

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**700 ANTRIM ROAD  
BELFAST  
BT15 5GQ**



**SAFEGUARDING  
and  
CHILD PROTECTION  
POLICY**

**OCTOBER 2018**

# **OUR LADY OF LOURDES PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

We in Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care and safety of the pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, and in which our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to ensure that everyone who works in the school – teachers, non-teaching staff, governors and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action required when abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. To this end, the school will ensure that all staff, whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary is aware of child protection issues, and their role with regard to these. The overriding concern of all the people who come to work in Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School is the care, welfare and safety of each child and **this is paramount**.

### **Introduction**

The following draft draws directly on the Department of Education Guidance - March 1999. Three articles in The United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (Article 19, 12, 3) influence the guidance.

**Article 19** provides that children have the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.

**Article 12** further provides that a child who is capable of forming his/her own views should be assured the right to express these views freely in all matters affecting the child; these views being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

**Article 3** provides that when organisations make decisions which affect children the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.

### ***Principle of Paramountcy***

***"The fundamental principle in child care law and practice is that the welfare of the child must always be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her".***

***Children's Order (NI) 1995***

The school's Child Protection Policy attempts to address the fundamental right of the child (anyone up to the age of 18) to be protected from harm. The policy is required to reflect both the legal duties of the school and its pastoral responsibilities. Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, in partnership with the statutory agencies will set out the procedures to be followed in cases of suspected abuse. This Child Protection Policy is part of the overall Pastoral Care Policy of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School and is in keeping with the guidance as laid down by DENI and C.C.M.S.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School considers that the following principles underpin the guidance on this policy document:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- At all times, there must be a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.
- Each agency involved must have an understanding of each other's professional values and accept each other's role powers and responsibilities.
- Any actions taken by agencies must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child's sex, age, stage of development, religion and race.
- The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF POLICY**

### **Aims**

1 To create a safe and secure environment for all members of the school community.

2 Develop the children's skills in self-protection through an agreed whole school curriculum initiative.

### **Objectives**

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

Child protection and safeguarding is the responsibility of all who work/volunteer in our school.

The school will contribute by:

- 1 ensuring pupils have sufficient knowledge about themselves to be able to understand what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate contact
- 2 enabling children to become aware of strategies which they may use to protect themselves from possible abusive situations
- 3 delivering an on-going programme of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- 4 ensuring that all new staff, volunteers and professionals from outside agencies are made aware of Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures on appointment
- 5 ensuring all staff and regular voluntary helpers will have undergone security clearance
- 6 ensuring that designated and deputy designated teachers avail themselves of all opportunities to update their knowledge of child protection procedures.
- 7 providing regular in-service training to maintain a working awareness among staff and volunteers of child protection issues and child protection procedures.
- 8 maintaining the Child Protection Register and Child Protection Records securely in accordance with requirements outlined in 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools- A Guide for Schools'.

## **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 cause them concerns.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to immediately make their concerns known to the Designated Teacher or, in his absence, to the Deputy Designated Teacher and to make a written record of their concerns as soon as possible.

In the case of absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher assumes the responsibility of the Designated Teacher. In Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, the **Designated Teacher** is **Mr C. McQuaid**, and the **Deputy Designated Teacher** is **Mrs Cahill (Vice Principal)**.

It is not the responsibility of school staff to undertake investigations or to make enquiries of parents or guardians and in some cases it could 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 police. However, it may be necessary sometimes for staff to seek clarification.

## **THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

Chair of the Board of Governors: Mrs C. Nagle

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Dr C. Zubier

Principal: Mr S. Merrick

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mr. C. McQuaid

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs C. Cahill

The Safeguarding Team meet regularly to discuss any current Child Protection issues and concerns, to ensure that the school is following correct procedures and to support the DT and the DDT in carrying out their responsibilities.

The Safeguarding Team will facilitate self-evaluation to continue to improve provision. If necessary, any changes to practice will be disseminated to relevant staff immediately.

## **CHILD ABUSE - A DEFINITION**

“Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child, such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms including:

**Neglect:** 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.

<b>Emotional Abuse:</b>	Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.
<b>Exploitation</b>	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.
<b>Sexual Abuse:</b>	Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.
<b>Sexual exploitation</b>	'Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.'
(SBNI 2014, adopted from CSE Knowledge Transfer Partnership NI).	
<b>Cyber Bullying</b>	This has been defined as: "an aggressive intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself."
Source – Report to the Anti-Bullying Alliance by Goldsmiths College, University of London.	
Categories include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ unwelcome text messages</li> <li>✓ threatening or embarrassing picture / video clips</li> <li>✓ abusive mobile phone messages</li> <li>✓ sending threatening emails</li> <li>✓ chat room / instant messaging bullying messages</li> <li>✓ defamatory blogs via websites</li> </ul>	
<b>Physical Abuse:</b>	Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

**Domestic Violence** Domestic violence and abuse is:  
‘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.  
(DHSSPS/DOJ ‘Stopping domestic and sexual violence and abuse in NI’ A 7yr strategy, Mar 2016)

### **The Signs and Impact of Domestic Violence upon Children.**

#### **Self**

- Physical injuries
- Feelings ranging from fear, responsibility, anger, depression, embarrassment, guilt
- Have to cope with tension, change ‘unexplained’ situation
- Unable to talk about experience/secretive/silent
- Loss of space for self as a ‘child’
- Sense of powerlessness to initiate change
- Sense of confusion and emotional turmoil
- Do not readily forget what they have seen, heard and felt
- Advanced in maturity and sense of responsibility
- Disruption in living and educational arrangements

#### **Relationship with Others**

- Sense of shame as family business becomes public knowledge
- View violence as appropriate behaviour
- Become passive withdrawn when conflict/disagreement occurs
- Fear of external agency involvement
- School life disrupted by behaviour or change
- Challenging behaviours in school

