

# MAGHERAFELT PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Safe Guarding & Child Protection Policy

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# Safe Guarding & Child Protection Policy

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## Policy Statement and Principles

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio. It is also available on the school website.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance;
- safer children make more successful learners;
- policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

## Child Protection Statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

## Policy Principles

- **The welfare of the child is paramount.**
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

## Policy Aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.

## Terminology

**Safe Guarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child Protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**DT** refers to the designated teacher for child protection

**DDT** refers to the Deputy Designated Teacher

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

## Roles and Responsibilities - Key Personnel

**Mrs Denise Doherty (Chair)      Designated Teacher Child Protection**

Contact details: email – [ddoherty573@c2kni.net](mailto:ddoherty573@c2kni.net)      Tel – 028 79632822

**Mrs Kirsty McAteer      Deputy Designated Teacher Child Protection**

Contact details: email – [kmcateer568@c2kni.net](mailto:kmcateer568@c2kni.net)      Tel – 028 79632822

**Mrs Denise Doherty      Acting Principal**

Contact details: email – [ddoherty573@c2kni.net](mailto:ddoherty573@c2kni.net)      Tel – 028 79632822

**Rev Dr Jonathan Curry      Chair of Governors**

Contact details: email – [jcurry@presbyterianireland.org](mailto:jcurry@presbyterianireland.org)      Tel – 028 79632822

**Mr Andrew Gallick      Designator Governor for Child Protection**

Contact details: email – [agallick1@gmail.com](mailto:agallick1@gmail.com)      Tel – 028 79632822

The Deputy Designated Teacher should only be consulted if the Designated Teacher is unavailable due to absence. Should an allegation be made against the Designated Teacher, the complaint should be directed to Rev. J Curry, Chairman of the Board of Governors.

## **The Designated Teacher (DT):**

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff;
- is appropriately trained, with regular updates;
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community;
- has a working knowledge of SBNI procedures;
- makes staff aware of SBNI latest policies on safeguarding;
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file;
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate;
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained;
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences;
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans;
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies;
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually liaises with the nominated governor and Principal (where the role is not carried out by the Principal) as appropriate;
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means.

## **The Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT):**

Is trained to the same level as the DT and, in the absence of the DT, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DT, the deputy will assume all of the functions above. Best practice now sees the DT and DDT acting as a team.

## **Good Practice Guidelines and Staff Code of Conduct**

Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect;
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately;
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them;
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils;
- being a good listener;
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse;
- reading and understanding the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour; policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues;
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse;
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DT, or, if necessary directly to police or children's social care.

## **Abuse of Position of Trust**

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence.

## **Children Who May Be Particularly Vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs;
- young carers;
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs;
- asylum seekers;
- living away from home;
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying;
- living in temporary accommodation;
- live transient lifestyles;
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations;
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality;
- at risk of sexual exploitation;
- do not have English as a first language;
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM);
- at risk of forced marriage;
- at risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

## **Children Missing Education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DT will monitor unauthorized absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

## **Staff Training**

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and governors will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DT. All staff, including the DT, Principal (unless the principal is the DT) and governors will receive training that is regularly updated. All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, e-bulletins, website access and staff meetings throughout the year.

## **Safer Recruitment**

Our school complies with the requirements of *Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools (DE 2017)* and the SBNI by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All relevant staff (involved in early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information to the school.

The school obtains written confirmation third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

## **Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests AccessNI with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the schools day.

## **Site Security**

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The principal will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site. Further details are available in our Site Security Policy.

## **Extended school and off-site arrangements**

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on behalf of our school we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## Recognising Abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

*Safeguarding and Child protection in Schools (DE 2017)* refers to five types of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse.

## Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures which can be accessed in the school Anti-Bullying Policy

## Taking Action

***Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.***

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child;
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DT, definitely by the end of the day;
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family;
- complete a record of concern;
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

## If You Are Concerned About a Pupil's Welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be concerning, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the **welfare concern form** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DT.

