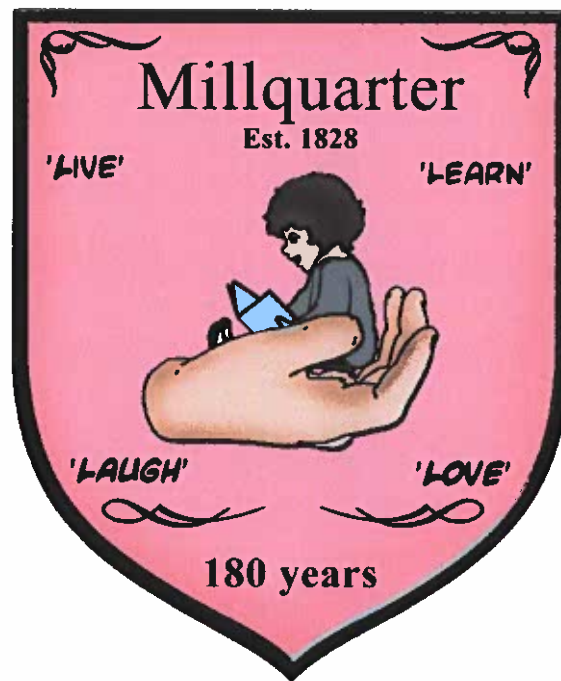


Millquarter Primary School

Child Protection Policy



September 2023

We, in Millquarter Primary School, have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

Principles

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection"(DENI Circular 99/10), the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005), Co- operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016), Safeguarding Board Act Northern Ireland (2011), The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.

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

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

Other Relevant Policies

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

- Acceptable use policy for mobile phones and related technologies
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Critical incident policy.
- Data protection
- Drugs policy
- Educational Visits
- E learning policy.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Emergency treatment policy.
- Fire drill policy.
- First Aid.
- Health and Safety Policy
- Internet safety
- Intimate Care
- Outdoor play
- Pastoral care policy
- Smoking policy.
- Special Educational Needs
- Transport and private car policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Using ICT policy.
- Volunteering policy.

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the school office.

Roles And Responsibilities

The School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors (Brendan Boyd)
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Jacqui O'Neill)
- Acting Principal (Mrs Dympna Storey)
- Designated Teacher (Mrs Dympna Storey)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Orlagh Devlin)

The main role of the team is to:

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

The Board of Governors

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

- ensuring that safeguarding/child protection is a standard item on the agenda of Board of Governor meetings.
- approving the school's Child Protection Policy at least once every 2 years
- ensuring that there is a time-tabled review (every 2/3 years) of all other safeguarding policies and that they are presented to the BOG for approval.
- receiving annual child protection reports.
- ensuring there is a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- attending relevant child protection/safeguarding training for Governors

School Staff

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

Members of staff must refer concerns or disclosures to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal. In addition, class teachers should also keep the Designated Teacher informed in writing or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse. A pro-forma for reporting a concern or disclosure is included at appendix 3.

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

Parents

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's well-being;
- making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
- familiarising themselves with the schools safeguarding policies.
- reporting to the school office when they visit the school.
- sharing any concerns they may have in relation to their child with the school.

Definition of Harm

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

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

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

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation

The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care

towards a child. The main types of abuse as well as their physical and behavioural indicators are included in **appendix 2**.

Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

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

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

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

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

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

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

Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse.

How a Parent can make a Complaint

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the *Class Teacher*, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **appendix 4**.

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

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly. He/she should not investigate- this is a matter for Social Services- but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.

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

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

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

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **appendix 5**.

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

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal then the Designated Teacher should be informed and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in **appendix 6** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance (DE Circular 2015/13).

Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Other Social Services Meetings

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

Consent from Pupils and Parents

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

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

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

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

Record Keeping/Transfer of Records

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE policy on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored until the child is 30 years old.

When a child moves to another school a copy of his/her child protection file if one exists will be transferred to the receiving school. This process will be undertaken by the Designated Teacher in the school of origin to the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

The Preventative Curriculum

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

1. The school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.
2. Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues: School visitors e.g. fire fighters, police etc. health visitor parent programmes.

Vetting Procedures

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

Code Of Conduct For all Staff Paid Or Unpaid

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

All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which is included as **Appendix 1** to this policy.

Photographic and Media Coverage

It is common place for schools to be involved in public relations exercises and this can often include children having their photograph taken with a school team or as part of a school activity. Also children's photographs will be taken and used for a variety of reasons. These may include school photographer, school displays or as part of project work. The school will from time to time video children as they take part in school events or school performances.

All volunteers must use a school's ipad/camera if they need to take photos of children and the school will email the photos to the relevant bodies.

