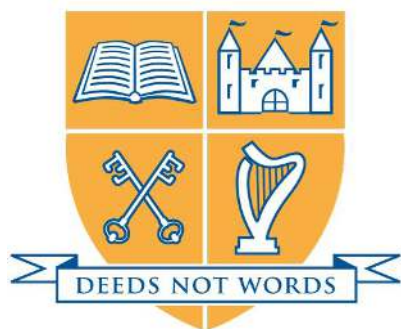




**ST. TERESA'S**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

# **PASTORAL CARE**

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**



Date Approved by Board of Governors: November 2023

Next Policy Review Date: November 2024

## **1. Child Protection Ethos ~**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

As a “Rights Respecting School”, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is at the centre of our ethos, policy, practice and planning, particularly in the area of child protection and safeguarding children, with specific reference to Article 19 where the child has the right to be protected from hurt or being badly treated.

The area of child protection is one of the most sensitive areas of a school’s policy. The overriding aim of protecting the child has to be tempered by the need to be even handed and professional in the school’s approach to everyone concerned.

The policy of St. Teresa’s Primary School, Belfast which follows has been developed in consultation with the Safe Guarding and Child Protection in Schools, A Guide for Schools, DENI (DENI Circular 17/04 – updated); CCMS; DE circulars and with the whole school staff. At this school, every member of staff, whether teaching or non-teaching, knows that they have a duty to be aware of child protection issues and to follow the child protection procedures laid down if they have concerns.

As a school we recognise how Article 18(1)(c) places a duty on the Board of Governors of a grant-aided school to have regard to the Statutory Guidance when determining the measures to be taken at the school (by the Board of Governors, the staff of the school or other persons) to protect pupils from physical or mental abuse, whether at school or elsewhere.

We in St. Teresa’s have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

### **1.2 DILEMMAS IN WORKING TOGETHER IN CHILD PROTECTION**

Child Protection involves different services and agencies working towards a common goal, which may engender misunderstanding, lack of communication and other inter-agency tensions.

- There is no shared body of knowledge, for example about how ‘significant harm’ is defined, what is ‘good parenting’, what are the ‘needs of children’ - every individual may have his/her own view.

- As people we all subject to our own traumas, feelings, fears and anxieties which can get in the way when dealing with a child protection issue.
- We have to balance our responsibilities to individual children, the school and ourselves.
- Knowing when something amounts to child abuse.
- Knowing when to share it with someone else.
- Being aware of when it is appropriate to contact other agencies e.g. Social Services, NSPCC or the PSNI.
- Knowing when to involve the parents.
- Having concerns that the child may feel you've betrayed a trust.
- Being concerned about the possible consequences of your actions, for breaking up a family.
- Fear of being wrong.

## **2. Principles**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safe Guarding and Child Protection in Schools- A Guide for Schools"(DENI Circular 17/04 - updated), the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005), Co- operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016), Safeguarding Board Act Northern Ireland (2011).

We also recognise the updates made to the Key Principles in relation to child protection and safeguarding and how the term 'staff' refers to all staff, permanent or temporary, paid, unpaid, teaching/non-teaching and volunteers.

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

- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.

## **3. Other Relevant Policies**

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

- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Pastoral Care
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs

- Educational Visits
- First Aid & Administration of Medicines
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Intimate Care
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- E-Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- School Complaints Procedure
- Managing Persistent and Vexatious Complaints.

**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.stteresasprimary.org](http://www.stteresasprimary.org).**

#### **4. Roles And Responsibilities**

##### **4.1 The School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors: Dr D Hanna
- Designated Governor for Child Protection: Mrs R Deane
- Principal: Mr T Rodgers
- Designated Teacher: Mr M McSwiggan
- Deputy Designated Teacher: Mr T Rodgers (Mainstream School)
- Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs O Conlon (Speech and Lanaguage Centre)

The main role of the team is to:

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

The roles and responsibilities of individual members of the Safeguarding team are summarised in **Appendix 1**.

