

**BALLYTOBER**



# **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

**Ratified : 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, BoG**

## BALLYTOBER PRIMARY SCHOOL

### SAFEGUARDING POLICY

#### RATIONALE

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states :-

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of....

- physical or mental violence
- injury or abuse
- neglect or abuse
- neglect or negligent treatment
- maltreatment
- exploitation including sexual abuse

....by those looking after them."

*Article 19*

"When organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interests of the children must be a primary consideration."

*Article 3*

The Children Order (Northern Ireland) 1995, states that :-

"....the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration."

At Ballytober Primary School we recognise that staff and governors have a pastoral responsibility towards all pupils and understand that the children enrolled have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

It is also acknowledged that :-

- \* Children need to feel secure in order to learn effectively and to develop to their full potential
- \* Whenever at all possible, the safety and well-being of all pupils should be both safeguarded and promoted

With these issues in mind, we intend to maintain an ethos which is conducive to learning, yet equally contributes to the care, safety and well-being of the children. Our school should provide a positive and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by :-

- \* DE "Pastoral Care in Schools : Child Protection (1999)
- \* Area Child Protection Committees" (ACPC)
- \* Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).
- \* Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools (2017).

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in the school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

There are five main elements to our policy:-

- \* Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- \* Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- \* Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- \* Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- \* Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

**THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT BALLYTOBER PRIMARY**

**Principal : Mrs Elaine Anderson**

**Designated Teacher for Child Protection : Mrs Aislinn Leighton**

**Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection : Mrs Lisa Chartres**

**ICT Co-ordinator : Mrs Kathy Elliott**

**Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance : Rev Alan Buick**

**Deputy Designated Governor for Child Protection : Mr Tim MacDonald**

## **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

**A "child" is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order.**

**"Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in communities, agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Child abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse. Those working with children and young people must have an awareness and understanding of the nature and prevalence of different manifestations within their practice area.**

**It is always preferable to prevent abuse or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Through their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff, especially teachers but also non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development.**

**A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who had suffered or is suffering significant harm. 'Harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, and the question of whether harm is significant, is determined in accordance with Article 50 (3) of the Children Order. More detail on the concept of harm and significant harm can be found in section 2.4 of Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016) and in the Children (NI) Order 1995."**

**(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)**

## **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE : SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

Due to their daily contact with individual children, the school staff, especially the teachers and the classroom assistants, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of :-

- \* Abnormality
- \* Changes in appearance, behaviour, learning patterns and development

Non-teaching staff, including the lunch-time supervisors and the caretaker also have an important role to play in :-

- \* Prevention of abuse if possible
- \* Early intervention where total prevention has not been possible

No list of symptoms is exhaustive and may include indicators of other forms of abuse. It is also important that staff recognise that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms as detailed below. These could include :-

- \* Bereavement
- \* Domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances
- \* Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse

In such contexts, symptoms should not be considered as proof of abuse.

## **\* PHYSICAL ABUSE.....**

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

(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)

Possible signs or symptoms of PHYSICAL ABUSE include :-

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

## **\* EMOTIONAL ABUSE.....**

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 a child's emotional development."

(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)

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 and/or signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self esteem

## **\* SEXUAL ABUSE.....**

**Sexual abuse "occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault 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."**

**(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)**

**Possible signs or symptoms of SEXUAL ABUSE include :-**

- Bruised or sore genitals and/or genital infection**
- Difficulty in walking or sitting**
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour**
- Low self-esteem and/or chronic depression**
- Substance abuse**
- Personality changes and/or fear of going home**

## **\* 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 purposes of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature."**

**(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)**



## \* CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.....

"CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve violent, humiliating or degrading sexual assaults. In some cases young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point."