#### **Relationship with Parents/Guardians**

- Confused about feelings towards mother/father
- Protective of mother/siblings, won’t leave mother/over concerned about her
- Sense of responsibility for situation
- Sense of mixed feelings towards perpetrator
- Take on role of caretaker, confidante, referee, colluder, perfect child, scapegoat

#### **Longer Term Considerations**

- Life chances affected by impact on schooling
- Young people may leave home prematurely to ‘escape’
- Children may be removed from living with one/both parents
- Relationship with parents affected
- Relationship with others affected
- Learn some things that are not true, e.g. the victim of violence is to blame

## Stress Indicators in Children

<p><b><u>Behavioural</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive outburst</li> <li>• Display of anger</li> <li>• Become withdrawn</li> <li>• Agitated</li> <li>• Eat too much/too little</li> <li>• Cry</li> <li>• Loss of concentration</li> <li>• Secretive</li> <li>• Spend time alone</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Emotional</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Angry</li> <li>• Afraid</li> <li>• Confused</li> <li>• Anxious</li> <li>• Lack of concentration</li> <li>• Upset – may be tearful</li> <li>• Frustration</li> <li>• Irritable</li> <li>• Bored</li> <li>• Tired</li> <li>• Depressed and suicidal</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Physical</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bed wetting</li> <li>• Physical injuries</li> <li>• Weight loss</li> <li>• Self-harm</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances</li> <li>• Nail biting</li> <li>• Hair loss</li> <li>• Stomach ache</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Personal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It’s my fault”</li> <li>• “There is something wrong with me”</li> <li>• “Nobody cares”</li> <li>• “No-one can help me”</li> <li>• “I can’t tell anyone or it will get worse”</li> </ul>

## **Identifying Signs of Abuse**

The following are examples of common signs and symptoms encountered by teachers which might indicate abuse or neglect. Please note, however, that this is not a checklist and some of the signs and symptoms may have other explanations.

<b><u>PHYSICAL ABUSE</u></b>	<b><u>NEGLECT</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ hand slap or belt marks</li> <li>✓ gripping bruises</li> <li>✓ burn / scald or bite marks</li> <li>✓ unwillingness to undress in front of others</li> <li>✓ failure to reach potential</li> <li>✓ unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent</li> <li>✓ improbable excuses given to explain injuries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ listlessness &amp; constant tiredness</li> <li>✓ poor personal hygiene, poor state of clothing</li> <li>✓ under achievement at school</li> <li>✓ lack of supervision at home</li> <li>✓ frequent lateness or non-attendance</li> <li>✓ untreated medical problems</li> <li>✓ no social relationships</li> <li>✓ running away</li> <li>✓ compulsive stealing or scavenging</li> </ul>

<u>SEXUAL ABUSE</u>	<u>EMOTIONAL ABUSE</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ sexually explicit behaviour</li> <li>✓ loss of self esteem</li> <li>✓ running away from home</li> <li>✓ unusual sexual themes in artwork or writing</li> <li>✓ self mutilation</li> <li>✓ sudden changes in behaviour or school performance</li> <li>✓ complaints of genital itching or pain</li> <li>✓ distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative or baby-sitter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ stunted growth</li> <li>✓ extremes of passivity or aggression</li> <li>✓ loss of self esteem</li> <li>✓ fearful or unhappy</li> <li>✓ over-reaction to mistakes</li> <li>✓ continual self-depreciation</li> </ul>

### **Children's Right to Self-Protection**

At Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, we will ensure through the teaching of our Religious Programme ‘Grow in Love’, RSE and through the use of PDMU, Circle Time and various external programmes, that all children in our school know they have the right:

**To be safe:** We will teach children that everyone has rights, such as the right to breathe which should not be taken away. We tell children that no one should take away their right to be safe.

**To protect their own bodies:** Children need to know that their body belongs to them, particularly the private parts covered by their swimwear.

**To say NO:** We tell children it’s all right to say no to anyone if that person tries to do something to them that they feel is wrong. Most children are taught to listen to and obey adults and older people without question.

**To tell:** We assure children that no matter what happens we will not be angry with them and that we want them to tell us of any incident that frightens or confuses them or makes them unhappy.

**To be believed:** When children are told to go to an adult for help they need to know they will be believed and supported.

**Not to keep secrets:** We teach children that some secrets should never be kept, no matter if they promised not to tell.

### **Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour**

Child protection procedures require that issues of concern, including inappropriate sexual behaviour, should be notified to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The Designated Teacher in turn notifies the Principal and together they decide, taking advice as necessary, on the most appropriate course of action.

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children, through PDMU, RSE and RE, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often, therefore, in a good position to notice behaviours that give cause for concern.

It can be difficult to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate behaviours. Complicating factors can include the age of the child concerned or whether the child has special educational needs.

Professional judgement is therefore likely to be required and schools should contact the CPSS for support and advice on the appropriate course of action to take.

The CPSS staff group has been trained in using specific education guidelines for identifying and managing harmful sexualised and problematic behaviours in education settings. This includes not only safely managing the pupil whose behaviour may pose a risk but also considering the needs of the pupil(s) already exposed to that risk, as well as safeguarding of the rest of the school population. It also includes consideration of effectively responding to parents.

