

# Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy



September 2021

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Vision Statement:

*'We work together, We play together, We pray together.'*

## **Mission Statement**

In St Patrick's we aim to provide an education rooted in the Catholic Faith that helps everyone reach their full potential. We endeavour to provide our pupils with the opportunity to obtain the skills necessary for their futures. We will provide them with a safe, caring and happy school in which they are all valued as individuals and where their academic, emotional, physical and spiritual needs are nurtured in a family atmosphere.

## **Aims:**

- A broad and balanced curriculum which will provide learning opportunities for each young person to develop as:
  1. an individual
  2. a contributor to society; and
  3. a contributor to the economy and the environment.
- An awareness of his/her own talents, skills and abilities
- A lively and enquiring mind, the ability to question and make informed decisions
- A love of learning, a knowledge of how to learn and the motivation to produce his/her best
- Effective communication between all members of the school community
- An awareness of the immediate environment and an attitude which leads to self-discipline, independence, courtesy, good manners and respect for everyone
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- A knowledge and understanding of the wider world in which we live, of the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations and a tolerance of other religions and ways of life.

The staff, pupils, parents and governors are fully committed to the aims of St Patrick's and have a strong sense of loyalty to the school. Parents and staff work well together in partnership in the children's education. Parents are welcome in school and are given clear information about their children's progress, the school's curriculum and the day-to-day organisation of the school. Parents' views are taken into account in the School Development Plan.

## SCHOOL ROLE

This following policy is based on the

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Education & Libraries (NI) Order 2003
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools 2017 (Updated August 2020)
- DENI Circular 2017/04: Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017
- EA School Governors Handbook-Safeguarding & Child Protection (updated Sept 2019)

The systems in place for safeguarding children involve joint working and shared decision making by the professionals and agencies involved. Children's needs must always come first.

At St Patrick's Primary School, Saul, we have a pastoral responsibility towards young people in our care, and by law must take all reasonable steps to ensure that children's welfare is protected. We will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment where each child is valued for his/her unique talents and abilities and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. We also aim to empower pupils to help them deal with any situation in which their own welfare or safety, or the safety/welfare of any other child may be compromised.

The purpose of the policy and procedures on Safeguarding and Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our 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 overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem 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.

We recognise that 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.

## **Principles**

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

- In any incident the child's or young person's welfare is paramount, this overrides all other considerations;
- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously; (Articles 12 and 19: United Nation Conventions on the Rights of a Child);
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved;
- An appropriate balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first. All efforts should be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety;
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met. Sound decision-making depends on the fullest possible understanding of the child or young person's circumstances and their needs. This involves effective information sharing, strong organisational governance and leadership, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals and professionals;
- Decisions and action taken must be considered, well informed and based on outcomes that are sensitive to, and take into account of, the child's specific circumstances, risks
- to which they are exposed, and their assessed needs.

## **Other Relevant Policies and Documents**

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions.

This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- E Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct

These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact the school Principal or contact the school office.

## 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.

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 safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It 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 the online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.



18<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I writing to update you about an important project that our school is going to be involved in. We have been given the opportunity to take part in a pilot project of 'Operation Encompass'. We are one of around 50 schools taking part in the Downpatrick/Newcastle/Ballynahinch area. Operation Encompass is a partnership between Police and Schools and is aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence.

Operation Encompass started in England ten years ago and is now coming to Northern Ireland. It is very simple idea, but one that will help us to support and protect vulnerable children. When the Police attend an incident of domestic violence where one of our pupils is present, they will inform the schools designated teacher for child protection at the start of the next school day. This information is shared in strict confidence and school staff are only told on a need to know basis.

Following any notification from the police, our staff will provide immediate support to any child who has been the victim of domestic abuse. We know that when children do witness domestic abuse at home, this is a highly traumatic experience for them. By taking part in Operation Encompass we can provide tailored and compassionate support to our pupils, in line with our ethos. This builds on our existing commitment to child safeguarding.

Should you wish to find out more information, please contact the schools Designated Teacher for Child Protection Mrs Sealey or alternatively you can read more about Operation Encompass at [www.operationencompass.org](http://www.operationencompass.org).

