

# ST BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy



Learning and Growing Together

Reviewed with Staff- August 2021

Ratified by Governors-

Signed by Chair of Governors

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## **Our Child Protection/Safeguarding Mission Statement:**

We in St Brigid's Primary School have a pastoral and legal responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our children will grow in self-confidence, learn and develop to their full potential.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching are alert to the signs of possible abuse and 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.

## **Definition of Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection.

Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm<sup>1</sup>.

(DoH 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children & Young People' 2017)

## **Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, "Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

## **The following Principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy:**

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount.
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard.
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together.
- Partnership- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility.
- Prevention- The importance of preventing problems occurring or worsening.
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances.
- Protection- Children should be safe from harm.
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

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<sup>1</sup> Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

## **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:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Drugs Policy
- Educational Visits
- E-Safety Policy
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care
- Managing a Critical Incident
- Pastoral Care
- Privacy Notices
- Records Management policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Volunteers & Visitors Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

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

## **Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools**

Everyone in education plays a part in keeping children and young people safe from harm and abuse. All staff in our school, both teaching and non-teaching, have a crucial responsibility to ensure the protection and welfare of children in their care. This also extends to any volunteers accepted to work in our school during hours when pupils are on the premises.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Board of Governors**

The NI Order 2003 places a statutory duty on Boards of Governors to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- Have a written Child Protection Policy.
- Specifically address the prevention of bullying in school behaviour management policies.

- To fulfil their responsibilities BOGs are obligated to acknowledge and work within the relevant guidance and procedural documents that have been produced by DE and DOH.

The Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A designated governor for child protection is appointed.
- A designated and deputy designated teacher are appointed in the school.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the designated and deputy designated teachers for child protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a child protection policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an anti-bullying policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The school ensures that other safe guarding policies are reviewed at least every three years, or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circulars 2012/19 & 2013/01.
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools:
  - Safeguarding and child protection concerns.
  - Disclosures of abuse.
  - Allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes.
  - Staff induction and training.

## **School Safeguarding Team**

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

- Chair of the Board of Governors -**Mr Brendan Smyth**
- Designated Governor for Child Protection -**Mrs Patricia Martin**
- Principal - **Mrs Dolores Miller**
- Designated Teacher - **Mrs Lynsey Devlin**
- Deputy Designated Teachers - **Mrs Dolores Miller**
- ICT Co-ordinator- **Miss Vanessa Cunningham**
- SENCO- **Mrs Grainne Mc Namara**

This safeguarding team is a vehicle for ensuring effective co-ordination and co-operation between the key individuals responsible for safeguarding throughout the school.

The responsibilities of the team will include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school.
- Support for the Designated Teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training- including refresher training- in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.
- Review child protection/safeguarding practices annually using the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) pro-forma entitled 'Guidance for the evaluation of child protection/safeguarding.'

## **Chair of Board of Governors**

The chair of the board of governors has a pivotal role in creating and maintaining a safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

In the event of a safeguarding and 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. The chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries.

## **Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The BoG delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to be able to advise the board of 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.

## **Principal**

The Principal as the Secretary to the Board of Governors will assist the Board of Governors to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties by:

- Informing the Governors of any changes to guidance, procedures or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring that any circulars and guidance from Department of Education is shared promptly.
- Ensuring that child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings. (termly updates & annual report)
- Assuming the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal has delegated responsibility for:

- Establishing and managing the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection within the school.
- Appointing and managing designated teacher/deputy designated teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction process.
- Ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy or summary of the child protection policy at intake and at a minimum every 2 years.

## Designated Teacher

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. Their role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school; and
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection in line with DE circular 2020/07.

## The Deputy Designated Teacher

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities.

It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that she may develop sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required.

## Other members of school staff

All staff have a responsibility to safeguard and protect children. Teachers, Classroom Assistants and other Support Staff see children on a daily basis over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and a child may choose to disclose to them allegations of abuse. They should remember the 5 Rs: **Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record** and **Refer**.

All staff must:

- Refer concerns to the Designated/ Deputy teacher for Child Protection.
- Listen to what is being said and support the child.

- Act promptly.
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures.
- Should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions.
- Avail of whole school training and relevant training safeguarding children.

Class teachers should complete the note of concern if there are safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.

## Parents

**The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.**

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by becoming familiar with the following policies: Attendance Policy, Behaviour Management and Discipline policy, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying policy, Safe Handling, Special Educational Needs, First Aid and Administration of Medicines, Health and Safety Policy, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Intimate Care, E-Safety Policy and Educational visits.