## If A Pupil Discloses To You

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the safeguarding lead in the school - DT.** The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the pupils, staff will:

- allow them to speak freely;
- remain calm and not overreact;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me';
- not be afraid of silences;
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the pupil's mother think about it;
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why;
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort;
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the pupil what will happen next;
- report verbally to the DT even if the child has promised to do it by themselves;
- complete the **record of concern form** and hand it to the DT as soon as possible;
- seek support if they feel distressed.

## **Notifying Parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DT will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

## **Confidentiality and Sharing Information**

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.

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

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

In accordance with DE guidance, we have developed clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in our school are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time 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.

Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate;
- relevant;

- adequate;
- accurate;
- timely;
- secure.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. The DT will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DT may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

## **Referral to Children's Social Care**

The DT will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

## **Reporting Directly to Child Protection Agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated teacher, their deputy, the principal and the chair of governors are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety;
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

## **Whistle Blowing If You Have Concerns About A Colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have

misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Principal. Complaints about the principal should be reported to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

## **Allegations Against Staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, our set procedures must be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *DE Circular 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a member of Staff*. Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling;
- **harmful sexualized behaviour/sexual abuse** such as inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault;
- **sexting**, including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content;
- **teenage relationship abuse** - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner;
- **initiation/hazing** - used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team or school groups by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials which promote a bond between them;
- **prejudiced behaviour** - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

At Magherafelt Primary School, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer on peer abuse.

- An open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Assemblies are used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- RE and PSHE are used to reinforce the message through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease in school.
- We will ensure that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

All allegations of peer on peer abuse should be passed to the DT immediately. They will then be investigated and dealt with as follows.

- **Information gathering** – children, staff and witnesses will be spoken with as soon as possible to gather relevant information quickly to understand the situation and assess whether there was intent to cause harm.
- **Decide on action** – if it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children’s social care. The DT will then work with children’s social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police.
- **Inform parents** - as with other concerns of abuse, the school will normally seek to discuss concerns about a pupil with parents. Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

## Supporting Those Involved

The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. Support could include counselling, mentoring, the support of family and friends and/or support with improving peer relationships.

Support may also be required for the pupil that harmed. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. Once those needs have been met, the consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

## **Sexting**

There is no accepted definition of 'sexting' but most professionals agree that it refers to the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs of a person under 18 years of age, via mobiles or over the internet. The [UKCCIS advice document](#) refers to this as 'youth produced sexual imagery'.

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery will be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

- The incident will be referred to the DT immediately and the DT will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff. If appropriate, there will be subsequent interviews with the young people involved.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately in accordance with this policy.

In some instances, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the police. Once a report is made to the police, the report must be recorded and the police will investigate. This may include seizure of devices and interviews with the young people involved.

## **Sexual Exploitation of Children**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and RSE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognize the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DT.

## Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours – these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'harmful'.

Healthy sexual behaviour has generally no need for intervention however there may be instances when interventions are applied, for example, it is not appropriate when displayed in school or during school activities.

Problematic Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Not age appropriate
- One off incident of low key touching over clothes
- Result of peer pressure
- Spontaneous rather than planned
- Lacking in other balancing factors e.g. no intent to cause harm, level of understanding, acceptance of responsibility
- Targeting other children, to irritate and make feel uncomfortable. Often the children are not scared and can feel free to tell someone
- Concerning to parents / carers, supportive
- Sometimes involving substances which disinhibit behaviours

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, advice from the Education Authority CPSSS may be required. The CPSSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Lacks the consent of the victim
- When the perpetrator uses threats or violence (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce or intimidate the victim
- Uses age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
- Involves inappropriate touching
- Involves sexual behaviour between children – it is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older – particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- Involves a younger child abusing an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and schools should refer to their own child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSSS

An Assessment Checklist can be used to evaluate individual incidents, or a series of incidents, retrospectively and are a guide for decision making about level of concern/ intervention.

