

# Child Protection Policy

Reviewed - October 2023



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## Child Protection Ethos

### Kylemore Nursery School

#### School Policy and Procedures on Child Protection.

*"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration"*

#### *Article 3 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

We the Governors and staff of Kylemore Nursery School believe the school to be a vital part of the Community. We are firmly committed to:

- The aims of preschool education
- Providing effective education for all our children.
- Children's Rights as detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 1-42 1992). All children have the same rights. All rights are interconnected and of equal importance.
- Developing positive pastoral care systems in our school.
- Establishing close links with the home and the wider community.

We have a primary responsibility for the 'Safeguarding' of the children in our charge – NOT JUST CHILD PROTECTION!

#### **Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**Safeguarding** *Effective safeguarding begins with preventing harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention. A safeguarding school culture is a child-centred one that promotes the welfare of all children. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children, and continues through to protecting children from harm when this is required.*

**Child Protection** *is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm.*

*A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission. The main purpose of this Child Protection document is to ensure that everyone who works in our school, teaching and non-teaching staff, has clear guidance on what action to take where a case of child abuse is suspected. The overriding concern of all staff must be the care, welfare and safety of the child. This Policy will also provide parents, carers and anybody who is involved with our school children with advice and guidance regarding Child Protection Procedures.*

The document will give some advice in recognising signs of possible abuse and how to deal with these. It will also lay out the procedures the school will follow in cases where a complaint is made and the necessary duties of those involved including the Designated Teacher, the Principal and the Board of Governors.

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in:

- the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995,
- "Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DOH, 2017),
- Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" (DENI Circular 2017/04)
- Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

**The following Principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy:**

- the child's welfare is paramount;
- the voice of the child should be heard;
- parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together;
- partnership;
- prevention;
- responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- protection; and
- evidence based and informed decision making.

**Other Related Policies:**

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

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Educational Visits



- E-Safety Policy
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care
- Privacy Notice
- Records Management Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Special Educational Needs
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Whistleblowing policy

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

## **School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

- Designated Governor for Child Protection      Mrs Nicola Carruthers
- Principal and Designated Teacher                Mrs Hilary Hutchinson
- Deputy Designated Teacher(s)                    Mrs Louise Cavalleros / Mrs Alison Gillan.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher**

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:

- the induction and training of all school staff including support staff;
- being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff;
- responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns;
- maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs;
- making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate;
- liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection;
- lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy;
- promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school; and

- compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

### **Principal**

- as secretary to the Board of Governors, assist in fulfilling its safeguarding and child protection duties;
- ensure the Board of Governors are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding including changes to legislation, policy, procedures, DE circulars, inclusion of child protection on the termly meeting agenda;
- to manage allegations / complaints against school staff;
- to establish and manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection;
- to appoint and manage designated teacher/deputy designated teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities;
- to ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection including awareness of safeguarding and child protection for new staff and volunteers;
- ensure that parents and children receive a copy or summary of the child protection policy at intake and at a minimum every 2 years; and
- to maintain the schools record of child abuse complaints.

### **Board of Governors**

- a designated governor for child protection is appointed;
- a designated and deputy designated teacher are appointed in their schools;
- they have a full understanding of the roles of the designated and deputy designated teachers for child protection;
- safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training;
- the school has a child protection policy which is reviewed annually and parents and children receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- the school has an anti-bullying policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;
- there is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school;
- all school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19;
- they receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that child protection activities are on each meeting agenda). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff; and
- the school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.



## Chair of Governors

The chair of the Board of governors:

- has a pivotal role in creating and maintaining a safeguarding ethos;
- receives training from CPSS and HR;
- assumes lead responsibility in the event of a CP complaint or concern about the principal; and
- ensures compliance with legislation, Child Protection record keeping and policies.

## Designated Governor for Child Protection

Advises the board of governors on: -

- the role of the designated teachers;
- the content of child protection policies;
- the content of a code of conduct for adults within the school;
- the content of the termly updates and full annual designated teachers report; and
- recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

## Other members of school staff

- members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the designated teacher for child protection or to the deputy designated teacher if he/she is not available;
- class teachers should complete the note of concern if there are safeguarding concerns such as: 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;
- **staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions.

## Support Staff

- if any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member they should report these concerns to the designated teacher or deputy designated teacher if he/she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made and any further necessary action will be taken.

## Parents

**The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.**

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school:

- if the child has a medical condition or educational need;
- if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child;
- if there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility;
- if there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school;
- if their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at:  
[www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection)

**It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.**



## Child Protection Definitions

### 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 from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm.**

### Harm can be caused by:

Sexual abuse

Emotional abuse

Physical abuse

Neglect

Exploitation

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

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving 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.