##### **4.2 The Board of Governors**

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

- Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A DT and DDT are appointed in their schools.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the DT and DDTs 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 (see Section 4.3 for more details).
- 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) 20162.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies, see Section 10, 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 (see Section 4.8 for more details).
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19 (currently under review) and DE Circular 2013/01 (currently under review)
- 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 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools:

### 4.3 School Staff

Teachers, Classroom Assistants and other Support staff in school 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.

Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal. In addition class teachers should also keep the Designated Teacher informed in writing or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse. All safeguarding and child protection concerns are recorded using the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS). All concerns are automatically brought to the attention of the DT/DDT via this system.

If a member of staff does not feel their concerns are being taken seriously or action to safeguard the child is not being taken by professionals and the child is considered to be at risk of continuing harm then they should speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Principal, Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or to Social Services.

#### **4.4 Parents**

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's well-being;
- making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;(primary schools only)
- familiarising themselves with the schools safeguarding policies e.g. Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the school office when they visit the school
- sharing any concerns they may have in relation to their child with the school.

#### **5 Internet safety**

We in St. Teresa's recognise that the Internet has enormous potential both as a tool for teaching, and supporting teachers and pupils in their work, as well as providing a forum for interacting with a wider peer group.

We also recognise that with access to the Internet comes the availability of material that may not be of educational value to our school and guidelines for its use must be strictly adhered to by all users. Therefore, staff and parents/guardians (on behalf of pupils) will be required to read and sign a statement on the acceptable use of the Internet. Pupils are made aware of the rules of internet usage. As part of the curriculum they are taught about safe and responsible practices regarding its use. No child is allowed internet access unless supervised by an adult.

##### **5a Mobile phones and other digital technologies**

The school is very aware of the dangers of mobile phones and other digital technologies. Having consulted DENI Circular 2007/01 parents have been advised that it would be highly recommended that no child brings a mobile phone to school. Parents must complete a consent form if they wish their child to bring a mobile phone to school.

##### **5a(i) Mobiles Phones - Pupils**

We discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones to school. If pupils bring mobile phones to school, the phone must be handed into the class teacher and switched off during the whole school day. Where a pupil is found, by a member of staff, to be using a mobile phone it will be removed and kept by the class teacher. The child's parent/guardian must come to collect the phone from the class teacher.

#### 5b(ii) Mobile Phones – Teaching Staff

During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' mode, except in urgent or exceptional situations. Mobile phones should always be kept in a secure place and should not be left lying around. Personal mobile phones should not be used to make phone calls to pupils.

#### 5c(iii) Mobile Phones – Non-Teaching Staff

The above guidelines apply during working hours.

### **6 Anti-Bullying**

The school's 'Anti-Bullying' policy states very clearly that pupils have a right to learn, free from intimidation and fear and that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. It is reviewed, on an annual basis, by the Board of Governors. Parents will receive a copy of the school's 'Anti-Bullying' policy.

### **7. Definition of Harm**

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals

#### **(Co-operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017)**

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation

The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child. The main types of abuse as well as their physical and behavioural indicators are included in **appendix 3**.

## **8. Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse**

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

**Receive** – listen actively, calmly, with open body language and accept in a non-judgemental way to what the child says, without displaying shock or disbelief.

**Reassure**- “You’ve done the right thing by coming to me” reassure the child that you have listened and hear what they are saying. **No promise of confidentiality can or should be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.**

**Respond**- Use open questions e.g. anything else to tell me? Do not interrogate or ask leading questions- this may invalidate your evidence and the child’s in any later court proceedings. Do not criticise the perpetrator- the child may love this person and reconciliation may be possible. Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk. Ensure the child is ok before leaving

**Report**- refer the matter to the Designated Teacher/D.D.T/Principal. Respect confidentiality i.e. the matter should only be discussed on a need to know basis

**Record**- make notes at the time and write these up as soon as possible afterwards using the record of concern using CPOMS. Note the time, date, place, people present as well as what *is seen and* said. Record key phrases/words used, noticeable non-verbal behaviour and any physical injuries. Under no circumstances should a child be photographed or a child’s clothing removed. Do not destroy original notes.

**Respect**-The child and their family and their right to a non-judgemental and confidential response.

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

### **9.1 How a Parent can make a Complaint**

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, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **appendix 4**.