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

**Healthy Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:**

- Exploratory and age appropriate
- Not intended to cause harm
- Fun / humorous
- Without power differentials
- 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. This may therefore
- be an opportune time for teachers to positively reinforce appropriate behaviour, drawing on the guidance issued by the
- Department on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

**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

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, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the Education Authority CPSS may be required. The CPSS 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 we will seek advice from CPSS and the Gateway Team. Whether a child is responsible for harmful sexualised behaviour, is a victim of sexual abuse, or both, it is important to apply principles that remain child centred. Harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children must be recognised as damaging to both the victim and the child who engages in the abusive behaviour. A child who engages in abuse of this kind may be suffering, or be at risk of, significant harm and may also be in need of protection. Some children who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour are likely to have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties and may have experienced some form of abuse themselves in the past.

Nonetheless, in the balance of what is in the child's best interests, the needs of the victim must be given priority; and nothing should be done which causes the victim further harm. The needs of children who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour towards others should be considered separately from the needs of their victims.

Schools should be conscious of the fact that it is not appropriate to refer to children displaying harmful sexualised behaviour using such terms as 'sexually aggressive', 'sexually precocious' or 'child perpetrators'.

It must also be borne in mind that harmful sexualised behaviour is primarily a child protection concern and does **not** be addressed through the school discipline procedures.

**Female Genital Mutilation**

FGM is illegal in the UK, as is taking a child from the UK to carry this out elsewhere. FGM is usually carried out on girls between the ages of 4 and 13, although the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8. FGM is practised in 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle East and the Far East. It continues to be practised in some communities in Western Europe. One of the difficulties is that FGM-practising families may not see it as an act of abuse. It is accepted practice in some communities, and this can make it very difficult for a girl or any other member of her family to come forward. Schools should be particularly alert for signs when a girl comes from a community where FGM is practised.

## **Policy on the taking of photographs or videos of pupils.**

As part of our Child Protection Procedures we ask parents to sign to give permission for their children's images (photographs/video) to be used –

1. within the school for display purposes
2. externally for displays associated with the school.
3. by local, national, television and press e.g., the launch of a school project, donations to charity.
4. on our own internet website (no children's names will appear with their image).

Parents will also want to keep a record of their children's time in primary school and the school would want to facilitate this as much as possible. It is therefore the school policy that parents will be allowed to photograph/video significant events, e.g., first day at school, concerts, sports days etc as long as this does not disrupt the smooth running of the school or be too intrusive.

## **Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools.**

**Online Safety** means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device.

Online safety remains a paramount concern. We want pupils to have the opportunity to avail of all the positive benefits that come from learning, exploring and connecting with each other online but also to know how to stay safe and act responsibly themselves.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its Report '*An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland*'. The report highlights the requirement to take appropriate preventative action to protect children and minimise the associated risks around online safety. These risks have been defined under four categories:

**Content risks:** The child is exposed to harmful materials.

**Contact risks:** The child participates in adult-initiated online activity and/or is at risk of grooming.

**Conduct risks:** The child is a perpetrator or subject to bullying behaviour in peer-to-peer exchange and/or is at risk of bullying, entrapment and/or blackmail.

**Commercial risks:** The child is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs/fraud.

The internet and other technology based tools are very powerful resources that can enhance and potentially transform learning and teaching when used effectively and appropriately.

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School will at all times adhere to guidance from DENI. The school will ensure that access to the internet is a filtered service and that all users are taught, and will learn and exhibit, safe and responsible effective working practices.

These will be promoted and modelled by staff who are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with the rules of behaviour governing employees in the education sector. Staff will ensure that pupils know and understand what they, as internet users, are permitted to do and are made fully aware of which activities are unacceptable and in violation of school rules.

Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the internet just as they are in the classroom or a school corridor; general school rules apply. While in school teachers will guide pupils towards appropriate materials on the use of the internet.

Guidelines have been issued in relation to Pupil Internet Access and displayed in all classrooms. Pupils are taught to be SAFE / SMART on-line.

Parents are asked for written permission for their child to use the internet in school.

All Pupils and Parents have signed an 'Acceptable Use of the Internet Agreement' and these are kept by the ICT Co-ordinator.

Outside school, parents/guardians bear responsibility for such guidance as they do for other information sources such as television, film, radio, mobile phone and other potentially offensive media.

Staff awareness of the need for online safety is included in Safeguarding and Child Protection training for teaching and support staff. The school follows the Guidance of DENI Circular 2007/1.

## **Procedures for Reporting Concerns**

### **General Concerns / Child in Need**

- A member of staff concerned about the physical and/or social and/or emotional "appearance" of the child should make detailed notes of the concerns and complete 'A Note of Concern Form' [An example may be a teacher who notices changed behaviour, appearance, attendance/punctuality patterns etc.]
- The concerns are discussed with the Designated Teacher (Mr McQuaid) or Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Cahill).
- Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality which are clearly understood by all staff and addressed during Child Protection training. Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, and, where abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this.
- Where a child confides in a member of staff or a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret it is important that the child is told sensitively that it may be necessary to share the information with those who need to know about it, and explain that this is important to ensure the child's safekeeping.

- All staff and volunteers who receive sensitive information about children or parents in the course of their professional duties are aware that such information is confidential, and is not to be made the subject of general conversation, or disclosed to others outside the school other than statutory officials, as required by this policy.
- Appropriate professional advice is sought from internally or externally, as necessary.

### **Child at risk of “significant harm”**

- (1) 1. Staff should be aware of all the possible signs of abuse
2. Where signs are evident, they should seek clarification discretely from the child and make notes.
  3. Where there is still concern, a report must be made to the Designated Teacher Mr. Mc Quaid, completing A Note of Concern Form. (Appendix 1) and full notes made.
  4. The Designated Teacher (Mr McQuaid) must notify the Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal.
  5. The Designated Teacher (Mr McQuaid) may seek clarification or advice and consult with EA Child Protection Officers and/or CCMS
  6. If a referral is necessary the Designated Teacher (Mr McQuaid) will notify Social Services or the PSNI Central Referral Unit & The Designated Officer for Child Protection in CCMS/EA
  7. Follow up with sending on an Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) form as referral on to other outside specialist agencies within 24 hours of making referral
- (2) 1. Where a pupil confides information to a member of staff, the pupil should be reassured and told that the information may need to be shared with others. Notes should be made. No investigation or promise of confidentiality should ever be made.
2. The Procedure at 1.3 is then followed.
- (3) 1. Where a pupil confides information of possible abuse outside the school or whether or not the pupil is the subject of the alleged abuse, and where the suspected abuser is not the parent, then the parent should be present while the school is seeking preliminary clarification.
2. The procedure at 1.3 is then followed.

