs.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working with children.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19.
- A full annual report on all child protection matters, including details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- DENI Circulars are followed  
2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a member of Staff  
2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in School

## Chair of Board of Governors

- plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.
- In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/ allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department, employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.
- child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the Record of Child Abuse  
Complaints against staff members even if there have been no entries.

## Designated Governor for Safeguarding

- The B.o.G delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues 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, vetting and induction of staff.

## Designated Teachers

- Deliver induction & training to all school staff
- Available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Have responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintain a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Make referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaise with the EA CPSS
- Keep the Board of Governors & Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promote a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compile written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.
- Ensure staff are aware of notes of concern being completed on CPOMs

## Principal

- As secretary to the Board of Governors the Principal will assist the B.o.G in fulfilling its safeguarding and child protection duties including:
- Ensure the Board of Governors are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding including changes to legislation, policy, procedures, DE circulars, inclusion of Child Protection on the termly meeting agenda.
- Manage allegations/complaints against school staff.
- Establish and manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection.
- Appoint and manage Designated Teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensuring safe and effective recruitment and selection including awareness of safeguarding and child protection for new staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy or summary of the Child Protection policy at intake and at a minimum every 2 years.
  - Maintaining the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints

## School Staff

- **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Deputy Designated Teacher if she is not available.
- must alert an incident on CPOMs to the DT/DDT if there are any safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance, punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about bullying type behaviours, about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.
- should not give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions, following the principles of: Receive, Recognise, Reassure, Respond, Report

### 3.3 Contact Details:

Chair of Board of Governors                      02890862743  
(a message will be passed on)

Caroline McCarthy	DT	028 90862743	<a href="mailto:cmccarthy834@c2kni.net">cmccarthy834@c2kni.net</a>
Gillian Currie	DDT	028 90862743	<a href="mailto:gcurrie903@c2kni.net">gcurrie903@c2kni.net</a>
Nichola Shannon	DDT	028 90862743	<a href="mailto:nshannon540@c2kni.net">nshannon540@c2kni.net</a>

### 3.4 Recruitment and vetting of staff and volunteers

Vetting checks are essential to prevent unsuitable individuals from accessing children and vulnerable adults in schools. All persons on school property must be supervised and vetted as appropriate.

The following groups must have an AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) before taking up post:

- All new paid teaching and support staff.
- Examination Invigilators.
- Private contracted transport providers - named drivers.

Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an EDC. A volunteer who works under supervision is not required to obtain an EDC, however, schools/organisations must determine whether the level of supervision meets the statutory standard - see DE Circular 2012/19 (currently under review).

Schools must ensure that volunteers, eg coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc, who are employed by others, have the necessary clearances in place and a record of these should be maintained by the Principal.

#### 3.4.1 Code of conduct

At Rosstulla, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is everyone's responsibility—this includes all teaching and support staff.

We aim to create a school culture built on mutual trust and respect, where the best interests of our pupils always come first. Staff are expected to act with integrity and professionalism at all times. This is especially important when working with younger

pupils or those with learning difficulties, who may be less able to recognise or report inappropriate behaviour.

To support this, all staff and volunteers must follow the school's Code of Conduct, which covers key areas such as:

- Setting a good example
- Professional relationships and attitudes
- Meeting with pupils privately
- Physical contact
- Honesty and integrity
- Behaviour outside of work
- E-safety and internet use
- Confidentiality

The Staff Code of Conduct is not meant to limit positive and supportive interactions between staff and pupils. Instead, it helps staff understand areas of risk and provides guidance on safe and appropriate behaviour. It encourages staff to use their professional judgement and reinforces safe practices that most already follow.

### **3.5 Visitors to Schools**

Visitors to schools, such as parents, suppliers of goods and services, workers to carry out maintenance etc. do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require.

Visitors should be:

- Met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school, by school staff.
- Given restricted access to only specific areas of the school, if appropriate.
- Escorted by a member of staff/representative, where appropriate.
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Given access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- Cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons if delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repairs.

### 3.6 Pupils on Work Experience

Health and Social Care Programmes will require an EDC for pupils on long term placement and may be required for pupils on work experience/shadowing placements.

Pupils coming into the school on work experience do not require AccessNI clearance as they are required to be fully supervised by school staff.

