



St Brigid's Primary School

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

St Brigid's Primary School

Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

As a Rights Respecting School, our policy, is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

- Article 3: Children have the right to have their welfare considered paramount in all decisions taken about them.
- Article 12: Children have the right to be heard.
- Article 19: All Children have a right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and mistreatment by anyone who looks after them.

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SAFEGUARDING

'Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and prevention activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and well-being 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.'

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI, March 2016)

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The Safeguarding team at St Brigid's

Mr Kieran O'Neill (Principal)

Mr Kieran O'Neill (Designated Teacher)

Mrs Leona Campbell (Deputy Designated Teacher)

Mr Gerry Doran (Chair of the Board of Governors & Child Protection Governor)

Mrs Aileen McIlroy (SENCO)

Mrs A McCormick (ICT Co-ordinator)

Mrs Mairead McKay, Mrs Jayne Thompson, Mr James Armour (First Aiders)

Full copy of St. Brigid's Privacy Notice is available on the school website, www.stbrigidspsballymoney.com

Or directly from the school office.

AIMS

At St Brigid's Primary School, Ballymoney, we are committed to the development of the whole child. We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare, and safety of all pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty, ensuring, at all times to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment valuing all individuals for their unique talents and abilities. A child cannot learn effectively or develop unless they feel secure.

Our school vision is: 'Building Better Futures' for all children

This involves:

- making sure that the child or young person's welfare is paramount
- making sure the voice of the child or young person is heard
- making sure parents are supported
- making sure there is a strong partnership in place to exercise a shared responsibility in ensuring all children's needs are met
- making sure systems are in place to prevent problems occurring or worsening
- making sure all responses to need are proportionate to the circumstances
- making sure that children are protected from harm
- making sure all decisions are evidence based and informed

At St. Brigid's Primary School, we recognise that all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, have an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. The school will provide a neutral place where the child feels safe to talk. Staff will listen carefully to what child is saying, treat it seriously and value what is said. Sensitivity to disclosure is vital.

By following child protection procedures, we

- Care for Children
- Care for our school
- Care for the community we serve
- Respond to the guidelines and procedures of other agencies

OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that everyone who works in our school – teaching or non-teaching staff and anyone who has regular contact with our children, is aware of the procedures to follow in the event of suspected child abuse or neglect or a child.

Child Protection awareness by the school involves all pupils and adults.

The school can contribute by:

1. Ensuring all pupils have sufficient knowledge about themselves to be able to understand what constitutes as appropriate and inappropriate contact.
2. Enabling children to become aware of strategies they may use to protect themselves from possible abusive situations.
3. Developing an ongoing programme of Personal and Social Development e.g. Circle Time, PDMU programmes, Pastoral Assemblies, Peer Mediation, Playground Buddies, Worry Box etc. Children know what they can do if they are worried, etc. posters of 'If I unhappy, I can talk to...'. This includes which staff to talk to, telephone numbers to ring e.g. Childline.
4. Ensuring that all new staff are made aware of Child Protection Procedures on appointment.
5. Making sure that all staff and regular voluntary helpers have undergone Access NI checks.
6. Ensuring that the designated teachers avail themselves to update their knowledge of Child Protection Procedures.
7. Assisting with regular in-service training to maintain a working awareness among staff of Child Protection issues and Child Protection procedures.
8. All records are stored in line with EA Guidelines

St. Brigid's Who's Who 2026-2026

TEACHING STAFF	LEARNING ASSISTANTS	ADDITIONAL SUPPORT STAFF
Principal – Mr Kieran O'Neill P.1 – Mrs Mairead McKay P.2 – Mrs Clare McShannock P.3 – Mrs Roisin Hickey P.4 – Mrs Dympna Kelly P.5 – Mrs Siobhan McMullan P.6 – Ms Anne McCormick P.7 – Mrs Leona Campbell (VP) LSC 1 – Mrs Aileen McIlroy (SENCo) LSC 2 – Mrs Michelle O'Mullan	Angela McBride Caroline Coyle Patricia Connolly Valerie Black Cheryl Cahoon Jayne Thompson Orlagh Murdoch Bridget Halliday Veronica Gilmour Rhiannon O'Boyle Janet Coyle Jolene Dempster Mya Patton Niamh Rodgers Gillian Boyd Taylor Neill Jenny Doherty Claire Neill Megan Boreland Denise Herron Rhonda Burns	Clerical Susan McAlister Building Supervisor Justin Hanna Cleaners Donna McGonigle Rachel Martin SUPERVISORY ASSISTANT Donna McGonigle

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors of St Brigid's Primary School comprises of one parent governor, one teacher representative, four trustees, two representatives from the Education Authority (NE) and one representative from the Department of Education. The School Principal, while not a Board member, is in attendance and acts as secretary.

THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS IN ST MARY'S ARE AS FOLLOWS:

CATEGORY POSITION

TRUSTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Fr Damian McCaughan PP
Siobhan Guiney
Eugene Wallace
Claire Harmer

DENI REPRESENTATIVE

Gerry Doran Chairperson

EA REPRESENTATIVES

Eoin McGarry
Deirdre Finnerty

PARENTS' REPRESENTATIVE

Karen Hanna

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE

Roisin Hickey

PRINCIPAL

Kieran O'Neill Secretary

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Each school has appointed a Designated teacher and a Deputy-Designated teacher to manage procedures in the event of a child or adult confiding information to a member of staff, or if a member of staff sees signs or observes behaviour which gives them concern. The staff's responsibility is to immediately make their concerns known to the designated teacher if they have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse.

Designated Teacher
Mr Kieran O'Neill

Deputy Designated Teacher
Mrs Leona Campbell

It is NOT the responsibility of school staff to undertake investigations or to make enquiries of parent or guardians and in some cases, it might be counterproductive for them to do so. It is for the Social Services departments to investigate suspected abuse and determine what action to take, including notifying the PSNI.

Safeguarding Team at St Brigid's PS

Principal
Kieran O'Neill

Designated Teacher
Mr Kieran O'Neill

Deputy Designated Teacher
Mrs Leona Campbell

SENCO
Mrs Aileen McIlroy

ICT/eSafety Co-ordinator
Anne McCormick

Chairperson of BoG and Child Protection Governor
Gerry Doran

The team meets to ensure that appropriate child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and to offer support to the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DESIGNATED TEACHER

The role of the designated teacher

- To raise awareness in child protection with all school staff including new staff and volunteers
- Responsible for discussing Child protection concerns by any member of the school staff and keeping of all records
- Responsible for making the referrals to social services or PSNI (Child Abuse Investigation Unit)
- Responsible for keeping the school principal informed
- Responsible for notifying the Chair of the Board of Governors of the school if there is a complaint against the Principal
- Taking the lead in the development of the school's Child Protection policy and ensure that parents receive a copy
- Ensure that the safeguarding team has identified key safeguarding lessons from the PDMU curriculum to be delivered
- Responsible for promoting a child protection/safe guarding ethos within the school
- Responsible for written report to the Governors regarding child protection issues.