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

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

member of staff must act promptly. **He/she should not investigate**- this is a matter for Social Services- but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.

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 and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. He/she will discuss the matter with the Principal and may also seek advice or clarification from the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or from Social Services (Gateway Team). Where it is evident that a young person has been or is at risk of being abused and/or a criminal offence may have been committed then the school must make a referral.

Referrals to Social Services will be made by telephone in the first instance and within 24 hours will be followed by the completion of a UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form. If a referral is made a copy of the UNOCINI referral form should be sent to the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection. A copy of the UNOCINI form will be placed in the school's child protection file.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **appendix 5**.

### **9.3 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff or a Volunteer**

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal then the Designated Teacher should be informed and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in **appendix 6** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance (DE Circular 2015/13).

## **10.Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Other Social Services Meetings**

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences, core group or family support planning meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. Attendees will be informed by the 'Signs of Safety Model' before attending a case conference. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with their child protection plan.

## **11. Consent from Pupils and Parents**

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) 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 of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person has been sought and is withheld we will consider and where possible respect their wishes. However our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

## **12. 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. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

## **13. Record Keeping**

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE policy on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child’s date of birth plus 35 years as per (DE Circular 2020/07 Child Protection:Record Keeping in Schools)

## **14. Preventative Curriculum**

The school seeks to promote pupils’ awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school’s personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional, and health issues, developing the confidence, resiliencies and coping skills of pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing certain difficulties.

Schools are well-placed to teach pupils how to develop healthy relationships, and to make informed choices in their lives so that they can protect themselves.

This is achieved in St Teresa’s Primary School using the following Strategies:

- **Class and school assemblies including awards e.g. star of Month, Attendance, AR, Freckle, Amazing Author.**

- **Playground Buddies**
- **Anti-Bullying Week.**
- **Media Initiative**
- **PATHS Programme**
- **Zones of Regulation**
- **Nurture in 5**
- **Helping Hands Programme**
- **Solas Back on Track Programme**
- **Roots of Empathy**
- **Operation Encompass**
- **Class Calm Corners**
- **Shared Education programme with Peace Players NI**
- **Worries, Thoughts and Suggestions Boxes in class and foyer**
- **Circle Time**
- **Right's Respecting School's**
- **Global Citizenship- China/Uganda Links, Trocaire campaign, charitable works**
- **Student Council**
- **Pupil's Attitudes to School's Survey**
- **Internet Safety Programme including internet safety day.**
- **Relationships and Sexual Education Programme- Flourish**
- **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Programme**
- **Outside agency support including-PSNI, NSPCC, Tullymore Community Forum**
- **Healthy Eating Policy**
- **Extended School's Programme**
- **Walk to School Week**
- **SUSTRANS Programme**
- **Prize Giving Ceremony**

## **15. Recruitment and Vetting of Staff and Volunteers**

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system. As a school we ensure that all persons on school property are supervised and vetted as appropriate if they are engaged in regulated activity. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the School are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

The school will ensure that the following groups will have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from Access NI before taking up post:

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

## **Volunteers**

There are two types of volunteers working in schools: those who work unsupervised and those who work under supervision. 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.

### **Visitors to Schools**

Visitors to schools, such as parents, 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 are managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school is 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.

### **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. Schools should apply through their AccessNI Registered Body in advance. Pupils coming into the school on work experience do not require AccessNI clearance as they are required to be fully supervised by school staff. The normal child protection induction processes should apply.

## **16. Code Of Conduct For all Staff Paid Or Unpaid**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which is included as **Appendix 2** to this policy.

## **17. Staff Training**

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal, Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend child protection training courses specific to their roles which is provided by the Education Authority's Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

## **18. Specific Issues Relating to the School**

### **Sure Start**

Sure Start occupy one corridor in St Teresa's PS. To ensure that staff and visiting adults and children do not come into contact with children in the school, doors are closed between Sure Start and the Primary School. However as this is a fire door, it cannot be locked. Sure Start Staff should not gain access to the Primary School without prior permission and under supervision. Equally staff in St Teresa's must seek permission to gain access to Sure Start. All Sure Start Staff have appropriate EDC checks in place. Any visiting adults in Sure Start are under strict supervision by Sure Start Staff. Entry to Sure Start is via coded access panel. Adults visiting Sure Start are only allowed vehicular access at permitted times. When exiting the building during play time, children in the playground are supervised at all times.

