

# **BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL**



# **Child Protection** **Policy**

**Designated Teacher:**

**Mrs J Torrens**

**Deputy Designated Teachers:**

**Mrs ML Richmond**

**Mrs Alison Cameron**

**Designated Governor for Safeguarding: Mrs Pamela Donnelly**

**Chair of Governors:**

**Mr Timothy Dowie**

## **SECTION 1**

### **RATIONALE**

Children cannot be expected to learn or develop effectively unless they feel secure. This Child Protection Policy reflects both our legal duties and our pastoral responsibilities.

In considering the area of child protection the governors firmly agree with article 19 of the U.N. convention on the Rights of the Child that:

**“Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.”**

The Children (N.I.) Order 1995 has placed a pastoral responsibility on schools towards the safety of the children in their care and to this end the governors of Bellaghy P.S. have adopted the following Child Protection Policy and will review it on an annual basis.

## **SECTION 2**

### **SCHOOL ETHOS**

Bellaghy Primary School – where ‘CHILDREN COME FIRST’ is the ethos statement of our school. This is displayed on our school sign and within the school foyer.

The mission of our school is to provide, in partnership with parents, a broad, quality education so that all pupils can reach their full potential within a **caring, secure environment** which promotes self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

We believe that:

- A working partnership and purposeful relationship between all staff, parents, pupils and the community is essential to provide the optimal learning experiences for everyone.
- Everyone learns best in a stimulating, attractive, supportive environment where individuals are acknowledged, accepted, and respected for their uniqueness.
- Every individual needs success to grow.
- Children should have an active role in the learning process.
- Through realistic expectations of each individual pupil, we can achieve a good standard of work.
- Co-operation, relationships and respect shown at all levels reflect our positive approach to discipline.

- It is our moral purpose to make a difference in the lives of our pupils and to help produce citizens who can live and work productively in an ever-changing society.

***“The curriculum needs to be delivered in a school with an ethos which empowers children; a school which allows them to voice ideas, feelings and make a contribution to the educational process.”***

***(“Responding to Child Abuse”)***

***The ethos of our school reflects the strong sense of pastoral care within our setting. Our pupils are at the heart of everything we do and we truly believe that our children do indeed come first.***

The safety and welfare of our children must be the paramount consideration for the staff. We have a duty to ensure that all children in our care are NOT put at risk during any school activity.

Furthermore, we have a duty to prevent situations arising, where our children would be at risk from ill-treatment or injury of any kind. We undertake the responsibility to safeguard the children from any physical danger while in our care. The principle is that children should be safe and should be protected by intervention if they are in danger.

It is the policy of Bellaghy Primary School, to protect its pupils from harm and to ensure their continuing safety in the following ways:

- Children are taught in a secure, supportive, respectful and caring environment at all times. By establishing this environment, where every child is valued, we believe will lead to the development of a positive self-image and high self-esteem within our children.
- We plan a variety of opportunities for class and group discussion about thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance.
- Through teaching in the curricular area, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), the children are taught about many issues which reflect the core values of keeping themselves safe and protected e.g., stranger danger, good touch, bad touch etc. These are taught in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner and often outside agencies are used e.g., NSPCC. We believe that a well-balanced PDMU curriculum will develop awareness and skills for personal safety and encourage the confidence to make good decisions. Many topics/ themes taught throughout the school lend to the teaching of child protection e.g., R U Wise? (KS2) – deals with bullying and keeping safe online.

- The school displays posters promoting responsible and safe online behaviour. This issue is also taught through the curriculum. Safer Internet Day is 'celebrated' annually. Parents' meetings 'Keeping your Child Safe Online' are held frequently.
- The school only uses the C2K filtered computer service.
- We constantly monitor children's welfare and physical, emotional, social, intellectual and behavioural development. If we have a concern about a child's welfare, for example, a child experiencing a trauma, a bereavement, having issues at home (e.g. divorce) etc., we maintain a separate record on that child. This record is kept with the Child Protection Records. Relevant staff working with this child are kept abreast of this information, so that we can monitor the child closely and support him/her within our resources and capabilities. The school (with parental consent) may request support from an outside agency to assist with this child's welfare.
- We inform parents of the school's Child Protection Policy. New families receive a paper copy of the Safeguarding file which contains all policies relevant to Child Protection. Policies related to safeguarding are available on the school's website. Parents have to sign annually that they have access to these on-line policies and if a paper copy is requested, these copies are fully issued. A 'Summary Document' is distributed every other year at October parent interviews.
- The school aims to maintain contact with appropriate agencies in order to promote co-operation to protect our children.
- All teaching and learning activities including school trips and outside play are supervised to the highest standard.
- The building is secured from 9a.m. to close of day; visitors only access by ringing the doorbell and speaking to staff. School gates closed while children are outside at break and lunch time and during after school outside activities.
- Visitors to the school must sign the Visitor's Book upon arrival and wear a lanyard for the duration of their visit. Visitors spending time in the school for a particular reason e.g.: completing a survey must be accompanied by a member of staff if at all possible.
- All volunteer parents and other facilitators working with children on an unsupervised capacity e.g.: music tutors, after school clubs have been vetted through the appropriate channels.
- All visitors to the school who are engaged in curriculum issues e.g.: presenters or speakers are supervised by a member of staff at all times.

- Written procedures are maintained, discussed and agreed by the Board of Governors and these will be followed if the school is alerted to possible abuse. (See Record Keeping Section of this Policy)
- The teaching and non-teaching staff are made aware of the school's child protection procedures and also the signs of possible abuse, through training. (See Training Schedule – APPENDIX 7)
- The school has appointed a designated teacher (DT) and 2 deputy designated teachers (DDT) for Child Protection.
  - Designated teacher (DT) – Mrs J Torrens
  - Deputy designated teacher (DDT) – Mrs ML Richmond
  - Mrs Alison Cameron
- There are posters on display in each classroom and in other significant places around the school for the benefit of the children. These posters explain in child friendly language who to speak to if you, as a child, have a worry or a concern. The DT and DDT are photographed on these posters. These are frequently referred to during curriculum time. The most recent posters on display were created by P7 children and they decided to change the language according to the location of the poster.
- Children also have access to a 'Worry Bag' (beside staffroom door) where they can place a confidential note to a member of staff.
- The school has a Safeguarding Sub-Committee on the Board of Governors comprising the Chair, one additional governor (Designated governor), the DT and DDT. Governors on this sub-committee have received the appropriate training from the Education Authority (EA). Child Protection is a standing item on the Agenda at each BOG meeting.
- Details of the BOG Sub-committee for Child Protection are on the Governors' Notice Board. Other details include who the Designated Governor is and how she and the Chair can be contacted.
- Governors sitting on the Appointments Committee have received the relevant training in Recruitment.
- There is a flow chart on the Parents' Information Board explaining how a parent can make report if concerned about a child's protection.
- All members of the Board of Governors receive in-school training from the DT once every four years i.e., once during their term of office. All members of BOG have

received a copy of this policy and the relevant documentation from DE – DE Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection, Governors’ Handbook on Child Protection (updated version – March 2017). Governors have access to other DE Circulars on Child Protection which are filed in the school office. Recently issued circulars are presented to governors at BOG meetings.