The Designated teacher is supported by the Deputy Designated Teachers.

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

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

It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required. Deputy Designated Teachers are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

PRINCIPAL

The role of the school Principal

- To manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection
- To appoint a designated teacher/deputy designated teacher who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- To have an understanding of current assessment and referral processes through UNOCINI
- To manage allegations/complaints against school staff
- To ensure BoG are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding
- To ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection
- To maintain the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints

Chair of Board of Governors

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the 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 (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), 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 Board of Governors 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 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.

Schools may have more than one Deputy Designated Teacher depending on their size, location, (eg split site schools) and the presence of an additional provision such as a nursery or speech and language unit, or boarding department.

Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

The following principles should underpin all strategies, policies, procedures, practice and services relating to safeguarding children and young people in St Brigid's PS.

- **The child or young person's welfare is paramount** - The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration for the courts and in childcare practice. An appropriate balance should be struck between the child's rights and parent's rights. All efforts should be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.
- **The voice of the child or young person should be heard** - Children and young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously, taking account of their age and understanding. They should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives and be provided with appropriate support to do so where that is required. Where feasible and appropriate, activity should be undertaken with the consent of the child or young person and, where possible, to achieve their preferred outcome.
- **Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together** - Parents have responsibility for their children rather than rights over them. In some circumstances, parents will share parental responsibility with others such as other carers or the statutory authorities. Actions taken by organisations should, where it is in the best interests of the child, provide appropriate support to help families stay together as this is often the best way to improve the life chances of children and young people and provide them with the best outcomes for their future.
- **Partnership** - Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met is through working in partnership. Sound decision-making depends on the fullest possible understanding of the child or young person's circumstances and their needs. This involves effective information sharing, strong organisational governance and leadership, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals and professionals.
- **Prevention** - The importance of preventing problems occurring or worsening through the introduction of timely supportive measures.
- **Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances** - Where a child's needs can be met through the provision of support services, these should be provided. Both organisations and individual practitioners must respond proportionately to the needs of a child in accordance with their duties and the powers available to them.
- **Protection** - Children should be safe from harm and in circumstances where a parent or carer is not meeting their needs, they should be protected by the State.
- **Evidence-based and informed decision making** - Decisions and actions taken must be considered, well informed and based on outcomes that are sensitive to, and take account of, the child or young person's specific circumstances, risks to which they are exposed, and their assessed needs.

In relation to the school setting for the purposes of this guidance:

- The term 'child' has the same meaning as in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 ie a person under the age of 18. In the case of a pupil with special educational needs the term 'child' should be interpreted as including any person who has not attained the age of 19 and is a registered pupil at the school. A person who attains age 19 during a school year shall be deemed not to have attained that age. While a school has responsibility for all registered pupils, referral pathways and processes may differ for a young person over the age of 18 (Education (NI) Order 1996).
- All schools have a safeguarding responsibility towards the young people in their charge and should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- Safeguarding/Child Protection arrangements should be accessible in the school and understood by children so that they know what to do and who to go to.
- References to 'parent' have the same meaning as anyone with 'Parental Responsibility' as defined in Article 6 of the Children Order ie 'all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property'. In practical terms, it means the responsibility to care for, and the right to make important decisions about, the child.
- The term 'staff' refers to all staff including paid, unpaid, non-teaching and volunteers.
- The term 'Designated Teacher' encompasses the role of both the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers.
- The term "Employing Authority" is used throughout this guidance to encompass the Education Authority NI (EANI) (formerly the five Education and Library Boards), Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), Board of Governors (BoG) or Proprietor of an Independent School as appropriate and any Body which might assume these functions in the future.

Legal and Policy Context

There is a broad range of international and domestic legislation relating to child welfare and protection. Details of all relevant legislation are set out in **Annex A** and schools must be aware of their responsibilities in each case, however, as a starting point schools must be aware of the following:

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Kingdom agreed to be bound by the Convention in 1991. It sets out the rights which all children and young people up to the age of 18 should have.

- **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is the principle statute governing the care, upbringing and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It applies to all those who work with and care for children, whether parents, paid carers or volunteers. It is the most comprehensive and far reaching child care legislation ever introduced to Northern Ireland. It clearly identifies five key principles which are Paramountcy, Prevention, Protection, Partnership and Parental Responsibility with the welfare of the child considered as being of paramount importance.

- **The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003**

Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 place a statutory duty on Boards of Governors (BoG) to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils and to determine the measures to be taken at the school with a view to protecting pupils from abuse (whether at school or elsewhere). Article 18(d) requires BoG to prepare a written statement of such measures and to provide this to parents. BoG must also have regard to any guidance given by the Department, the Education Authority (EA), the former DHSSPS (Department of Health from 9 May 2016), Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI) and the relevant Employing Authority.

As such, all grant-aided schools must have a child protection policy which includes the appointment of a Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher with responsibility for child protection. Requirements on other settings are a condition of grant.

- **Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008**

This legislation reduced the age of consent in NI (in line with other areas of the UK), and strengthened the legal safeguards for young people between the ages of 16 and 17. Significantly, it introduced the concepts of grooming (including online behaviours), and 'Abuse of a Position of Trust'.

- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a Disclosure and Barring Service and requirements relating to individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults. This legislation, brought in to address concerns around the plethora of criminal justice legislation in recent years, defines 'regulated activity' with children and prevents persons on barred lists from engaging in regulated activity.

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted

- **The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011**

This Act established the SBNI and places interagency co-operation on a statutory footing. The objective of the SBNI is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland by co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the board. The SBNI are also responsible for development of regional policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

www.safeguardingni.org

- **The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016**

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016 gives a power to investigate education authorities in respect of complaints made by a member of the public (came into effect on 1 April 2016). The power to investigate will extend to Boards of Governors of grant-maintained schools from 1 April 2017. This process of complaint must be referred to in the complaints policy.

www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/4/schedule/1/paragraph/5

Government Policies and Strategies

- **Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)**

This policy replaces the 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children guidance issued in 2003 and provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

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

- **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020 and subsequent action plans**

This Strategy highlights an overarching strategic vision for addressing domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The Department of Health (DoH), and the Department of Justice (DoJ) are the strategic lead departments in taking forward both the domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence and abuse agendas through improved effective, collaborative, and cohesive engagement within and across Northern Ireland.