There are 8 factors, drawn from the AIM Project (Assessment, Intervention, Moving On) guidelines, which should be considered.

Where only limited information is available, the checklist should provide a prompt for the information that needs to be gathered.

Assessment Factors:

- The type of sexual behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The young person's response when challenged about their behaviour
- The reaction/response of others
- The relationship between the children / young people / targeted adult
- The persistence and frequency of the behaviour
- Any other behavioural problems; and
- Background information known

## **Honour-Based Violence**

'Honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBV are abuse.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a

leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

## **Private Fostering Arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DT and the school should notify the local Trust of the circumstances.

## **Looked After Children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the Trust looking after the child. The DT has details of the child's social worker.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Governors, Principal and SMT will monitor the policy.**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman of BOG

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

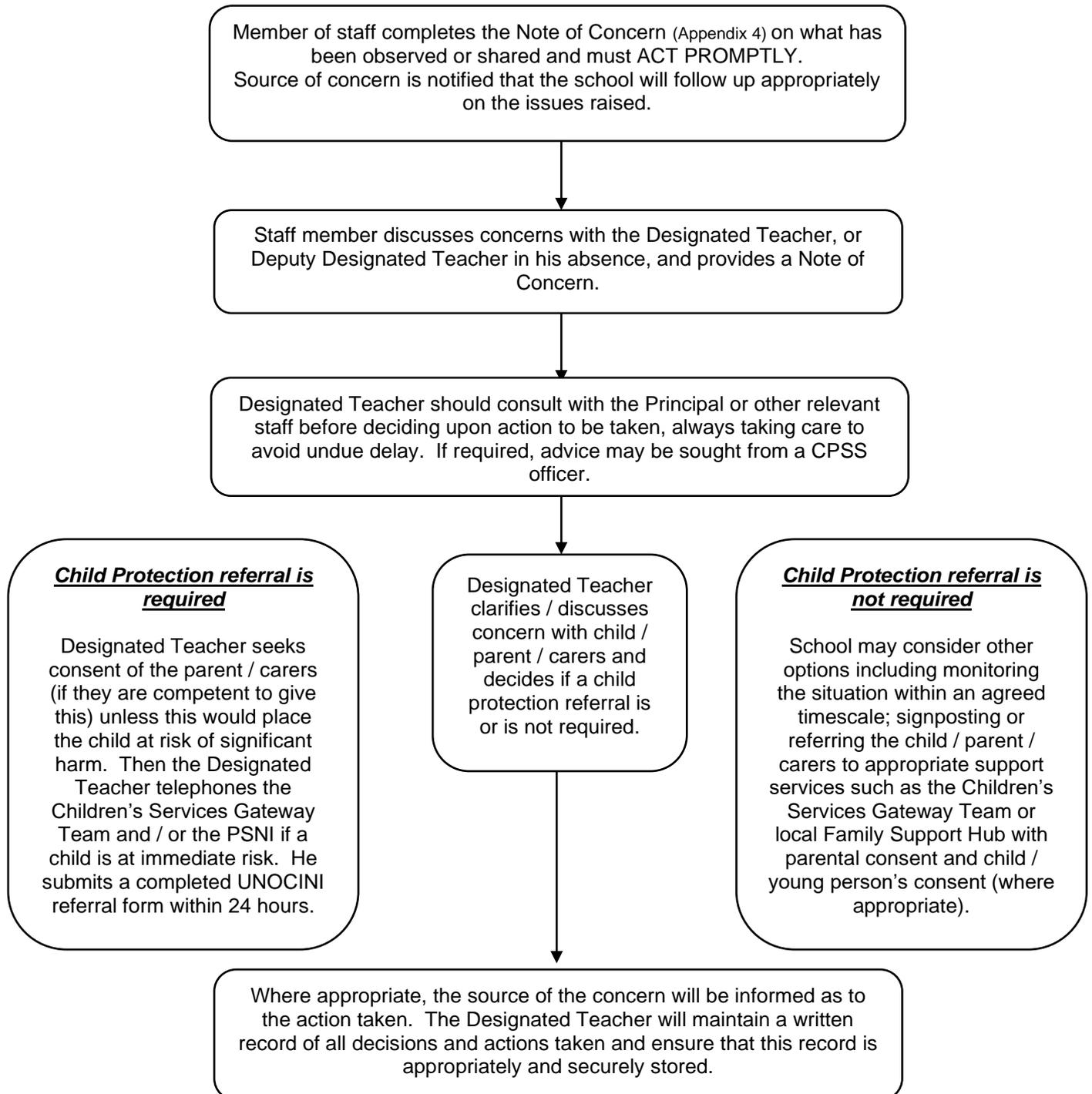
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***Please note - All procedures and contacts are outlined in Appendices 1-5***