Safeguarding/Child Protection be a key part of the induction process.

### 3.7 Child Protection Training

- Child Protection Training for school governors has three specific elements:  
Initial Child Protection Awareness Training as part of the induction programme for all new governors.  
Child Protection Training from the CPSS for Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection completed every four years..  
Training on recruitment, selection and vetting which incorporates child protection legislation and DE guidance for all governors who will be sitting on interview or teacher appointments panels.
- Designated Teacher Training/Deputy Designated Teacher Training  
All new DTs and DDTs attend the two-day CPSS Introduction to Child Protection Course when they are appointed to the post, and refresher training every 3 years..
- Whole school Child Protection Training  
The DT and DDT cascade child protection training to the whole school, at a minimum every two years, with new staff receiving training as part of their induction programme.  
All staff (permanent, temporary or supply) should know how to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and be aware of the relevant child protection procedures, including how to contact the designated teachers.  
Supply staff are directed to read through Rosstulla's Child Protection Policy.

## 4. Responding to Child Protection Concerns

### 4.1 WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE OR HARM?

- **Definition:**

Child abuse can occur in any social class, culture, community, or organization. Abusers can come from any background or profession. Child abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child. This can include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as neglect. Abuse can happen in any setting, such as at home, in institutions, or in the community, and can be inflicted by adults or other children. It involves causing harm or failing to prevent harm to a child.

‘Harm’ means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development, and the question of whether harm is significant is determined in accordance with Article 50(3) of the Children Order 1995.

- **Forms of Abuse:**

Abuse can manifest in various ways and often involves multiple forms.

**Neglect:** Failing to meet a child's basic needs like food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, or shelter, leading to serious harm to their health or development. Neglected children often suffer other types of abuse as well.

**Physical Abuse:** Deliberately causing physical harm to a child, such as hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, or suffocating.

**Sexual Abuse:** Using or exploiting children for sexual gratification. This includes physical acts like rape or touching, as well as non-contact activities like making children watch sexual acts or creating sexual images. Both men and women, as well as other children, can commit sexual abuse.

**Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional mistreatment that harms a child's emotional development. This includes making a child feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate, silencing them, or bullying, including online bullying.

**Exploitation:** Manipulating or abusing power over a child for personal gain, such as child labour, slavery, criminal activity, or trafficking. This can include sexual exploitation.

(See **Appendix A** for specific types and signs of abuse)

#### 4.2.1 PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION:

Emphasis on preventing abuse and intervening at the earliest possible stage.

##### **Role of School Staff**

**Observation:** School staff are well-placed to observe signs of abuse due to their daily contact with children. At Rosstulla, we prioritise positive relationships between all staff, pupils and parents/carers where there is an understanding of individual communication needs. We ensure an active environment of approachability and response. We are committed to restorative practice focused on promoting a culture of respect and accountability.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Staff should be alert to changes in appearance, behaviour, learning patterns, or development that may indicate abuse.

A clear outline of signs and symptoms of abuse available through [Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#)

**Legal Obligations:** Staff must be aware of their legal obligations, including the duty to report.

#### 4.2.2 MANAGING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS & RESPONDING

**Reporting:** Any concerns about possible abuse must be reported immediately. In school, reports are made to the Designated Teacher (DT) or Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection using secure system (CPOMs). The DT/DDT can seek advice from Child Protection Support Services at EANI (CPSS). If the child is known to Social Services the DT/DDT will make contact.

**Role of All Staff:** All staff members have a role in being alert to signs of abuse and following procedures, including in cases where allegations are made against staff members.

**Immediate Risk:** If a child is at immediate risk, the concern must be reported to the PSNI and Social Services immediately to ensure emergency protection measures are taken. This report will be made by the DT/DDT or Principal in the first instance.