- A report on Attendance is a standing item on each BOG meeting. Attendance data is reported annually, and this data is also included in Annual Report.
- Members of the PTA Committee receive training in Child Protection once during their term of office. This training is led by the DT. The PTA has a Child Protection policy which is on display on PTA Notice Board in school.
- Staff carry out Risk Assessments prior to any school event or school trip. The school also retains a Risk Assessment for activities that potentially present a risk e.g., Outdoor Playtime, P.E., Golden Time at Bellaghy Play Park, Swimming, Shared Education Activities. A risk assessment may also be in place for a child whose behaviour might put him/herself or other children / adults at risk.
- There is a governor with responsibility for Health and Safety. The governors have an annual walk through the school and a list is compiled of any potential hazards. These are reported to the Maintenance Department by the Principal. Likewise, if the school caretaker notices any potential safety concern, this is reported to the Principal. The Caretaker checks the school grounds on a regular basis to ensure that nothing dangerous has been thrown over the fence.
- Students who are doing their ‘placement’ at our school receive induction training which includes information on safeguarding. They are given a ‘Students’ Handbook’ which also refers to Child Protection issues. Copies of this policy are also issued to students, and they are signposted to all other policies online.
- Substitute teachers working in our school are issued with an Information Booklet which contains references to safeguarding. All sub teachers are employed through the NI Substitute Teacher Register. This procedure ensures that they have gone through the appropriate vetting channels.
- The school will review and monitor the system for recording information about, and action taken in cases of suspected or alleged abuse. A review generally takes place annually but in reality, much more often and usually when there has been an incident.
- The Child Protection Log and Register are held securely in the school office.

- This Child Protection Policy is linked closely to other policies which together form the 'Safeguarding Policy.'
- The school adheres to new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The school's Privacy Statement for parents and pupils is available on the school website.

### **SECTION 3**

#### **THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AND THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The safeguarding team in our school includes:

- The Principal: Mrs Richmond
- The Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers: Mrs Torrens, Mrs Richmond and Mrs Cameron
- Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Mrs Timothy Dowie
- Designated Governor for Child Protection: Mrs Pamela Donnelly

#### **BOARD OF GOVERNORS MUST ENSURE THAT:**

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually, and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19 and DE Circular 2013/01.
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.

- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

### **THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

- To ensure there is a Safeguarding Policy within the school which includes a Child Protection Policy.
- To promote a safeguarding ethos.
- To promote safeguarding within the curriculum.
- To understand the roles and responsibilities in the child protection process.
- To ensure safe recruitment and selection practices, including induction of all adults before coming into contact with children e.g., substitute teacher, student teachers or assistants.
- To appoint designated teacher and deputy designated teachers and ensure their training is up to date.
- To ensure all staff have regular awareness training in child protection issues.
- To ensure the Board of Governors is kept fully informed about safeguarding issues.
- To ensure a robust Code of Conduct for adults is in place.
- To ensure parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum of two years.

### **THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

- To ensure a designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- To ensure that Governors have taken the appropriate training in Child Protection.
- To ensure that the governors receive a termly Child Protection report.
- To ensure that the Record of Child Abuse Complaints (concerning a member of staff) is presented and signed off annually.
- To handle complaints or allegations against the Principal.

*DE Circular 2010/18: Governors' Role*

*DE Governors' Handbook*



## THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR

- To provide advice to the governors about the role of the Designated teacher, the content of the Safeguarding Policy, the Code of Conduct, the content of the termly updates and/or the annual DT's report.
- To provide advice and support to other governors on the recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

*DE Circular 2010/18: Governors' Role*

*DE Governors' Handbook*

## THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

- To promote a child protection ethos within the school
- To induct all adults in safeguarding and child protection before meeting with children
- To disseminate child protection training to all school staff
- To ensure all staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of the different types of child abuse and are aware of the procedures for reporting suspected cases of abuse.
- To seek advice from Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)
- Being available to discuss Child Protection concerns with staff and maintain records.
- To co-ordinate action by staff in cases of suspected abuse and reporting to Social Services or PSNI.
- To take the lead in the development of the Safeguarding Policy.
- To provide information on Child Protection issues to the Board of Governors
- To keep the Principal informed.
- To notify the Chair of the Board of Governors in the event of an allegation against the Principal.
- To participate in all necessary training led by CPSSS.

*DE Circular 2006/08: Child Protection Training*

## OTHER MEMBERS OF SCHOOL STAFF

- Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs Torrens) or to one of the Deputy Designated Teachers (Mrs Richmond/Mrs Cameron) if she is not available.
- Class teachers should complete the Note of Concern (See Appendix) if there are safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about

concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.

- **Staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions.

### **SUPPORT STAFF**

- If any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member, they should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher (Mrs Torrens) or one of the Deputy Designated Teachers (Mrs Richmond/Mrs Cameron) if she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made, and any further necessary action will be taken.

### **PARENTS**

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

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

## **SECTION 4**

### **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

The overriding concern of every caring adult must be the safety of the child. The welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration. Abuse may take many forms, including:

#### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

**NEGLECT:** The actual or likely persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development including non-organic failure to thrive.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Actual or likely perpetrated physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury (or suffering) to a child.

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not truly comprehend and to which they are not able to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.

- *DE Circular 2013/16: [RSE Policy](#)*
- *DE Circular 2016/05: [Harmful Sexual Behaviour](#)*

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Actual or likely persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of the child. Emotional abuse occurs when an individual suffers harm as a result of being intimidated, being exposed to constant degradation or verbal attacks.

#### **GRAVE CONCERN**

While strictly not a form of abuse (but a category of registration of abuse), this term covers children whose situation does not currently fit any of the four categories above but where social and medical assessment indicates that a child is at significant risk of the above. For example, situations where another child in the household has been harmed or the household contains a known abuser.

**VERBAL ABUSE:** This is the least recognised form of harm done to children, yet the long-term psychological effects may be traumatic to the individual.

**BULLYING AND CYBER BULLYING:** Violence, which can be physical, verbal or psychological. It is the REPEATED exercising of power over another who is powerless to defend him/herself. It can be for a short or long duration. Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will not be tolerated in our school. All reported

incidents of bullying must be dealt with promptly and thoroughly. (See Anti-Bullying Policy). Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones is called cyber bullying. A child can feel that there is no escape from this type of bullying as it can happen wherever they are, at any time, day or night.

**DOMESTIC ABUSE:** Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Domestic abuse can seriously harm children. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse.

**ONLINE ABUSE:** Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as from strangers.

- [DE Circular 2011/22: Internet Safety Guidance](#)
- [DE Circular 2013/25: E-Safety Guidance](#)
- [DE Circular 2016/27: Online Safety](#)

**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:** Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something eg gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

- [DE Circular 2013/16: RSE Policy](#)
- [DE Circular 2015/22 Relationship and Sexuality Education \(RSE\) Guidance](#)
- [DE Circular 2016/05: Harmful Sexual Behaviour](#)

**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION:** Female genital mutilation (FMG) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. FGM is child abuse and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health.

*Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (April 2016)*

**CHILD TRAFFICKING:** Child trafficking is a type of abuse where children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.