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy can be found at:

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy

- **Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Prevention in Partnership**

'Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership' was published by the former DHSSPS (now the Department of Health) and the Department of Justice, on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive in July 2015 with the aim of improving safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect. A key objective is to reduce the incidence of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect of adults who are at risk in Northern Ireland and to provide effective support and, where necessary, protective responses and access to justice for victims and their families. The publication is available at:

www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf

Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) offices will have contact details for Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Teams.

Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools

Recruitment, Vetting and Induction 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 and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate.

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provide the legislative framework for a vetting and barring scheme for people who work with children and vulnerable adults.

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2007/1351/pdfs/ukxi_20071351_en.pdf
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted

Process

- The responsibilities and processes to be followed are clearly set out in: DE Circular 2013/01 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools':

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201301-guidance-schools-and-employing-authorities-pre-employment-safer

- DE Circular 2012/19 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Schools from 10 September 2012:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201219-changes-pre-employment-vetting-checks-volunteers-working-schools

Access NI Clearance

- DE Circular 2013/01 (updated September 2015) sets out vetting requirements for schools. In brief, the following groups must have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) from Access NI **before** taking up post:

All new **paid** teaching and non-teaching staff.

Examination Invigilators.

Private contracted transport providers - named drivers.

Recruitment, Vetting and Induction of Staff and Volunteers

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.

Schools must ensure that volunteers, e.g. coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc, who are employed by others, have the necessary clearances in place.

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 should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require.

Visitors should be:

- Met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school by school staff.
- 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.

Pupils on Work Experience

- Health and Social Care Programmes will require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate for pupils on long term placement and may be required for pupils on work experience/ shadowing placements. Schools should apply through their Access NI Registered Body in advance. (See DE Circular 2013/01 for more information).
- Pupils coming into the school on work experience do not require Access NI clearance if they are fully supervised by school staff. The normal child protection induction processes should apply.

Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools

Child Protection Training

School Governors

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 should be completed during each term of 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 appointments panels.
- On line training packages are available on ESAGs TV at www.esags.tv/ however this is to provide additional support rather than act as a substitute for child protection training.

Designated Teacher Training/Deputy Designated Teacher Training

- All new Designated Teachers (DTs) and Deputy Designated Teachers (DDTs) should attend the two day CPSS Introduction to Child Protection course, within their first year in post. Several of these courses will be offered throughout the year.
- DTs and DDTs should attend refresher training every 3 years thereafter. A certificate of attendance will be issued to DTs and DDTs as proof of attendance and this may be examined by ETI during any inspection. All training is subject to the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's (SBNI) Child Protection and Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy 2014-2017.
- The DT and DDT are expected to cascade child protection training to the whole school, at a minimum every two years, with new staff receiving training as part of their induction programme. All staff should know how to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and be aware of the relevant child protection procedures, including how to contact the designated teacher.

Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools

Conduct of Staff

The protection and promotion of the welfare of children and young people is a responsibility for all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching. In meeting this, staff should work towards a culture of mutual trust and respect in school through which the best interests of the children and young people entrusted to their care is paramount.

Naturally, implicit in this is the assumption that the conduct of school staff towards their pupil group must be above reproach. This holds true whatever the age, gender, or developmental maturity of the pupils, but clearly the younger the child, or the greater the degree of learning difficulties he/she has, the less likely it will be that he/she will be able to recognise and respond appropriately to an abuse by any member of staff or the trust that his/her position confers.

Each school should operate a Code of Conduct which extends to staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and volunteers and should include:

- Private meetings with pupils.
- Physical contact with pupils, including safe handling/use of reasonable force.
- Choice and use of teaching materials.
- Relationships and attitudes.
- Use of social media.
- Staff mobile phone policy.

Code of Conduct can be found in the Appendices to this policy.

Adherence to the Code will reduce the risk of allegations being made. Schools should adapt and update the Code to meet their individual needs and agree the contents with teaching and non-teaching staff.

The Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. Rather, it is intended to assist staff by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on conduct. The Code of Conduct can be referred to in the school's child protection/pastoral care policy, and should be made known to parents.

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.

Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools

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. As part of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents/carers, the school should help parents/carers to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the children and young people in its charge.

All policies, including child protection, pastoral care, anti-bullying, positive behaviour, online safety, and complaints, should be issued to parents/carers at intake*. The child protection policy, in particular, should be reviewed and reissued, at a minimum, every two years*.

**Issue of a summary of the full policy is sufficient provided it contains clear details of how to access the full policy, including a hard copy if required.*

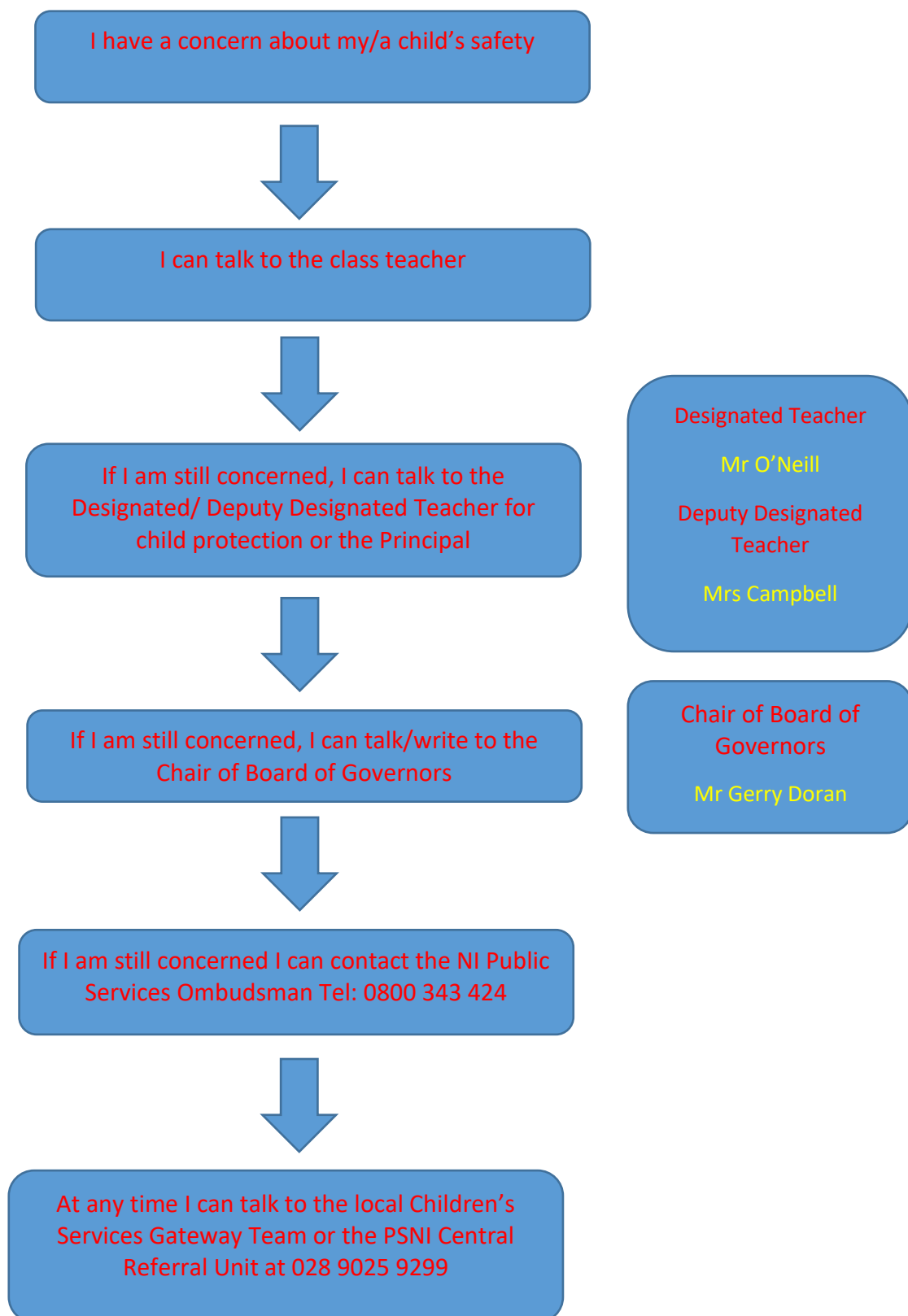
It should be clear that the school will always protect the best interests of the child and, in cases of suspected abuse, may refer cases direct to the investigative agencies. It is important that parents take time to read these policies and know they are required to inform the school:

- 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.
- Parents of primary school children should tell the teacher if there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- Parents should contact the school if their child is absent and send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at:
www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/
- It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.

Parents

The arrangements for parents to make known to staff any concerns they may have about the safety of their (or another) child should be clear, including how to contact the school, the class teacher, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, or the Principal if they are worried about a safeguarding or child protection concern. The process for a parent who has a potential safeguarding or child protection concern is set out below.

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:



Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools

Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)

The CPSS is a regional service for schools. It is based within the EA Directorate of Children and Young People's Services.

The CPSS primary role is to provide:

- Daily helpline to advise, guide and support DTs/DDTs/Principals in relation to concerns about individual children with safeguarding/child protection concerns and on wider policy and training matters.
- Initial, refresher and cluster group training on child protection issues.
- Support visits to schools where required.
- Advice and guidance on assessing and managing children who pose a significant risk of harm to themselves, other pupils and staff.
- Dissemination of new information on training, DE Circulars and guidance.
- Support in developing or reviewing the school's child protection policy.
- Follow up to ETI inspections where safeguarding/child protection is identified as an area for improvement.

The CPSS will also:

- Offer training to the Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection in relation to their statutory safeguarding/child protection responsibilities.
- Offer support, advice and training to other services within the EA.
- Assist Education Authority Human Resource Managers in dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other EA officers/employees.
- Liaise with Social Services and PSNI where appropriate.
- Represent the education sector at multi-agency meetings including MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings which are a co-ordinated inter-agency response to domestic violence and abuse.

Contact details for CPSS are included in the Contacts Section.

Dealing with Child Protection Concerns

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 practice 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, school staff, especially teachers, but also non-teaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff, 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 Order. More detail on the concept of harm and significant harm can be found in Section 2.4 of Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016) and in the Children (NI) Order 1995.

Staff should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations (see Annex A), 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.

Observation of signs and symptoms of possible abuse can do no more than give rise to concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. It must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. However, teachers and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are repeated regularly.

Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he/she must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher who has specific responsibility for child protection. ***The designation of a teacher for this purpose should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff in being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed***, including those in cases where an allegation is made against any member of the school's staff, teaching or non-teaching.

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.

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

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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 children 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.
- **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.

**All the above definitions are from Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016)*

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

- 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.

Indicators of Abuse

Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff are particularly well placed to observe acquired symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of causes, including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances, or drug, alcoholic or solvent misuse.

The following illustrations are examples of common signs and symptoms encountered by teachers, classroom assistants or auxiliary staff, which might indicate abuse or neglect. These signs are not a checklist, indeed many of them could have other explanations.

Physical Abuse	
Physical Indicators Unexplained bruises or burns particularly in places difficult to see e.g. behind ears, groin. Human bite marks, welts or bald spots Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions. Untreated injury.	Behavioural Indicators Self-destructive tendencies. Improbable excuses given to explain injuries. Fear of returning home. Chronic runaway. Aggressive or withdrawn. Reluctant to have physical contact. Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body.

Neglect	
Physical Indicators Constant hunger. Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene. Untreated medical problems. Emaciation/ distended stomach. Constant tiredness. Exposed to danger/ lack of supervision.	Behavioural Indicators Tiredness, listlessness, lack of concentration. Lack of social relationships. Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging. Frequently absent or late. Low self-esteem. Destructive tendencies. Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking) Chronic running away.

Emotional Abuse	
Physical Indicators Sudden speech disorder. Signs of mutilation. Signs of solvent abuse, (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness). Wetting and/ or soiling. Attention seeking behaviour. Poor peer relationships. Poor skin/ hair. Non-accidental injury.	Behavioural Indicators Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking). Reluctance for parent liaison. Fear of new situations. Chronic runaway. Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations. Extremes of passivity or aggression.

Sexual Abuse	
Physical Indicators Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat. Torn, stained or bloody underclothes. Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches. Difficulty in walking or sitting. Frequent urinary or yeast infections. Vulnerable diseases. Unexplained pregnancies.	Behavioural Indicators Be chronically depressed/ suicidal. Inappropriately seductive or precocious. Sexually explicit language. Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence. Recurring nightmares, fear of the dark. Outbursts of hysteria/ anger. Over protective to siblings. Obsessive washing.

NB: If in doubt, speak to someone NOW.

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. Further details on the main types of abuse as well as their physical and behavioural indicators and other forms of abuse are included in **Appendix 4**.

Domestic Violence and Abuse (See Appendix 9)

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**)

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

The Designated teacher in St Brigid's Primary school for child protection is Mr Kieran O'Neill. In his absence, Mrs Leona Campbell will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

ADVICE FOR STAFF

- If a child discloses abuse 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, that member of **staff must act promptly**.
- **He/She must not investigate** – but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated teacher, discuss the matter and make full notes. **(See Appendix 3)**
- The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and to ensure that a written record is made.
- The Principal, in consultation with the Designated Teacher, will decide whether in the best interests of the child, if the matter needs to be referred to Social Services.
- **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, our school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
- The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Designated Officer from the Education and Library Board, CCMS or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to the Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.
- The safety of the child is our first priority.