## **Handling Information**

Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

**No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.**

If a child confides information to a member of staff which gives cause for concern about possible abuse and requests that the information be kept secret it is important that the member of staff should tell the child sensitively he/she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate person in the school, i.e., the designated teacher initially. Within that context the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

- ✓ The Designated/Deputy Designated teachers have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals and where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this to Social Services and / The PSNI Central Referral Unit.
- ✓ Staff should share information only within appropriate contexts. Child protection records will be kept under secure condition.
- ✓ When concerns reach a level of significance referral to Social Services using 'UNOCINI' form.

## **Reports for Child Protection Case Conferences**

Reports for child protection conferences should focus on the child's educational progress and achievements, attendance, behaviour, participation, relationships with other children and adults within the school and, where appropriate, the child's appearance.

Reports should be objective and based on evidence;

They should therefore contain only fact, observations and reasons for concern.

Reports will be made available to the child's parents at the Child Protection Conference (CPC) and may be used in court. All reports should be checked and signed by the designated teacher or by the teacher who has assumed these responsibilities in her/his absence. (Pro-forma report - Appendix 2).

The designated teacher where possible will attend Social Services Case Conferences. If unable to attend the Designated Teacher will compile relevant feedback from school staff to specific social worker.

## **Monitoring and supporting pupils on the Child Protection Register**

The school will monitor pupils whose names are on the Child Protection Register and alert the child's co-ordinator (social services) or Education Welfare Officer when a pupil on the CPR is absent for more than a few days, or on a regular basis, or to any signs which suggest a deterioration in the pupil's home circumstances.

## **Social Services**

The statutory responsibility for protecting children lies with Social Services and they will:

- ✓ talk to the Designated teacher;
- ✓ decide how the case should proceed;
- ✓ investigate and assess the degree of risk;
- ✓ organise, if appropriate, a case conference;
- ✓ invite a representative from school to attend; (this will normally be Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal.) inform parents and school of the child protection plan when agreed.

### **Remember:**

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Confidentiality is subordinate to the need to protect the child.

If in doubt, report suspicions to the designated teacher.

You are only asked to report suspicions, not to investigate.

If you comply with EA/CCMS procedures, you will receive full support and will not be legally or financially liable.

Disclosure can leave you feeling vulnerable - remember you may need support.

*Please remember - do not make a promise of confidentiality to either a child or a parent. Always tell them that you will need to share the information with another member of staff, i.e., the designated teacher.*

### **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE**

***"Child abuse may be a criminal offence, therefore, we are not free of our obligations."***

If a child disclosed that he/she has been abused, it is important to talk/comfort the child as well as tell them you may need to speak to someone else. It is important to say: -

- I believe you;
- I am glad that you have told me this;
- I am sorry that this has happened to you;
- It is not, nor ever was your fault;
- We are going to do something about this together.

### **Five things to do:**

- Stay calm, listen, say you will take a few notes (very important as a safeguard for you).
- Do not interrogate; do not ask how, when, where or why?
- Record your notes later again (time, place, date, behaviour of the child, place where the abuse occurred. If possible, do a drawing or description of physical abuse).
- Follow guidelines immediately.
- Disclosure can leave you traumatised - remember you may need support.

*Please remember - do not make a promise of confidentiality to either a child or a parent. Always tell them that you may have to disclose the information to another member of staff, i.e., the Designated Teacher.*

The Designated Teacher in Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School is Mr C McQuaid.  
The Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs C Cahill.

### **RECORDING NOTES**

These are suggested guidelines only.

- Notes should be written on the presumption that parents can request access to them.
- Note takers personal feelings or reactions to clients or speculations about their motivations should not be recorded.
- Notes should be factual and in neutral language.

***Why take notes:***

- Aid to memory: as initial records of concern may be called upon at a later date as evidence of disclosure
- Protection for note taker if other party alleges something different agreed during meeting.
- Opportunity for note taker to reflect on meeting, look for the positives and plan further action.
- Protection and information for the school.

***When:***

- As soon after session as possible.
- During session if all parties are comfortable with that.

**Record Keeping Procedure**

The Designated Teacher should ensure that proper records, dated and signed, are kept of all complaints or information received, and all concerns about possible abuse noted by staff. As soon as possible he/she should obtain a written record from the member of staff who received the information, signed and dated, or otherwise has concerns about possible abuse, setting out:

- ✓ the nature of the information;
- ✓ who gave it;
- ✓ the time, date and circumstances; and
- ✓ where the concern relates to signs of symptoms of possible abuse, a description of these.
- ✓ ensure that any Word Processed notes / records are DELETED and attach rough written notes to Word Processed copies.
- ✓ The Principal or designated teacher should supplement the record with:
  - ✓ details of any advice sought, from whom and when;
  - ✓ the decision reached as to whether the case should be referred to Social Services; and if so how, when and by whom this was done; otherwise, reasons for not referring to Social Services;

**What to record**

- ✓ Factual and in neutral language
- ✓ Nature of information
- ✓ Days, dates and times
- ✓ Observations
- ✓ Personnel advised/involved in referral
- ✓ Decision taken - reasons for decision
- ✓ If referred to Social Services, how, when and by whom was this done
- ✓ Record signed, dated by Principal and countersigned by Designated Teacher

**Where**

- ✓ Retained on child's file in a secure system.
- ✓ Coded colour sticker / date of initial concern beside name on Class List in Class Report File.
- ✓ If against a member of staff on their file
- ✓ Record of Child Abuse Complaints i.e. Designated Teachers Log Book

### **How Long (alleged disclosure for child)**

- ✓ Record should be maintained indefinitely on child's file in line with guidance from Department of Education November 2006, 'Retention and Destruction of Records'.
- ✓ When child transfers to a new school all Third Party communications shredded, if on Child Protection Register, but initial concern records kept in child's file in secure system. Brief verbal communiqué to child's new school to make them aware of child's Social Worker and address.