**GROOMING:** Grooming is when someone build an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Children can be groomed online or in the real world.

**FORCED MARRIAGE:** A forced marriage is conducted without valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor.

**HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR:** harmful sexual behaviour includes using sexually explicit words and phrases, inappropriate touching, using sexual violence or threats or full penetrative sex with other children or adults. Children who develop harmful sexual behaviour harm themselves and others.

- [DE Circular 2013/16: RSE Policy](#)
- [DE Circular 2016/05: Harmful Sexual Behaviour](#)
- [DE Circular 2015/22 Relationship and Sexuality Education \(RSE\) Guidance](#)

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

## **SECTION 5**

### **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

Detection of abuse is seldom straightforward and rarely clear - cut. It is important therefore, that staff share concerns with the designated teacher or deputy designated teacher. As staff members, we see children over long periods and can notice physical and behavioural indicators which may be evidence of abuse. It is important that we recognise these symptoms.

The following table is intended as a guide,

**Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof that child abuse has occurred. It may however indicate that investigation should take place.**

## SECTION 6 - INDICATORS

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Unexplained bruising in various stages of healing, grip marks on arms, slap marks, human bite marks, welts, bald spots, unexplained/untreated burns, especially cigarette burns or emersion 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.

#### **NEGLECT**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Looks very thin, poorly and sad, constant hunger, lack of energy, untreated medical problems, special needs of child not being met, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, repeatedly unwashed, smelly and repeated accidents, especially burns.

#### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Well below average in height and weight “failing to thrive”, poor hair and skin, alopecia, recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling, sudden speech disorders, signs of self-mutilation, signs of solvent abuse – (mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness),

Extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g., anorexia, vomiting)

#### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Bruises, scratches, bite marks, recurrent abdominal pains or headaches, difficulty in walking or sitting, frequent urinary infections, avoidance of lessons especially P.E.

#### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Self destructive tendencies, aggressive to other children, behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive), appears frightened or cowed in the presence of adults, improbable excuses to explain injuries, chronic runaway, uncomfortable with physical contact, comes to school early or stays late as they are afraid to be at home, clothing inappropriate to weather to hide part of the body, violent themes in artwork or stories.

#### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Tired or listless (falls asleep in class), steals food, compulsive stealing, 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.

#### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Apathy and dejection, inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations, rocking, head banging, inability to play/concentrate, reluctance for parental liaison, chronic runaway, attention seeking, poor peer relationships.

#### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Withdrawn, depression, excessive sexual precociousness, seductiveness, children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference, parent/child role reversal, overly concerned for siblings, poor self-esteem, lack of confidence, peer problems, lack of involvement, suicide attempts, angry outbursts, deterioration of schoolwork or behaviour, repeated attempts to run away from home, themes in children’s artwork and stories.

## **BULLYING AND CYBER BULLYING**

### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Belongings getting lost or damaged, unexplained injuries, asking for or stealing money, problems eating and sleeping, excessive or no use of internet, mobile phone, gaming etc.

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening because it usually takes place in the family home and abusers can act very differently when other people are around.

May have schoolbooks etc missing due to moving to and from refuges

### **ONLINE ABUSE**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Spends much more or much less time online, texting, gaming or using social media.

Have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e mails addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

### **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Have older boyfriends, girlfriends, go missing from home, get involved in gangs, hang out at places of concern e.g., hotels, be involved in petty crime, have unexplained physical injuries, have an unexplained physical appearance e.g., lost weight.

### **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Has difficulty walking, standing or sitting, pain, bleeding, spends longer in the bathroom, reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations

### **CHILD TRAFFICKING**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Spends a lot of time doing household chores, rarely leaves the house, lives apart from family, not registered with GP or school, has no documents e.g., BC, is seen in inappropriate places, has unexplained injuries, possesses unaccounted for money or goods.

### **GROOMING**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

Have older boyfriends, girlfriends, go to unusual places to meet friends, have new things such as clothes, mobile phone which they cannot explain, have access to drugs and alcohol.

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Afraid to go to school, being ill in the mornings, not doing as well at school, being nervous, loss of confidence, becoming distressed or withdrawn, bullying others, secretive about who they are talking to online or what they are doing online.

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Become aggressive, display anti-social behaviour, suffer from depression or anxiety, not do as well at school – due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges.

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the Internet, gaming or texting, are secretive about who they are talking to or what they are doing online or on their mobile phone.

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Not know where they are because they have been moved around a lot, intimidated or fearful of certain people or situations

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Withdrawn, anxious, depressed, have unusual behaviour after an absence from school.

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Is not sure where they are, reluctant to give personal details, gives a prepared story.

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Act secretly, refuse to talk about what they are doing online, get agitated about discussing texting, gaming etc.

<p><b><u>HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR</u></b></p> <p><b><u>PHSYICAL INDICATORS</u></b> Seeking out the company of younger children, taking younger children to secret places, insisting on hugging or kissing when a child does not want to, using sexual language, showing sexual materials to younger children,</p> <p><b><u>FORCED MARRIAGE</u></b></p> <p><b><u>PHSYICAL INDICATORS</u></b> Persistent absence or request for extended leave from school. Increased surveillance by siblings and other relatives.</p>	<p><b><u>BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS</u></b> Becoming anxious when another child comes to visit, exposing genitals to other children, withdrawn, anxious.</p> <p><b><u>BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS</u></b> Withdrawn from parents/guardians. Loss of interest in schoolwork.</p>
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*DE Circular 2021/12 Addressing Bullying In Schools Act (NI) 2016 - Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors*

*DE Circular 2021/13 Interim Guidance on the use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings HSSPS – Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)*

## **SECTION 7**

### **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

#### **THE ROLE OF THE STAFF- RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS**

- Each member of staff has a key responsibility to help promote a safe and secure environment and be vigilant for signs of concern.
- Responding to incidents of alleged or suspected child abuse must be based upon clearly defined procedures. Knowing what to do, whom to contact and who needs to know will make the staff more confident in this area.

At our school, we have a policy of partnership between home and school, however with child abuse, or suspicion of child abuse, our first responsibility is to the child. This may mean that parents are not contacted in some instances.

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. The criteria should be that they have “*reasonable suspicion*” and under the Children Act 1989 this definition has been extended to include “*or may suffer in the future*”.

If a child discloses abuse or a member of staff suspects abuse, the following procedures must be followed:

- Act promptly
- Never investigate or ask the child leading questions. Do not promise the child that this can be kept a secret. Make brief notes if the child is making a disclosure.
- Report immediately to the designated teacher for child protection or the deputy designated teacher, discuss the matter with her and make full notes.



- The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency and a course of action will be planned. A written record will be made.
- The Principal, in consultation with the DT will decide if the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. Advice may be sought from CPSSS or Social Services. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.
- 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 parents will be informed immediately.