Parents should inform 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 and sending in a note on the child's return to school.
- If they have concerns, in relation to their child with the school.
- Of their up to date contact details.

## How a Parent Can Raise a Concern (Appendix 1.Flow Chart)

In St Brigid's Primary School, we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their 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, Designated Teacher (Mrs Devlin) and the Deputy Designated Teachers (Mrs Miller).

If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. If after this a parent still has concerns, they can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman.

At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit.

## **Safe Recruitment Procedures**

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system. For all reasonable steps to be taken to employ and engage suitable staff to work with the children in our care, we follow the guidance provided by the Department of Education on pre-employment checking and safe recruitment practices. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in St Brigid's Primary School are inducted in our Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an Enhanced Disclosure Check. Those volunteers who work under supervision are not required to have an EDC. In St Brigid's we ensure that volunteers, eg coaches, music tutors etc have the necessary clearance in place.

### **Visitors**

Visitors to St Brigid's, such as parents (members of the PTA), suppliers of goods and services to carry out maintenance etc do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors will be managed by the staff of St Brigid's and their access to areas and movement within the school will be restricted as needs required.

- Visitors will be met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school by school staff.
- If appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school.
- Where possible, escorted by a member of staff/representative.
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- If delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

## **Conduct for Staff**

The protection and promotion of the welfare of children and young people is a responsibility for all members of staff, teaching & non-teaching. 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 conduct. It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the educator sector. The Code cannot address every possible circumstance in which staff might find themselves, however it is intended that staff will be mindful of the Code which will raise awareness of issues and situations which can potentially arise. 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 safe practice.

**(The school's Code of Conduct is available on request)**

## What is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in communities, agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Child abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse. Those working with children and young people must have an awareness and understanding of the nature and prevalence of different manifestations within their practise area.

It is always preferable to prevent abuse, or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Through their day-to-day contact with individual children, staff at St Brigid's are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development.

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm. '**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 (NI) Order 1995.

Staff at St Brigid's should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations including reporting of offences – Section 5 of the **Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence. This includes crimes against children.

Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, they must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher who has specific responsibility for child protection.

It is imperative that any disclosure of a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk is reported **immediately** to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk of the child at home.

Pupils who are the victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties which may require a Holistic assessment of needs to determine appropriate level and type of intervention.

## Types of Abuse

Child abuse may take a number of forms, including:

**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.

**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.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or 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.

**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 emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity 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.

**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, and 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.

*The definitions above are from Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI (2017)*

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities, but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.

## **Signs & Symptoms of Abuse    See Appendix 2**

### **Child Abuse in Other Specific Circumstances**

**Grooming** of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

If the staff in St Brigid's become aware of signs that may indicate grooming, they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures.

Staff should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children and may be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given, and advice should be sought to consider if these young people should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm and referrals made to the appropriate agencies.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017)

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.

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

### **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse**

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, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.

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).' (Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland a Seven Year Strategy: March 2016).

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

If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

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

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practise is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

FGM is a form of child abuse and as such, staff at St Brigid's have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies through agreed and established school procedures.

**Forced Marriage** is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and if the staff of St Brigid's has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, the Child Protection Support Services (CPSS) will be contacted immediately.

### **Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour**

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. As a school we support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however the staff of St Brigid's will consider its appropriateness within a school setting. Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2016/05 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

## **Harmful Sexualised Behaviour**

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

- Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Using sexual violence or threats.

Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if:

- one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age
- or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern.

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

## **Bullying** (See Anti-Bullying Policy)

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St Brigid's Primary School. Cyber-bullying is considered within the schools overall Anti-Bullying Policy. 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.

## **E safety/Internet abuse**

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In St Brigid's, children search the internet using a filtered internet service provided by C2K. Pupils are taught to follow SMART Tips produced by Northern Ireland Area Child Protection Committee and participate in Safer Internet Day annually. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of online safety issues and can demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like.

St Brigid's audits their current online safety provision using the 360 degree safe website as recommended in DE Circular 2016/27 Online Safety. All teaching and non-teaching staff can recognise and are aware of online safety risks. Online safety messages are integrated across the curriculum for pupils in all Key Stages. All pupils and their parents are asked to agree to an acceptable usage of internet policy and a digital and video images of pupils' agreement prior to any internet use or images be taken. Our ICT Co-ordinator Miss Cunningham, is a member of our safeguarding team, where she actively promotes internet safety. 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.