### **School Canteen**

The school canteen can not be accessed in the main school building and does not have secure entry doors which poses some additional risk. To gain entry to the school canteen, staff and children must walk across the school playground/carpark. A risk assessment for the school car park is in place. In the unlikely event that an unauthorised adult gains entry into the school canteen, all staff must report immediately to the senior supervisor on any occasion were this occurs. The Senior Supervisor will intervene and ask the adult to leave the premises as appropriate. The school canteen has separate fire evacuation procedures in place (see fire evacuation procedures).

## **19. Conclusion**

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

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

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children and their manner and approach to individual children, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the mind of colleagues, children or parents/guardians.

## **20. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the schools 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.

Date of Next Review: November 2024

Signed:

Handwritten signature of R. J. Hanna in black ink.

(Chair of Board of Governors)

Handwritten signature of Mr. T. Rodgers in black ink.

(Principal)

Handwritten signature of Mr. M. Mc Swiggan in black ink.

(Designated Teacher)

## **Appendix 1.**

### **The School Safeguarding Team**

#### **Roles & Responsibilities**

##### **1. Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chair of the Board of Governors is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a Child Protection policy is in place and that a safeguarding ethos is maintained in the school
- Ensuring that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Ensuring that Governors receive relevant training in Child Protection and Recruitment and Selection
- Assuming lead responsibility in the management of a complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive regular updates in relation to child protection activity including a full written annual report

##### **2. Designated Governor for Child Protection.**

The BoG will delegate a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to be able to advise the governors on:

- The role of the DTs;
- 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 Reports;
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff.

##### **3. Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all relevant DENI guidance in relation to child protection and safeguarding in particular “*Safeguarding & Child Protection in Schools (September 2023)*” is implemented within the school.
- Enabling the Board of Governors fulfil their Child Protection duties by keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to child protection and ensuring the inclusion of child protection activities on their agenda
- Maintaining and securely storing the *School Record of Child Abuse Complaints* and to make it available at least annually to the Board of Governors.
- The appointment of suitable staff to posts (teaching and non-teaching) within the school and the appointment of suitable teaching staff to the roles of Designated and Deputy Teacher for Child Protection
- Ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.

- Ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedures every 2 years.
- Managing child protection concerns relating to staff

#### **4. Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. They must also appoint a Deputy Designated Teacher who as a member of the Safeguarding team will actively support the Designated Teacher in carrying out the following duties:

- Providing child protection training for all teaching and non-teaching staff (whole school training) to be delivered a minimum of once every two years;
- Taking lead responsibility for the development and annual review of the school's child protection policy;
- Promoting a child protection ethos in the school;
- Acting as a point of contact for staff (and parents) in relation to child abuse concerns;
- Liaison with the Principal and Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected Child Abuse;
- Making referrals to other agencies such as social services and PSNI, with the Principal's knowledge;
- Maintaining and securely storing appropriate child protection records;
- Ensuring staff are aware that Notes of Concern should be completed using the CPOMS system.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg Family Support Hubs.
- Attending child protection case conferences and other relevant case planning meetings where appropriate and practicable;
- Providing an annual report to the Governors on child protection activity;
- Keeping the school Principal informed.

The Deputy Designated Teacher will deputise for them in their absence. Consequently, it is important that the DDT works in partnership with the DT so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

Given our unique setting with 5 specialist Centre classes, a further DDT has been appointed to support the DT with regards to safeguarding and child protection concerns in the Specialist Centre.

## Appendix 2.

### Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers

#### CODE OF CONDUCT

- **INTRODUCTION**

All actions concerning children 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 children in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

- **PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH PUPILS**

Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from being alone with or holding private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access and with the **door open**.

Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.

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

- **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS**

As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils, especially any contact which would likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or observer. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the principal.

Guidance on the use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings is provided in Circular 2021/13. The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Article 4, outlines the powers a member of school staff can use in restraining pupils. However, schools are reminded that reasonable force/restraint should only be used as a measure of last resort. Staff of a grant-aided school may only use reasonable force/restraint:

- to prevent a pupil from committing an offence;
- to prevent a pupil causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);
- to prevent a pupil from engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils.