#### 4.2.3 EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DIFFICULTIES

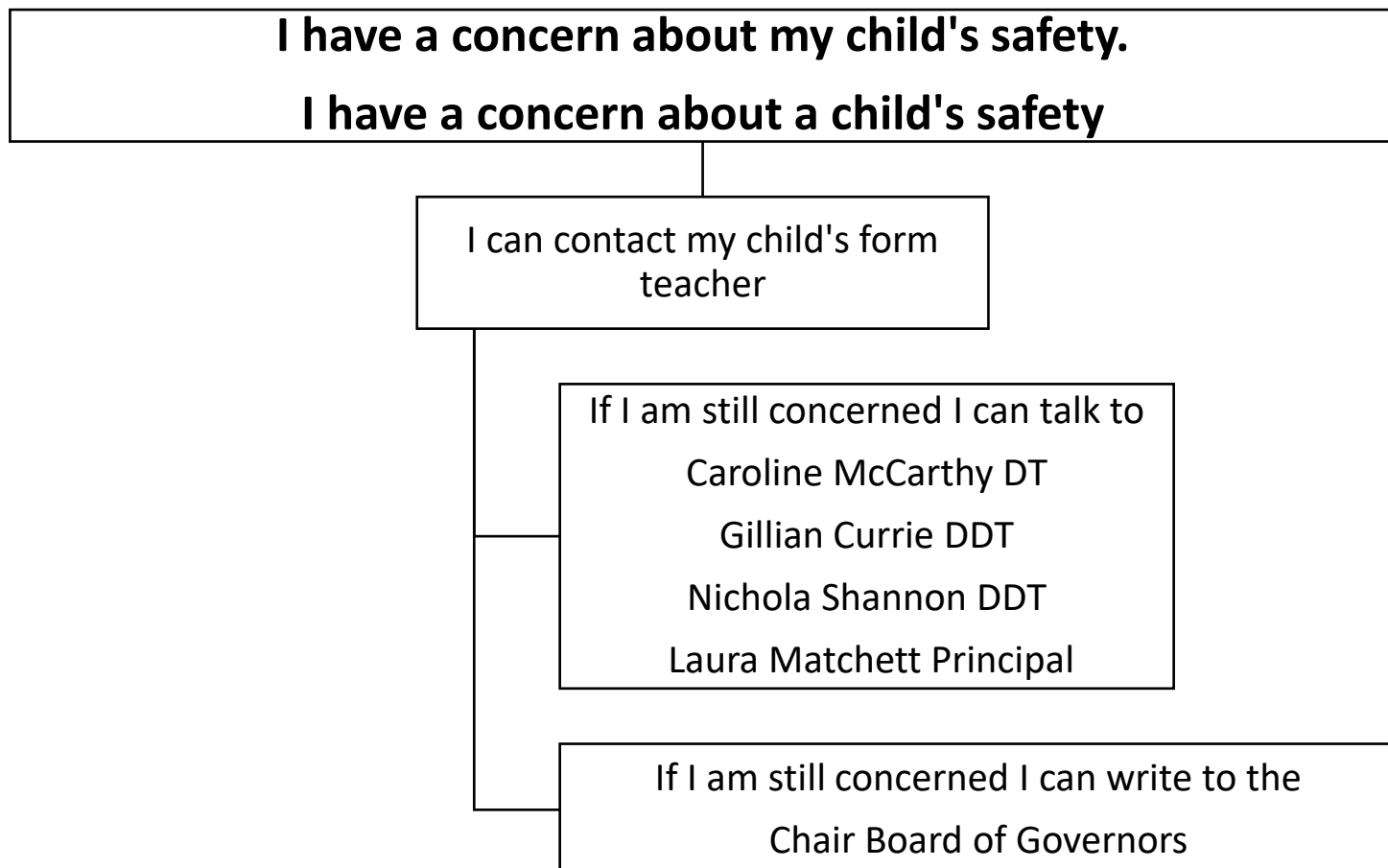
**Holistic Assessment:** Victims of abuse may display emotional or behavioural difficulties, requiring a holistic assessment to determine appropriate supports, referrals or interventions. Rosstulla is recognised as an attachment and trauma informed school and follows the guidance of this practice **See Appendix B**

#### 4.2.4 ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES

Some children and young people have increased risk due to additional vulnerabilities **see Appendix C**

#### 4.3 HOW DOES A PARENT/CARER RAISE A SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

In Rosstulla, we aim to work closely with pupils, parents/carers, support services in supporting all aspects of a child's development and well-being. Any concerns a pupil, parent/carer or other may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.