*M McGrath*

### **School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of our school Safeguarding Team

- Designated Teacher: Mrs Susan Sealey
- Deputy Designated Teacher: Mr Mark McGrath
- Designated Governors for Child Protection: Mrs Kim Surginor, Mrs Margaret Orr
- Chair of the Board of Governors: Mr David Higgins
- SENCo: Mr Mark McGrath
- ICT Co-ordinator: Miss Carmel Maguire

The EA CPSS provides child protection training in relation to the specific responsibilities of each member of the team.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **The Safeguarding Team**

The responsibilities of the team should include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school;
- Support for the Designated Teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post;
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements;
- The Safeguarding Team will review their child protection/safeguarding practices annually using the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) pro-forma entitled 'Guidance for the evaluation of child protection/safeguarding'.

#### **The Designated Teacher (DT) and Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT)**

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- 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 eg Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the BoG regarding child protection.

The Deputy Designated Teacher works co-operatively with the DT in fulfilling her responsibilities. The DDT works in partnership with the DT so that he develops sufficient

knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

### **The Principal**

The Principal, as the Secretary to the BoG, will assist the BoG to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from DE are shared promptly, and termly inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. In addition, the Principal takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff. The Principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of DT and DDT Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme. It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the DTs to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role. The Principal must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

### **The Designated Governor for Safeguarding/Child Protection**

The Designated Governors should avail of Safeguarding/Child Protection awareness training delivered by CPSSS and will take the lead in Child Protection issues in order to advise the Governors on:

- The role of the Designated Teachers
- The content of Safeguarding/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 Teacher's Report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

### **The Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chairperson of the BoG plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment. In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures. The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the Record of Child Abuse Complaints against staff members even if there have been no entries.

### **Other Members of School Staff and Volunteers**

Staff should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations (see Annex A of DENI Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Schools Guide 2017), including reporting of offences - Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence. This includes crimes against children.

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse.

They should remember the 5 Rs:

### **Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record, Refer.**

#### **The member of staff and volunteers must:**

- refer concerns to the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher (and the Principal)
- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (**Appendix 1**)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding Safeguarding children
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- **Not** investigate
- **Not** ask leading questions.

#### **In addition, the Class Teacher should:**

Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self-harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will immediately follow the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection procedures.

**At no time will the school be involved in investigating abuse. The role of the school is to inform the relevant outside agencies of its concerns.**

The purpose of these procedures is to protect vulnerable children by ensuring that all members of staff have guidance on the action to be taken and the inter-agency management of situations where abuse or neglect is evident or suspected.

These guidelines define child abuse and outline the action to be taken when it is known or suspected that a child is at risk, or has been subjected to abuse. Often teachers or other members of staff may feel that reporting alleged abuse may be disloyal to the child. They may



also be concerned that it may damage their relationship with the child's parents. There is also concern that should the referral turn out to be unfounded, this may lead to the child's parents or others seeking legal redress.

In spite of this, it must be remembered that a staff member's first and foremost obligation is to the child. Reporting facts in accordance with agreed procedures will not put any member of staff at risk.

**REMEMBER: IF IN DOUBT - REPORT**

### **Parents**

References to 'parent' have the same meaning as anyone with 'Parental Responsibility' as defined in the Article 6 of the Children Order i.e. 'all rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property'. In practical terms, it means the responsibility to care for, and the right to make important decisions about, the child.

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents/carers who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. As part of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents/carers, the school will help parents/carers to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the children and young people in its charge.

It should be clear that the school will always protect the best interests of the child and, in cases of suspected abuse, may refer cases direct to the investigative agencies. It is important that parents take time to read these policies and know they are required to inform 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;
- Parents/carers of primary school children should tell the teacher if there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school;
- Parents/carers should contact the school if their child is absent and send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence.