IN THE EVENT OF A CHILD DISCLOSING ABUSE:

IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY:

- I am glad you told me this.
- We are going to do something about this together.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO:

- Stay calm, listen and say you will take a few notes (very important as a safeguard for you.)
- DO NOT interrogate.
- Record later the details (e.g. time, place, date, behaviour of child, place the abuse occurred.)
- Follow guidelines immediately. (Appendix 3)

If a Child discloses abuse or staff are suspicious, there are three things to do.

1. Report immediately to the designated teacher Mr Kieran O'Neill.
(or in his absence, Mrs Leona Campbell).
2. Do not speak to the parents if the suspected abuse involves the parents in any way.
3. Do not promise the child that it will be kept a secret.

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concerns they are necessarily starting procedures.

It is very important in these cases that prompt and correct procedures are followed under Child Protection Procedures. The reporting teacher will be informed of any further action taken e.g. Referral to Social Services.

When a member of staff gives the Designated Teacher a written record of concern about a child, that child is placed on the Child Protection Record. This is a log of children causing concern and the nature of those concerns. It is kept by the designated teacher. Staff are informed of any child in their class who is on this record. Information from the records is disclosed on a need to know basis only.

In the case of a long-term absence of the designated teacher, another member of staff would be asked to take responsibility for Child Protection.

Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

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

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

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

Respond- respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter. Use open questions e.g. anything else to tell me? Do not interrogate or ask leading questions- this may invalidate your evidence and the child's in any later court proceedings. Do not criticise the perpetrator- the child may love this person and reconciliation may be possible. Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

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

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

Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse.

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 5**.

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 are shown in **Appendices 2 & 6**.

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 7** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance (DE Circular 2015/13).

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. 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.

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.

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.

Vetting Procedures

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the School are vetted/ supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

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 8** to this policy. Appendices 8a & 8b must be signed and returned to the Principal

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 regular refresher training (every two years). 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.

Child Protection: Record Keeping In Schools

Schools must create and retain reliable records to demonstrate accountability for decisions and actions taken. As part of developing child protection/safeguarding arrangements organisations must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, sharing, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child welfare concerns.

Statutory Responsibilities

Each school should have a Records Management Policy. While there is no specific legislation in respect of child protection records, schools should ensure that the principles of the requirements of the legislation, in particular the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Data Protection Act 1998, and guidance in DE Circular 2016/20 is adhered to.

Process

School staff should be aware of the need to record and report child protection concerns. It is essential that an accurate record of all cases of child abuse, or possible abuse, is maintained detailing all actions taken. Circular 2016/20 provides a framework for managing child protection records in order to ensure that schools create and retain reliable records to demonstrate accountability for decisions and actions taken.

The school should ensure that:

- School staff are aware of the need to record and report child protection issues and the appropriate procedures to be followed. The importance of confidentiality should be highlighted.
- The Child Protection Files are held in a separate, secure confidential filing system, ideally in a fireproof cabinet. This is only accessible to the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher or the Principal.
- Files must not be removed from school premises except when taken to a case planning meeting or on foot of a court order. A record should be kept of when information is removed, by whom, for what purpose, and when it is returned.
- If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or portable memory device all must be encrypted and appropriately password-protected.

Departmental Guidance

- DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping Schools
- DE Circular 2015/13 Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff

Other Policies

Overview

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

- 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.
- Educational Visits.
- Staff Code of Conduct.

All policies must be kept up to date, with regular risk assessments carried out where required. All policies should be available to parents with hard copies available on request.

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

All staff have a responsibility to maintain confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. Integral to this is a clear understanding of standards of behaviour expected and in particular the acceptable boundaries of physical contact with pupils. School staff must accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny and that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued.

The Code of Conduct (Section 4.8) 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.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. 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. 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.

Statutory Responsibilities

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998¹⁸, Article 4, outlines the powers a member of school staff can use in restraining pupils. Through this legislation, staff of a grant-aided school may use reasonable force for the purposes of preventing the pupil from:

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

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.

Further Information

Support is available from the EA Behaviour Support Service.

Schools should also be familiar with:

- 'Regional Policy Framework on the Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling' (May 2004).
- 'Towards a Model Policy in Schools on the Use of Reasonable Force'.
- DE Circular 1999/9 Use of Reasonable Force.

These documents can be found at:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/search?query=reasonable+force&edit-submit-

Contacts

Child Protection Support Service

The helpline number is **028 9598 5590** and operates from Monday to Friday from 9.00 am until 4.30 pm.

Duty Social Worker Gateway Team (Health & Social Care Trusts)

Gateway Teams	Contact Number
Belfast	028 9050 7000
Northern	0300 1234 333
South Eastern	0300 1000 300
Southern	028 3756 7100
Western	028 7131 4090
Out of Hours for All Areas	028 9054 9999

PSNI

PSNI The Central Referral Unit (CRU) based in Antrim Road PSNI Station is part of the Public Protection Unit and is the central referral point for child sexual and physical abuse allegations.

The office is open Monday to Sunday 9.00am to 5.00pm including public holidays.

Email cru@psni.police.uk or telephone 101.

Legislation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international human rights treaty setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the child. It provides the overarching framework to guide the development of local laws, policies and services so that all children and young people are nurtured, protected and empowered. Each of the 41 Articles in the Convention detail a different type of right, all of which interact to form one integrated set of rights for children and young people. All Articles of the Convention are important and inter-relate to each other: those Articles with particular relevance for this policy include:

- **Article 3 (Best Interests of the Child)** The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration for all actions concerning children taken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies. This includes ensuring the child is given the protection and care necessary for their wellbeing, taking into account the rights and duties of others towards them. Organisations, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children must conform with appropriately set standards.
- **Article 4 (Protection of rights)** Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. This involves assessing their social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as funding for these services. Governments must help families protect children's rights and create an environment where they can grow and reach their potential.
- **Article 12 (Voice of the Child)** A child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters which affect them, those views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. This is particularly the case for any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting them. A child can either give their views directly, or have their views represented appropriately on their behalf.
- **Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence)** Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and their right to be protected from harm and mistreatment is upheld.
- **Article 20 (Children deprived of family environment)** Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to be looked after properly by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language.
- **Articles 34 and 36 (Exploitation)** Governments should protect children from all forms of exploitation.
- **Article 39 (Rehabilitation of child victims)** Children who have been harmed should receive help to recover and reintegrate into society.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is the principal statute governing the care, upbringing and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It applies to all those who work with and care for children, whether parents, paid carers or volunteers. The Children Order provides the legislative framework within which this policy operates.

Legislation

The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act (1998) incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK legislation. State authorities must use their powers reasonably and proportionately to protect children and young people, and the ECHR holds them responsible for inhuman or degrading treatment inflicted within their jurisdiction. Professionals across all public authorities, including government departments, local councils, hospitals, schools and the police must respect the ECHR, as must private bodies in specific circumstances.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a Disclosure and Barring Service and requirements relating to individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults. This legislation defines 'regulated activity' with children and prevents persons on barred lists from engaging in regulated activity.