At any time you can talk to the local services

Children's Services Gateway Belfast Trust

9am – 5pm 028 9050 7000 out-of-hours Emergency: 028 9504 9999

Children's Services Gateway Northern Trust

0300 1234 333 or 028 9442 4459

or the PSNI Central Referral Unit ([cru@psni.police.uk](mailto:cru@psni.police.uk))

### **4.3.1 HOW DOES A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON RAISE A CONCERN ABOUT THEIR SAFETY?**

It is very important to everyone at Rosstulla that you know who you can talk to if you need help, support or want to talk about something that happened and how you feel.

#### **Who can help you?**

Staff in school	Parents	Carer	Guardian
Social Worker	Brother or Sister	Granny/Nanny	Granda
Counsellor	GP	Neighbour	Friends

If you tell a friend or a friend tells you about something that is unsafe, hurts or makes you feel sad, think who you could ask for help and speak to them.

If you feel unhappy or hurt or unsafe you must let people know.

You can tell more than one person.

Someone will always want to help.

Sometimes it can feel confusing.

It is normal for some people to feel confused.

You can always share a secret with someone who can help you.

**You have the right to be safe.**

## 5. RESPONDING TO A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN RAISED

### Remember the 5 Rs

<b>Receive</b>	<b>Reassure</b>	<b>Respond</b>	<b>Record</b>	<b>Refer</b>
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#### **Receive**

Stay calm

Listen to what the child/young person is saying without displaying shock or disbelief.

Ensure that they have the appropriate communication system in place – Makaton, symbols, gesture, or speech or any other the parent or school team may be aware of.

#### **Reassure**

Reassure them that they have done the right thing by talking to you.

Make sure they know that you cannot keep this information a secret – you need to pass this on if they are to be helped.

Reassure them that they are not at fault.

#### **Respond**

Respond to their concerns and establish whether you need to refer the matter to the DT.

Ask the questions – Can you tell me what happened. Is there anything else you want to tell me.? How do you feel.?

Do not ask leading questions e.g. Did \_\_\_\_\_ do this to you.?

Do not criticise anyone named – this can be confusing.

Explain what will happen next (talk with the designated teacher who will know how to get help).

#### **Record**

Make notes as soon as possible after hearing the pupil's disclosure using the Report to the Safeguarding Team Note of Concern (Appendix D) or CPoms

Record everything – date, time, place, people present any particular words used by the pupil.

Record any injuries or marks on the pupil that can be seen.

Record any statement made by the pupil and any observations. Do not interpret or make assumptions.

Create incident on Cpoms or complete & sign the Note of concern and hand to the DT who will copy and keep in the CP locked filing cabinet.

If you have concern about the child/young persons immediate safety let the DT/DDT know as soon as possible that a safeguarding concern has been raised.

### **Refer**

Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated teacher at the earliest opportunity.

The DT may liaise with the Principal and the CPSS (Child Protection Support Service) and will refer to statutory services at the earliest opportunity.

Referrals may be made to Gateway (Social Services), PSNI, Camhs, Family Support Hub and other support groups

### **5.1 Seeking Consent Before Referral**

We will usually seek consent from the parent/carer and/or the young person (if they are able to give it) before making a referral to Social Services.

However, we may not seek consent if doing so could:

- Increase the risk of significant harm to a child, young person, or others,
- Place an adult at risk of serious harm, or
- Interfere with the prevention or investigation of a serious crime.

If consent is sought but not given, we will consider and respect their wishes where possible. However, the safety and welfare of the child or young person is our top priority. We may still make a referral if we believe it is in their best interests based on the information available.

### **5.2 Confidentiality**

Where it is necessary to safeguard a child, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis and will be clearly identified as confidential.

To ensure a child is protected all staff have a responsibility to share relevant information with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies.

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

Information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Child Protection records are stored inline with DE Circular 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping Schools

### **5.3 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse made Against a Member of Staff**

Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures in [DE Circular 2015/13](#) should be followed.

In all decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration and the child should be listened to and their concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed.

Principals and Boards of Governors have a duty of care for the welfare of pupils and any allegation needs to be effectively evaluated and managed. However, as employers, they also have a duty of care to their staff and should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

All allegations should be reported immediately, normally to the Principal or DT/DDT.