(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)

Possible indicators of CSE include :-

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation
- Truanting/ leaving school without permission
- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Receiving lots of texts / phone calls prior to leaving
- Change in mood - agitated/ stressed
- Appearing distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age
- Physical symptoms e.g. bruising; bite marks
- Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis
- New peer groups
- Significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Low self esteem
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)
- Self-harm or other expressions of despair
- Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse

**\* NEGLECT.....**

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

**(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)**

**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**

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

**These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities. However, in such circumstances, the abuse may take slightly different forms, including :\_**

- \* Lack of appropriate supervision**
- \* Use of physical constraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed**

## **\* DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.....**

**The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as**

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

**"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."**

**(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)**

### **Sexual Violence and Abuse**

**"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)"**

**(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)**

**Symptoms which young people may display and which are indicators only include:**

- \* Nervousness**
- \* Low self- worth**
- \* Disturbed sleep patterns**
- \* Nightmares/flashbacks**
- \* Physiological - stress/nerves**
- \* Stomach pain**
- \* Immature/needy behaviour**
- \* Temper tantrums**
- \* Aggression**
- \* Internalising distress or withdrawal**
- \* Truancy**
- \* Alcohol and drugs**
- \* Bullying**

**These symptoms can lead to a child/ young person being diagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive.**

If it comes to the attention of the school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information to Social Services

**\* FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION.....**

"Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises of procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as cutting, female circumcision and initiation. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies through agreed and established school procedures."

(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)

**Indicators that FGM is imminent**

- Being a girl aged 5-8 within a community where FGM is practised.
- Prolonged return to country of origin for summer break - giving sufficient healing time before return to school.
- Female elder visiting from a country of origin.
- Child may tell other children about it.
- A girl may disclose that she is to have a 'special procedure' or attend a special occasion to 'become a woman'.
- Parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period.

**\* GROOMING.....**

**"Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of a 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 and 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.**

**Adults may misuse online settings e.g. chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms of digital communications to try and establish contact with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared."**

**(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017)**

## **IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE**

Due to their daily contact with individual children, the school staff, especially the teachers and classroom assistants are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of:-

- \* **Abnormality**
- \* **Changes in:-**
  - appearance
  - behaviour
  - learning pattern
  - development

Non-teaching staff, including the lunch-time supervisors and the caretaker also have an important role to play in:-

- \* **Prevention of abuse if possible**
- \* **Early intervention where total prevention has not been possible**

**Neglect - physical indicators**

- \* **Constant hunger**
- \* **Constant tiredness**
- \* **Poor personal hygiene**
- \* **Inadequate or inappropriate clothing**
- \* **Untreated illnesses or medical problems**
- \* **Emacipation**
- \* **Lack of supervision**
- \* **Exposure to danger**

**Neglect - behavioural indicators**

- \* **Falling asleep, listlessness or lack of concentration**
- \* **Poor peer relationships**
- \* **Destructive tendencies towards peers and property**
- \* **Compulsive stealing or begging**
- \* **Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school**
- \* **Chronic running away**
- \* **Scavenging for food or clothes**

### **Physical Injury - physical indicators**

- \* Scratches**
- \* Bite marks**
- \* Welts**
- \* Bruises in places**
- \* Burns, especially cigarette burns**
- \* Untreated injuries**
- \* Poisoning**

### **Physical Injury - behavioural indicators**

- \* Self-mutilation tendencies**
- \* Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries**
- \* Frozen watchfulness**
- \* Undue fear of adults**
- \* Flinching at sudden movements**
- \* Withdrawal from physical contact**
- \* Fear of returning home or parents being contacted**

### **Sexual Abuse - physical indicators**

- \* Soreness and/or bleeding in genital, anal or throat area**
- \* Itching in genital area**
- \* Stained or bloody underwear**
- \* Wetting or soiling - day and/or night**
- \* Stomach pains or headaches**
- \* Pain or urination**
- \* Difficulty in walking or sitting**
- \* Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks**
- \* Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating**
- \* Young pregnancy or abortion**

