

# St Patrick's Primary School



## Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy

Date Approved by Board of Governors: June 2022

Next Policy Review Date: June 2023

## **1. Child Protection Ethos**

We in St Patrick's Primary School have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care. We will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to achieve their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedure to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

## **2. Principles**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (N. Ireland) Order 1995, The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools-A Guide for Schools (DENI Circular 2017/04), The Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005), Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in N. Ireland (2016), Safeguarding Board Act Northern Ireland (2011).

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

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

## **3. Other Relevant Policies**

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

- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- Administration of Medicines

- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Intimate Care
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement
- Attendance Policy

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

#### 4. Roles And Responsibilities

##### 4.1 The School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors ( Mr Manus Doherty )
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Ms Eimear McCauley)
- Principal (Mr Eamonn Devlin)
- Designated Teacher (Mrs Marie McSheffrey)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Katharine Logue)

The main role of the team is to:

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

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

## 4.2 The Board of Governors

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

- Ensuring that safeguarding/child protection is a standard item on the agenda of Board of Governor meetings
- Approving the schools child protection policy at least once every 2 years
- Ensuring that there is a time-tabled review (every 2/3 years) of all other safeguarding policies and that they are presented to the BOG for approval.
- Receiving annual child protection reports.
- Ensuring there is a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- Attending relevant child protection/safeguarding training for Governors

## 4.3 School Staff

Teachers, classroom assistants and other support staff in school see children on a daily basis over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and a child may choose to disclose to them allegations of abuse.

Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal. In addition, class teachers should also keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse. A pro-forma for reporting a concern or disclosure is included at **Appendix 4**.

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

## 4.4 Parents

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by:

- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's well-being.

- Making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child.
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school.
- Familiarising themselves with the schools safeguarding policies e.g. Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies.
- Reporting to the school office when they visit the school.
- Sharing any concerns they may have in relation to their child with the school.

## 5. Definition of Harm

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

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

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

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

## 6. Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At St. Patrick's Primary School we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the Class Teacher, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 5**.

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

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly. **He/she should not investigate.** This is a matter for Social Services but the member of staff

should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.

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

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

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

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 6**.

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

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal then the Designated Teacher should be informed and she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in **Appendix 7** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance (DE Circular 2015/13).

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

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences, core group or family support planning meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation

with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with their child protection plan.

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

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

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

### **10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

### **11. Record Keeping**

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE policy on the disposal of child protection records, these records will be stored from the child's date of birth plus 30 years as per DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.



## **12. Safeguarding in the Curriculum**

The school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects.

## **13. Operation Encompass**

St. Patrick's Primary School is 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](#).

#### **14. Vetting Procedures**

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

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

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

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

#### **16. Staff Training**

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

#### **17. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and approved annually by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the schools staff induction and training programme and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team.

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Date of Next Review: June 2023.

Signed: Mr Manus Doherty (Chair of Board of Governors)

Mr Eamonn Devlin (Principal)

Mrs Marie McSheffrey (Designated Teacher)

## Appendix 1

### St. Patrick's Primary School Safeguarding Team Roles & Responsibilities

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

The Chair of the Board of Governors is responsible for:

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

#### 2. Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Designated Governor is responsible for advising the Governors on matters related to child protection including the child protection policy, reports to Governors, the recruitment, selection and vetting of staff and the role of the Designated teacher.

#### 3. Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

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

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

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

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

- Providing child protection training for all teaching and non-teaching staff (whole school training) to be delivered a minimum of once every two years
- Taking lead responsibility for the development and annual review of the school's child protection policy
- Promoting a child protection ethos in the school
- Acting as a point of contact for staff (and parents) in relation to child abuse concerns
- Liaison with the Principal and Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected Child Abuse
- Making referrals to other agencies, with the Principal's knowledge
- Maintaining and securely storing appropriate child protection records
- Attending child protection case conferences and other relevant case planning meetings where appropriate and practicable
- Providing an annual report to the Governors on child protection activity

The Deputy Designated Teacher will deputise for the Designated Teacher in her absence.

**Introduction**

This Code of Conduct is intended to assist staff and volunteers 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. It is built on the premise that staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children in their charge must be above reproach. However, it is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff.

**Private Meetings with Pupils**

- Staff and volunteers 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. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- 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.

**Physical Contact with Pupils**

- As a general principle, staff and volunteers are advised not to make any unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency because another person is not present.*
- Any physical contact which would likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- 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 his/her line manager.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of schools activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

## **Confidentiality**

- Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need to know basis.
- There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay but only to the Designated Teachers, Mr. Devlin or the Vice Principal.

## **Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by the pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

## **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.

## **Use of Mobile Phones and Social Media**

Staff should not make or receive personal telephone calls or text messages during contact time with children. Phones may be used to contact the office or the Principal/Vice Principals instead of using phones in the shared area to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

No mode of social networking should be used during contact time with children unless in connection with a task/project approved by Senior Management. A staff member or volunteer's off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using Information Technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others.