**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.

**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.

**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, and 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

## **Signs and symptoms of abuse**

**Included below are the main signs and symptoms of the main forms of abuse. A more comprehensive list is included in Appendix 1.**

*Child abuse can be categorised under seven main headings. (These are only some of the definitions used)*

- 1. Neglect** – The persistent or significant neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from any kind of danger, including cold and starvation. The persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care including medical care or treatment, lack of supervision or neglect of emotional/psychological needs.

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
  - Constant hunger/cramming food
  - Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
  - Constant tiredness
  - Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
  - Untreated illness
  - Lack of peer relationships
  - Compulsive stealing / begging
- 2. Physical** – Physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning,



suffocation, confinement to a room or cot or inappropriate giving drugs to control behaviour.

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractions or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

3. **Sexual** – the sexual exploitation of a child (CSE) or young person for an adult's own sexual gratification. The involvement of a child in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography), which they do not understand, or those activities, which violate normal family roles. Forcing the child to take part in sexual activities.

**Two online modules are available for Governors at:**

<http://esags.tv/governor-support/child-sexual-exploitation-program-1/>

<http://esags.tv/governor-support/child-sexual-exploitation-program-2/>

The activities may involve physical contact.

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

4. **Emotional** – persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and behavioural development of a child.

It may involve conveying to a child that he/she is worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued in so far as he/she meets the needs of school person.

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem
- Domestic abuse

**5. Bullying** – Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. Our anti-bullying policy is set out in a separate document available from the school office/website. Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening to protect and reassure the victim. Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the DT for Child Protection. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a child's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures.

#### **6. Exploitation**

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.

#### **7. Domestic Abuse**

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, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member”.

*DHSSPS / NDOJNI Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland- A Seven Year Strategy (2016, p2).*

## **8. Self-Harm and Suicide**

Self-harm is to be considered as a continuum, ranging from behaviour which has a strong suicidal intent (for example, some kinds of overdose) to behaviour which is intended to help the person stay alive (such as cutting)’. Children’s mental health is central to their participation in school life. The best way to preserve life is to promote positive mental health.

## **Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English and sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 2**

## Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm<sup>1</sup>.

### How a Parent Can Raise a Concern

In **Kylemore Nursery 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 initially. If this has been done and the desired response not been realised then the parent can speak to the designated or deputy designated teacher for child protection.

If they are still concerned they may talk to the chair of the board of governors. If after this a parent still has concerns they can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman.

At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 3**.

### Where School has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff

In **Kylemore Nursery School** 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 will complete a Note of Concern (see **Appendix 6**) and act promptly. **They will not investigate** - this is a matter for Social Services - but will discuss these concerns with the designated teacher or with the deputy designated teacher if she is not available.

The designated teacher will consult with other relevant staff always taking care to avoid due delay. **{If principal is not available the school Safeguarding Team will convene to determine the best course of action and make a decision}** If required, advice may be sought from an Education Authority Child Protection Officer. The designated teacher may also seek clarification from the child or young person, their parent/carer.

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<sup>1</sup> Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017)  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>



Where a member of staff suspects a case of child abuse either by their own observation or by a disclosure made by a child that member must act on this suspicion. **She should not investigate;** this is a matter for the Social Services or police.

- 1) She should immediately inform the designated teacher of the concerns, discuss the matter with her and she will make full notes.
- 2) The Designated Child Protection will plan a course of action and ensure that full written records are made.
- 3) Following discussion, the Principal will decide whether in the best interests of the child the matter should be referred. ***If there are concerns that a child is at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.*** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents should be informed.
- 4) The Principal may seek advice from CPSS before a referral is made. ***The safety of the child is our first priority.***

If a child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent.

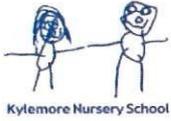
If a child protection referral is required the designated teacher will seek consent from the parent/carer unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.

The designated teacher will phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form. Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

For further detail please see **Appendix 4.**

## **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 deputy designated teacher if the principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal then the deputy 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 5** will be followed.



## **Consent**

Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child/young person, should, where practicable, be discussed with the parent and consent sought for a referral to children's social services in the local HSC Trust, unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child/young person at further risk through delay or undermine any criminal investigative process (for example in circumstances where there are concerns or suspicions that a crime has taken place); or there is concern raised about the parent's actions or reactions. The communication/language needs of the parents/carers should be established for example in relation to disability/ethnicity and the parent's/carer's capacity to understand should be ascertained. These should be addressed through the provision of appropriate communication methods, including, where necessary, translators, signers, intermediaries or advocacy services.

Effective protection for children/young people may, on occasions, require the sharing of information without prior parental/carer consent in advance of that information being shared.

Where staff decide not to seek parental consent before making a referral to children's social services in the local Health and Social Care Trust or the police, the reason for this decision must be clearly noted in the child/young person's records and included within the verbal and written/UNOCINI referral.