### **Sexual Abuse - behavioural indicators**

- \* Obsessive washing**
- \* Fear of the dark**
- \* Wariness of being approached by certain individuals or a gender**
- \* Unexplained sums of money or gifts**
- \* Withdrawn behaviour in general**
- \* Day or nightmares**
- \* Conscious of removing clothes for sports activities etc**

**Emotional Abuse – physical indicators**

- \* Sudden speech disorders
- \* Poor hair or alopecia – poor skin
- \* Swollen extremities
- \* Recurrent diarrhoea
- \* Self-mutilation
- \* Attempted suicide
- \* Drug and/or solvent abuse

**Emotional Abuse – behavioural indicators**

- \* Neurotic behaviour – rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking
- \* Continual self-depreciation
- \* Over-reaction to mistakes
- \* Extreme fear of new situations
- \* Inappropriate responses to pain – deserve it
- \* Poor peer relationship
- \* Extremes of passivity or aggression

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive and may include indicators of other forms of abuse. It is also important that staff recognise that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms as detailed above. These could include:-

- \* Bereavement
- \* Domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances
- \* Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse

*In such contexts, symptoms should not be considered as proof of abuse.*



## Operation Encompass

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

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

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

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

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

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is acknowledged that the relationships which teachers and other members of staff in school have with the children in their charge is based on trust and often on confidentiality. Such relationships are usually an integral part of the secure, caring environment present in such establishments.

However, where physical or sexual abuse is suspected staff:-

- \* Have a legal duty to report such information

- \* Should recognise that:-

".....in order to protect children from harm, cases may arise where confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action, by informing others, in the child's best interests....."

*Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection: DENI*

If a child confides information in a member of staff which gives cause for concern about possible abuse and requests that the information be kept secret, it is important that they:-

- \* Should speak to the child in a sensitive manner

- \* Tell the child that he/she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's own sake.

- \* Assure the child that the matter will be disclosed only to those people who need to know about it

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

## **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE**

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern they should:-

- \* **Seek clarification from the child themselves, with tact and understanding.**
- \* **Keep extent of questioning to a minimum**
- \* **Not ask leading questions which...**
  - can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind
  - encourage the child to change their version of events in any way
  - impose the adult's own assumptions

"Tell me what has happened." - acceptable practice  
" Did they do.....to you?" - unacceptable practice
- \* **Listen to the child and not interrupt**
- \* **Try to interpret if child is freely recalling significant events**
- \* **Make notes of discussion to pass on to Designated Teacher**
- \* **Record following details.....**
  - time, date, place and people present
  - what was actually said
  - signs of physical injury observed
  - explanations made by a child, parent, carer or other adult for injury
- \* **Under no circumstances remove a child's clothing**
- \* **Be aware that notes may be used in any subsequent court proceedings**
- \* **Understand that it is not their responsibility to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse.**

Non-teaching members of staff should immediately report any concerns to either the class teacher, the designated teacher or the Principal. It is advisable that they do not engage in further conversation with the child regarding any alleged abuse.

Should child abuse be suspected or alleged the reporting procedures which will be followed are as detailed in Figure 1:-

- \* **Figure 1 - Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff.**

## **DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES - 5R'S**

**RECEIVE** - Listen actively, open body language, accept, non-judgmental

**REASSURE** - The right thing, help is coming, don't promise what can't be delivered.

**RESPOND**- Say what you are going to do and do it. Ensure child is ok before leaving.

**REPORT** - As soon as possible, to the designated teacher

**RECORD**- Vital - facts, no opinions - When? Where? Who? What?

## **COMPLAINTS AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF**

Where a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the school the initial procedures are as detailed earlier in the policy. Figure 2 should be referred to for specific details regarding appropriate action to be taken should child abuse be suspected or alleged:-

- \* Figure - Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of staff.

*Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection: DENI*

## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **STEP 1**

**\*Teaching staff, classroom assistants and supervisory assistants will be made aware of the categories of abuse and their indicators.**

### **STEP 2**

**\*Any concerns will be reported to the Designated Teacher and a Child Protection Concern Sheet completed. The Principal will be notified.**

**Staff will be aware that they:**

- must not investigate their concerns by questioning the child - only record factually what the child says**
- must not investigate by removing the child's clothing - only record what physical evidence is clearly visible**
- must not promise the child confidentiality**

**In the event of the Designated Teacher being absent then concerns should be notified to the Deputy Designated Teacher and a Child Protection Concern Sheet completed.**

**Complaints against members of staff should be notified in the same manner as above, except that:**

- in the event of complaints being made against the Designated Teacher then concerns should be expressed to the Principal and a Child Protection Concern Sheet completed.**
- in the event of complaints being made against the Principal then concerns should be expressed to the Designated Teacher and a Child Protection Concern Sheet completed. Two copies of the Child Protection Concern Sheet will be kept, one by the Designated Teacher and the other by the Principal.**

**If a complaint is made against a member of staff then that person will be told of the complaint. It will then be decided if it is necessary to complete a UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) form.**

### **STEP 3**

**\*The Principal (unless the complaint is against the Principal) will then report directly to EA's Designated Child Protection Officer.**

**\*The Designated Teacher will report directly to EA's Designated Officer if the complaint is against the Principal.**

**\*In the event of the complaint being against a member of staff then the Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be notified.**

### **STEP 4**

**This will be dependent upon the advice given by EA's Designated Officer and upon the nature of the concern.**

**Normally Social Services will be notified by a UNOCINI and they will become the investigating body. ( In the case of an emergency, notification will be by telephone which will then be followed up by a UNOCINI as soon as possible. )**

**In more extreme cases if the child's safety is jeopardised, or a suspected crime committed, PSNI may have to be contacted.**

### **STEP 5**

**Liaison between the school and Health and Social Services will follow up through Inter-Disciplinary Case Conferences.**

## **ROLE OF DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

**Designated Teacher: Mrs Aislinn Leighton**

**Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Lisa Chartres**

**The Designated Teacher will ensure that all the members of staff have relevant knowledge regarding how to:-**

- \* Identify signs and symptoms of possible abuse**
- \* Follow child protection procedures as detailed in the policy of the School**
- \* Make a referral if necessary**
- \* Talk to children about whom there are concerns**
- \* Prepare required contributions for Social Services**
- \* They will also make staff aware of who will be responsible for child protection arrangements throughout the school in their absence.**

**The Designated Teacher will be aware of:-**

- \* EA's child protection procedures**
- \* Any change in legislation that would require implementation**
- \* Necessary changes to be made to either policy or practice**
- \* Whom to consult and when to make a referral**
- \* Roles and responsibilities of investigating agencies**
  - whom to consult in each case and how to liaise with them profitably**
- \* Requirements for record keeping**
- \* Conduct for child protection conferences**
  - how appropriate contributions can be made to it**
- \* Support as provided through local child protection procedures**
  - how to access such support**
- \* Sources of advice and guidance**
- \* Own role and responsibilities in respect of child protection throughout the school**
- \* Necessity of attending appropriate training**



## **RECORD KEEPING**

The Principal will ensure that proper records, dated and signed, are kept of all complaints or information received. Such records will also include all concerns about possible abuse noted by members of staff.

As soon as possible the Principal should obtain a written record from the member of staff who:-

- \* Received the information
- \* Has concerns about possible abuse

These records will be completed in a factual manner and in neutral language. They will include the following, in appropriate detail.....

- \* Nature of the information
- \* Who provided it
- \* Time, date and circumstances
- \* Description of the signs or symptoms of possible abuse
- \* Details of disclosures will be in words the child used if it is a child's disclosure.
- \* Observations

The Principal or designated teacher should supplement the record with:-

- \* Details of any advice sought, from whom and when
- \* Decision reached as to whether the case should be referred to Social Services
- \* If referred, how, when and by whom this was done
- \* Otherwise, reasons for not referring to Social Services

## **MAINTAINING RECORDS**

The Principal should ensure that records are maintained as required.