## 6. The Preventative Curriculum

The Preventative Curriculum is focused on learning about personal and emotional development, including health, wellbeing, safety and relationships.

At Rosstulla we believe in teaching to help our children and young people stay safe as they grow up and prepare for life after school and navigate the complex world around them.

We aim to empower all our pupils to achieve their full potential.

The provision of a high-quality preventative curriculum provision is crucial to safeguarding children and young people while providing them with the knowledge and information they need to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, beliefs and attitudes.

The Preventative Curriculum covers:

- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE is a statutory part of the curriculum covered within Primary classes through the 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' (PDMU) area of learning, whilst at post-primary level it is covered within 'Learning for Life and Work' (LLW).

Rosstulla believe Relationships and Sexuality Education programmes should be part of life regardless of ability. The focus of this programme is to develop understanding and skills around self, boundaries, personal space, permission, consent and the choices. A clear and factual approach to RSE focused on developing individual understanding of physical and emotional changes will help support self confidence, self esteem and awareness of safety.

Rosstulla use resources provided by CCEA, Informing Choices, HSCT

- Domestic and Sexual Abuse

While it's important to identify those at risk and provide support, it's just as important to teach children and young people how to build healthy behaviours and relationships. They should be given the chance to develop strong mental health and emotional resilience so they can recognise abuse and protect themselves by seeking support.

As a school

Rosstulla use resources provided by CCEA and partnerships with local support services.

- Online safety

It's important for children to learn how to use the internet safely and responsibly.

This includes knowing how to protect themselves and understanding what good online behaviour looks like. With these skills, they can enjoy digital platforms, avoid

risks, and be positive members of the online community.

Rosstulla use resources provided by CCEA, Safer Schools App, UK Safer Internet: Project Evolve.

- Restorative Practice

Restorative practice is about developing positive relationships, which give a greater awareness of feelings and how to express and regulate those feelings, and respond appropriately to the feelings of others.

This is based on key principles:

1. Respect – Valuing everyone’s voice and perspective.
2. Responsibility – Encouraging individuals to take ownership of their actions.
3. Repair – Focusing on making amends and restoring relationships.
4. Reintegration – Supporting individuals to rejoin the community after conflict or harm.
5. Relationship-building – Creating strong, positive connections to prevent conflict.

- Mental health & Regulation

Teaching emotional regulation and mental health awareness from an early age helps prevent the escalation of mental health issues. It equips children and young children with tools to recognize and manage emotions, reducing the likelihood of crisis situations.

Knowledge about mental health empowers young people with learning disabilities to take an active role in their own wellbeing, promoting autonomy and confidence.

## Types of Abuse and Safeguarding Measures

### 1. Grooming:

- Always abusive and exploitative.
- Involves gaining trust to facilitate abuse.
- Can occur face-to-face, online, or through social media.
- Often linked to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Early intervention and multi-agency cooperation are crucial.

#### Signs of Grooming:

Unexplained gifts or possessions: The child may have items they cannot account for.

Changes in behaviour: Sudden changes in behaviour, such as becoming secretive or withdrawn.

Older friends or relationships: Associating with older individuals or having relationships with adults.

Excessive use of the internet: Spending a lot of time online or on social media, especially with secrecy.

Emotional changes: Becoming more emotional, anxious, or depressed.

Physical signs: Unexplained injuries or changes in appearance.

### 2. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):

- A form of child sexual abuse involving coercion or manipulation for sexual activity in exchange for something.
- Can occur without physical contact, through technology.
- Any child can be a victim of CSE regardless of their gender.

#### Potential signs of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Having unexplained amounts of money or clothes, mobile phones etc.

Being involved in criminal activities.

Changes in appearance: Dressing inappropriately for their age or suddenly changing their style.

Unexplained physical injuries or sexually transmitted infections.


Becoming aggressive, disruptive, or engaging in risky behaviours.

Relationships with older individuals: Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.

Substance abuse: Using drugs or alcohol.

Isolation: Becoming isolated from friends and family.

Absence from school: Regularly missing school or being late.