**Sexting** is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

### **Sexting between individuals in a relationship**

Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. We may also seek advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

While offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of a sexual image.

### **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress**

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is not forwarded to anyone else. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent.

If a child has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures of the school will be followed.

### **Children with Increased Vulnerabilities ( APPENDIX 3)**

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

### **Talking to Children where there are Concerns about Possible Abuse (APPENDIX 4)**

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's non-teaching staff see such signs, he/she should immediately bring them to the attention of the either the class teacher or the Designated Teacher, and it may be appropriate for the necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher.

Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family are in need of intervention by statutory, voluntary or community- based services through a 'child in need' referral (with parental consent).

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child is makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some circumstances talking to the child will quickly clarify initial

concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred and point to the need for an immediate referral. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore be kept to a minimum.

- Staff should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- Staff should not therefore, ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?".
- The priority at this stage is to actively listen to the child and not to interrupt or try to interrupt if he/she is freely recalling significant events, and as soon as possible afterwards to make a record of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher using the template Note of Concern. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail.
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used.
- Staff should not give the child or young person undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should of course, reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.
- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.
- Staff should not ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

### **Child displaying Symptoms of, or School alerted to, Possible Abuse (APPENDIX 5)**

In all cases where symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or the welfare of the child, the teacher or other member of staff should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher. A parent or carer may also give information to a member of staff of the school, or by a person working in the school in a volunteering capacity. **The person making the complaint should be advised of their responsibility to refer to the Local Health and Social Trust Gateway Team the school must identify who the concern was made by when referring to Gateway.** The staff member should also inform the Designated Teacher responsible for child protection matters in the school who will refer, if necessary, to the appropriate statutory authorities.

In order to form a view on whether a child or children may indeed be being abused, or at risk of possible abuse, the Principal or 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 Principal or Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the CPSS-Designated Officer for Child Protection at the EA.

## **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse made Against a Member of Staff (Appendix 6)**

Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures in DENI Circular 2015/13 will be followed.

In all decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration and the child should be listened to and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed. In some cases, this may require consideration of suspension as a precautionary measure.

The Principal and BoG have a duty of care for the welfare of pupils and any allegations need 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**, to Mrs Miller the Principal who will be the Lead Individual and handle the management of the allegation from the onset. If a complaint is made against the Principal, Mrs Devlin the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of governors Mr B. Smyth who will be the Lead Individual and he will assure that necessary action is taken.

In the interest of all involved the issue should be dealt with as a priority and unnecessary delays should be avoided. Every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity must be made. Allegations should not be shared with other staff or children.

All allegations of a child abuse nature **must** be recorded in the hard backed and bound Record of Child Abuse Complaints book which must be retained securely. A record of this should be placed on the relevant pupil's Child Protection File in line with recommendations in DENI Circular 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

### **Process for Referral**

Responsibility for referral of suspected abuse cases lies with the Designated Teacher who will have a good working relationship with colleagues from other agencies, especially Social Services and the Police. Understanding the needs of children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) is a framework to support professionals in assessment and planning to better the needs of children and their family.

The UNOCINI model is used to enable practitioners and their agencies to communicate their concerns about children using a common format, language and understanding of the level of need, concern or risk for all children across Northern Ireland.

The UNOCINI assessment framework is intended to be used by all professionals working with children as a tool to help them identify the needs of children at an early stage.

The UNOCINI referral form must be completed whenever staff wish to refer a child or young person to children's social service for support, safeguarding or a fuller assessment of a child's needs.

If the Designated Teacher, Principal or DDT is concerned that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, then an **urgent** referral to children's social service through the local Gateway Service must be made.

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person, or others at increased risk or 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 consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

In instances where consent is sought but refused, a referral should be made, and a record maintained of the reason for that decision and the action taken.

## **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. Where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

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

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

## **Record Keeping**

In accordance with DE circular 2020/07 guidance we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in St Brigid’s are stored in a secure confidential filing cabinet which is only accessible to the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal. In accordance with DE circular 20/07 on the disposal of child protection records, these records will be stored from child’s date of birth plus 30 years. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriate password protected.

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

*Please refer to Appendix 4 for recording pro-formas used to record concerns.*

## **Physical Contact with Pupils/Safe Handling/Use of Reasonable Force**

Our policy on ‘Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling’, by staff is set out in a separate policy, in accordance with guidelines from EA, CCMS and DE circular 21/13. The Code of Conduct makes it clear that

whilst, as a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children and young people, it is also unnecessary and unrealistic to suggest that physical contact should only happen in emergencies. As a general rule, when physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in schools may occur most often with younger pupils, for example, physical comforting can give welcome reassurance to a distressed younger child.