Where complaints about possible child abuse are *not referred to Social Services* that school will:-

- \* Maintain the record on the child's file until his/her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday
- \* Send a confidential copy to any school to which the child subsequently transfers

Identical procedures will be followed if on referral, the Social Services do *not place* the child's name on the Child Protection Register.

However, if the Social Services inform the school that the child's name *has been placed* on the Child Protection Register, the school should:-

- \* Maintain a record of this fact on the child's file while he/she continues to attend
- \* Maintain associated documentation from Social Services in a similar manner

When the child subsequently *transfers* to another school:-

- \* School will be informed immediately that their name is on the register
- \* All child protection registers on the child supplied by Social Services will be destroyed, including records of case conferences
- \* Child's Case Co-ordinator in Social Services will be informed

If the Social Services inform the school that the child's name *has been removed* from the Register, the school should:-

- \* Destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences.

## **RECORD OF CHILD ABUSE COMPLAINTS**

Where a complaint is made about a member of staff and is pursued as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record should also be entered by the Principal on the Record of Child Abuse Complaints. The summary should include:-

- \* Date and brief details of the nature of the complaint
- \* By whom and against whom it was made
- \* If the complaint was formally referred, to whom it was referred, and the date of referral
- \* If the complaint was dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.

The school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints will be made available to the Board of Governors annually.

## **CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES**

**When the referral has been made of a case of suspected or alleged abuse, a member of staff may be asked to contribute the school's knowledge of the child to the Child Protection Conference convened by Social Services to:-**

- \* Assess the child's circumstances**
- \* Decide on further action**

**In such cases the school will prepare a report which should focus on the child's:-**

- \* Educational progress and achievements**
- \* Attendance**
- \* Behaviour**
- \* Relationships with other children and adults within the school**
- \* Appearance, where appropriate**
- \* Family structure, where appropriate**

**Reports will be made available to the child's parents at the child Protection Conference and may be used in court. All reports should be checked and signed by the designated teacher.**

## **MONITORING THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER**

The school should monitor those pupils whose names are on the Child Protection Register in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan. This would include alerting the child's Case Co-ordinator from Social Services or the Education Welfare Officer when:-

- \* He/she has been absent for more than a few days or on a regular basis
- \* Signs suggest deterioration in the pupil's home circumstances

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR LIMITED FLUENCY IN ENGLISH**

Children with special educational needs and those who are not fluent in English, may be especially vulnerable to abuse as the abuser may expect it to be more difficult for these children to report what has happened.

- \* Extra care will be taken to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse
- \* Indications of abuse of these children will be reported exactly as for other children, according to established procedures.

Where children have difficulties in communicating, including those whose first language is not English:-

- \* The child will be given an opportunity to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate language/communication skills..... especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.
- \* Designated teachers will work with the SEN co-ordinator and specialist teachers to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have.
- \* The school will create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which will involve communication difficulties, or pupils with language limitations, feel confident and able to discuss these or any other matters that may be worrying them.

## **LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

The staff recognise that they can best contribute to a co-ordinated approach to child protection by developing effective links with:-

- \* Other agencies
- \* Support services

With this in mind communication as and when appropriate will be maintained with the following representative professionals:-

- \* Designated Officer for Child Protection in EA
- \* Social Services
- \* PSNI
- \* NSPCC
- \* School nurse
- \* Education Welfare Services
- \* Education Psychology Services

## **CONTRIBUTION TO THE CURRICULUM**

The school will endeavour to play its part in the prevention of child abuse through the curriculum. Through appropriate activities the children will be:-

- \* Taught with the skills they need to help them stay safe
- \* Equipped with the skills they need to help them stay safe
- \* Informed as to how to recognise unwelcome approaches and develop the confidence to resist them

Staff will take special care when discussing with the children possible ways to prevent or talk about abuse. This will be done most carefully in order to avoid:-