## **Conclusion**

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

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

## Appendix 3

### Types of Abuse and Physical/Behavioural Indicators

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

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

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

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

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

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

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent

adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)

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

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)

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



anorexia/gross over-eating	peer problems lack of involvement massive weight change suicide attempts (especially adolescents) hysterical/angry outbursts lack of emotional control sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour inappropriate sex play repeated attempts to run away from home unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation promiscuity exposure to pornographic material
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**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

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

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

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

#### **Bullying**

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

The procedure for referral and investigation of abuse may therefore be implemented in certain circumstances such as when anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective; the bullying behaviour is persistent and severe resulting in the target of the bullying suffering/likely to suffer significant harm; there are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the child exhibiting this behaviour suffering/likely to suffer significant harm or where concerns exist in relation to the parents/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child (either the target or the child exhibiting this behaviour).

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

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in **Section 7** of this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and, where appropriate, a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved. The above guidance follows DE Circular 2016/05 subject **Children Who Display Harmful Sexualized Behaviour**.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

The Department of Health wrote to the SBNI to confirm that it has now amended section 7.2.7 of *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland* to take account of a revised definition of Child Sexual Exploitation.

The revised definition, now adopted for use in Northern Ireland, is in line with that consulted on and agreed by the Department for Education in England and is as follows;

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

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

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

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

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

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc. without plausible explanation
- Leaving home/care without permission
- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care
- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return
- Truancing from school
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections
- Concerning use of the internet
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis
- New peer groups
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Low self-esteem
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)
- Self harm and other expressions of despair
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse

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

## **Indecent Photographs**

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

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

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

## **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

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

## **Sexual Violence and Abuse**

Is defined as 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual /online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability)'. (**Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland a Seven Year Strategy: March 2016**)

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

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

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

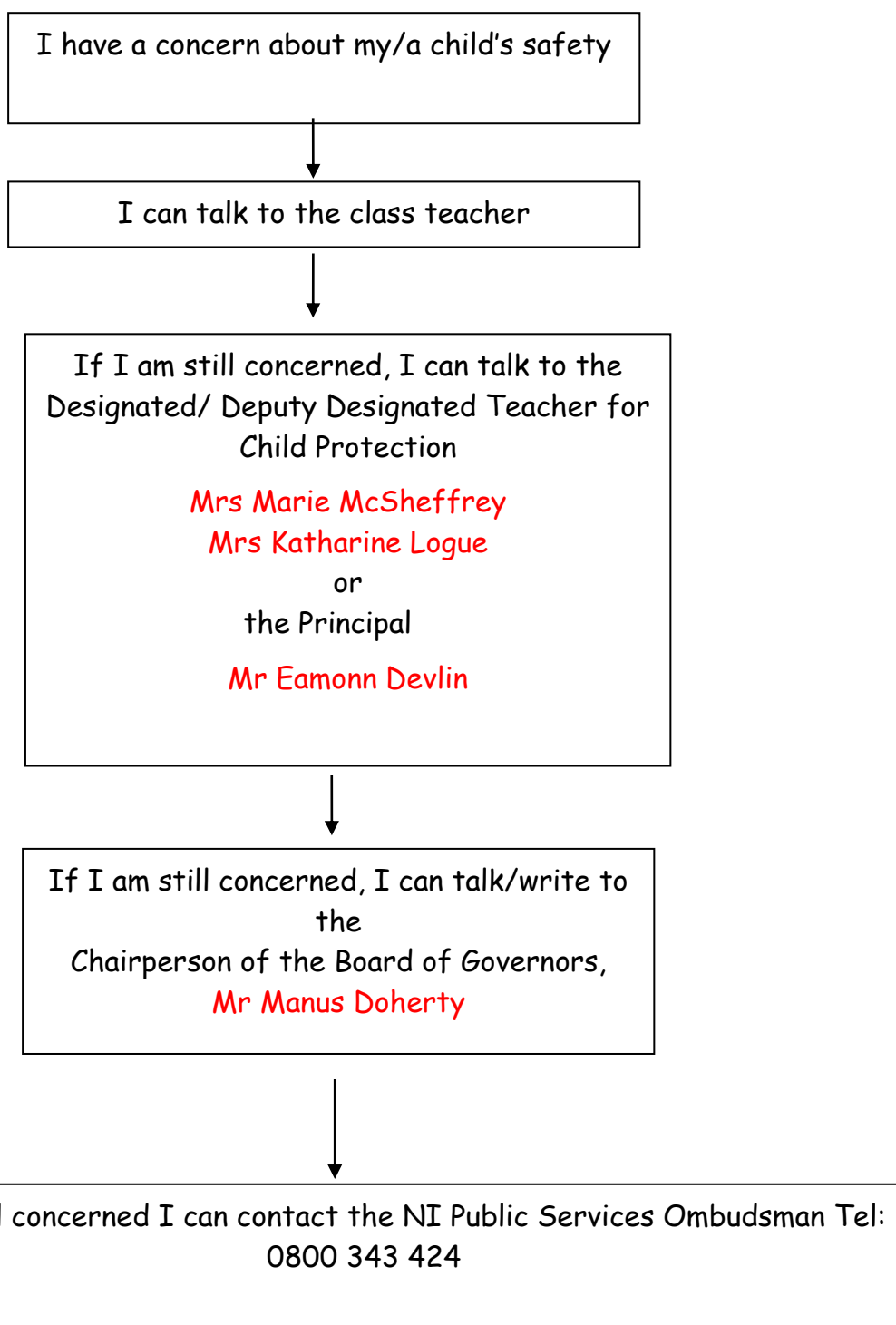
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as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