Parents should play their part in safeguarding by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so that the school is kept well informed as to the child's situation
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school
- letting the school know in advance if there are changes to children's living arrangements
- being aware of other relevant school policies
- reporting to the office when they visit school
- raising any concerns they may have in relation to their child or any other child within the school. **Follow Appendix 2**

### **Board of Governors**

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

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- having a Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually
- having a staff Code of Conduct for all adults working in the school
- attendance at relevant training by Governors and that up-to-date training records are maintained
- the vetting of all staff and volunteers.

All Governors should undertake refresher Child Protection training during every term of office (four years).

### **Record Keeping**

All Safeguarding/Child Protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked cabinet. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by the Principal, Designated Teacher and the Deputy Designated Teacher.

### **APPOINTMENT OF STAFF**

All staff (paid or unpaid) appointed to St Patrick's Primary School, are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and to DENI guidance. Substitute Teachers are employed through NISTR. All adults working on a regular basis with our pupils will be vetted through Access NI. Volunteers brought in on irregular basis will be supervised by a member of staff.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Child Protection arrangements will seek to maintain the necessary balance between protecting children and respecting the rights of parents, families/carers and members of staff.

## **CHILD ABUSE – DEFINITION**

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. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

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 or significant harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect;
- Exploitation.
- Sexual Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Grooming
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse
- Forced Marriage
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- E- Safety / Internet Abuse
- Sexting

**(Taken from: Co-operating to Safeguard Children & Young People in Northern Ireland. March 2016)**

**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.

**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.

**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, 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.

### **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence 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.' any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

(Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016))

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

Psychological                  Physical                  Sexual                  Financial                  Emotional

### **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).'

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

**Forced Marriage** is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland,

and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

**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 and 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.

**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.

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

- **Sexting between individuals in a relationship** Pupils 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 the PSNI will be contacted.
- **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress** 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 individual's consent - see Articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail. Police will be contacted to help prevent further such incidents.

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 should be followed.

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
- Bed wetting
- 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 misdiagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive.

If it comes to the attention of 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 with Social Services.

**A child may suffer from 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.**

Signs & Symptoms of Abuse – Possible indicators

**Physical Abuse**

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

**Emotional Abuse**

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

**Neglect**

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

**Sexual Abuse**

<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioural Indicators</b>
<p>Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.</p>	<p>What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; self-devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material.</p>



**Guidelines for use by Staff should a child disclose concerns of a Child Protection nature**

<b>Do:</b>	<b>Do not:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Listen to what the child says</li> <li>✓ Assure the child they are not at fault</li> <li>✓ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret</li> <li>✓ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words</li> <li>✓ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality</li> <li>✓ Stay calm</li> <li>✓ Listen</li> <li>✓ Accept</li> <li>✓ Reassure</li> <li>✓ Explain what you are going to do</li> <li>✓ Record accurately</li> <li>✓ Seek support for yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask leading questions.</li> <li>▪ Put words into the child's mouth.</li> <li>▪ Ignore the child's behaviour.</li> <li>▪ Remove any clothing.</li> <li>▪ Panic</li> <li>▪ Promise to keep secrets</li> <li>▪ Ask leading questions</li> <li>▪ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily</li> <li>▪ Delay</li> <li>▪ Start to investigate</li> <li>▪ <b>Do Nothing</b></li> </ul>

**Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse**

**How a Parent can make a Complaint**

We aim to work closely with the parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the 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 or the Principal/Designated teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2**.

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

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate – this is a matter for Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher and full notes should be made. 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 teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The designated teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

The designated teacher may consult with the Education Authority South Eastern Region's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the designated teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. He/she will also notify the EASER Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team with a copy sent to the EASER Designated Officer for Child Protection.

If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 3**.

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

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or Designated teacher if he/she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated teacher)

If a complaint is made against the Principal the Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a

precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately. Child protection procedures as outlined in Appendix will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 4**.

### **Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings**

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

### **Confidentiality & 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. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the relevant agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in our school are vetted or 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.

The school's Code of Conduct is available on request.

### **Staff Training**

St Patrick's Primary School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on policies and procedures where some members of staff will receive more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic Safeguarding/Child Protection awareness training and refresher training annually. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governors for Child Protection will also attend relevant Child Protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies.