- \* Unnecessary anxiety
- \* Upsetting normal, stable relationships between adults and children

The school will also organise participation in self-education programmes for the pupils. These will include:-

- \* Operation Streetwise

Should a child reveal information during a curricular activity which gives the teacher cause for concern, the teacher will adhere to the following procedures:-

- \* Discussion will not be pursued in front of the other children
- \* Promise will be made to talk to the child later
- \* Actual conversation will be recorded as soon as possible
- \* Information will be reported to designated teacher as soon as possible



## **VETTING**

The school recognises the important and beneficial role to be played by volunteers in :-

- \* Supporting the work of the teaching staff
- \* Contributing to the life of the school

However, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school screening and selection arrangements will be undertaken as follows:-

- \* Engagement of volunteers will only be undertaken with the agreement of the Board of Governors
- \* Acceptance of any offers of help will not be automatic
- \* School will feel under no obligation to accept offers of help
- \* Before any volunteer is accepted the following will be clearly established.....
  - actual needs of school for voluntary support
  - appropriate areas of work and relevant duties
  - supervisory arrangements
  - implications for child protection
  - conditions and expectations to volunteers role

Volunteers will be asked to provide the following details:-

- \* Personal details such as.....
  - name, address, date of birth and any relationship within school
- \* Details of any qualifications and of previous work with children
- \* Declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence
- \* Declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for Child Protection or had a child removed from their care

They will also be asked to:-

- \* Agree to an Access Ni check being carried out
- \* Provide the names of two referees who are not family members or employed at the school
- \* Attend an interview with the Principal for assessment

No individual will be admitted into school as a volunteer unless these steps have been undertaken and the results assessed. As always the overriding duty of the school will be to protect the children in its care from contact with unsuitable individuals. It should therefore be remembered that genuine volunteers would not be deterred by the recommended degree of scrutiny the school accords their involvement in its work.

The following principals will be observed by the school when using volunteers.

Volunteers will:-

- \* Assist staff, not act as substitutes for paid staff who are absent
  - \* Only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff-
- Arrangements should be such as to minimise opportunities for direct, unsupervised access to children
- \* Not be placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment
  - \* Receive training to enable them to perform appropriate tasks
  - \* Only be allocated duties after agreement with the relevant member of staff
  - \* Not be given access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

The staff understand their responsibility in relation to the welfare of the children in their charge. They also recognise that parents should be encouraged to understand this aspect of ongoing work within the school with regards to fostering good working relationships.

Parents will be made aware of:-

- \* School's Child Protection arrangements
- \* Fact that such arrangements may require cases to be referred to investigative agencies in the best interests of a child
- \* Importance of notifying the school when someone other than the parent or usual carer will be picking their child up
- \* Continue to be informed of the educational progress of their child even in the event of a case of suspected abuse being referred to the investigative agencies

The staff also recognise that procedures must exist to enable parents to make known to staff any concerns that they may have about the safety of their child. They should be provided with details about:-

- \* Correct procedure for making complaints
- \* Recourse they have should they not be satisfied with the outcome

With this in mind a summary of appropriate arrangements will be included in the prospectus. The statement will provide clarity concerning the following:-

- \* What will happen when concerns or complaints are reported
- \* Which members of staff need to be informed
- \* Who will report back and when
- \* What further options are available to them

Parents should:-

- \* Make their concerns known to the relevant class teacher
- \* Talk to the designated teacher for child protection if still concerned
- \* Contact the Principal if issue still not addressed
- \* Speak or write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors if not satisfied with the response in school

No concern about a child will be ignored in this school.

**We have been asked by the Department of Education to include the following contact numbers:**

<b>NSPCC Child Protection Helpline -</b>	<b>0800 800 500</b>
<b>Northern Ireland Childline -</b>	<b>0800 212 888</b>
<b>Childline UK -</b>	<b>0800 1111</b>

**PROFORMA**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORT 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: \_\_\_\_\_