The legislation extends to the premises of the school and when a member of school staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned. DE Circular 1999/09 provides clarification and guidance on the use of reasonable force, by teachers and other authorised staff, to restrain or control pupils in certain circumstances. Further advice to schools on the use of reasonable force/restraint and positive behavioural management is set out in:

- Towards a Model Policy in schools on the use of reasonable force
- Regional Policy Framework on the use of reasonable force/safe-handling
- Pastoral care in schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour ([education-ni.gov.uk](http://education-ni.gov.uk))

Reasonable force/restraint should:-

- only be used as a measure of last resort;
- preserve the dignity and respect of all concerned;
- never be used as a form of punishment or to make a child behave; and
- never deliberately cause pain/injury to a pupil.

All instances of the use of reasonable force/restraint should be recorded using CPOMS. Parents/Carers should be informed and follow up support provided to the pupil and staff involved.

It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.

Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she would be uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.

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

Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. (However, no adult should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.)

Staff should not become friends with our pupils on social networking sites.

During swimming lessons, teachers stay outside changing cubicles and verbally encourage children to change quickly. Teachers should only enter the cubicles in case of emergency.

Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

- **CHOICE AND USE OF TEACHING MATERIALS**

Teachers should avoid teaching materials that might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult the principal first.

- **RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTITUDES**

Within the Pastoral Care Policy of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with children. Staff are role models for our pupils.

**The following must also be considered:**

**1. Setting an Example**

1.1 All staff and volunteers who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

1.2 All staff and volunteers must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.

1.3 All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

1.4 This Code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority.

1.5 All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

**2. Safeguarding Pupils/Students**

2.1 All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.

2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal).

2.3 The school's DT is Mr McSwiggan and the DDT's are Mr Terry Rodgers (Mainstream School) and Mrs O Conlon (SLC).

2.4 All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these

documents and other relevant school policies eg e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

2.5 All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.

2.6 All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.

2.7 All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

### **3. Relationships with Students**

3.1 All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in **Appendix 7** of this document.

3.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

### **4. Pupil/Student Development**

4.1 All staff and volunteers must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.

4.2 All staff and volunteers must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.

### **5. Honesty and Integrity**

5.1 All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Principal with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

## **6. Conduct Outside of Work**

6.1 All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.

6.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

## **7. E-Safety and Internet Use**

7.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

7.2 Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

7.4 Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.

7.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management

Policy and Disposal Schedules.

## **8. Confidentiality**

8.1 Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

8.2 Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

8.3 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

8.4 If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

8.5 Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.

8.6 Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

## **9. Dress and Appearance**

9.1 All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.

9.2 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

9.3 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

## **10. Disciplinary Action**

Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

All staff and volunteers must complete the form below to confirm they have

read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

### **Confirmation of Compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Post Held \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.

## Appendix 3

### Types of Abuse and Physical/Behavioural Indicators

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

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

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

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

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's 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 opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers. **(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

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

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

| <b>Physical Indicators</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Behavioural Indicators</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs;<br>bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas;<br>torn, stained or bloody underclothes;<br>chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches;<br>difficulty in walking or sitting;<br>frequent urinary infections;<br>avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; | What the child tells you;<br>Withdrawn;<br>chronic depression;<br>excessive sexual precociousness;<br>seductiveness;<br>children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality;<br>parent/child role reversal;<br>over concerned for siblings;<br>poor self esteem; |

|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague;<br>anorexia/gross over-eating. | self devaluation;<br>lack of confidence;<br>peer problems;<br>lack of involvement;<br>massive weight change;<br>suicide attempts (especially adolescents);<br>hysterical/angry outbursts;<br>lack of emotional control;<br>sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour;<br>inappropriate sex play;<br>repeated attempts to run away from home;<br>unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories;<br>vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation;<br>promiscuity;<br>exposure to pornographic material |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

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

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

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

#### **Bullying**

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

The procedure for referral and investigation of abuse may therefore be implemented in certain circumstances such as when anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective; the

bullying behaviour is persistent and severe resulting in the target of the bullying suffering/likely to suffer significant harm; there are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the child exhibiting this behaviour suffering/likely to suffer significant harm or where concerns exist in relation to the parents/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child (either the target or the child exhibiting this behaviour).