When a referral is deemed to be necessary in the interests of the child/young person, and the parents/carers have been consulted and do not consent, the following action should be taken:

- the reason for proceeding without parental consent must be recorded;
- the withholding of permission by the parent/carer must be included in the verbal and written referral to children's social services;
- the parent/carer should be contacted to inform them that, after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

Staff making a referral may ask for their anonymity to be protected as far as possible because of a genuine threat to self/family. In such instances this anonymity should be protected with an explanation to the staff member that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information may become the subject of court processes.

## **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.

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

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

## **Record Keeping**

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

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning children in Kylemore Nursery School are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

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

A member of staff who becomes aware of something which causes concern should make a note setting out the following:

- Nature of Information.
- Who gave it?
- Date, time and circumstances.
- If the complaint relates to signs or symptoms of possible abuse give a description of these.
- DO NOT INVESTIGATE – UNDERTAKE DISCREET PRELIMINARY CLARIFICATION
- All procedures will follow those specified in Child protection Record keeping in schools 2020/7.

In Responding to a Disclosure follow the 5R Rule:

- Receive
- Reassure
- Respond
- Record
- Refer

NOTE: Keep a written Record at all steps and remember to follow our school's child protection procedure.



## **Safe Recruitment Procedures**

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Kylemore Nursery School are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

## **Code of Conduct For All Staff - Paid or Unpaid**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors.

***(See Appendix 8 or the school's Code of Conduct is available on request)***

## **The Preventative Curriculum**

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

Our school has previously been recognised as a 'Rights Respecting School' by UNICEF. We have received Level 1 Award status awarded in June 2010 as a result of the work undertaken by teachers and our children. This award recognises how the school's curriculum recognises the rights of children as detailed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992) Our school plans to renew this award in 2020/2021. Our school is designated as a Bronze level 'Health Promoting School'. Staff will undertake regular 'circle time' with children focusing on keeping ourselves healthy and safe both physically and emotionally and we plan to work on identifying emotions/ how we feel. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations. Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues pre Covid-19 were School visitors e.g. fire fighters, police etc. health visitor and Family Friday parent programmes.

All staff are vetted and fulfil the necessary 'checks' and training in Child Protection. (See Guidance of Appendix 11 DENI *Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools (Circular 2017/04)*)

DENI Circular 2013/01: 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or providing a Service for Schools'.

There is a permanent child protection notice board in the main entrance and relevant information in each class area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers.

### **Operation Encompass**

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

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

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

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



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

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the safeguarding team and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, children and staff. It will be implemented through the school' 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. The board of governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the designated teacher.

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the school's policy review schedule.

Reviewed at a Board of Governors Meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## Appendix 1

### Specific Types of Abuse

**Grooming** of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

If the staff in Kylemore Nursery School become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017)

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.

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.



**Domestic and Sexual violence and abuse** can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children.

Domestic violence and abuse is defined as 'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.' 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).

If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

**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 established procedures set out in our school policy.

**Forced Marriage** A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and if in SCHOOL NAME we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

### **Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour**

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. As a school we support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. 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. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2016/05 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

### **What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?**

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim
- Harmful sexualised behaviour can include: Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children 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.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the school's positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and in our school we will refer to our child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

### **E safety/Internet abuse**

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. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

- **Content risks:** the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.



- **Contact risks:** the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.
- **Conduct risks:** the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.
- **Commercial risks:** the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

We have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of children accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and will be energetic in teaching children how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, children should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like.

The school's actions and governance of online safety are reflected clearly in our safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the children in the school or on school-organised activities.

**Sexting** is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

**Sexting between individuals in a relationship** schools should look at this individually. Whilst their procedures should be the same as below they may want to include something specific here re what their preventative curriculum approach will be.

Children need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. We may also seek advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of a sexual image.

### **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress**

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is **not forwarded to anyone else**. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individuals consent.

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures of the school will be followed.

## Appendix 2

### Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

- **Children with a disability**

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and those working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues.

Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

- **Children with limited fluency in English**

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

Designated Teachers will work along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer children, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. We try to create an atmosphere in which children with special educational needs and particularly those with communication difficulties, or those for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them. Many of these issues will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedures in consultation with the child's parents/carers.

- **Looked After Children**

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then make arrangements for the

child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily. It is important that the views of children, young people and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the looked child are taken into account when decisions are made.

A member of school staff will attend LAC meetings and will provide a written report. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

- **Children / young people who go missing**

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and young people may have been abused.

School staff will work in partnership with those who look after the child or young person who goes missing and, if appropriate, will complete a risk assessment. Current school policies will apply e.g. attendance, safeguarding, relationships and sexuality education.

- **Young people in supported accommodation**

Staff will work in partnership with those agencies involved with young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation and will provide pastoral support as necessary.

- **Young people who are homeless**

If we become aware that a young person in our school is homeless we will share this information with Social Services whose role is to carry out a comprehensive needs and risk assessment. We will contribute to the assessment and attend multi-disciplinary meetings.