If it is the wish of any parent, not to have their child's image used or stored via any of the above mentioned media, the school must be informed in writing so that any such children can be withdrawn from these events at the appropriate time.

CHOICE AND USE OF TEACHING MATERIALS

Teachers should avoid using teaching materials the choice of which could be misinterpreted and reflect on the motives for the choice. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

Staff Training

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

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the schools staff induction and training programme and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team.

Date of Next Review: _____

Signed: _____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Designated Teacher)

Appendix

1

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff Code Of Conduct

Code of Conduct for all staff – September 2023

Introduction

In Millquarter Primary School we want all our pupils to feel happy, secure and safe so that they can benefit fully from their time in school and be able to avail of the educational experiences which our school offers. We aim at all times to behave appropriately and warmly towards each other and with every member of our school community.

We value greatly the friendly, caring relationships which exist between all staff and pupils at Millquarter Primary School. We want to ensure that these relationships are always appropriate and professional and that the compassionate and caring ethos within our school community continues to flourish.

We recognise that 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 and young people in their care must be above reproach.

This code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff. It is intended as a guide and an aid to all school staff. It sets out standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow. It has also been drafted to comply with the school policies and procedures. It is also 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. All the Staff of Millquarter P.S have been consulted and subscribe to the following Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct covers all activities organised in and by the school, whether on the premises or elsewhere. Staff are requested to read the Code of Conduct carefully and to consider the issues raised.

1. Private Meetings with pupils

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual children. It is recognised that there may be occasions when confidential interviews must take place.
- As far as possible, staff should conduct interviews 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.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- Where possible another child or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview/meeting.

Individual Teaching and Pupil Support

- Every day in school, staff are involved in individual teaching and support sessions. These include classes throughout the school eg in resource areas etc and are not considered private meeting with pupils. All staff should provide in an appropriate and professional manner.

2. Physical Contact with pupils

- As a general principal, staff are advised that it is good practice not to make unnecessary physical contact with children
- Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of a pupil or others around them, that safety must take precedence over all other considerations.
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, whatever the provocation.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed pupil, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion to ensure that what is seen by others present to be normal and natural and does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.
- Staff should never touch a student who has clearly indicated that he/she is or would be uncomfortable with such contact unless it is necessary to protect the student, others or property from harm.(DENI Circular 1999/9 on the use of reasonable force gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils.) (DENI Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils)
- Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching, e.g., when showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or demonstrating a move or exercise during P>E. Staff should be aware of the limits within such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the pupil.
- Staff have undertaken training in First Aid. When required to administer first aid to a child staff should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other pupils or another adult. However, the welfare of the pupil is paramount and no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.

The designated First Aiders in Millquarter P.S are Mrs McWilliams and Mrs Storey.

- Any physical contact which would likely be misinterpreted by the child, parent/guardian or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising children in approved out of school activities, where more formal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from normal school/work environment.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- It is inevitable that some of our teaching will involve the use of sensitive materials and it is very difficult to anticipate when these might impact negatively on our students. If the material to be used is contentious, and if there are concerns about any students in a class in relation to it, it is good practice to consult with the Principal and/or Designated Teacher. All INTERNET sites should be checked before use.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature, a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or the teacher might be criticised after the event. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching

material the teacher should consult with the Principal or the Deputy Designated Teacher as to the suitability of the resource before use.

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

- Staff should ensure that all verbal exchanges are conducted in a calm and professional manner. Only in unusual circumstances, for example in emergency situations or when attracting attention in large areas will voices be raised. Sarcastic, threatening or demeaning verbal interaction is not acceptable. Furthermore verbally humiliating or frightening pupils as a means of punishment is not acceptable. The use of humour can be helpful in diffusing situations, but the humour used must be understood and appropriate. The basic rule of thumb is that we should treat everyone in the way we would expect to be treated ourselves i.e. with respect and dignity.
- Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour, and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with older boys and girls.
- From time to time it is wise for all staff to reappraise their teaching style, relationships with children and their manner and approach to individual pupils to ensure they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions in the minds of colleagues, children or their parents/guardians.

5. Use of Private/Email/Mobile/Social networking

All communications with children and young people in our school should be of a professional nature and communicated via official school email addresses or Seesaw. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and should never enter into inappropriate relationships with children or young people.

Staff should never:

- Make communication of a personal nature with pupils
- Engage in inappropriate dialogue with pupils through the internet, via Facebook, Twitter, online gaming sites etc.
- Post photographs or make reference to pupils or school issues on internet sites other than on the school's official sites/Facebook.
- Send emails or text messages to children via personal email addresses or mobile phones.