***Signs and Symptoms of Abuse are outlined in Appendix 6***

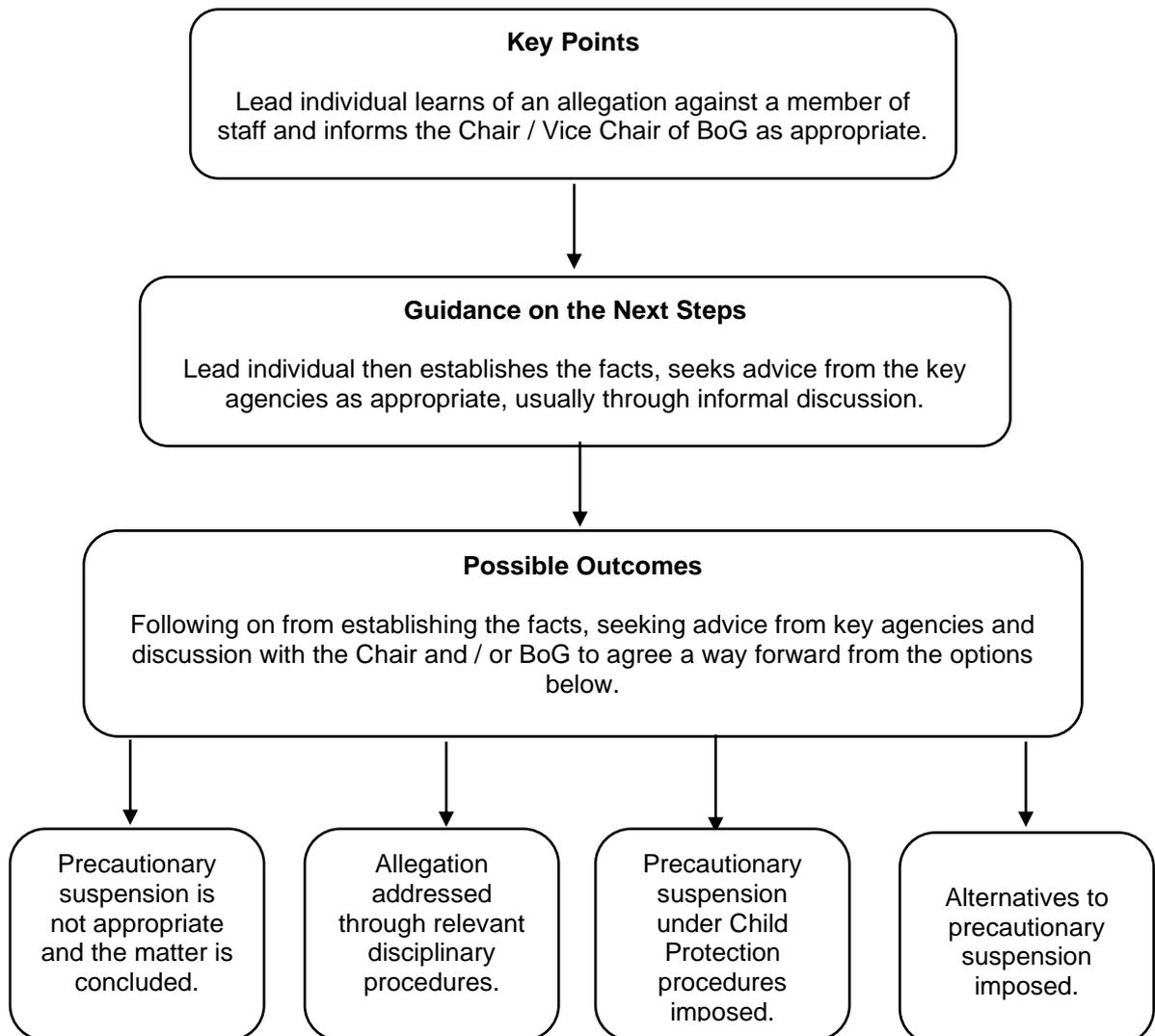
## Appendix 1

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



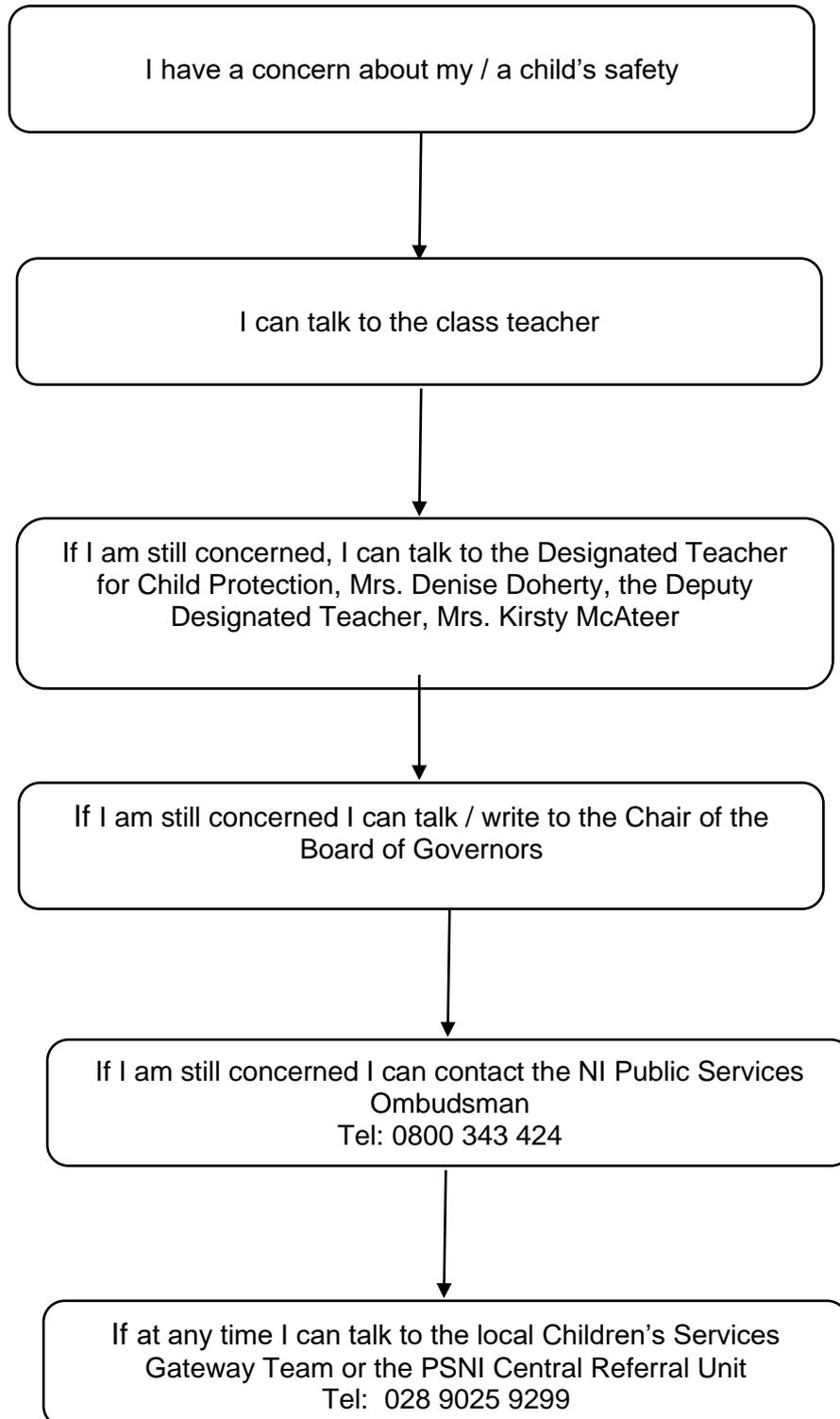
## Appendix 2

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



## Appendix 3

Procedure if a parent has a potential child protection concern



**Appendix 4**  
**Note of Concern**

**Magherafelt Primary School**  
**Child Protection Note of Concern**



Name of Pupil \_\_\_\_\_

Year Group  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Disclosure  
\_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Time of Disclosure  
\_\_\_\_\_ am / pm

Circumstances of incident / disclosure

Nature and description of concern

Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event; what was said or done 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, please state reason

Date of report to Designated Teacher                      \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_  
Time of report to designated Teacher                      \_\_\_\_\_ am / pm

Name of staff member making the report                      \_\_\_\_\_  
Role of staff member making the report                      \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of staff member                      \_\_\_\_\_                      Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_  
Signature of Designated Teacher                      \_\_\_\_\_                      Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

## **Appendix 5**

### **Contacts – Child Protection Support Service**

<b>EA Offices</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Belfast	028 9056 4289