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

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in **Appendix 6** of this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved. The above guidance follows DE Circular 2016/05 subject Children Who Display Harmful Sexualized Behaviour.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

"Child sexual exploitation is a form of 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 Northern Ireland 2016)**

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

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

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

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc without plausible explanation;
- Leaving home/care without permission;
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving;
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care;

- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances;
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return;
- Truanting from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Concerning use of the internet;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis;
- New peer groups;
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend';
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Low self-esteem;
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less);
- Self harm and other expressions of despair;
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse.

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

When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity (Post-primary only) or, where we have concerns about a 16/17 year old in a sexual relationship the Designated Teacher has a duty to follow appropriate procedures and where necessary make a referral to Social Services.

### **Indecent Photographs**

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

### **Online Safety**

Our online safety in school is inkeeping with the most up to date guidance published in Safe Guarding and Child Protection in Schools, A Guide for Schools, DENI (DENI Circular 17/04 – updated) and is supported by the Keeping Children and Young People Safe: An Online Safety Strategy (February 2021).

As a school we recognise our responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and support and empower pupils to engage in online activities in an educated, safe, responsible, and respectful way. Pupils have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, are able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like. Our actions and governance of online safety is reflected in our safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the

pupils in the school or on school-organised activities. It is recommended that rather than having a stand-alone online safety policy, schools should integrate their online safety policy into existing safeguarding, behaviour, code of practice and anti-bullying policies. Our online safety policy incorporates agreements on the acceptable use of (i) the internet and school-based digital technology and (ii) personal mobile technology. Safer Schools NI App provides safeguarding and child protection support for school staff, parents/carers and pupils.

### **Young Person whose Behaviour places him/her at Risk of Significant Harm**

A child whose own behaviours e.g. self-harming behaviour, leaving school without permission etc. places him/her at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse as defined in Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The decision to initiate child protection procedures is a matter for professional judgement and each case will be considered individually with advice sought from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection. The criminal aspects of such cases will be dealt with by the PSNI.

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

Is defined as threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.' (**Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016**).

As a school we are aware of the current position of the above document which has been extended until March 2024 under an addendum.

### **Operation Encompass**

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

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, 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 school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police 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 online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

During the summer break the police and CPSS will make arrangements for details of any operation encompass incidents to be passed onto the schools so that they are aware when they open in the new school year.

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

### **Sexual Violence and Abuse**

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

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent. **(Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016)**

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

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

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 practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

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

In the UK, FGM has been a specific criminal offence since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act in

England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Serious Crime Act 2015 further strengthened the law on FGM.

FGM is a complex issue with many men and women from practising communities considering it to be normal to protect their cultural identity. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of five and eight, putting children in this age bracket at highest risk.

### **Statutory Responsibilities**

Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 - Article 17 - schools have a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of its pupils.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 repealed and re-enacted the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 to set the maximum penalty for FGM to 14 years imprisonment and to make it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to perform FGM overseas or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where FGM is legal.