- **Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children and young people**

**Separated children** and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver.

**Unaccompanied children** and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.



**Child Trafficking** is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation.

If we become aware of a child or young person who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking we will immediately follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures

- **Children of parents with additional support needs**

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action school staff take to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children's social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist us in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will give consideration to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

- **Gender identity issues and sexual orientation**

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

- **Work experience, school trips and educational visits**

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE guidance on educational visits, school trips and work experience to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

## **Children/young people's behaviours**

- **Peer Abuse**

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all school staff should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and, where necessary, should contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

- **Self-Harm**

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

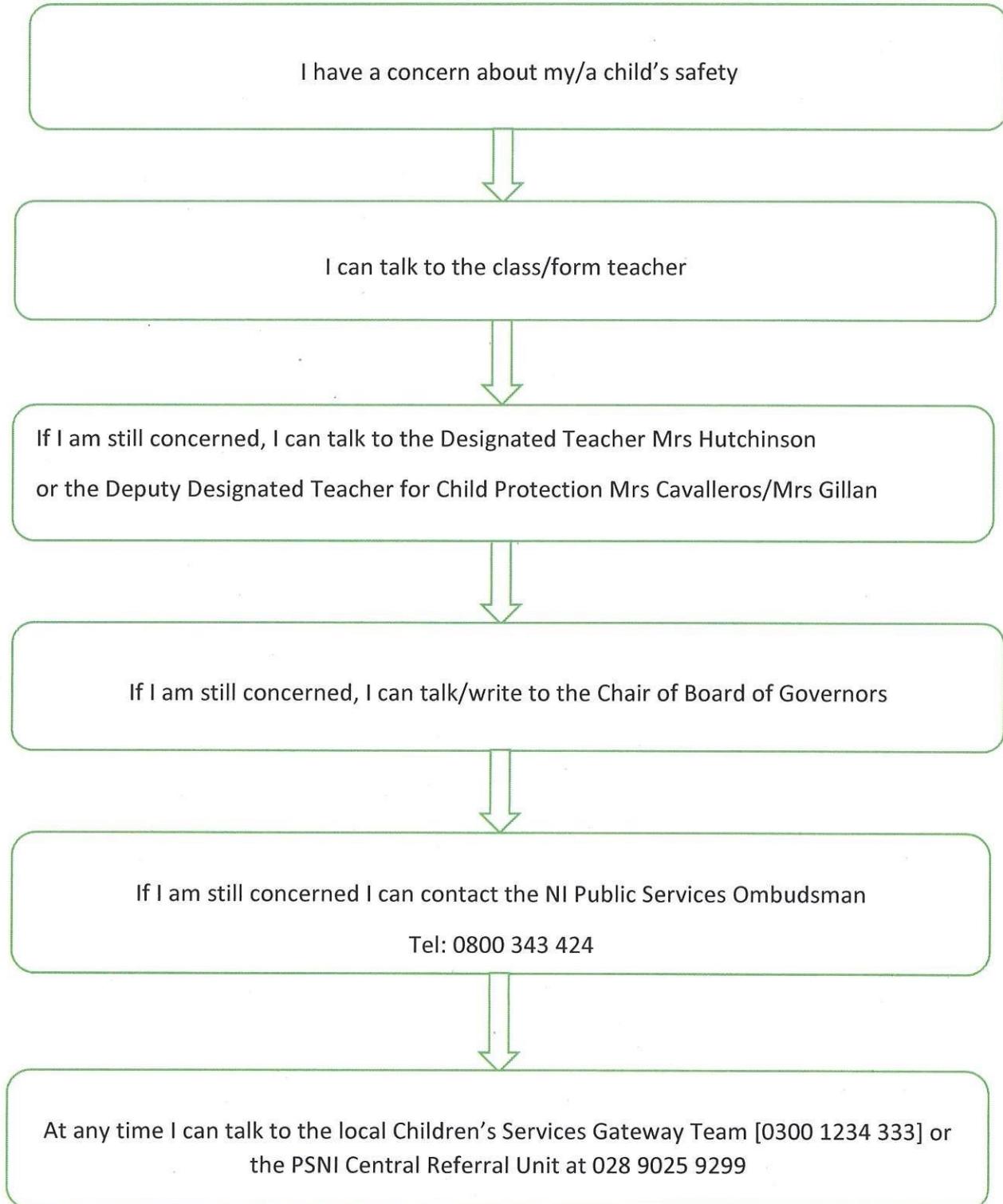
- **Suicidal Ideation**

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child or young person who presents as being suicidal as it is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

## Appendix 3

### How a Parent can make a Complaint

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:



## Appendix 4

### 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 Hutchinson or Deputy Designated Teacher, Mrs Cavalleros /Mrs Gillan in her absence. Staff member completes note of concern.