• **THE SAFETY OF THE CHILD IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY.**

**OTHER POINTS FOR STAFF TO CONSIDER**

*IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY:*

- *I am glad you told me this.*
- *We are going to do something about this together.*
- *I will have to speak to someone about this, I can not keep it our secret.*

*IT IS IMPORTANT TO:*

- *Stay calm.*
- *Listen and say you will take a few notes (very important as a safeguard to you)*
- *DO NOT interrogate.*
- *Record the detail later e.g.: time, place, date, behaviour of child, place the abuse occurred and any other relevant information – FACTS)*
- *Follow the guidelines immediately i.e.: Report to the DT/DTT*

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- Written records may be used in subsequent court proceedings.
- The reporting member of staff will be informed of any further action taken, i.e., Social Service referral, monitor etc. If the reported case is taken up and investigated by an external agency, any meetings, case conferences or action taken will be followed through and the member of staff concerned informed.
- Staff have an important role in hearing what children have to say. The school can provide a neutral environment where the child feels it is safe to talk. Sensitivity to any disclosure is vital. Staff must listen to what the child is saying.

- Fear of the consequences of telling is very common. The child needs to hear the truth about what will happen, together with a commitment to support the child. Our role is to enable the child to speak and then know what to do next. Remember, never investigate or ask leading questions and do not promise to keep it a secret.

## **SECTION 8**

### **ALLEGATION AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, it is the responsibility of the DT or DTTs to ensure that the allegation is thoroughly investigated, and procedures are followed.

### **ALLEGATION AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL**

If an allegation is made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. She will then inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together, they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

### **ALLEGATION AGAINST THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

If an allegation is made against the DT, the Principal must be informed immediately, who may discuss the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

### **ALLEGATION AGAINST A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

If an allegation is made against a member of the Board of Governor, the DT and the Principal must be contacted immediately. The Chairperson must also be informed unless he/she is the subject of the allegation. The Designated Officer within CPSSS must be informed immediately.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Suspension from duty – Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with children. He / she may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure, pending investigation by Social Services.

Record Keeping - Records of allegations against a member of staff are filed in a locked cabinet independently of other Child Protection files.

*DE Circular 2015/13: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff*

*DE Circular 2016/20: Child Protection- Record Keeping in Schools*

*DE Circular 2020/07 - Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools*

## **SECTION 9**

### **RECORDS**

A Concern Log is securely kept in the office. This lists children who, for whatever reason need to be monitored e.g., a child who has recently suffered trauma e.g., a bereavement, family separation etc. A record of concern about the child is maintained and updated when required. Staff are kept informed of any child in their class who is on the list.

The Child Protection Register is securely kept in the office. This contains information about confirmed and suspected cases of child abuse.

Records of allegations against a member of staff are filed in a locked cabinet independently of other Child Protection files.

#### **Additional Records**

- Record of concern
- Record of training dates
- Record of acknowledgement of receipt of 'Safeguarding File' by new families
- Record that parents have access to online policies.
- Record of contacts with other agencies.
- Record of policy review dates.

#### **False Allegations**

Records of any false allegation a child makes against a member of staff should be recorded – including “You are always picking on me” or “You hit me” or comments such as “Don’t touch me”. A record of dates and times should be kept. Another adult should witness the allegation if possible.

If a child touches a member of staff in a sexually inappropriate way or place, this needs to be recorded the DT notified.

Records are disposed of in accordance with the EA Disposal Policy.

*DE Circular 2015/13: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff*

*DE Circular 2016/20: Child Protection- Record Keeping in Schools*

*DE Circular 2020/07 - Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools*

## **CONSENT**

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

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

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

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

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

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

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in Bellaghy Primary are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child’s date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

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

## **SECTION 10** **TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

- Newly appointed DT or DDT – as soon as possible
- DT or DDT – Every three years – refresher training
- Principal – Safeguarding role – every four years
- Teaching staff – Every two years
- Non-teaching staff – Every two years
- Governors – Once every four years (once in their term as a governor)
- Chair of Governors – Strand 2 of CP training offered by CPSSS
- Designated Governor – Strand 2 of CP training, offered by CPSSS  
*[DE Circular 2006/08: Child Protection: Training Requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels](#)*

## **SECTION 11** **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF – PAID OR NOT PAID**

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 children in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### **PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH PUPILS**

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.

- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- Where possible another pupil or preferably another adult should be present or nearby during the interview and the school will take active measures to facilitate this.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are such circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, e.g., when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he/she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media/legal enquires should be passed to the principal.

Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the DT/DDT without delay.

### **TUTORING PRIVATE PUPILS**

Teaching staff must not use the school facilities or resources for teaching/coaching private pupils.

### **STAFF APPEARANCE**

Staff should be appropriately dressed for the type of work they are engaged in.

### **STAFF USE OF LANGUAGE**

Staff should never use inappropriate language within hearing range of the children which includes swearing or taking the Lord's name in vain.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ON WORK EXPERIENCE**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration.

Students and substitute teachers must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children in their charge must be above reproach.

On commencing work within the school, they will be issued with 'A Guide for Students' or an 'Information booklet for Substitute Teachers'. This is relevant information including names of DT and DDT and synopsis of school life and what is expected of a visitor in our school.

### **E-SAFETY AND INTERNET USE**

A staff member or volunteers off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's 'Staff Guide – Use of Social Media'.

Staff and volunteers should have contact with pupils via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary.

### **HONESTY AND INTEGRITY**

All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

### **CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK**

Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside of school which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of the other members of the school community.

## **SECTION 12**

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS**

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with the pupils.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need

reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel prohibited from providing this.

- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- All staff should be aware of the D.E. guidelines and the school's policy based on the Regional Policy Framework on the Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling (May 2004)  
*DE Circular 1999/09 and Guidance Document: [Towards a Model Policy in Schools on use of reasonable force](#)*  
*DE Circular 2021/13 [Interim Guidance on the use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings](#)*
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of another adult or other children. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or another casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the DT.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment.
- The Principal must ensure that there is the correct adult/child ratio for all school trips. If members of staff are on a residential trip, rooms should be checked with the support of another adult. Under no circumstances should a member of staff take a child or children into his / her room.
- Staff should never do anything of a personal nature for a child that they are capable of doing themselves. This includes toileting or any other activity that could be misconstrued. Staff should not go into the toilet alone with children. In an emergency, there should be another child or adult present.



- Staff should never take photographs with their mobile phone or personal tablet.

## **SECTION 13**

### **THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

- Preventative 'Keeping Safe' education programme devised by the NSPCC [www.nspcc.org/underpants](http://www.nspcc.org/underpants) etc.
- **NSPCC: PANTS**
- Childline Posters displayed around the school.
- **PATHS**
- **Stranger Danger**
- Anti-bullying posters displayed around the school.
- Anti-bullying talks in class and assembly.

### **CHOICE AND USE OF TEACHING MATERIALS**

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials which might be misinterpreted.
- Teachers should only use materials of a sensitive nature that have been agreed and included in the curriculum for the school. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.
- The content of material of all visitors to the school should always be agreed before the presentation to pupils.

## **SECTION 14**

### **RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTITUDES**

Staff should always ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils.

**Staff and volunteers should:**

- act in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- co-operate and liaise with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service.
- take responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises.
- be familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils, staff and volunteers.

**SECTION 15****GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS**

The staff at Bellaghy P.S. continually foster trust and good relationships with parents. Parents are regularly made aware of the school's Child Protection arrangements and the fact that there may be a need for cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interest of the child.