Antrim	028 9448 2223
Dundonald	028 9056 6216
Armagh	028 3834 1975
Omagh	028 8241 1461

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

<b>EA Offices</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Belfast	028 9050 7000
Northern	0300 1234 333
South Eastern	0300 1000 300
Southern	028 3741 5285
Western	028 8283 5156
Out of Hours for All Areas	028 9504 9999

## Appendix 6

### Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

#### 1. Physical Abuse

##### Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises or burns, especially recurrent bruises / burns
- Human bite marks
- Unexplained lacerations
- Untreated injuries

##### Behavioural indicators

- Self-destructive tendencies
- Improbable excuse for injuries
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Inappropriate clothing for weather

#### 2. Neglect

##### Physical Indicators

- Constant hunger
- Poor state of clothing and / or personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Emaciation / distended stomach
- Constant tiredness

##### Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness / listlessness
- Lack of social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self-esteem

#### 3. Emotional Abuse

### Physical indicators

- Sudden speech disorder
- Signs of mutilation
- Signs of solvent abuse (mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)
- Wetting or soiling
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relationships

### Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour
- Reluctance for parent liaison
- Fear of new situations
- Chronic runaway
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

## **4. Sexual Abuse**

### Physical indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in 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 infections
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases

### 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 anger / hysteria
- Overly protective to siblings

## **Appendix 7**

### **Safeguarding Children Through the Curriculum**

#### **Aims**

- To encourage all children towards a positive self-image.
- To help children view themselves as part of a community and, by example, to nurture children's abilities to establish and sustain relationships with families, peers, adults and the world outside.
- To provide time, space and opportunities for children to explore, discuss and develop the key concepts of Child Protection.
- To equip children with appropriate information to make reasoned, informed choices, judgements and decisions.

#### **Curricular Activities to Promote Safeguarding**

- School and classroom environments in which every child is valued as a member of a community.
- Provision of a variety of opportunities, appropriate to the Year Group, to discuss thoughts, feelings and worries in an atmosphere of trust acceptance and tolerance. This will be delivered through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and school assemblies.
- Identification of a range of people to whom children can turn to in order to share concerns and discuss problems.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluating**

- This policy will be review regularly and amended when appropriate.
- All staff will be aware of the Child Protection policy and procedures to be followed.
- Training for all staff will be updated as appropriate.