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



Appendix 5

**St. Patrick's Primary School  
Procedure for Parents who wish to raise a Child Protection  
Concern**



**At any time a parent can talk to a social worker at the Gateway Team (Western Trust) Tel: 028 71314 090 or the PSNI at Central Referral Unit Tel: 999 (Emergency) or 101 (Non-Urgent)**

## Appendix 6

### St. Patrick's Primary School

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

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must **ACT PROMPTLY**. Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.

Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher (**Mrs Marie McSheffrey**) or Deputy Designated Teacher (**Mrs Katharine Logue**) in her absence and provides note of concern.

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

#### Child Protection referral is required

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

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

#### Child Protection referral is not required

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

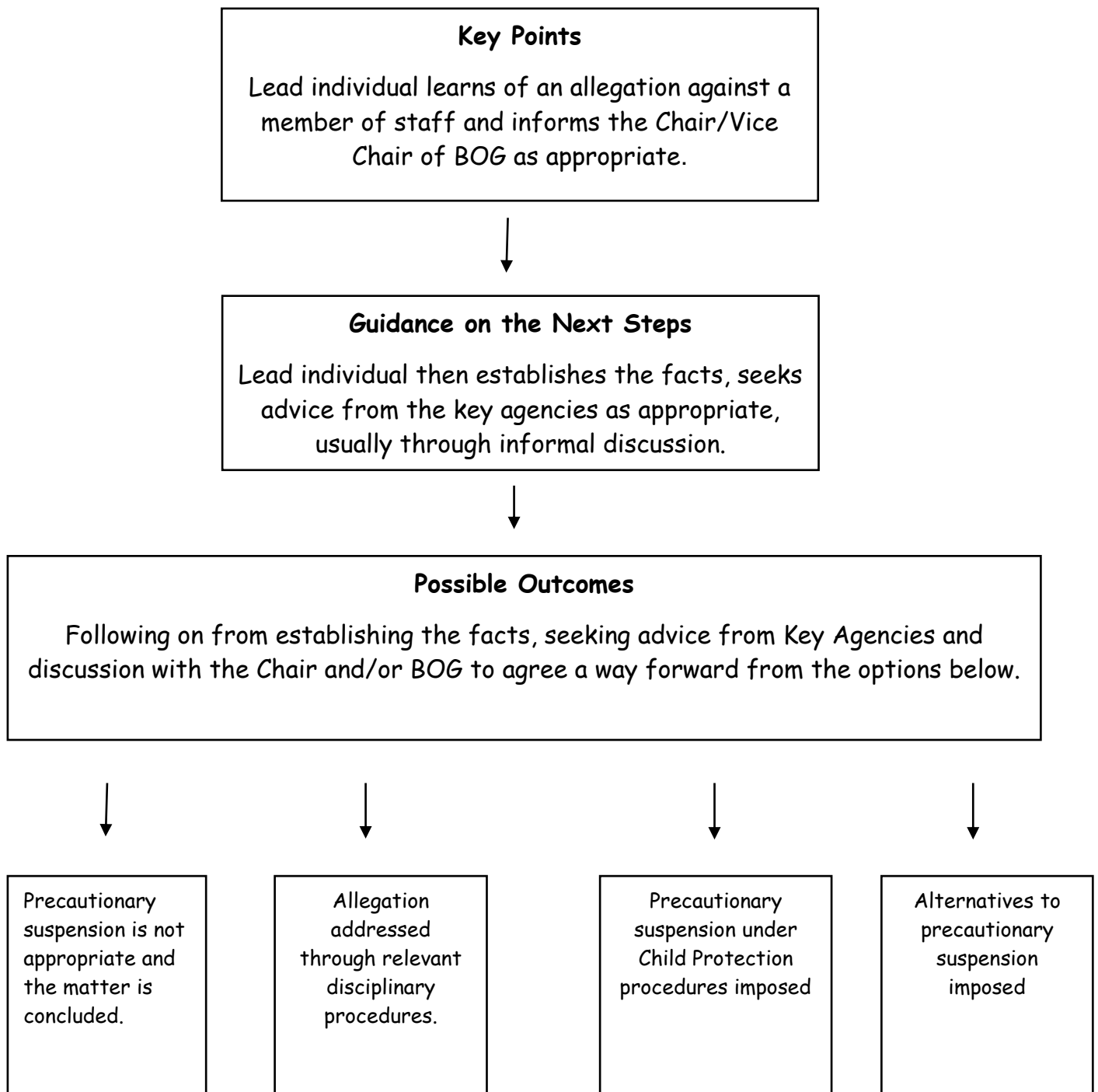
Where appropriate, the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.



## Appendix 7

### St. Patrick's Primary School

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



*\*Lead Individual to manage the handling of an allegation should be identified from the outset, normally the Principal or a designated senior member of staff.*