As a matter of procedure, all parents should notify the school when someone other than the parent is picking up the child from school. The school retains a record of all potential people who may pick up a child.

If a case of suspected abuse being referred to the investigative agencies, the school will continue to inform parents of the educational progress of the child.

The procedures for a parent to make a complaint, concerning the safety of their own child or another child, are outlined in Appendix 2. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Deputy Designated Teacher will report back to the parent within a reasonable timeframe to inform them of the outcome of their complaint.

New families to the school receive a copy of the Safeguarding File / Policy. The Policy is also available on the school website. Parents sign off annually that they have access to all policies online. If parents request a paper copy of policies these are dully distributed. Parents receive a summary document every other year at Parent Teacher Interviews in October.

## SECTION 16

### LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

(Which together form the SAFEGUARDING FILE)

- Child Protection
- Anti-Bullying
- Positive Behaviour
- SEN
- The Use of Reasonable Force
- Health and Safety (includes First Aid and Critical Incident)
- Administering of Medication
- Intimate Care
- Trips
- Supervision of Pupils
- Photography
- E Safety
- A guide for students
- A guide for substitute teachers
- Staff Guide – Use of social media

## SECTION 17

### VETTING PROCEDURES

At Bellaghy Primary School, we comply with Statutory Child Protection Procedures and ensure that the staff, volunteers, other agencies and adults working with the children exercise good practice and display common sense in all physical contact with children in their care. Adults working with children will work under the guidance and supervision of a member of staff.

Parental involvement is given high priority in the life of the school. We actively seek to work in partnership with parents. Parents are a valuable resource and can contribute greatly to the life of the school by sharing their time and talents.

D.E. document -1999 “Pastoral care In Schools” states.

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

Anyone working within the school may have the potential to abuse children. Therefore, procedures for screening staff are adhered to in line with Education Authority policy. In

following these procedures Governors and staff are doing their utmost to protect all children in their care from potential harm.

Parent volunteers and other adults working with children in an unsupervised capacity complete a vetting form online. These applications are screened by Access N.I.

All members of the Board of Governors are also vetted.

Music tutors are all vetted by Access NI. Anyone visiting the school to speak to the children e.g.: in Assembly or to enhance learning in a particular curricular area are supervised at all times by a member of staff.

*[DE Circular 2006/06: Child protection: Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings](#)*

*[DE Circular 2006/07: Child Protection: Employment of Substitute Teachers](#)*

*[DE Circular 2006/08: Child Protection: Training Requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels](#)*

*[DE Circular 2006/09: Child Protection: Criminal Background Checking of staff in Schools – programme to extend coverage.](#)*

*[DE Circular 2006/25: Child Protection: Vetting of School Governors](#)*

*[DE Circular 2008/03: Pre-Employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools – New Arrangements](#)*

*[DE Circular 2008/10: Employment of Substitute Teachers](#)*

*[DE Circular 2012/19: Disclosure and Barring Arrangements](#)*

*[DE Circular 2013/01: Disclosure and Barring Arrangements](#)*

*[DE Circular 2016/20: Child Protection- Record Keeping in Schools](#)*

*[DE Circular 2020/07 - Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools](#)*

## **SECTION 18**

The Child Protection Policy remains the same throughout this pandemic with the exception of the following amendment which comes into effect when children are learning from home because of a school closure or because a child or family is self-isolating.

*[DE Circular 2020/05 Guidance for schools on supporting remote learning to provide educational continuity](#)*

*[DE Circular 2011/22 Internet Safety](#)*

*[DE Guidance - School Development Planning 2020/21 – COVID 19](#)*

## **CONTEXT**

For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in the unusual circumstances, where a family finds itself self-isolating or in lockdown. It is critically important that children who are, or may be at risk are identified so that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

**AS TEACHERS, OUR CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND PROTECTION IS OUR PRIMARY CONCERN.**

## **PROCEDURES**

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy. In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor child protection:

- Teachers can be contacted through Seesaw and the Principal can be contacted via email [mrichmond484@c2kni.net](mailto:mrichmond484@c2kni.net)
- Teachers provide online learning via Seesaw with strict procedures in place to minimise risk.
- This platform provides parents with a range of teaching and learning activities and links to additional online learning, support and guidance. When a teacher uses You Tube to support an activity, Safe You Tube will be used.
- We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.
- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the EA CPSS, teachers may make phone calls to parents. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding team and procedures will be followed as indicated in the Child Protection Policy. Staff members may seek advice for the EA Child Protection Service for Schools or from the Department of Health and Social Care.

## **ONLINE SAFETY**

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing or simply sharing a recorded message from their teacher:

- Teachers and children need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleep wear during any online session.
- Students cannot participate in an online session from a bedroom.
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.
- Seesaw activities provide children with a range of resources and links to additional online learning, support and guidance. Safe You Tube will be used to support teaching and learning.
- Parents need to constantly monitor their child's online activity and consistently reinforce the importance of online safety as outlined in the school's E Safety policy.

*[DE Circular 2016/27 Online Safety](#)*

### **HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN**

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help, if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously. Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the safeguarding team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help and support.

### **HOW A CHILD CAN RAISE A CONCERN**

We know that while many children may enjoy their time at home, there will be others who feel scared and lonely. For some children, school is their only safe haven, so to be denied that daily routine of attending school may be a huge concern for them. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children as well as signpost them to other agencies where they can receive help and support. When contacting parents via phone we will always ask to speak to their child. Children can be signposted to other agencies - NSPCC Childline, CEOP, Safer Schools.

### **SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS WHICH CAN BE SHARED WITH CHILDREN: –**

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/>

## **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](#).

## **SECTION 19** **IN SUMMARY**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff inter-relate with the children in their care, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

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

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1 – Record of Concern

APPENDIX 2 - Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff.

APPENDIX 3 - How a parent/carer can raise a concern about child protection.

APPENDIX 4 – Procedure where the school has concerns or has been given concerns about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff.

APPENDIX 5 – What happens after a referral is made?

APPENDIX 6 - Record of staff training in Child Protection

APPENDIX 7- Record of Safeguarding Information given to parents.

APPENDIX 8 – Record of contact with other agencies

APPENDIX 9 – Record of Policy Review

APPENDIX 10 – Important contact numbers and web addresses



**APPENDIX 1 - CHILD PROTECTION - NOTE OF CONCERN - CONFIDENTIAL**

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Designated Teacher:

Written note from staff member placed on child's Child Protection file: YES / NO  
If NO state reason:

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

Signed by staff member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

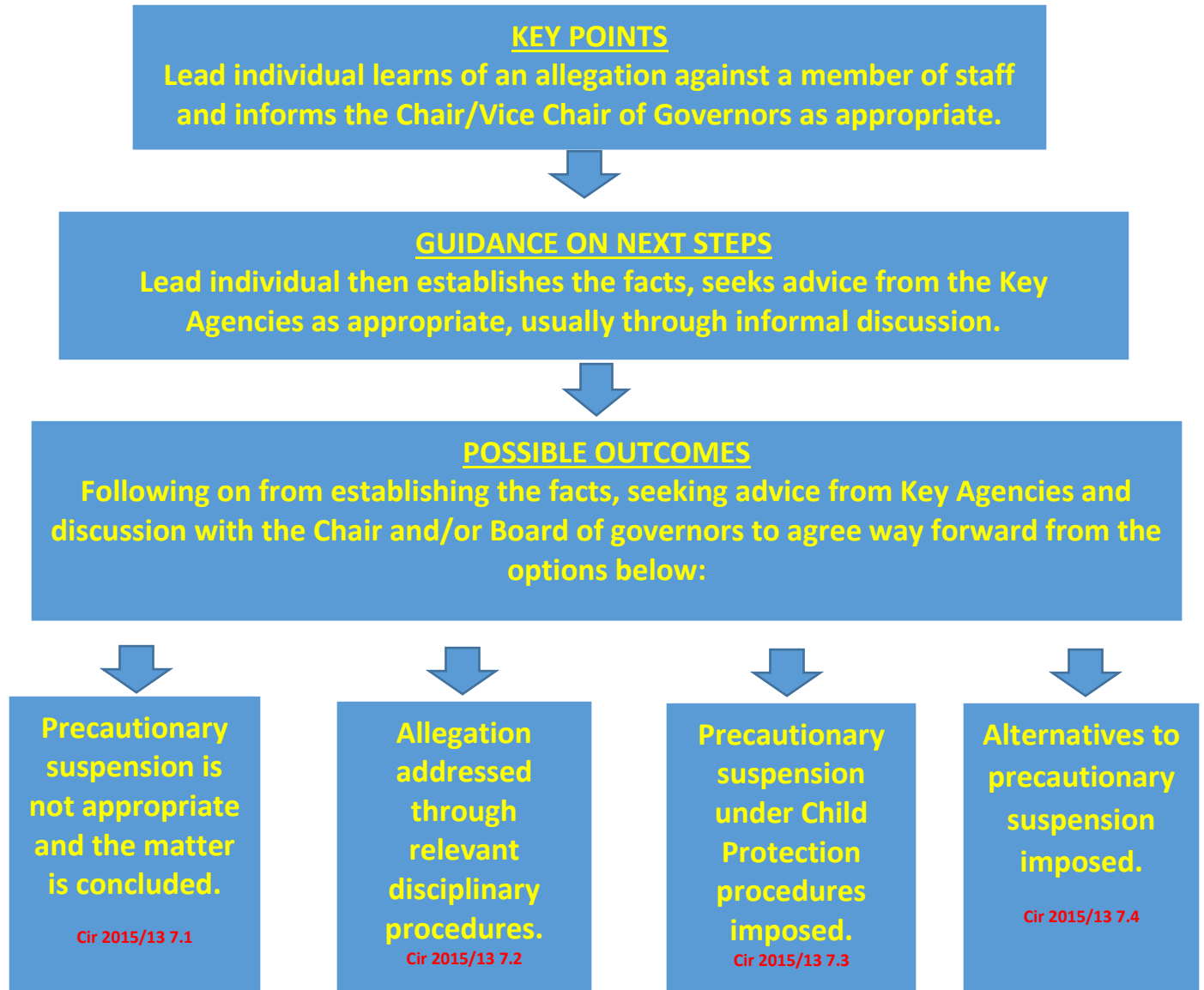
Signed by Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2**

**CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

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

Refer to the Department of Education N.I.'s Circular 2015/13



**OUR CHILD PROTECTION SAFEGUARDING TEAM IS AS FOLLOWS:**

Board of Governors (Chairperson)  
Board of Governors (Vice Chairperson)  
Designated Teacher  
Deputy Designated Teachers  
Governor with Child Protection Responsibilities  
Principal

Mr Timothy Dowie  
Mrs Wilma Bruce  
Mrs Judith Torrens  
Mrs Mary Lou Richmond & Mrs Alison Cameron  
Mrs Pamela Donnelly  
Mrs Mary Lou Richmond

**APPENDIX 3**

**CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

**HOW A PARENT/CARER CAN RAISE A CONCERN ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION**

**I have concerns about my/a child's safety**



**I can talk to my child's teacher**



**If I am still concerned, I can speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs J Torrens) a Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs ML Richmond/ Mrs Cameron)**



**If I am still concerned, I can write to or contact the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mr Timothy Dowie  
Tel: 028 258 22622 / 075 9291 1285**



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



**At any time, I can talk to:**

<b>Children's Services Gateway Team</b>	<b>Tel: 028 796 51020</b>
<b>Single Point of Entry (SPOE)</b>	<b>Tel: 0300 1234 333</b>
<b>Regional Emergency Social Work Social Work Service</b>	<b>Tel: 028 9504 9999</b>
<b>PSNI Central Referral Unit</b>	<b>Tel: 028 9025 9299</b>

## APPENDIX 4

### CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

PROCEDURE WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS CONCERNS OR HAS BEEN GIVEN CONCERNS  
ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF STAFF

Member of staff complete the 'Note of Concern' on what has been observed or shared and MUST ACT PROMPTLY.

Source of concern is notified that the school will follow-up appropriately on the issues raised.

Staff member discusses matters with Designated Teacher (Mrs Torrens) or one of the Deputy DTs (Mrs Richmond/Mrs Cameron) and provides completed 'Note of Concern'.

Designated Teacher consults with Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay if required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.

#### CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL IS REQUIRED

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

Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is required.

#### CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL IS NOT REQUIRED

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

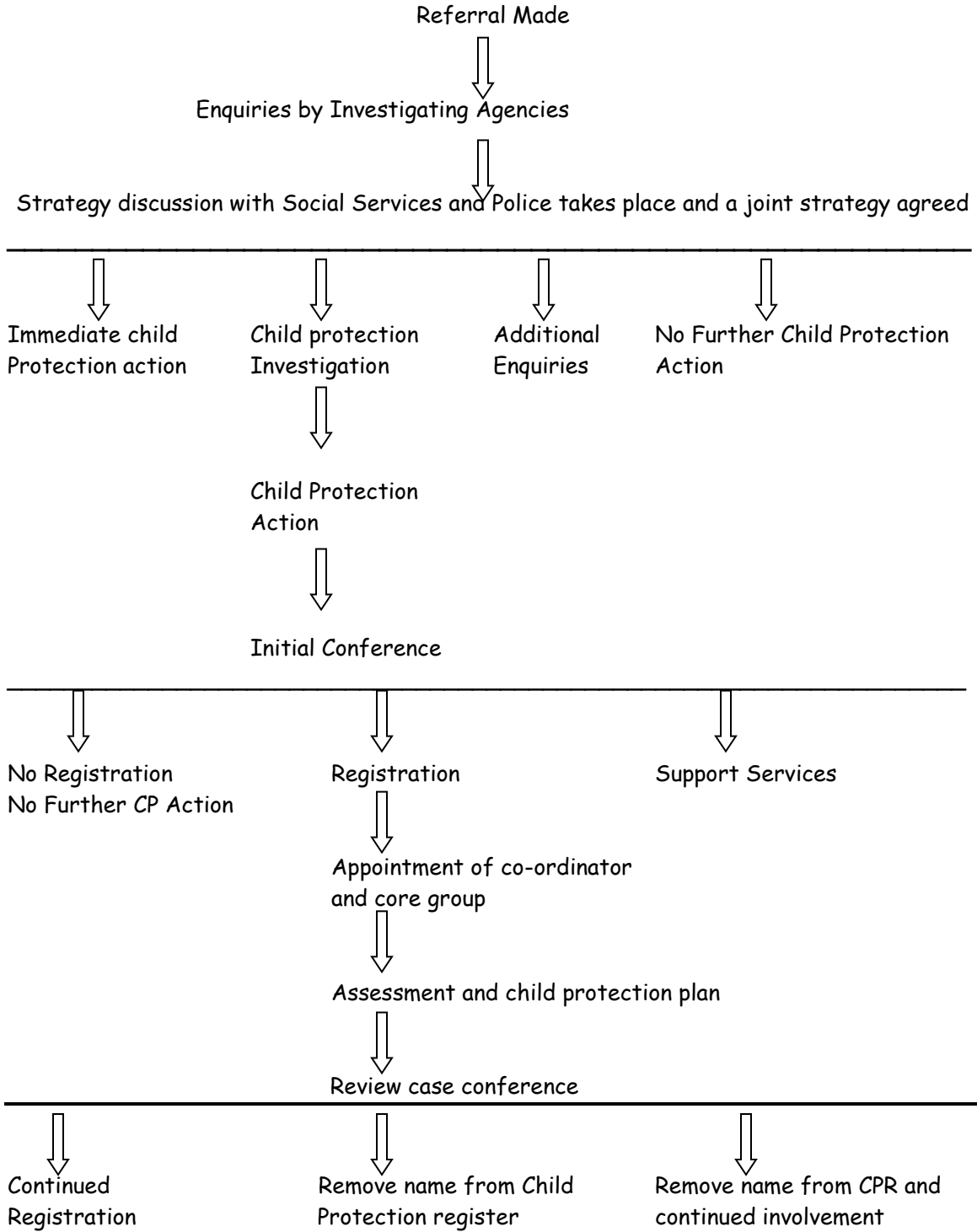
Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team Tel: 028 796 51020  
Regional Emergency Social Work Social Work Service Tel: 028 9504 9999  
Or the PSNI Central Referral Unit Tel: 028 9025 9299

## APPENDIX 5 - WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REFERRAL IS MADE

### ROLES OF OTHER AGENCIES

The welfare of the child is paramount and the following interagency procedures are intended to ensure a prompt and co-ordinated response to any referral.



**APPENDIX 6 - RECORD OF STAFF TRAINING IN CHILD PROTECTION**

DATE	WHO WAS TRAINED?	WHO WAS THE TRAINER?	NATURE OF TRAINING





**APPENDIX 8- RECORD OF CONTACT WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Of Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Of Agency Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Advice/Concerns discussed by telephone   
visit

Advise/Concerns regarding:

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

Nature Of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nature Of Advice: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow Up Procedure: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parents informed: Yes  No

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

**APPENDIX 9 - RECORD OF POLICY REVIEW**

<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Adopted By Governors</b>

## **APPENDIX 10**

### **IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS AND WEB ADDRESSES**

**Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)** – Tel 028 9598 5590

#### **CPSSS Designated Officers**

[margaret.brady@eani.org.uk](mailto:margaret.brady@eani.org.uk)

[colleen.ellison@eani.org.uk](mailto:colleen.ellison@eani.org.uk)

[elaine.craig@eani.org.uk](mailto:elaine.craig@eani.org.uk)

[paula.mccreesh@eani.org.uk](mailto:paula.mccreesh@eani.org.uk)

[heather.grimason@eani.org.uk](mailto:heather.grimason@eani.org.uk)

#### **CPSSS Clerical Support Officer**

[anna.mitchell@eani.org.uk](mailto:anna.mitchell@eani.org.uk)

[pamela.collins@eani.org.uk](mailto:pamela.collins@eani.org.uk)

**Single Point of Entry (SPOE)** – Gateway Referrals – Tel 0300 1234 333

**School Age Mothers and Looked After Children** – Senior EWO – Tel 028 90862568

#### **Vetting and Barring Queries**

Volunteers – Contact Claims and Legal Admin – Karen Mawhinney – Tel 028 25662310

Paid Staff – Human Resources – Tel 028 25662417

## **Department of Education Publications on general child protection issues**

This publication provides guidance to schools and others on their responsibilities in relation to child protection, including the action to be taken to enable cases of suspected abuse to be properly considered and pursued. It also includes guidance on how complaints against school staff should be handled. The contents do not constitute, or purport to be, an authoritative interpretation of the law: that is exclusively a matter for others.

- [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools](#)

This handbook will assist school governors in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities regarding their safeguarding role, in order to promote consistency and clarity of approach across all schools.

- [Child Protection Support Service for Schools: School Governors Handbook Child Protection](#)

These slides are part of training materials designed to help the Designated Teacher in each school raise awareness about safe guarding and child protection issues. They complement the Child Protection Safeguarding Children DVD that has already issued to all schools. The materials convey a key message that safeguarding and protecting children is everyone's business.

- [Safeguarding Children: Training Materials for Schools](#)

The Department recognises that schools may occasionally wish to procure external training to support the teaching of sensitive subjects such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

To assist schools in selecting the provider that would best meet their needs, the Department has produced guidance which contains some useful advice for schools. Whilst the advice is couched in terms of CSE, the principles apply equally to training in other areas of child protection and safeguarding.

This guidance should be considered in conjunction with the wider DE guidance, 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools' which includes more information on issues such as the handling of disclosure.

- [Child Protection and Safeguarding - Guidance on Choosing an External Training Provider](#)

## **Circulars and letters - General child protection issues**

This circular informs schools and their Boards of Governors about a number of important new legal requirements about the welfare and protection of pupils and to advise schools on sources of advice and guidance in ensuring compliance with the new requirements. It also contains information for schools and their Boards of Governors about important new legal requirements about measures to prevent bullying.

- [Circular 2003/13 Welfare and protection of pupils: Education and Libraries \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2003](#)

This circular is to advise schools of the publication of the Department of Education's guidance on child protection, "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools".

- [Circular 2017/04 - Safeguarding and Child Protection - A Guide for Schools](#)

### **Record Keeping in Schools**

This circular provides advice and guidance to schools on the recording and retention of child protection concerns.

- [Circular 2016/20 - Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools](#)
- [Circular 2020/07 - Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools](#)
- 

### **Other circulars and letters**

- [Abolition of Corporal Punishment Extended to Special Schools - 24 June 2003](#)
- [Child Protection: Legislative Changes to the Age of Consent - Feb 2009](#)
- [Social Networking by Pupils](#)
- [Contact with Schools during Summer Holidays \(Referrals to Social Services\)](#)

### **Circulars and letters - Safeguarding children and young people**

- [Circular 1999/17 Parental responsibility: Guidance for schools](#)

This circular informs schools about the law on parental responsibility and provides advice on the action required by schools in respect of a person or persons who acquire parental responsibility for a pupil. This circular is currently being updated to reflect changes to the law brought in through the Family Law Act (NI) 2001 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004, and will be available in spring 2009.