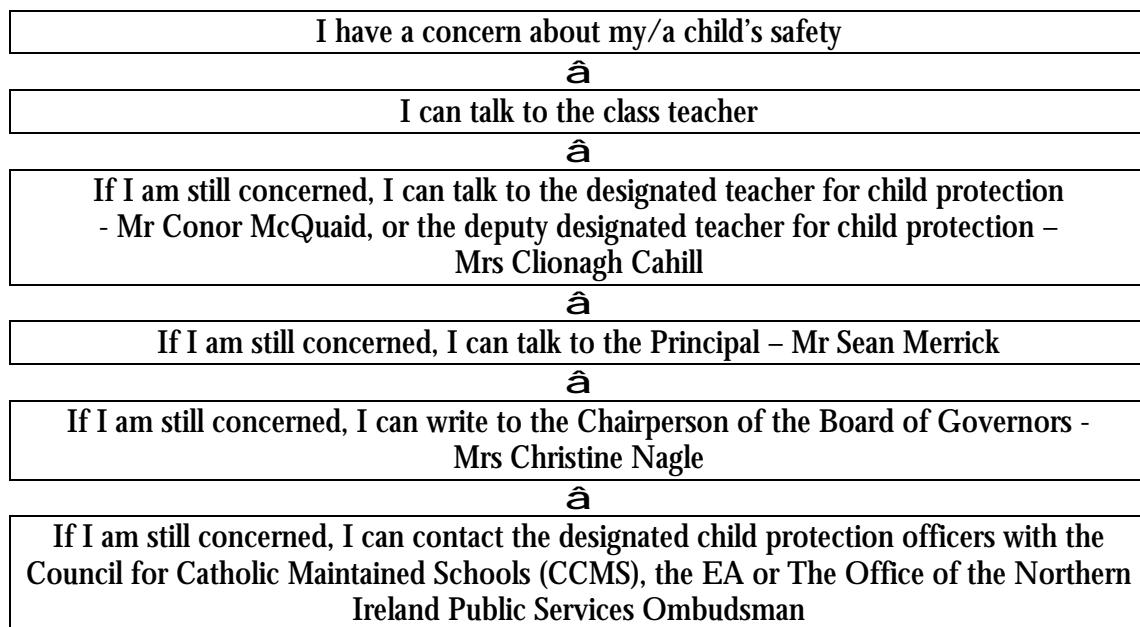
### **How Long (alleged disclosure for adult member of school)**

- ✓ If after investigation staff exonerated record deleted from staff file and Record of Child Abuse Complaints.
- ✓ If disciplinary matter, details of complaint and sanction maintained on child and staff file for a period of 5 years.

### **Parental/Guardian Complaints**

If parents/guardians have a concern about their child's safety they may wish to make a complaint. The flow chart below sets out how they can go about this.

#### **How a parent/guardian can make a complaint**



**Contact can also be made at any time with:**

**Children's Services Gateway Team to talk to a Social Worker**  
**(Belfast Trust 02890 507000)**  
**(Northern Trust 0300 1234333)**

**or**

**PSNI Central Referral Unit (02890 259299) or (101 x 30299).**

## **REFERRAL PROCESS**

Each school has appointed a designated teacher to manage the implementation of procedures. In our case, this is Mr C McQuaid. If a classroom teacher suspects child abuse, it is important that he/she follows the correct procedures.

## **REFERRAL PROCESS**

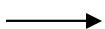
Child makes a disclosure to teacher or teacher has concerns about child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time. Teacher does not investigate.  
**MUST ACT PROMPTLY.**



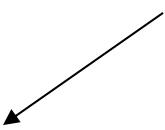
Teacher refers matter to designated teacher, discusses with designated teacher makes full notes.



Designated Teacher meets with Principal (in case of Principal's absence Vice-Principal) to plan course of action and ensures that a written record is made.



Principal/Designated Teacher makes referral to:  
Social Services and Care Unit.  
copies of pro-forma C.P.I. to:  
CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools).  
EA Designated Officer.  
Indicate that it is a Child Protection issue in an envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL".



If there is any doubt about whether to take further action, advice is available from:

CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools);

EA Designated Officer;  
Social Services;

For other sources of advice, see Appendix 3.

When seeking advice, you do not have to give any names.  
You are making an enquiry.



Other Action:  
Record Advice given;  
Monitor;  
Review.

## **Other Complaints**

### **Complaints about possible abuse by a member of staff (see Appendix 3).**

A complaint or allegation may be made in the context of child protection about the conduct or activities of a member of staff of the school towards a child or children. If the complaint has not been made directly to the Principal and he/she is not the subject of the complaint it should be referred directly to him/her by the person to whom it was made.