### **The Preventative Curriculum**

Throughout the school year, Safeguarding/Child Protection issues are addressed through class activities, assemblies and meetings. Flow diagrams are on display around the school building in relation to how a parent can make a complaint and in relation to others reporting Child Protection concerns. We use our Religion Programme, 'Grow in Love,' Let's Look, Let's Learn, Let's Live approach along with the NI Curriculum PDMU – Living. Learning. Together. Each child is encouraged to become personally, emotionally, socially and physically effective; to lead healthy, safe, fulfilled lives and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions now and in the future.

We recognise that St Patrick's plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils. We aim to ensure every child knows that they can talk to any staff member and that they have friends and are safe in school. The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher/Principal visit classrooms regularly to chat with children and staff. Each new academic year every child has a one-to-one with their teacher to talk about themselves and what they are looking forward to in the year ahead. These chats are then revisited periodically throughout the year. We aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of our children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations. An awareness of "stranger danger"; an understanding of how to respond to perceived threats; care in regards to e-safety; and the development of standards of behaviour that are appropriate for primary school children are all reinforced through our work on PDMU. In the classroom, Circle Time sessions are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates. Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and relevant information is displayed around the school building, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. All children, parents and staff are aware of our safeguarding & child protection DT & DDT.

We also address child protection and safety issues via:

- ✓ NSPCC Speak Out Stay Safe programme
- ✓ Safer Internet Day
- ✓ Internet Safety Workshop for parents and children (PSNI)
- ✓ Anti -Bullying Week
- ✓ Kindness Week
- ✓ Thought for the Week
- ✓ Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
- ✓ Participation in the Daily Mile programme
- ✓ RISE service P1-P4
- ✓ RSE Curriculum
- ✓ Worry Box
- ✓ Education Authority – Psychology, Behaviour Support, Autism Advisory Intervention Service
- ✓ Family Support Hub

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Safeguarding Team in St Patrick's will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

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 & Principal.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

### **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.

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 safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It 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 the online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass on this information with urgency.

**Date Policy Reviewed:** 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

#### **Signed:**

*Mrs S Sealey*

(Designated Teacher)

*Mr M McGrath*

(Deputy Designated Teacher)

*Mrs K Surginor & Mrs M Orr*

(Designated Governors for Child Protection)

*Mr D Higgins*

(Chair of Board of Governors)

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Useful Contact Numbers**

Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) Monday – Friday 9am-5pm	028 9598 5590
Gateway Team (Down)	028 4461 3511
Gateway Team Duty Social Worker South Eastern area (9am-5pm)	0300 1000 300
Gateway Teams Emergency Out of Hours Regional Social Worker	028 9025 9299
NSPCC	080 8800 5000
PSNI Central Referral Unit (CRU) Emergency number	028 9025 9299
PSNI Non-emergency number	101 (CRU is extension 30299)
Childline	0800 1111
Family Support Hub	028 3741 5285
UK Safer Internet	0844 381 4772
Barnardo's	028 9065 8511
Parenting NI	0808 8010 722



Appendix 2 (taken from Safeguarding & Child Protection in Schools August 2020)

How a parent can raise a concern



I have a concern about my/a child's safety



I can talk to the class teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors  
Mr D Higgins