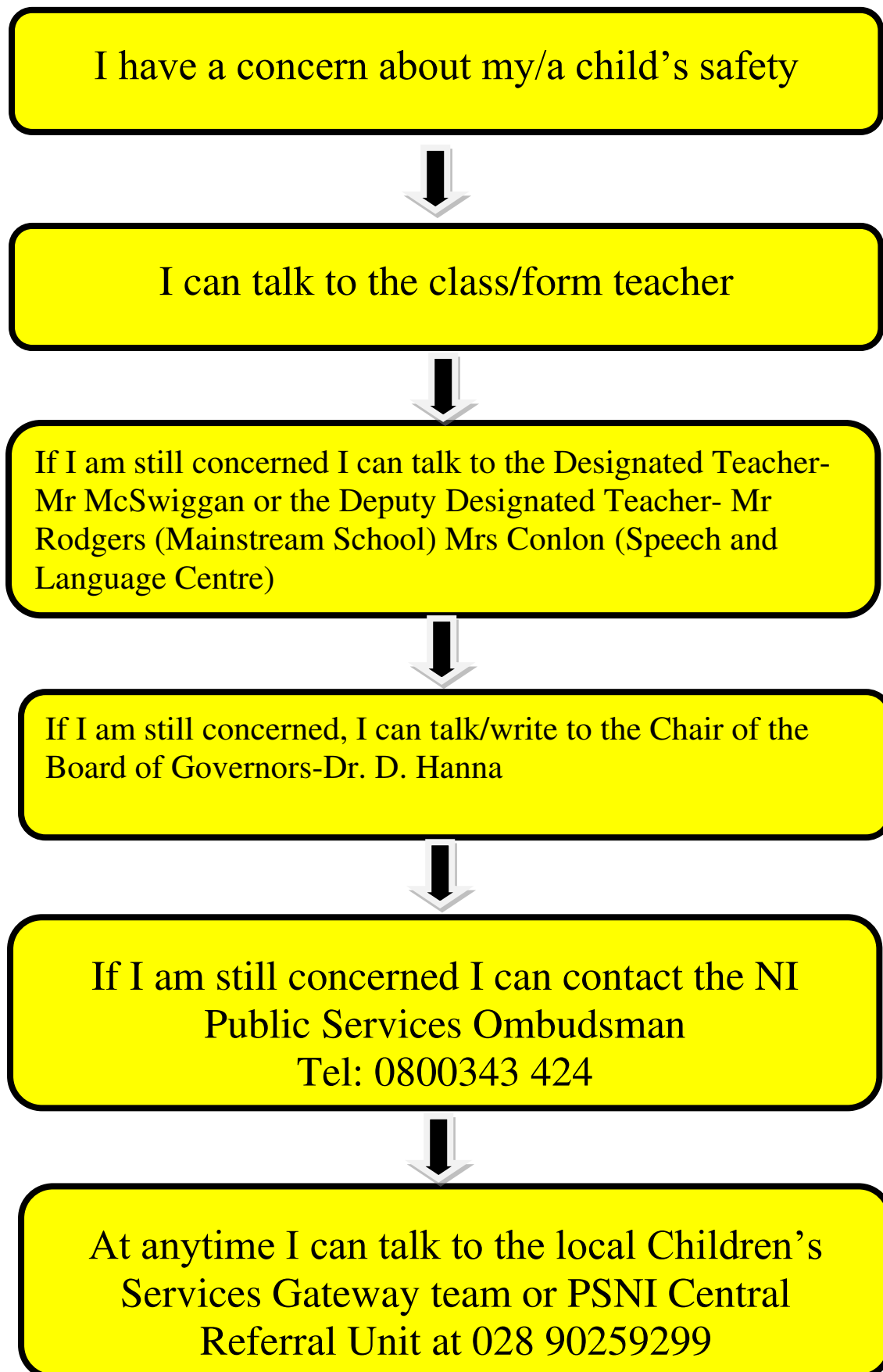
The Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced a new offence of failing to protect a girl from FGM and lifelong anonymity for victims of FGM has been guaranteed. New FGM Protection Orders (FGMPO) were introduced in July 2015 (Section 73) and allows for the making of an FGMPO for the purpose of protecting a girl against the commission of a genital mutilation offence or protecting a girl against whom such an offence has been committed.

A new mandatory FGM reporting duty was also introduced. This duty does not extend to Northern Ireland, however, the **Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** - Section 5 - makes it an offence to fail to report a “relevant offence” where a person has information which could lead to the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of such an offender. FGM would be such an offence.

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/58/section/5](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/58/section/5)

## Appendix 4

### Procedure for Parents who wish to raise a Child Protection Concern



## 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- Mr McSwiggan or Deputy Designated Teacher- Mr Rodgers (mainstream school) or Mrs Conlon (Speech and Language Centre) in his/her absence and provides note of concern.

Designated Teacher- Mr McSwiggan should consult with the Principal- Mr Rodgers 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- Mr McSwiggan 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.