To form a clearer view on the complaint the Principal may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information or from others who may have relevant information. It is not, however, the responsibility of the school to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse or to make extensive inquiries of members of the children's family or other carers. The school should not take action beyond that set out in the procedures established by their Education Authority, CCMS and ACPC (Annual Child Protection Conference) to be followed in handling cases of suspected abuse. Having satisfied him/her that a complaint has been made the Principal should immediately:

- inform the designated teacher (if he/she is not the subject of the complaint) who will initiate the record of the complaint;
- consult as a matter of urgency and in confidence with the Designated Officer of the Education Authority or CCMS as appropriate to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action.
- consult the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

### **Complaints about possible abuse by a member of the Board of Governors**

Where a member of staff receives a complaint concerning possible child abuse by a member of the Board of Governors, he/she should notify the Principal and all aspects of the above procedures for complaints against a person other than a member of staff should be followed. The Principal should immediately inform the Chairperson unless he/she is the subject of the complaint, in which case the Chairperson's role should be exercised by the Vice-chairperson. The designated officer of CCMS should be informed immediately.

### **Complaints about possible abuse by a volunteer**

Any complaint about the conduct of a person working in the school in a voluntary capacity should be treated in the same manner as above and the above procedures followed. If the Principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer should be suspended immediately, pending outcome of ensuing investigation.

**Procedures for reporting possible abuse by anyone other than a member of the school's staff. (See Appendix 4).**

The person receiving the complaint or noticing signs of possible abuse must notify the Designated Teacher who must in turn notify the Principal. Together they will decide, taking advice as necessary, if the information is such that the matter should be referred immediately to the Social Services. If agreement cannot be reached the decision should be made by the Principal but where there is doubt a referral should be made. If the school considers that a referral is necessary, it is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that the following are immediately notified:

- Social Services or Police
- The Designated Officers for Child Protection in the Education Authority and the Designated Officer for Child Protection in CCMS.

**Contact with Pupils**

**Private Meetings with Pupils**

- a) Teachers should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place, but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people.
- b) Where such conditions cannot apply teachers are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- c) Where possible another pupil or another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

**Physical contact with pupils**

- a) As a general principle teachers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils. This is particularly the case with maturing children of primary school age.
- b) Physical contact, which may be misconstrued by the pupil, parent or other casual observer, should be avoided. Such contact can include well-intentioned informal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which if repeated with an individual pupil, could be misconstrued, as well as more obvious and more intimate contact which should never occur.
- c) There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and re-assurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Teachers should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen by others present to be, normal and does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.

- d) Some teachers are likely to come into physical contact with their pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching, for example when showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE. Teachers should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the pupil.
- e) Teachers who have to administer first-aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact in the circumstances could be misconstrued.
- f) Following any incident where a teacher feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal of the school. This would apply especially in a case where a teacher had been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury.
- g) Following an accident or mishap, for example where a teacher has to supply new clothing; the child should change itself with appropriate supervision. If help is needed another adult should be present.

**Guidelines about Restraint** – Refer to: Regional Policy Framework on the use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling May 2004. [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

In the event of a member of staff having to restrain a pupil a written report must be filled in. Physical restraint should only be used:

- to prevent injury to the child/other children, yourself/other staff member;
- to prevent damage to property; or
- to prevent the commission of a criminal offence.

### **Guidelines about Touching**

- Responding to the needs of the child and NOT the needs of the adult.
- With the child's permission - resistance from a child should be respected (depending on the age and developmental stage of the child).
- Touch should be carried out in openness - not in secretiveness.
- If touching is given which could be construed as inappropriate due to the isolated place it occurred, tell someone else.

### **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 the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and governors when using materials in connection with sex education programmes.

### **Relationships and attitudes**

Teachers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender 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.

## **Volunteers**

### **Appointment of Staff**

The recruitment and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in close proximity with children. Volunteers will have to complete a Disclosure Certificate Application form. A copy of this form can be obtained from [www.accessni.gov.uk](http://www.accessni.gov.uk) or the school.

### **Who is a Volunteer?**

An individual who:

- Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions  
OR
- Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in:
  - school visits or trips
  - summer activity schemes
  - residential activities
  - coaching in sports activities

### **Process of Selection for all Volunteers**

- Procedures explained to volunteer
- Assessment of individual's skills and experience to the voluntary duties and activities identified
- Completion of an application form
- Agreement from the individual for a criminal record check to be carried out
- Names of two referees - non family members or school staff
- Attendance at an interview with the Principal OR Nominated Teacher
- Vetting and re-vetting take place annually

### **Why have Volunteer Application Forms?**

- Aid the selection process.
- A vehicle for gaining specific information.
- To elicit individual's reason for volunteering/other skills to be possibly drawn on in the future.
- To gain consent for further checks, e.g. reference, criminal records check.
- To ensure equal opportunity of recruitment and selection of volunteers.
- Use of a standard application form helps structure 'interviews' with volunteers.
- Ensures that the volunteer is clear about their role and responsibilities.
- Reduces the likelihood of 'unsuitable' adults gaining access to children and young people in the school.

*(Extracts from Wandsworth Volunteer Bureau Publication)*

### **Interview**

- Assessment of individual's:
  - motivation
  - skills
  - personal qualities
- Confirmation of details on Application Form
- Proof of Identity

## **REFERENCES SHOULD ALWAYS BE TAKEN UP**

### **Why take up volunteers' references?**

- Reinforces information from the application form and interview (if carried out).
- Provides additional information.
- Screens out 'unsuitable' people.
- Demonstrates that volunteering is taken seriously.
- Evidence of a facility fulfilling their 'duty to protect'.

### **School Security: Identity of Volunteers**

- Volunteer to register at the beginning of each visit to the school.
- Volunteer to have an identifiable name badge or pass on arrival. To be collected at the end of the visit. EA have left such in the school.
- Volunteer to have limited access to particular areas in the school.

### **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which teachers interrelate with pupils and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances teachers' professional judgements will be exercised and for the vast majority of teachers the Code of Conduct confirms what has always been in practice.