## Appendix 8

### A Code of Conduct for Members of Staff at Magherafelt Primary School

All actions concerning children and people uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This 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. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

#### Code of Conduct

##### 1. Private meetings with pupils

- (a) Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognized that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or the door open.
- (b) Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows the interview is taking place.
- (c) Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.
- (d) In cases where a child needs changed as a result of them wetting or soiling themselves, this should be done by a female member of staff with another member of staff at a discrete distance. This should then be recorded on the 'Intimate Care' form located in the office. (See Intimate Care Policy).

##### 2. Physical contact with pupils

- (a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- (b) It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- (c) Staff should not touch a child who has clearly indicated that he / she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999 / 9), on the use of

reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).

- (d) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- (e) Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. ***However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.***
- (f) Any physical conduct which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- (g) Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his / her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal.
- (h) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or approved out of school activities, when more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school / work environment.

### **3. Choice and use of teaching materials**

- (a) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- (b) When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticized. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials in connection with sex education programmes.
- (c) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

### **4. Intimate Care**

Intimate Care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child. Parents have a responsibility to advise staff of the

potential intimate care needs of their child, and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents. At the Year 1 Induction Day held in June, parents are given the option of either entrusting their child's teacher or classroom assistant to help their child change in the event of a toileting accident, or being contacted by the school to come in and do it themselves. Where a parent gives permission for the child's teacher / classroom assistant to change the child, the following will apply:

- Every child will be treated with dignity and respect
- Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his / her own intimate care.
- One female adult should administer the necessary care with another at a discreet distance to provide further support if necessary.
- A supply of clean under-clothing should be stored in each classroom.
- The parent should be informed and where possible the soiled clothing sent home for washing.
- All cases where intimate care has been administered should be recorded in the Intimate Care Record held in the Principal's office.

(Please refer to the School's Intimate Care Policy.)

## **5. Relationships and Attitudes**

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

## **6. Use of Social Media & Internet Use**

Staff should not engage in activities outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school. Staff should also exercise caution with using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the school's E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times.

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

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.

Contact with pupils should be through school authorized mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communications routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

Photographs or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorized by the school.

Staff should refrain from the use of mobile phones in classrooms, corridors and pupil areas.

## Appendix 9

### Useful Resources

- DE Circular 1999 / 10 and booklet Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection
- DE Circulars 2006 / 6, 7, 8, 9, 25 Vetting of Staff
- DE Circular 2008 / 03 pre-employment checks
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Education & Libraries (NI) Order 2003
- Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Cooperating to Safeguard Children
- Kidscape booklets
- NSPCC literature

### Conclusion

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

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgment will be exercised and for the vast majority of the employee this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this Code of Conduct, or how they act in particular circumstances, they should consult the Principal or a representative of their professional association. From time to time it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children / young people and their manner and approach to individual children / young people, to ensure they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children / young people or their parent / guardians.

## Appendix 10

### Annex to Child Protection Policy COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

#### Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak and the uncertainty of Education Restart

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following advice from government and local agencies.

#### Reporting arrangements remain unchanged

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Teacher (DT) is: Mrs Denise Doherty

The Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) is: Mrs Kirsty McAteer

The school's approach ensures the DT or a deputy is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible the DT or DDT will be contactable and the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will email all staff by 9am to advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role together with contact details for the DT or DDT.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting gateway are:

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure

#### Identifying vulnerability

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/new-vulnerable-children-guidance-published-schools-and-parents>

During Lockdown many families were assisted by the school or local community and this will continue for as long as required.

### **Staff will be aware of increased risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

### **Risk online**

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place
- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and guidance for safer working practice from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly.
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP.
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
  - Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
  - Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online

- UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.

### **Allegations or concerns about staff**

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

### **New staff or volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DT or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DT or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

### **New children at the school**

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DT whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DT to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system (CPOMS), will be securely copied to the placing school DT and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DT will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

## Appendix 11

### 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](#).