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

### **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).

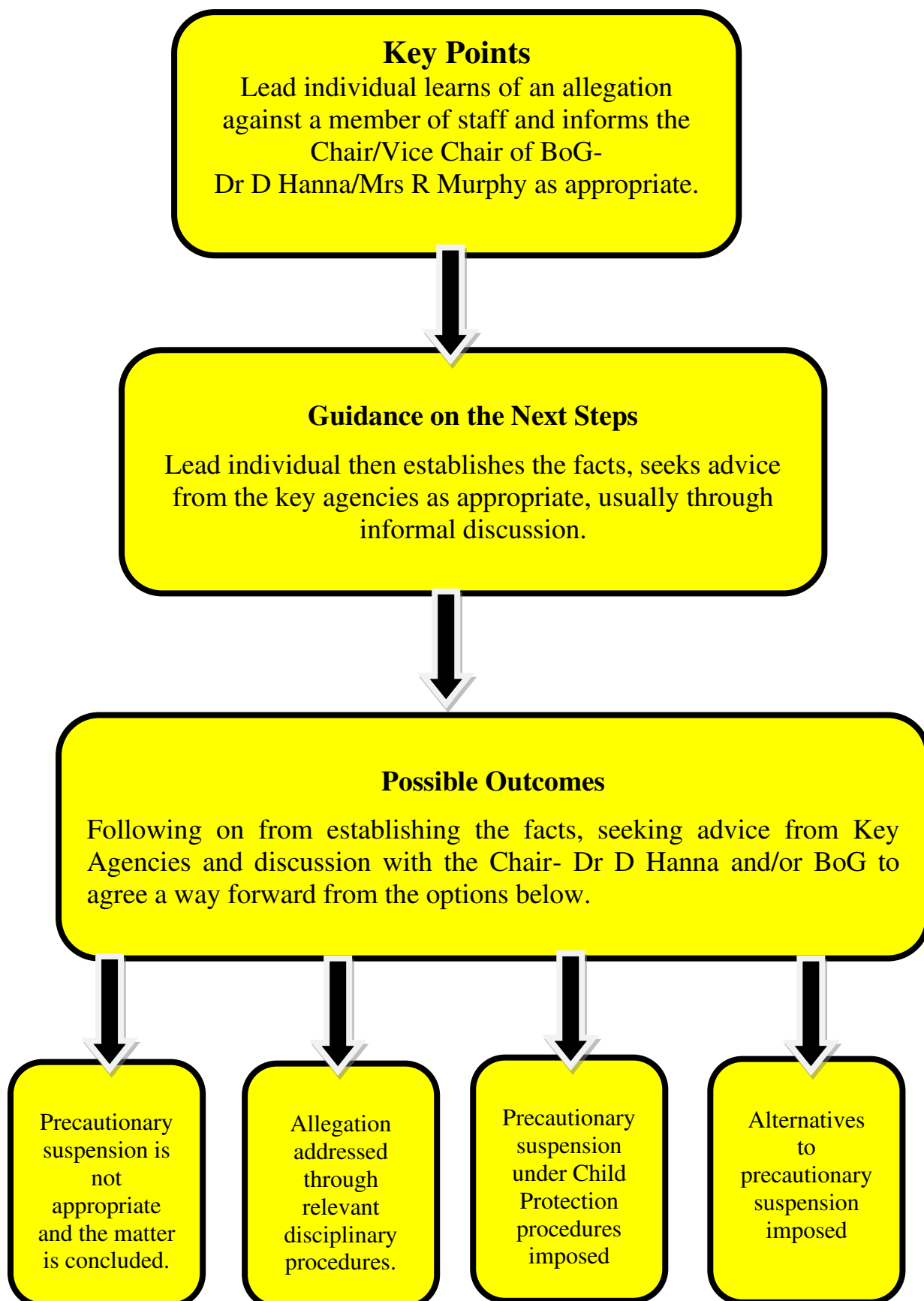
Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher- Mr McSwiggan will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

It is imperative that any disclosure by 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. Contact details for the PSNI Central Referral Unit and Duty Social Workers can be found in the Contacts Section.

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

## Appendix 6

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



## **Appendix 7**

### **Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student outside of school, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring.
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school.
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (eg via the child) or formally.
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.