## **Vetting of staff working in schools**

This circular explains that from 1 April 2008 responsibility for undertaking criminal history background checks transferred from PSNI Criminal Records Office to an organisation called AccessNI. This circular sets out the process which all grant-aided schools must use to request pre-employment criminal history background checks on prospective employees, volunteers and school governors from that date. Other changes to apply from that date are covered in this circular.

- [Circular 2008/03 Child Protection Pre-Employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools - New Arrangements](#)

The circular below recommends that all staff, paid or unpaid, in a school should have been subject to a criminal background check to ensure suitability to have access to children.

- [Circular 2006/09 Child protection: Criminal background checking of staff in schools- programme to extend coverage](#)

The circular below contains a schedule setting out the dates and the appropriate nominated officer.

- [Circular 2006/09a - Appendix A - timetable for action](#)

This circular advises that from 1 September 2006 at least one school governor serving on an interview panel or committee established for the purpose of recruiting or selecting staff for appointment to a school should be trained in 'Child Protection and Recruitment and Selection'.

- [Circular 2006/08 Child protection: Training requirements for School Governors on staff recruitment and selection panels](#)

The circular below advises that from 1 September 2006 schools should employ as substitute teachers only those who are on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register.

- [Circular 2006/07 Child protection: Employment of substitute teachers](#)

The following circular replaces previous guidance on pre-employment checking in Circular 1990/28 - Disclosure of criminal background of persons with access to children.

- [Circular 2006/06 Child protection: Recruitment of people to work with children and young people in educational settings](#)

Circular 2006/06a outlines checks on applicants from abroad:

- [Circular 2006/06a Appendix A: Checks on applicants from abroad](#)

## **Protecting and safeguarding our children**

Topics:

- [Support and development](#)
- [Child protection and safeguarding](#)

Much work has and is currently taking place to bring about changes to law and practice in child protection to ensure all possible steps are taken to keep our children safe in our schools and elsewhere.

### **The protection of our children is of paramount importance.**

Everyone in the education service plays a part in keeping children and young people safe. Your child's school will have measures in place to ensure that pupils are safeguarded from abuse. These measures include training designated teachers for child protection and vetting all staff.

If you have concerns about a child, please follow the link below to nidirect website for information on the school's role.

- [How schools can protect children from abuse - nidirect website \(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)

### **Keeping children safe: Child protection in education**

This is an information leaflet for parents. Available, using the link below, in English, Irish and 13 other most frequently identified first languages in schools.

- [Child protection in education leaflet](#)

### **Vetting and selection of staff working with children and young people**

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 introduced changes to the vetting requirements for people undertaking Regulated Activity in specified places of work such as schools. A new definition of Regulated Activity came into force in September 2012.

Regulated Activity is work that a barred person must not do. As a key part of changes to reduce the scope of Regulated Activity, the Protection of Freedoms Act removes from

Regulated Activity, broadly, supervised work such as instructing or looking after children, which if unsupervised would be Regulated Activity.

The Department of Education has produced guidance in a circular for schools to help them decide whether the supervision they plan to provide will take the supervised activity out of Regulated Activity.

- [Circular 2012/19 - Changes to pre-employment vetting checks for volunteers working in schools](#)

Schools can obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from AccessNI, but not check barred list status, for supervised work that is no longer Regulated Activity.

However, schools should note that pre-employment vetting remains a key preventative measure in denying unsuitable individuals access to children and vulnerable adults through unsupervised Regulated Activity.

Schools must ensure that newly appointed paid staff such as teachers and non-teaching staff, including classroom assistants, office, catering, cleaning and caretaking staff are appropriately vetted in line with the practice and procedures operated by their employing authority and outlined in [DE Circular 2013/01](#) Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff Working in or Providing a Service for Schools.

### **Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)**

The CPSS came into operation in April 2006 following a review of the arrangements for providing child protection support and advice to schools. They provide advice and training for schools on child protection matters.

**From Monday 3 September 2018 the Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)** will have one dedicated regional helpline which can be utilised by schools and EA services seeking advice and support from the CPSS.

The new helpline number is **028 9598 5590** and will operate from Monday to Friday from 9.00am until 5.00pm

Publications on the issue of safeguarding/child protection and guidance for schools can be found at:

- [Publications and guidance for schools](#)



## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.

Please see links to the DE circular - letter to schools on child sexual exploitation

- [CSE Letter to Principals](#)

Schools received a copy of 'False Freedom', the new film made by young people in NI for young people, to highlight the issues around child sexual exploitation (CSE). This resource is intended to help schools understand the issues around CSE and generate discussion about the issues with the aim of empowering young people to make safe choices for themselves.

The film shows how grooming for exploitation can be played out in real life, and depicts a young girl who finds herself in an exploitative relationship.

The young people volunteered through Barnardo's Safe Choices, and both wrote and acted in the film.

The aim of the DVD and the accompanying resource pack is to alert young people to the dangers around sexual exploitation and generate discussion about the issues with the aim of empowering young people to make safe choices for themselves. False Freedom is designed to be used in any setting from schools to youth clubs with young people aged 12 years and above.

The DVD and resource pack is free of charge and is available from Barnardo's NI. For further information contact: [Jacqui.montgomery@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:Jacqui.montgomery@barnardos.org.uk)

- [DVD \(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- [Resource Pack \(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)

## **CSE guidance**

Guidance on child sexual exploitation can be accessed at the link below issued by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

- [CSE Guidance](#)

The circular below provides guidance for schools on managing information about persons who may pose a risk to pupils.

- [Circular 2014/27 - Managing Information on Persons Who Pose a Risk to Pupils](#)

## **DE Action Plan**

The document below outlines the DE response to the recommendations for education arising from the report of the independent inquiry, led by Professor Kathleen Marshall, into child sexual exploitation in Northern Ireland. Links to that independent inquiry report are contained in the body of the DE/CSE Action Plan.

- [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland DE/CSE Action Plan](#)

A composite Implementation plan has also been produced.

- [The Marshall Implementation Plan - composite plan](#)

The Department has issued the following guidance to all schools on preventing child sexual exploitation

- [Preventing child sexual exploitation guidance - circular letter to schools issued June 2015](#)

## **Progress Report**

A progress report has been prepared on the DE CSE Action Plan and can be accessed using the link below.

- [1st Progress report](#)
- [2nd Progress report](#)

A progress report has also been prepared on the Composite CSE Action Plan and can be accessed using the link below.

- [Progress report](#)

## **e-Safety guidance**

The Department has issued the following guidance to all schools on e-Safety:

- [DE Guidance on e-Safety](#)

Please see below a link to the Child Exploitation and Online Child Protection Centre:

- [thinkuknow website](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab)

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) has advised DE that a Beta version of their new website for parents and carers is now live at:

- [thinkuknow website](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab)

The new site offers a completely refreshed suite of articles and guidance on all aspects of child internet safety.

### **Internet Safety**

The [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab) offers e-safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people to stay safe on the internet. The site also offers advice for teachers and parents on issues such as setting parental controls on games and gaming devices.

For free independent expert advice on dealing with internet safety problems, you can contact the Professionals Online Safety Helpline ([helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk) or telephone 0844 3814772)

- [Askaboutgames](#) (external link opens in a new window / tab) is another useful advisory site for parents.

*Policy – Updated – September 2024*