These signs can help identify potential cases of grooming and CSE, allowing for early intervention and support. Social Services and the Police should be involved as early as possible to ensure any evidence that may assist prosecution is not lost and to enable a disruption plan to reduce the victim's contact with the perpetrator(s) and reduce the perpetrator(s) control over the victim to be put in place without delay. If you need more detailed information, you can refer to the full document on the [Department of Education Northern Ireland's website](#)

### 3. Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse:

- Negatively affects a child's well-being – research indicates this includes during pregnancy. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm.
- Defined as controlling, coercive behaviour, or abuse by a partner or family member
- Support services within schools, such as counselling, are essential.

#### **Rosstulla is a part of Operation Encompass:**


- Partnership between police and schools to support children exposed to domestic violence. Police will contact DT/DDT at Rosstulla at the earliest opportunity and share basic details of incidents of Domestic Violence they have attended.
- Rosstulla can provide immediate support and safeguarding within school and can provide advice of support for other family/household members.
- Emphasizes confidentiality and timely communication.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022.](#)

### 4. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

- A form of child abuse and violence against women.
- Involves partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.
- Clear reporting procedures and awareness of legal obligations are necessary.

FGM is a criminal offence and schools have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion. FGM is a complex issue with many men and women from practising communities considering it to be normal to protect their cultural



identity. T

#### 5. **Forced Marriage:**

- Marriage without valid consent, involving duress.
- A criminal offense in Northern Ireland.
- Detailed steps for schools to follow if suspected, including immediate contact with the police.

#### 6. **Harmful Sexualized Behaviour:**

- Behaviour of a sexual nature without informed consent or involving coercion or threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to intimidate the victim.
- Can include:
  - using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases,
  - Inappropriate touching
  - Using sexual violence or threatsIf one of the children is more than 2 years older or one of the children is pre-pubescent or a younger child can abuse an older child if they have power over them, eg. If the older child is disabled.
- May take place in a family home, in school or in the wider community.

School will seek support from EA through the CPSS and may complete a Risk Assessment Management Plan.

#### 7. **E-Safety/Internet Abuse:**

- Staying safe when using digital technologies.
- Schools must teach pupils about online safety and responsible behaviour.
- e-safety policies and regular training are advised.
- If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is not forwarded to anyone else. Schools are not required to investigate incidents but may refer to external agencies including PSNI.
- Information is available for parents/carers and pupils, to improve their e-safety and refer to support agencies/apps, on [Rosstulla Website page](#)

#### 8. **Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes:**

- Sending or posting sexually suggestive images.

- It is illegal to take, possess, or share indecent images of anyone under 18.
- Schools must follow child protection procedures if incidents occur, including reporting to PSNI and Social Services.

Children and young people need to know how to cope if they come across inappropriate material or situations online and should be encouraged to seek help and advice when they need it without fear of censure or criminalisation. The message in Rosstulla is we can't always control what we receive on our phones but we can do something about it – if you are upset, hurt, scared, worried about something you have received report it to an adult as soon as possible.

Advice is available on <https://www.rosstulla.co.uk/parents-and-carers/online-safety/>

## Understanding Attachment and Trauma

**Attachment:** Refers to the emotional bond between a child and their caregiver. Secure attachment is crucial for healthy emotional and social development.

**Trauma:** Involves experiences that overwhelm a child's ability to cope, such as abuse, neglect, or witnessing violence. Trauma can significantly impact a child's development, behaviour and learning.

### 1. Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice

- **Safety:** Ensure physical and emotional safety for all students.
- **Trustworthiness & transparency:** Build trust through clear, consistent communication & actions.
- **Peer support:** Encourage connections and support among students.
- **Collaboration and mutual respect:** Foster teamwork among staff and with students.
- **Empowerment, Voice, and Choice:** Empower students by giving them a voice in their care and education.
- **Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues:** Recognize and address cultural, historical, and gender-related factors.

### 2. Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices

- **Training:** Provide ongoing training for staff on trauma and its effects.
- **Environment:** Create a safe, supportive school environment that minimizes triggers.
- **Policies:** Develop policies that reflect trauma-informed principles, such as Social, Behavioural and Emotional Wellbeing (SBEW) plans & individualized support plans.
- **Support Systems:** Establish systems for identifying and supporting students affected by trauma, including referrals for counselling and mental health services.