The responsibilities and processes to be followed are set out in DE Circulars 2012/19 and 2013/01.

The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 places a requirement on individuals and organisations providing children's services to children to co-operate with each other to devise and implement cross cutting strategies. The Act is key to ensuring improved outcomes for children by supporting, enhancing and encouraging co-operation so that services are integrated from the point of view of the child or young person.

In order to fulfil your responsibilities, you are obligated to acknowledge and work within the relevant guidance and procedures that have been produced by the Department of Education (DE) and the Department of Health (DoH).

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

Article 17 and 18 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 places a statutory duty on Boards of Governors (BoGs) to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils and to determine the measures to be taken at the school with a view to protecting pupils from abuse (whether at school or elsewhere). Article 18(d) requires BoG to prepare a written statement of such measures and to provide this to parents. BoG must also have regard to any guidance given by the Department, the Education Authority (EA) and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

As such, all grant-aided schools **must** have a child protection policy which includes the appointment of a Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher with responsibility for child protection. [Requirements on other settings are a condition of grant.]

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2003/424/contents

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Section 2 of the Act will require that the Board of Governors of the school determine the anti-bullying measures pursued at the school, ensure these are properly implemented and are reviewed at intervals of no more than four years.

Section 3 of the Act will place a statutory duty on Boards of Governors of a grant-aided school to ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school that occur:

- On the premises of the school during the school day;
- While travelling to or from the school during the school term;
- While the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or
- While the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school.

The Act can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/25/pdfs/nia_20160025_en.pdf

The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 ensures employees are protected from suffering detrimental treatment by their employers for disclosing information (in good faith, and in the reasonable belief that it is substantially true) about the conduct of private or public bodies or individual employers ('protected disclosure'). Specifically, protected disclosure includes any disclosure of information which, in the belief of the employee making the disclosure, tends to show that a criminal offence has been, is being or is likely to be, committed, or that the health or safety of an individual has been, is being or is likely to be, endangered; or that information about such matters has been, is being or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.

Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967

Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 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. Sexual offences against children, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) would be such an offence (The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2007 and the FGM Act 2003).

Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, includes that, in addition to non-molestation and occupation orders, a court will have the power to attach an exclusion requirement to an interim care or emergency protection order in order to protect children, providing therefore for the removal of the suspected abuser, rather than the child, from the home.

Legislation

Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011

The Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011 places interagency co-operation on a statutory footing. The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) was launched in September 2012. The objective of the SBNI is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland by co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the board. There is a statutory duty on members to co-operate with each other, to make arrangements to promote the welfare of children, and to supply information to the SBNI under certain conditions. Further details are available on www.safeguardingni.org

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016 gives a power to investigate education authorities in respect of complaints made by a member of the public (came into effect on 1 April 2016). The power to investigate will extend to Boards of Governors of grant-maintained schools from 1 April 2017. This process of complaint must be referred to in the complaints policy.

www.legislation.gov.uk/ni/2016/4/schedule/1/paragraph/5

Use of Reasonable Force

The **Education (NI) Order 1998**, Article 4, outlines the powers a member of school staff can use in restraining pupils.

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1998/1759/article/4

May 2004 Guidance “**Regional Policy Framework on the use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling**” may also provide useful guidance.

www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Reg-policy-framework-reasonable-force.pdf

CIRCULATION OF THIS POLICY

Parents of children in Nursery and Primary 1 will receive a summarised version of this policy.

Parents of children from within P2-7 will receive a summarised version of this policy on a bi-annual basis.

Parents of new pupils who join the school will receive a summarised version of this policy.

Full policies are available on the school website at all times and from the school office if requested. Parents will receive updated information throughout the year, as necessary

The Preventative Curriculum

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. (2017/04)

Our 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 (PDMU). 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.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is child protection information displayed around the school, providing advice and visual reminders of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers in the school. Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues: School visitors e.g. fire fighters, police etc. health visitor parent programmes; 'Helping Hands' Programme; NSPCC etc

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection Mrs A McIlroy 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 Acceptance of Policy: June 2024

Date of Next Review: Annual

Signed: Mr Gerard Doran (Chair of Board of Governors)

Mr Kieran O'Neill (Principal) and (Designated Teacher)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY OF TERMS-

Throughout our policy the term 'child' should be taken to mean any young person under the age of 18.

The term 'staff' should be taken to mean any responsible adult i.e. professional, auxiliary or ancillary workers in our schools as well as any voluntary workers.

APPENDIX 2

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL Telephone – 028 27662664 www.stbrigidspsballymoney.com	COUNCIL FOR CATHOLIC MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (CCMS) Head Office Lisburn Telephone 028 82 255326												
NSPCC Telephone 0808 800 5000 Website: www.nspcc.org.uk	CHILDLINE Telephone 0800 1111 Website: www.childline.org.uk												
PSNI (Central Referral Unit CRU) Central Referral Unit (CRU) 101 EMERGENCY 999 NON-EMERGENCY 101	CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES GATEWAY – CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK SERVICES Regional Emergency Social Work Service If you are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child, call Gateway to Children's Social Work Service. Telephone: 0300 1234 333 If you need social work assistance outside of office hours: Telephone: 028 9504 9999												
Child Protection Support Service for Schools 028 9598 5590	Duty Social Worker Gateway Team (Health & Social Care Trusts) <table> <tr> <td>Belfast</td><td>028 9050 7000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Northern</td><td>0300 1234 333</td></tr> <tr> <td>South Eastern</td><td>0300 1000 300</td></tr> <tr> <td>Southern</td><td>028 3756 7100</td></tr> <tr> <td>Western</td><td>028 7131 4090</td></tr> <tr> <td>Out of Hours for All Areas</td><td>028 9504 9999</td></tr> </table>	Belfast	028 9050 7000	Northern	0300 1234 333	South Eastern	0300 1000 300	Southern	028 3756 7100	Western	028 7131 4090	Out of Hours for All Areas	028 9504 9999
Belfast	028 9050 7000												
Northern	0300 1234 333												
South Eastern	0300 1000 300												
Southern	028 3756 7100												
Western	028 7131 4090												
Out of Hours for All Areas	028 9504 9999												

CONFIDENTIAL
NOTE OF CONCERN

**ST BRIGID'S PS BALLYMONEY 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 4

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

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

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots;	Self destructive tendencies; aggression to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway;

unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday	uncomfortable with physical contact; coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories
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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)**

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

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

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self esteem; self devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; 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 **section 7** of this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved. The above guidance follows DE Circular 2016/05 subject Children Who Display Harmful Sexualized Behaviour.