Designated Teacher, Mrs Hutchinson should consult with 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 Mrs Hutchinson 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 Mrs Hutchinson 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 5

### Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

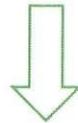
#### Key Points

Lead individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of BoG as appropriate.



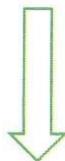
#### Guidance on the Next Steps

Lead individual then establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.



#### Possible Outcomes

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or BoG to agree a way forward from the options below.



Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.

Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed

Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed

**Appendix 6**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**

**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:
Action taken at the time:



Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:	
Any further action taken:	
Written report passed to Designated Teacher:	Yes:      No:
If 'No' state reason:	
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:	
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file	
Yes	No
If 'No' state reason:	

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

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

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

## Appendix 7

### General Advice in dealing with complaints/disclosures.

*If a teacher sees signs, which cause them concern, they should seek some clarification from the child. This should be done with **tact and understanding**. **Keep a written record of complaint at all steps.***

Staff should be aware that the way they talk to a child might have an effect on the evidence put forward at subsequent criminal proceedings.

Further guidance on how to deal with disclosures against staff can be sourced from staff circular 2015 / 13 Allegations Against Staff.

The following points should be kept in mind when talking to a child:

- Questioning should be kept to a minimum.
- Do not ask leading questions.  
E.g. "Tell me what happened." rather than "What did X do to you?"
- The chief task at this stage is to **listen** to the child.
- A note of the conversation should be made as soon as possible using the actual words said by the child.
- A copy of this note should be given to the Designated Teacher when reporting the case. This may be needed later.
- Do not promise the child confidentiality, which you cannot keep.
- Remember that the teacher is not investigating. This is the responsibility of the statutory agencies.

The designated teacher will inform the member of staff who has made the initial report of the case as soon as a decision about referral has been made.

## Appendix 8: Staff Code of Conduct.

All actions concerning children must uphold the best interests of the child as primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### 1. Private Meeting with Children

- a) Staff should be aware of the dangers that may arise from private interviews with individual children. 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.
- b) 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 signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- c) Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school will take active measures to facilitate this.

### 2. Physical Contact with Children

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their children.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however to suggest that staff should touch children only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. **Staff should 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. (DENI Circular *Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools (Circular 2017/04)* on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain children).**

- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e. Our policy on 'Use of Reasonable Force' by staff is set out in a separate document in accordance with guidelines from Education Authority. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. This is in line with training received from the Education Authority.
- f. Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- g. Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted, by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- h. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the designated teacher/Principal.
- i. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising children in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to children in circumstances very different from normal school/work environment.

### **3 Relationships and Attitudes**

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

### **4. Health and Safety**

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

### **5. The Internet and Digital Technologies (e-safety policy)**

Our policy on the internet and digital technologies is set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

## 6. ICT

In line with the school's ICT Policy, the following Code of Safe Practice has been highlighted by all staff:

- No social networking site should ever be used in the school without the permission of the Principal
- Staff should never accept a 'friend request' from a parent on a social networking site
- As is normal practice, staff should not use their mobile phones during teaching time, unless in an emergency and with notification to the Principal
- Children accessing the Internet should be supervised by an adult at all times
- Staff should ensure that children use any ipad with guided access and that all children are aware of the rules for the safe and effective use of ict.
- Any websites accessed by children, and recommended by teachers, should be checked beforehand, as far as is possible, to ensure that there is no unsuitable content and that the material is age-appropriate
- In the interests of security, staff passwords should not be shared with anyone
- Photographs of children should only be taken with a school camera/iPad and images stored on the school network. On occasion, and with the permission of the Principal, a 'back up 'of images can be stored to facilitate out of school work, for example, website building, worksheet creation etc. Staff should never take a photograph of a child with their mobile phone or store any images or data regarding any child on a personal laptop or on a memory stick.

### Other Specific Issues to Consider

**Children 'out of Class' for individual lessons or Educational Trips**

**Recruitment/Use of Volunteers (see Appendix 2)**

**Record Keeping**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **Introduction**

All actions concerning young children must maintain the best interests of the young child as a primary concern. Adults coming into contact with young children must always be aware that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the young child must be above reproach. *Any abuse of that position of trust by any member of staff is unacceptable.*

This code of conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff, parents, volunteers and students. It is intended to assist by drawing attention to the areas of risk and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### Code of Conduct

- All members of staff, volunteers and students will always wear a name badge for purposes of identification.
- All members of staff, students and volunteers should sign in each morning upon arrival in school.
- All parents are made aware of the necessity to arrange for their child to be brought to school and collected by an adult. If an adult who is not named is coming to collect the child it is the duty of the parent to inform the staff. Where this is not done, staff will not release the child to an unknown adult, but will attempt to contact the parent.
- Adults working in the nursery should be aware of the dangers that may arise when alone with an individual child. As far as possible all dealings with children should take place in a room with visual access or with the door open. You must always advise the other adult working in the room if an occasion arises and you are alone with an individual child. Where possible invite another adult, child or children to accompany you.
- Toileting of children may be required in the nursery school. All parents/guardians will be informed in the school booklet that accidents can occur and that the school has a policy for dealing with such incidents. Each parent/guardian will be asked to sign a permission slip to permit a member of staff to change his/her child's clothing in the event of an accident.