In extreme cases, a staff member might have to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him or her from committing an offence, from causing injury to him or herself, to others or to property, or otherwise from behaving in an undisciplined way. Staff are empowered to use reasonable force in these circumstances, either on school premises or anywhere else where the member of staff is in lawful charge of the pupil concerned. In such instances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used. The overarching principle is that the best interests of the child should guide all decisions taken by staff in relation to children in their care. Staff should act within the Department's and the Education Authority's (EA) guidelines on the use of reasonable force and should seek to avoid causing injury to the pupil.

## **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.

## **School trips and Educational visits**

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

## **The Preventative Curriculum**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communications with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. The personal development curriculum and wellbeing of pupils has a high priority in the school development plan and keeping safe messages are embedded throughout the school.

Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

An awareness of "stranger danger"; an understanding of how to respond to perceived threats; care in regards to e-safety; and the development of standards of behaviour that are appropriate for primary school children are all reinforced through the school's work on PDMU within the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

In the classroom, regular Circle Time sessions are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. We also have a safeguarding display outside the front office which provides information about our safeguarding team for both pupils and parents.

Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues include:

- The whole school participates in Safer Internet Day
- Internet Safety Workshop for parents and children (PSNI)
- The NSPCC regularly visits the school and provided information on a range of child protection issues through Assemblies, talks, role – plays, puppets shows and resources.
- Participation of Time for Me Programme through Barnardos.
- The whole school participates in “Anti -Bullying Week” activities (NIABF).
- The whole school participates in Mental Health Day.
- Thought Box which encourages pupils to write down their concerns
- Primary five pupils take part in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service talks on Fire Safety.
- Participation in Action Cancer for Schools programme
- Participation in the Daily Mile programme (Local Health Trust)
- Participation in the ‘Sustrans’ programme.
- Use of the PATHS programme and the associated activities
- RSE Curriculum
- Family Support Hub and
- Our educational psychology service.

## **Staff training**

St Brigid’s Primary school is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and procedure with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection/safeguarding training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Deputy Designated Teacher, Designated Teacher; Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses. Child Protection training for school governors has three specific strands-

- 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 in order that they can assist the full Board of Governors with their child protection governance. This is completed during each term in office (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 appointment panels

## Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the safeguarding team 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 Schools Safeguarding Team. The board of governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the designated teacher.