Child Sexual Exploitation

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

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity **in return for something** they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something

received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

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

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

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc without plausible explanation;
- Leaving home/care without permission;
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving;
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care;
- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances;
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return;
- Truanting from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Concerning use of the internet;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis;
- New peer groups;
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend';

- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Low self-esteem;
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less);
- Self harm and other expressions of despair;
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse.

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

Indecent Photographs

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

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

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

Domestic Violence and Abuse

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

Sexual Violence and Abuse

Is 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)**

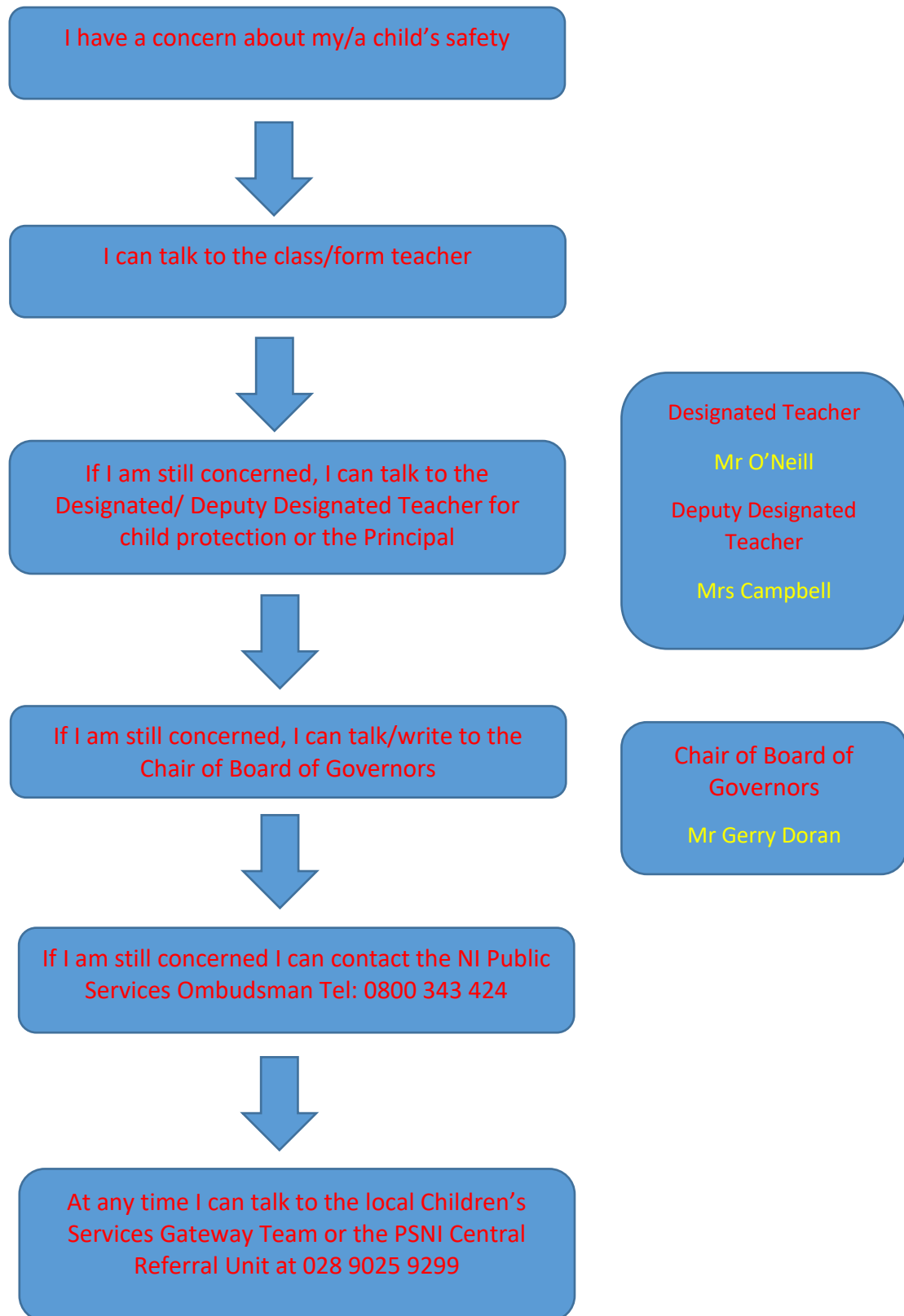
A child may live in a family where there is domestic abuse or a young person may be in a relationship where they become the subject of domestic abuse. In high risk cases involving domestic abuse Social Services and/or the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection will contact the 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.

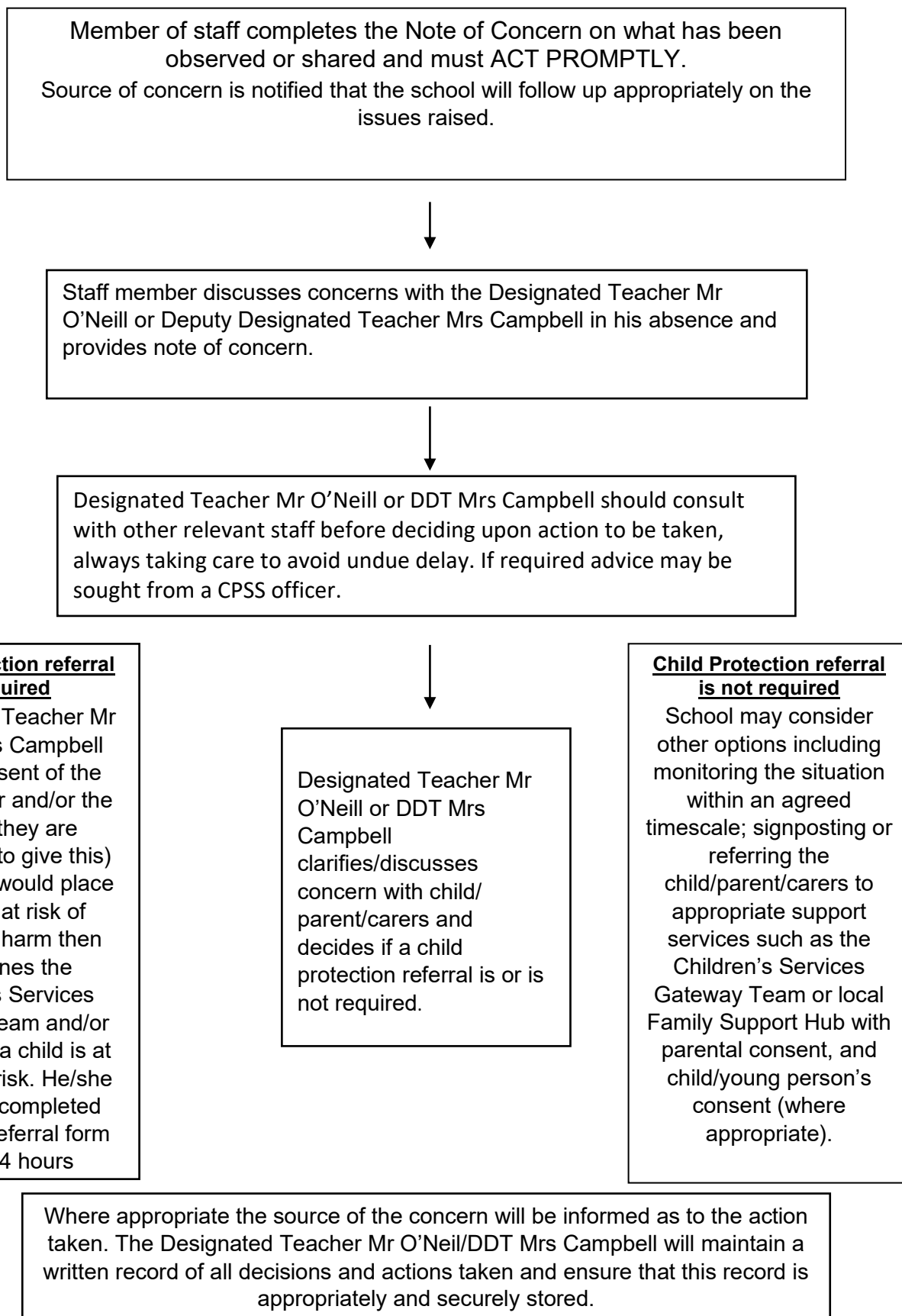
FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed and established school procedures.