*No adult volunteer or student will be asked to change a child.*

If a child is wet or soiled please inform the second member of staff discreetly before you go to the toilet area. Your role is to encourage the child to be as independent as possible; however where a child requires assistance please help him/her.

The exception is where a child wearing a nappy needs to be changed. This should be carried out in the agreed location.

The staff member will inform the parent/guardian, discreetly, why the child was changed and remind the parent/guardian to provide an additional change of clothing in case of a subsequent accident.

- Adults are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children. *It is essential not to touch children in ways, on parts of the body or in circumstances that might be considered indecent.* However it is unrealistic in a nursery school to suggest that adults should only touch a child in an emergency. A distressed child may need reassurance involving physical comforting, in the form of a hug, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- If a child indicates clearly that s/he is uncomfortable with contact, their wishes should be respected – unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9 <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-199909-use-reasonable-force> gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils*))
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- The administration of first aid to children should be carried out, wherever possible in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- Any physical contact that would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent/guardian or a casual observer should be avoided.

- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted to the principal.
- Adults should be particularly careful when supervising children on a school trip.
- Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, adults should ensure that relationships with children are appropriate to their age, maturity and sex, taking care that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. You are a role model for the children in attitude, behaviour and language and you must be aware of this at all times.

## Conclusion

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

*In all circumstances, the professional judgement of staff will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this document, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult the principal or a representative of their professional association.*

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

*(Pastoral Care in Schools : CHILD PROTECTION,p71 – 74)*

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Introduction

All actions concerning young children must maintain the best interests of the young child as a primary concern. Adults coming into contact with young children must always be aware that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the young child must be above reproach. *Any abuse of that position of trust by any member of staff is unacceptable.*

This code of conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff, parents, volunteers and students. It is intended to assist by drawing attention to the areas of risk and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### Code of Conduct

- All members of staff, volunteers and students will always wear a name badge for purposes of identification.
- All members of staff, students and volunteers should sign in each morning upon arrival in school.
- All parents are made aware of the necessity to arrange for their child to be brought to school and collected by an adult. If an adult who is not named is coming to collect the child it is the duty of the parent to inform the staff. Where this is not done, staff will not release the child to an unknown adult, but will attempt to contact the parent.
- Adults working in the nursery should be aware of the dangers that may arise when alone with an individual child. As far as possible all dealings with children should take place in a

room with visual access or with the door open. You must always advise the other adult working in the room if an occasion arises and you are alone with an individual child. Where possible invite another adult, child or children to accompany you.

- Toileting of children may be required in the nursery school. All parents/guardians will be informed in the school booklet that accidents can occur and that the school has a policy for dealing with such incidents. Each parent/guardian will be asked to sign a permission slip to permit a member of staff to change his/her child's clothing in the event of an accident.

No adult volunteer or student will be asked to change a child.

If a child is wet or soiled please inform the second member of staff discreetly before you go to the toilet area. Your role is to encourage the child to be as independent as possible; however where a child requires assistance please help him/her.

The exception is where a child wearing a nappy needs to be changed. This should be carried out in the agreed location.

The staff member will inform the parent/guardian, discreetly, why the child was changed and remind the parent/guardian to provide an additional change of clothing in case of a subsequent accident.

- Adults are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children. *It is essential not to touch children in ways, on parts of the body or in circumstances that might be considered indecent.* However it is unrealistic in a nursery school to suggest that adults should only touch a child in an emergency. A distressed child may need reassurance involving physical comforting, in the form of a hug, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- If a child indicates clearly that s/he is uncomfortable with contact, their wishes should be respected – unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9 <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-199909-use-reasonable-force> gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils*))
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- The administration of first aid to children should be carried out, wherever possible in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- Any physical contact that would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent/guardian or a casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted to the principal.
- Adults should be particularly careful when supervising children on a school trip.
- Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, adults should ensure that relationships with children are appropriate to their age, maturity and sex, taking care that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. You are a role model for the children in attitude, behaviour and language and you must be aware of this at all times.

## Conclusion

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

*In all circumstances, the professional judgement of staff will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this document, or how they should act in*

*particular circumstances, they should consult the principal or a representative of their professional association.*

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

*(Pastoral Care in Schools : CHILD PROTECTION,p71 – 74)*

# Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers, Visitors

At our school – we want to build good relationships within the whole of our school community – that includes parents, staff and pupils. The key to a happy school is one where everyone feels respected and valued. To this end we have an agreed Code of Conduct for parents, carers and visitors.