## Amendments

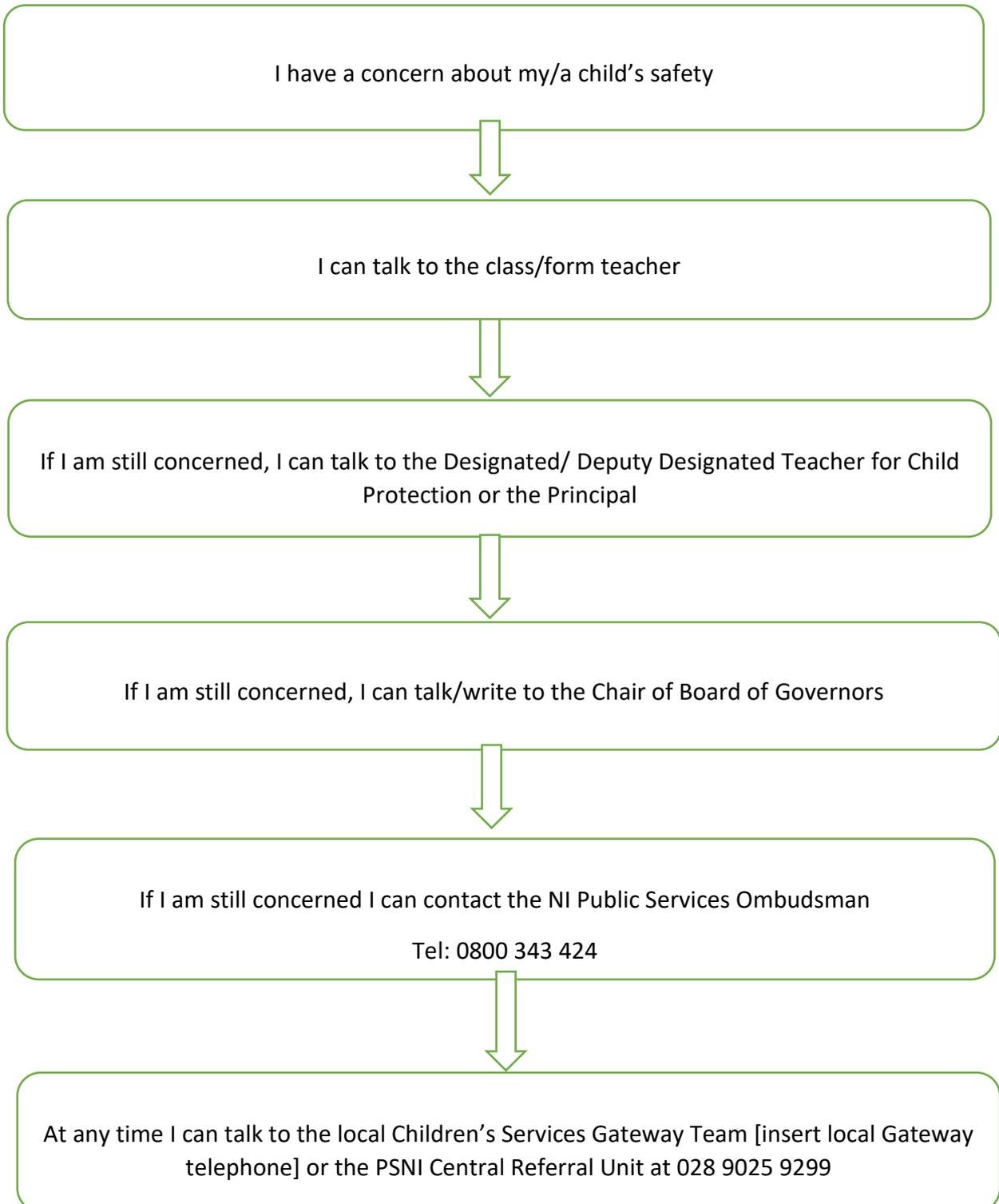
Date of Review		Updates
Last Reviewed	August 2018	
Reviewed	January 2019	<p>Updated to Acknowledge:            Change in Staffing            The Public Service Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016            The revised edition of CPSS School Governors Handbook Cooperating to Safeguard Children &amp; Young People In NI (DOH 2017)            Reference the circulars consulted in developing the policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DE Circular 2016/05 Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour</li> <li>• DE Circular 2016/20 Record Keeping in schools</li> <li>• DE Circular 2016/26 Effective educational uses of mobile digital devices</li> <li>• DE Circular 2016/27 Online Safety</li> <li>• DE Circular 2017/04 Child Protection/pastoral care</li> <li>• DE Circular 2018/08 The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</li> </ul>
Reviewed	February 2020	<p>Updated to acknowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DENI Circular Revised 2017/04 issued September 2019 Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools -</li> </ul>
Reviewed	August 2020	<p>Updated to acknowledge:            Impact of Covid 19 Pandemic</p>
Reviewed	August 2021	<p>Updated to acknowledge:            Changes in Safeguarding Team            Participation in Operation Encompass            Reference the circulars consulted in developing the policy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DE Circular-2020/07- Record Keeping in Schools</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DE Circular 2021/13 Interim guidance on the use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings.</li></ul>
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## Appendix 1

### How a Parent can Raise a Concern

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:



## Appendix 2

### Identifying signs and symptoms of abuse

All staff – teaching and non –teaching, especially lunchtime supervisor and ancillary or auxiliary staff – should be alert to any outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. These symptoms may be due to a variety of causes including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse and accidental injuries such as bruising to any part of the body.