Procedure for Parents who wish to raise a Child Protection Concern



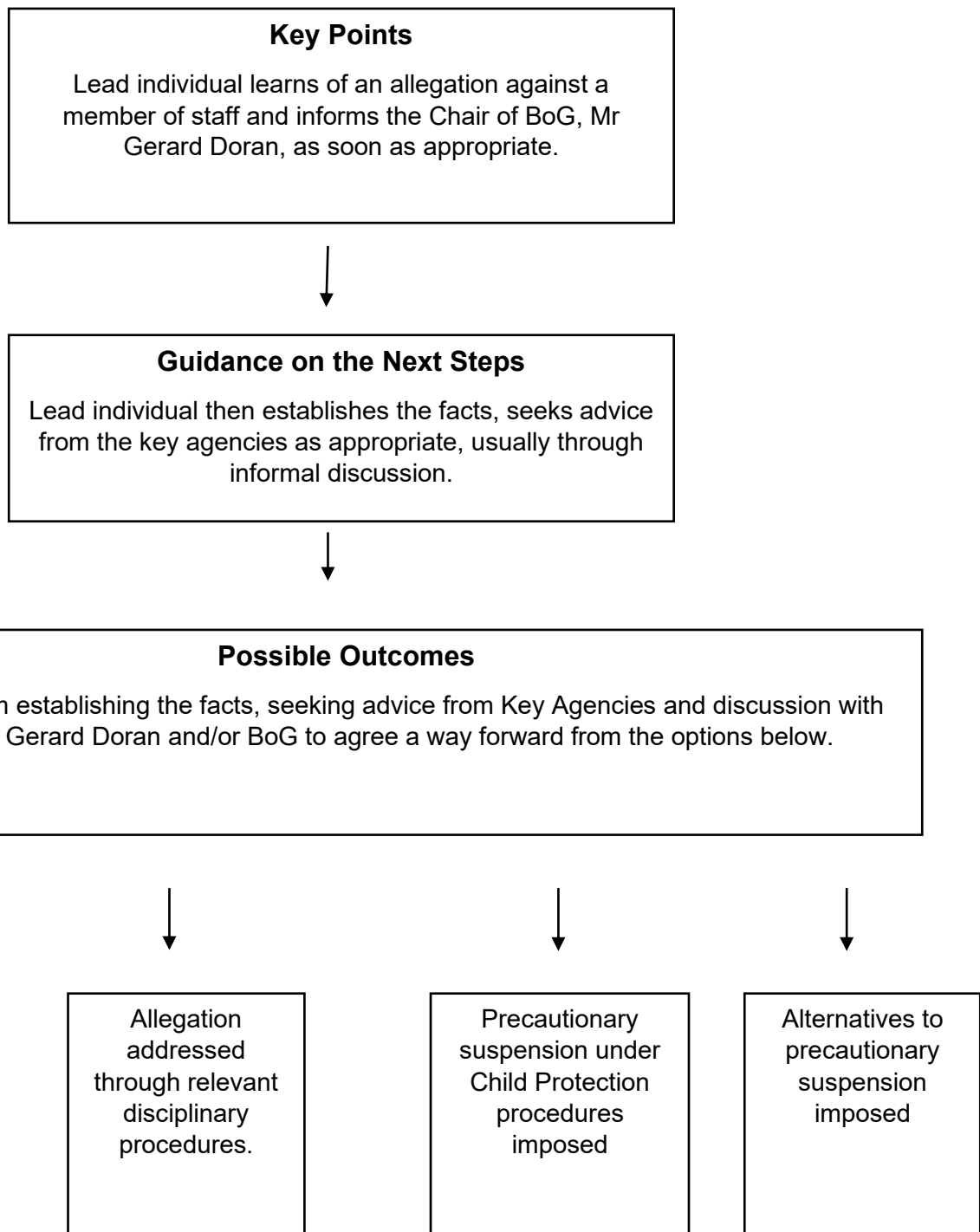
Appendix 6

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



Appendix 7

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



Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools

Date Ratified by BOG: June 2024

Review Date: Annual

Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff and volunteers are expected to observe. School staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school.

This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

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 Kieran O'Neill** and the DDT is **Mrs Leona Campbell**
- 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 e.g. 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 1 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 every day 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.

11. Compliance

All staff and volunteers must complete the form in Appendix 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

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

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.

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)**

General Role for Education

While it is important that those at risk are identified and interventions are put in place, it is equally important that children and young people are provided with information and skills in building healthy behaviours and relationships.

Children should be provided with the opportunity to develop good mental health and emotional resilience to enable them to identify abuse and exercise prevention skills. The statutory curriculum provides the opportunity for specific attention to be given to a pupil’s emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships and the development of a moral thinking and value system. It also offers a vehicle for exploring with children and young people sensitive issues such as domestic violence and sexual abuse in an age appropriate way and appropriate protective behaviours.

Teachers or other school staff who suspect that a pupil is a victim of domestic violence or sexual abuse should raise their concerns with the designated teacher. The procedures to be followed are the same as for any other type of abuse.

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.

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