- Follow the school's signing in and out procedures for visitors
- Respect school staff and support them in the things they do to help children learn
- Set a good example by behaving appropriately and not using inappropriate language
- Ask the school about their view on incidents so that you can determine if it is the same as your child's view before taking things further
- Ensure that your child knows how to behave in school and towards others
- Ask the school for help if you need more information about something or do not understand something the school is doing

In order to have a peaceful and happy school environment – parents, carers and visitors must not:

- Disrupt classes or any area of the school
- Question decisions made by the school in front of the children
- Use loud or rude language; swear or show temper
- Threaten to hit/push staff, other parents or carers
- Deliberately damage or destroy school property
- Criticise school staff, pupil or other parents and carers – on school premises or on social media sites
- Send abusive or threatening emails or make abusive or threatening phone calls to the school
- Physically punish your child on school premises
- Go up to another child and ask them or tell them off for something that has happened to your child
- Smoke or consume alcohol at school events (other than as pre-agreed) or on school premises
- Spit on school premises or discard chewing gum on school premises

## Appendix 9

### Useful Addresses & Contact Information

1. GATEWAY SERVICES for CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK  
**Telephone for Referral: 03001234333**

Northern Locality Gateway Team: Coleraine 028 7032 5462

#### Postal Referrals:

NHSCT Referral Gateway Team

Oriel House

2-8 Castle Street, Antrim

Co. Antrim BT414JE

#### E Mail Referrals:

SPOE.Referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net

2. PSNI  
Public Protection Units, Ballymena H District based in Ballymoney PSNI

**Tel: 02890650222**

**PSNI Referral Unit – 101**

3. Child Protection Support Services (CPSS)

**Tel: 028 95985590**

## Appendix 10

### GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other support staff in our school and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the school.

It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken, through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

### Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, either

1. Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or
2. Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips; residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Formal arrangements as to selection and vetting should not be required for volunteers who are involved outside school hours and who do not have unsupervised contact with children. These would include fund raisers, people using school premises for meetings etc.

### Use of Volunteers

There are three main categories into which the use of volunteers might be grouped and to which guidance will apply:

- During school hours involving direct contact with children
- Outside school hours involving direct contact with children
- During school hours but not involving direct contact with children

### Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance of their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

### Initial Appraisal

As a minimum requirement all potential long term/regular volunteers are asked to provide the following information:

- personal details
- qualifications and previous work with children
- a declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound-over Order
- a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for child protection
- agree to a criminal record being carried out, however from September 2012 DENI Circular has stated that supervised volunteers do not need Access NI checks. This means however that the volunteer should have no **UNSUPERVISED CONTACT.**
- provide the name of two referees who are not family members or members of staff in the school
- attend an interview with the school Principal with proof of identity
- Undergo an annual criminal record check through Access NI (via Education Authority)

No individual will be admitted to the school as a long term/regular volunteer until these basic steps have been completed and the results assessed.

### **Accepting Volunteers**

Where the previous procedures have been followed as appropriate and the school is satisfied that:

- the volunteer is a suitable person to have contact with the children and has the character, skills and experience to support the work of the school in a voluntary capacity;
- well defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the volunteer to undertake and he/she is competent to undertake them;
- the school will notify the individual that he/she has been accepted for voluntary duties in the school

### **The use of Volunteers**

These are the fundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

- the purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties:

- volunteers only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff and these arrangements should be such as to minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised, access to children;
- volunteers are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment;
- volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and receive appropriate training to enable them to perform these;
- volunteers are only allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers are not to be placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom;
- volunteers are not afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or children. An exception might be made where a child has a medical or other condition of which all those working with the pupil should be made aware, and where agreement of the parent has been sought.

## **Health and Safety Insurance**

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety Legislation. Our school therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees in terms of the schools' obligations under the legislation.

## **Duration**

Our school places a time limit on the period of the volunteer's service. This is done where the work earmarked for the volunteer is likely to be completed within a specific period. Where a volunteer's involvement is likely to be long term, the school advises the volunteer that he/she will be subject to a trial period, during which the Principal monitors the volunteer's effectiveness in contributing to the life and work of the school.

## **Information and Training**

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

- the policy of the school and the management authority in relation to pastoral care and child protection, including its behaviour/discipline policy, including rewards and sanctions, and the extent of the volunteer's authority within it; its child protection procedures
- Our School's Health and Safety Policy

### **School Security**

The school has drawn on the advice from the guidance Document "Security and Personal Safety in Schools" 1997 to establish arrangements for the admission and supervision of volunteers on school premises. Particular attention is drawn to:

- The volunteer registering at the beginning of each visit
- Providing the volunteer with a readily identifiable name badge or pass giving his/her name and status

The school ensures passes are surrendered at the end of each day and when the volunteers' involvement with the school comes to an end.