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman  
Tel. 0800 343 424

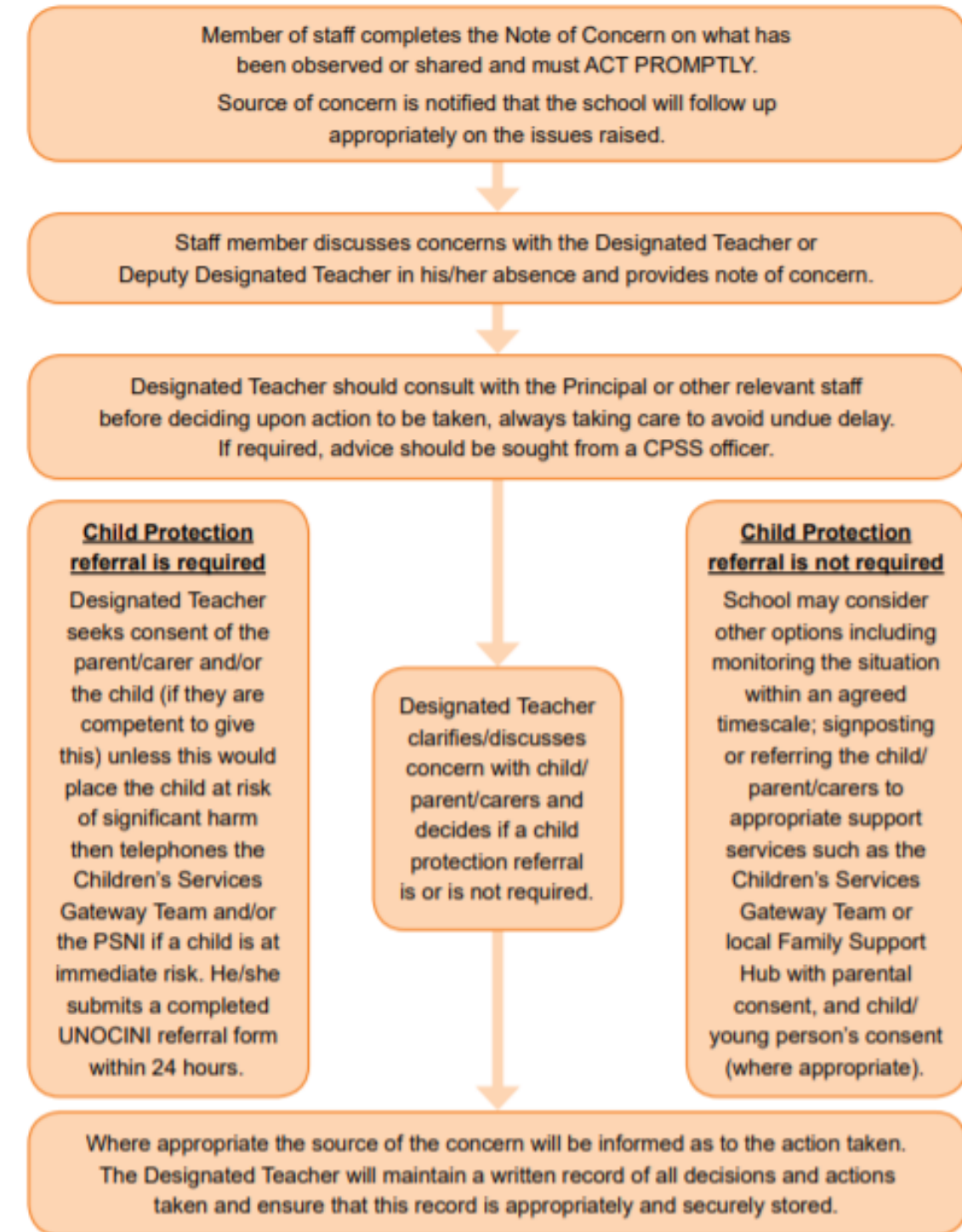


At any time, I can talk to a Social Worker at the Gateway Team  
Tel: 0300 1000 300  
Or can contact the PSNI Central Referral Unit  
Tel: 101 (Extension 30299)  
Or Tel. 028 902 59299