### 3. Attachment Informed Practices

- **Relationships:** Prioritise building strong, positive relationships between staff & students.
- **Consistency:** Maintain consistent routines & responses to help students feel secure.
- **Emotional Support:** Provide emotional support and teach coping strategies including individual regulation programmes.
- **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents and caregivers in the school community and support their involvement in their child's education.
- **Whole-School Approach:** Integrate trauma-informed and attachment-aware practices are embedded in Rosstulla's ethos.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly review and assess the effectiveness of policies and practices, making adjustments as needed



## ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES

- **Children with a Disability**

Children with disabilities (learning difficulties, physical, sensory impairments, or significant health conditions) are more vulnerable to abuse. Staff should be aware of communication difficulties and receive training to identify and refer concerns early.

- **Pre-School Provision & children with limited verbal communication**

Young children and those with limited communication skills need special attention and communication support systems. Staff will follow the Intimate Care policy in consultation with parents/carers.

- **Children with Limited Fluency in English**

Children who are not fluent in English should be able to express themselves to staff with appropriate communication aids and support, especially if abuse is suspected. Rosstulla creates a supportive atmosphere for these children. Designated Teachers should seek advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have.

- **Children Looked After (CLA/LAC)**

If a child's welfare cannot be safeguarded at home, they may be placed in alternative care by the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT). The views of the child and their parents/carers should be considered. School staff will attend meetings and provide support as needed. Information will be shared with staff on a need to know basis.

- **Children/Young People Who Go Missing**

Missing children are at greater risk of harm, including abuse and exploitation. Staff should be alert to signs of harm when a child returns. School policies on attendance and safeguarding apply.

- **Young People in Supported Accommodation**

Staff will work with agencies involved with young people leaving care and those in supported accommodation, providing necessary support.



- **Young People Who Are Homeless**

If a young person is homeless, the school will inform Social Services for a comprehensive assessment. The school will contribute to this assessment and attend meetings.

- **Separated, Unaccompanied, and Trafficked Children and Young People**

Separated or unaccompanied children may be victims of trafficking. If suspected, the school will follow safeguarding procedures immediately.

- **Children of Parents with Additional Support Needs**

Children can be affected by the disabilities or additional needs of their carers. Joint working between disability and children's social workers is essential to safeguard these children.

- **Gender Identity Issues and Sexual Orientation**

LGBTQ+ young people may face difficulties making them more vulnerable to harm. Staff will support them in accessing information on healthy relationships and reporting concerns.

- **Work Experience, School Trips, and Educational Visits**

Safeguarding duties extend to times when children are in the school's care outside the school setting. Staff will follow guidance to ensure policies are adhered to and appropriate staffing levels are maintained.

## **Children/Young People's Behaviours**

- **Peer Abuse**

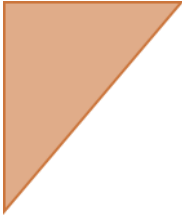
Abuse by peers should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults. Staff should be aware of their responsibilities to both the victims and perpetrators and contribute to a multi-agency response. Rosstulla also has an Addressing Bullying Behaviours Policy.

- **Self-Harm & Self-Injurious Behaviours**

Self-harm includes a range of damaging behaviours and may indicate dysregulation, emotional distress or mental health issues. Concerns should be shared with the safeguarding team for assessment, support may also be available from the Teacher with responsibility for Pupil Support.

- **Suicidal Ideation**

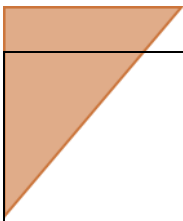
If a child is suicidal, staff must act quickly to ensure they are seen by a qualified professional for urgent assessment and support. The parent/carer must be informed urgently (& Social Worker if identified) and advised to contact their GP.



**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**NOTE OF CONCERN**

**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Student name(s)	Year Group(s)
Date, time of incident / disclosure:	
Circumstances of incident/disclosure:	
Nature & description of concern:	
Parties involved, including any witness(es) to an event / what was said or done and by whom:	
Action taken at the time:	
Details of any advice sought, for whom and when:	
Any further action taken:	
Written report passed to Designated Teacher:      YES      NO <i>(please circle your answer)</i> If "No", state reason:	



Date and time of report to Designated Teacher:

Written note from staff member placed on student's Child Protection file      YES      NO  
*(please circle)*

Name of staff member making the report: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of staff member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional report attached (please tick)