**Remember Child Protection is the responsibility of  
EVERYBODY!**

**The Child's care is paramount in all that we do.**

## **Appendix 11**

**As part of our teachers' commitment to child protection procedures the following points have been adapted from part of the Code of Values and Professional Practice written by the GTCNI (September 2004)**

### **Commitment to Learners**

**Teachers will:**

- maintain professional relationships with those children / learners entrusted to their care which respect the learner as a person, and encourage growth and development

### **Commitment to Colleagues and Others**

**Teachers will:**

- work with colleagues and others to create a professional community that supports the social, intellectual, spiritual / moral, emotional and physical development of children
- promote collegiality among colleagues by respecting their professional standing and opinions and, in that spirit, be prepared to offer advice and share professional practice with colleagues
- cooperate, where appropriate, with professionals from other agencies in the interests of children
- ensure that relationships with the parents, guardians or carers of children, in their capacity as partners in the educative process, are characterised by respect and trust
- respect confidential information relating to children or colleagues gained in the course of professional practice, unless the well-being of an individual or a legal imperative requires disclosure.

### **Commitment to the Profession**

**Teachers will:**

- as reflective practitioners, contribute to the review and revision of policies and practices with a view to optimising the opportunities for children or addressing identified individual or institutional needs in keeping with the concept of professional integrity



## **Links with other Policies**

Pastoral Care Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Use of Images Policy

Use of Mobile Phones Policy

Drugs Policy

SEN Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Medication Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

Staff Professional Development Policy

Staff Self Protection Policy

Reasonable Force Policy

Complaints Procedure Policy

## Appendix 12

### Safeguarding and Child Protection: DE Circulars

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools (Circular 2017/04)**  
*Guidance for schools on child protection policy and procedures. Code of Conduct for staff. (to be read in conjunction with Update (Aug 2020) Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools*
- **Circular 2003/13**  
*Guidance for schools on the Welfare and Protection of Children Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003*
- **Circular 2006/06**  
*Guidance on safer recruitment practices for education authorities*
- **Circular 2006/08**  
*Guidance for schools on the requirement for child protection training in relation to interviewing and selection panel*
- **Circular 2007/01**  
*Acceptable use of the internet and digital technologies in schools*
  
- **Circular 2008/10**  
*From 1st August 2008 substitute teachers must be booked on line via NISTR*
- **Circular 2010/01** Guidance on Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE): Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination in NI
- **Circular 2010/18**  
*“Every School a Good School” – the Governors’ Role*
- **Circular 2011/22**  
*Internet Safety (addendum to 2007/01).*
- **Circular 2012/18**  
*Replaces Circular 2010/07. Pupil Attendance: Absence Recording by Schools*
- **Circular 2012/19**  
*Disclosure and barring arrangements: changes to pre-employment vetting checks for volunteers working in schools from 10 September 2012*
- **Circular 2013/01**  
*Disclosure and barring arrangements. Guidance for Schools and employing authorities on pre-employment vetting checking and safer recruitment practices*
- **Circular 2013/16**  
*Relationship and sexuality education policy in schools.*



- **Circular 2013/25**  
*e-Safety Guidance*
- **Circular 2014/14**  
*Guidance on how to encourage pupil participation in decision making in schools*
- **DE Circular 2014/27**  
*Managing Information on Persons Who Pose a Risk to Children*
- **DE Circular 2015/13**  
*Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff*
- **DE Circular 2015/22**  
*Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)*
- **DE Circular 2015/23**  
*Drugs Guidance*
- **DE Circular 2016/05**  
*Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour*
- **DE Circular 2016/20**  
*Child Protection: Record keeping in Schools*
  - *DE Circular 2016/20 Record Keeping Circular.*
- **DE Circular 2016/26**  
*Effective Educational Uses of Mobile Digital Devices*
- **DE Circular 2016/27**  
*Online Safety*

## Letters from DE

### February 2009

*Child Protection: Legislation Changes to Age of Consent*

### June 2009

*Provision of free school meals on humanitarian grounds*

### May 2012

*Revised criterion for the provision of free school meals on humanitarian grounds*

**November 2013**

*Concussion and Sudden Impact Syndrome*

**July 2014**

*Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines on Female Genital Mutilation*

**September 2014**

*Disposal of Child Protection Records. Letter to Principals.*

**October 2014**

*Child Sexual Exploitation – key messages.*

**June 2015**

*Inappropriate use of the internet and mobile technologies. Advice for children, parents and staff.*

**June 2015**

*Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation.*

**September 2015**

*SBNI leaflet “Sexting and the Law”*

**September 2016**

*DE Guidance on Child Protection: Record keeping in Schools; Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young people in NI, DHSSPS 2016*

**New and updated guidance in relation to safeguarding and child protection including DE circulars and letters can be found using the following DE web page links:**

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/publications-and-guidance-child-protection-issues-school](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/publications-and-guidance-child-protection-issues-school)