Teachers should review their teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual pupils, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of pupils and of their parents.

**Relevant addresses in relation to Child Protection - see Appendix 5.**



## **Confidential**

### **NOTE OF CONCERN CHILD PROTECTION RECORD – REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time 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: If "No" state reason
Date and time reported to the Designated Teacher:
Written note from staff member placed on the pupil's Child Protection file. If "No" state reason:

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

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

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

**Appendix 2**  
**REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE**

Pupil's Name:
DOB:
Year group:
Address:
Attendance in current school year: _____ days out of possible _____ days.
Attainment levels/educational performance:
Intellectual ability ( <i>e.g. below average/average/above average</i> ):
Performance in relation to intellectual ability:
Presentation of work, including homework:
Participation in teaching/learning activities:

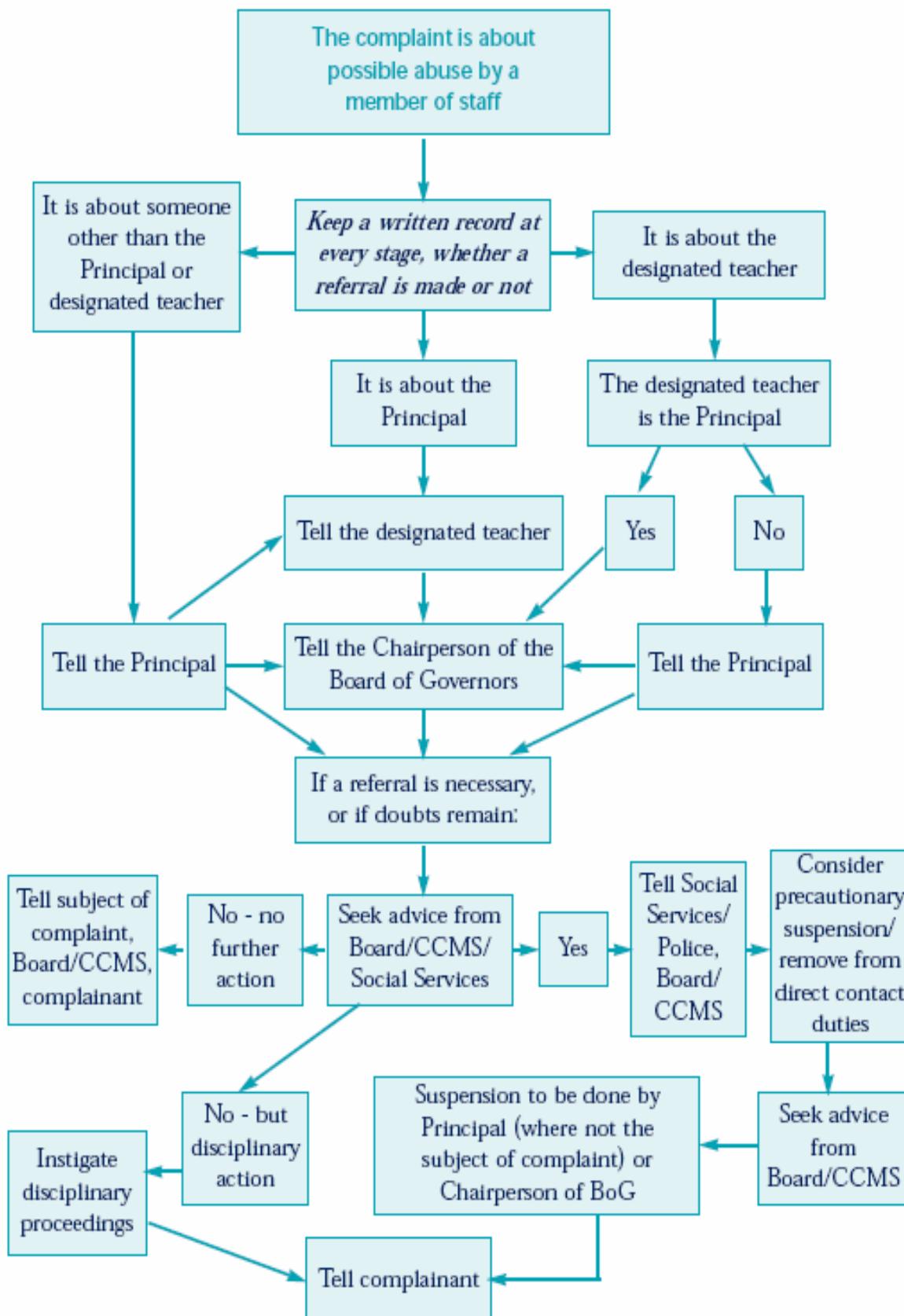
Behaviour in class:
Behaviour out of class:
Relationships with other children:
Relationships with teacher/other adults in school:
Relationships with family ( <i>if relevant/known</i> ):
School's contacts with home ( <i>e.g. telephone calls</i> ):
General remarks ( <i>e.g. personal appearance, readiness/preparation for learning</i> ):

Signed on behalf of the school: \_\_\_\_\_ (Designated Teacher)

Please complete and return to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