**Appendix 3**

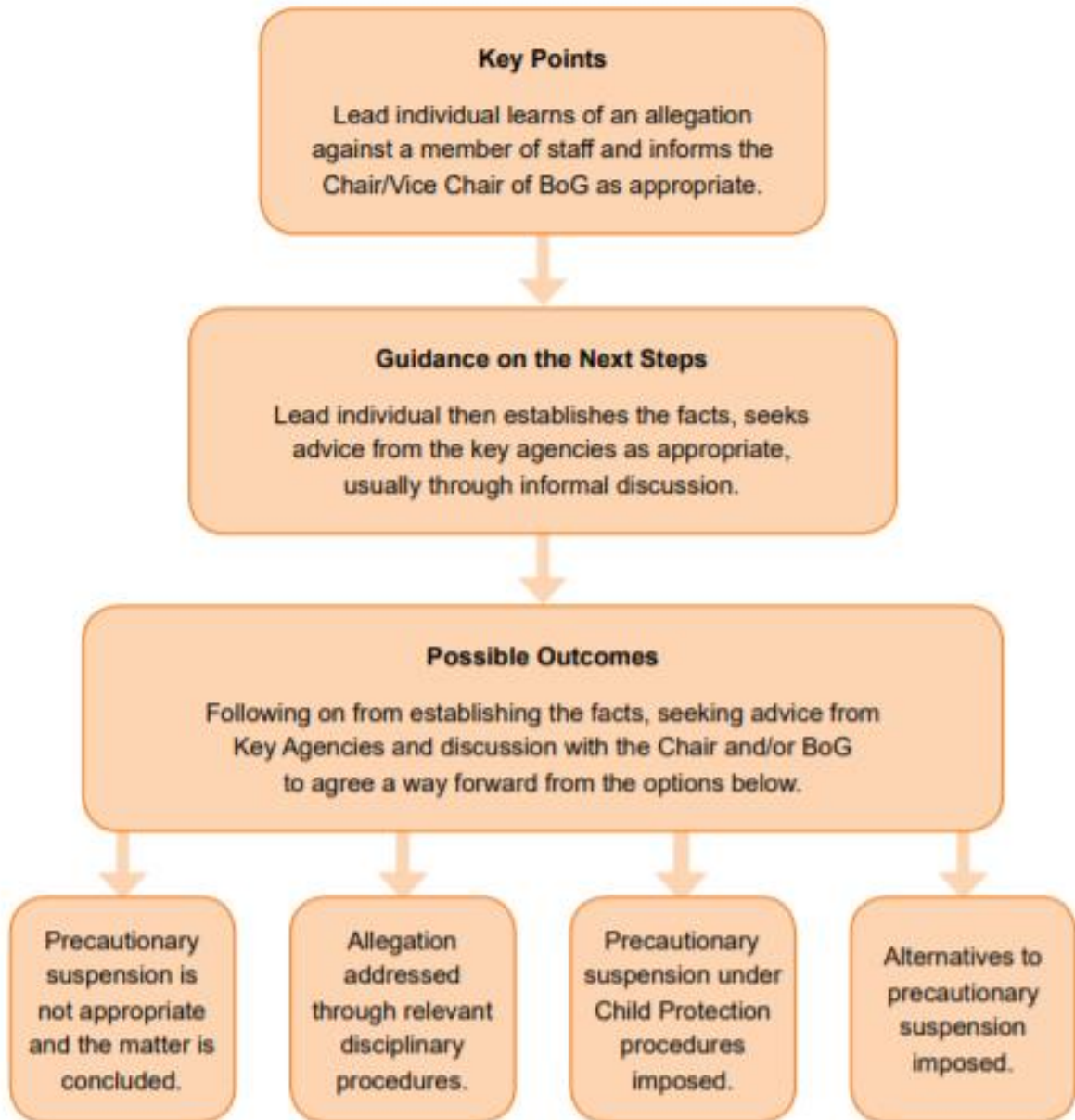
**Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff.**



**Appendix 4**

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

**Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff<sup>10</sup>**



## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **PROTECTING THE TEACHER**

**[Reprinted from "child abuse guidance to members" Irish National Teacher's Organisation 1993, by kind permission]**

#### **Private meetings with pupils**

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

#### **Physical contact with pupils**

- a. As a general principle teachers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils. This is particularly the case with children of secondary school age and maturing children of primary school age.
- b. Physical contact which may be misconstrued by the pupil, parent or casual observer should be avoided. Such contact can include well intentioned informal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which if repeated with an individual pupil, could be misconstrued, as well as more obvious intimate contact which should never occur.

- c. There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Teachers should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen by others present to be, normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.
  
- d. Some teachers are likely to come into physical contact with their pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching, for example when showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE. Teachers should be aware of the limits teacher's professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of teachers this Code of Conduct confirms, what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is wise for all teachers to review their teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual pupils, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of pupils or of their parents.

\* Will be reviewed and updated after further training.