<b>Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:</b>	<b>Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Constant hunger/cramming food/storing food</li> <li>• Inadequate/inappropriate clothing</li> <li>• Constant tiredness</li> <li>• Exposed to danger/ lack of adequate supervision</li> <li>• Untreated illness</li> <li>• Lack of peer relationships</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing/begging</li> <li>• Chronic poor attendance (without valid cause)</li> <li>• Inappropriate attachment/clinginess</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying of others</li> <li>• Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn</li> <li>• Difficulty in forming/maintain relationships with others</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Signs of mutilation/self-harm</li> <li>• Attention seeking</li> <li>• Chronic runaway/frequent absconding</li> <li>• Wetting and soiling</li> <li>• Sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>
<b>Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:</b>	<b>Possible signs or symptoms of domestic abuse include:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruise in places difficult to see/mark e.g. behind ears, groin</li> <li>• Human bite marks, welts or bald spots</li> <li>• Unexplained lacerations, fractions or abrasions</li> <li>• Untreated injuries</li> <li>• Self-destructive tendencies</li> <li>• Chronic runaway/frequent absconding</li> <li>• Fear of going home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They may become anxious or depressed.</li> <li>• They may have difficulty sleeping.</li> <li>• They may have nightmares or flashbacks.</li> <li>• They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches.</li> <li>• They may start to wet their bed.</li> <li>• They may have temper tantrums.</li> <li>• They may behave as though they are much younger than they are.</li> <li>• They may have problems at school, or may start truanting.</li> <li>• They may become aggressive.</li> <li>• They may internalise their distress and withdraw from other people.</li> <li>• They may have a lowered sense of self-worth.</li> <li>• Older children may start to use alcohol or drugs.</li> <li>• They may begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves.</li> <li>• They may develop an eating disorder.</li> </ul>
<b>Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruised or sore genitals</li> <li>• Genital infection</li> <li>• Difficulty in walking or sitting</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Chronic Depression</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Personality changes</li> <li>• Fear of going home/absconding</li> <li>• Acquiring money or belongings without explanation</li> </ul>	

Possible signs or symptoms of CSE	Warning signs within the school environment for Forced Marriage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation</li> <li>• Truancing/leaving school without permission</li> <li>• Persistently going missing or returning late.</li> <li>• Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving.</li> <li>• Change in mood-agitated/stressed</li> <li>• Appearing distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.</li> <li>• Physical symptoms e.g bruising; bite marks</li> <li>• Collected from schools by unknown adults or taxis.</li> <li>• New peer groups</li> <li>• Significant older boyfriend or girlfriend</li> <li>• Increasing secretiveness around behaviours.</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)</li> <li>• Self-harm and other expressions of despair</li> <li>• Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence and persistent absence.</li> <li>• Request for extended leave or absence/ failure to return from visits to country of origin.</li> <li>• Surveillance by siblings or cousins.</li> <li>• Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.</li> <li>• Poor exam results</li> <li>• Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home.</li> <li>• Not allowed to attend extra curricular activities.</li> <li>• Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger.</li> <li>• Prevented from going on to further/higher education.</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 3 Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

- **Children with a disability**

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

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

- **Children with limited fluency in English**

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

Designated Teachers should work with their SEN co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer pupils, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. All schools should try to create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

- **Looked After Children**

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

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

- **Children who go missing**

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

or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

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

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

- **Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children**

Separated children are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver. Unaccompanied children and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.

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

If we become aware of a child who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking we in St Brigid's will immediately follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures

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

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

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

- **Gender identity issues and sexual orientation**

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

- **Residential settings**

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

## **Children's behaviours**

- **Peer Abuse**

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

- **Self-Harm**

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

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however, this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

- **Suicidal Ideation**

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child or young person who presents as being suicidal as it is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

## Appendix 4

### CONFIDENTIAL

#### NOTE OF CONCERN

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

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:
Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:

Any further action taken:
Written report passed to Designated Teacher:                      Yes:                      No: If 'No' state reason:
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file  Yes                      No  If 'No' state reason:

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

Signature of Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5

### Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.

Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.



Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.



Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required, advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.



#### **Child Protection referral is required**

Designated Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

#### **Child Protection referral is not required**

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children's Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person's consent (where appropriate).

Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/ parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.



Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

## Appendix 6

### Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

#### Key Points

Lead individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of BoG as appropriate.



#### Guidance on the Next Steps

Lead individual then establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.



#### Possible Outcomes

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or BoG to agree a way forward from the options below.



Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.



Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.



Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed



Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed

## Appendix 7

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Should any adult in the school find themselves in the rare position of being the only adult in the school and in need of immediate safeguarding advice, they should use the contacts below (in the given order) to seek help.

Child Protection Support Service (9am-5pm)	028 95985590
Duty Social Worker (South Eastern)	0300 1000 300
Out of Hours Duty Social Worker (all areas)	028 9025 9299
Childline:	0800 1111
Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline NSPCC:	0800 389 1701
PSNI: (8am-6pm Mon-Fri; 9am-5pm Weekend and public holidays)	02890 259299
24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline:	08088021414
NSPCC Adult Helpline:	08088005000 Text: 88858
Regional Emergency Social Work Services (RESWS) 5pm-9pm Mon-Thu; 5pm on Friday to 9am on Monday	028 95049999