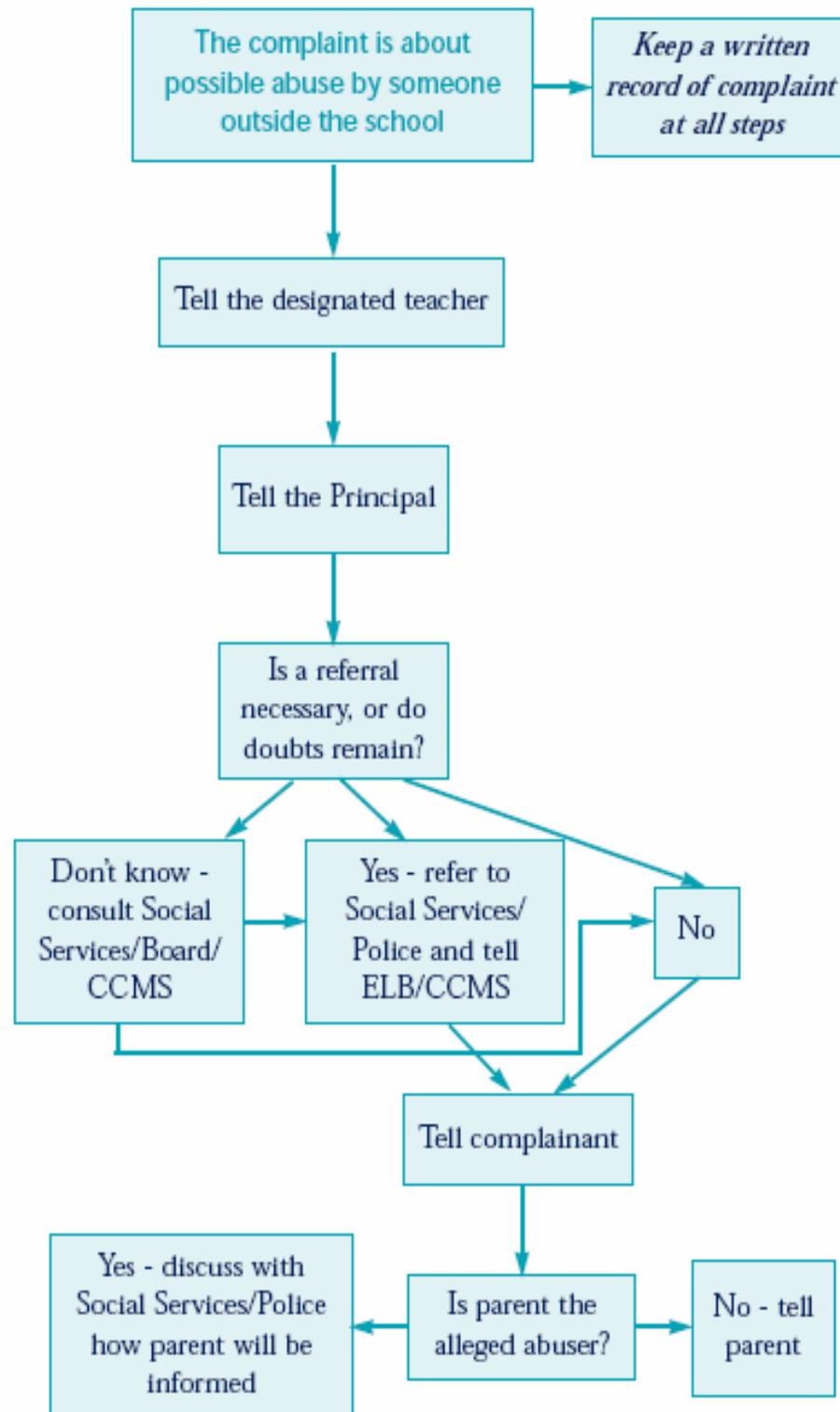
## APPENDIX 3

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



## APPENDIX 4

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



## **Appendix 5**

**Police Service of Northern Ireland**

**Tel: 028 9065 0222**

### **Public Protection Units (PPUs) consist of 4 teams**

- Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU)
- Domestic Abuse Unit
- Sex Offender Management Unit
- Missing and Vulnerable Person Unit

### **Child Abuse Investigation Units (CAIU)**

District (North Belfast)  
Tennent Street Police Station  
Tel 028 9025 9457

### **Rape Crime Units (CRUs)**

(Cover adult rape and child stranger rape crimes)  
Ladas Drive Police Station  
Tel 028 9065 0222

### **Relevant Addresses**

**Kidscape**  
2 Grosvenor Gardens  
LONDON  
SW1W 0DH  
Telephone: 020 7730 3300

**NSPCC**  
First Floor, Unit 7  
The Lanyon Building  
Jennymount Court  
North Derby Street  
BELFAST  
BT15 3HN  
Telephone: 028 9035 1135

**NSPCC (Child Protection Helpline) 24 hours call:**  
0808 800 5000 (if you have a concern)  
0800 1111 – (for children to ring)

**NI Childline**  
PO Box 1111  
BELFAST  
BT1 2DD  
Telephone: 028 9032 7773  
Linkline: 0800 212888

**CCMS Designated Officer Down & Connor Diocesan Education Office**  
Linen Hill House  
23 Linen Hall Street  
Lisburn  
BT28 1FJ  
Telephone: 028 9201 3014

## **Gateway Services / Child Protection**

### **How to access these Services**

Anyone can contact this service directly in one of the following ways:

#### **By phone:**

During office hours (9.00am – 5:00pm) - you should contact Belfast Gateway (EA) on

**028 9050 7000 or Ballyclare Gateway (EA) 028 9334 0165 or 028 9334 9797**

At all other times (all through the night, at weekends and over Bank / Public Holidays) - you should contact the out-of-hours Emergency Service:

**028 9504 9999 (Belfast Gateway Team)**

**028 9446 8833 (South Eastern Gateway Team).**

#### **In person:**

Speak to a Duty Social Worker at:

Greater Belfast Gateway Team

110 Saintfield Road

BELFAST

BT8 6GR

South Eastern Gateway Team (Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Larne)

The Beeches

76 Avondale Drive

Ballyclare

BT39 9DB

Email: [southeastern.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:southeastern.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net)

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY REVIEW DATE - JUNE 2019**