We at Millquarter P.S recognise that every adult has a right to use social networking as a means of communicating with other adults. However, social networking sites present particular difficulties for staff in all schools. Great care must be taken to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained between staff and students in this area as in all others.

It is strongly recommended that all staff using social networking sites use the highest availability privacy settings and that staff do not communicate with pupils via personal social networking sites. Information directly related to the school community should never be posted on personal social networking sites. Staff should be mindful of content attributable to them posted on others' sites (eg family and friends) that may not have the privacy settings recommended. The school would however like to highlight the risks associated with your communications being accessible to the general social networking public. It is advisable to consider using privacy tools when communicating via this media. Staff should at all times be mindful of the nature of their communications on forums

not controlled by themselves (e.g friends or relatives networking sites) and how these communications might be interpreted by others. "A simple rule of thumb is not to put any information/images etc. On social media that you would not be happy to place on the school noticeboard".

6. Use Of Mobile Phones/Cameras

- Mobile phones should be stored out of sight of pupils at all times.
- Mobile phones should be turned off or on 'silent' mode in school during contact time with pupils.
- If a member of staff needs to be contacted during contact time the main school phone should be used (02879650130)
- Never share mobile phone details with children – yours or theirs
- Never send text messages to children using personal phones. Only the school messaging system/phone should be used to contact parents.
- Photographs of children should not be stored on personal devices.

7. The use of reasonable force to restrain and control pupils

What might be regarded as constituting reasonable force?

Physical intervention can take a number of forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of back
- Or (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

In exceptional circumstances where there is an immediate risk or injury a member of staff may need to take necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force', for example to prevent a pupil hitting someone or throwing something. However, staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching. Kicking or using any implement on a pupil
- Throwing any object at a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a pupil
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground.

Staff should avoid touching or holding a pupil in any way that might be considered indecent.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances staff professional judgment will be exercised and for the vast majority of staff this Code of Conduct confirms what has always been their practice. From time to time however, it is wise for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children and their manner and approach to individual children to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions in the minds of colleagues, children or of their parent/guardians.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Millquarter P.S will update this Code of Conduct in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually in conjunction with our Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

Consultation with staff will be undertaken on a regular basis.

Appendix

2

Specific types of abuse



Specific Types of Abuse

6.1 Grooming

Grooming^{11,12} of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (see Section 6.2), but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

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

Those working or volunteering with children or young people should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming, and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs.

11 DoH publication 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (March 2016) www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland

12 NSPCC definition - 'Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.'

Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given to any punitive approach or 'criminalising' young people who may, themselves, still be victims and/or acting under duress, control, threat, the fear of, or actual violence. In consultation with the PSNI and where necessary the PPS, HSC professionals must consider whether children used to groom others should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm.

Statutory Responsibilities

The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 provides for offences relating to sexual grooming of children and young people.

Further Information

DoH Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016)
www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland

Further information and sources of advice on online grooming and internet safety can be found in Section 6.7.

The Education Authority (EA) Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) can offer advice on all child protection issues. Contact details are included in the Contacts Section.

6.2 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.¹³

13 Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety publication 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (March 2016)
www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland

Any child under the age of 18 can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited. Young males can also be victims of CSE.

CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males.

While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, the majority of CSE victims are living at home.

Statutory Responsibilities

While CSE is not a specific criminal offence, it does encompass a range of sexual offences and other forms of serious criminal misconduct.

The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 provides for a number of offences that between them could enable prosecution of all cases of CSE.

The Children (NI) Order 1995 and the Child Abduction (NI) Order 1985 can also be used in cases where children are going missing as part of the exploitation.

6.2.1 Identifying CSE

CSE can be very difficult to identify and a young person may not see themselves as a victim. However, it is our statutory responsibility to protect all children and young people from abuse, irrespective of whether or not they view themselves as a victim of abuse. Professionals need to be able to identify vulnerability in the midst of challenging behaviour and frequent resistance to, or even apparent disregard for, professional support.

Research repeatedly shows that young people rarely report abuse through CSE. Most concerns are identified by professionals, friends or family or by proactive investigation by authorities. In recognition of this, good practice guidelines state that all areas should assume that CSE is occurring within their area unless they have evidence to indicate otherwise. As such, schools should be alert to the likelihood of CSE and plan to protect children and young people accordingly.

Potential Indicators of CSE:

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

While these indicators can be useful in identifying potential risk, their presence does not necessarily mean CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence mean it is not.

6.2.2 What to Do

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

The HSCT and PSNI should be involved as early as possible to ensure any evidence that may assist prosecution is not lost and to enable a disruption plan to reduce the victim's contact with the perpetrator(s) and reduce the perpetrator(s) control over the victim to be put in place without delay. More details on the process can be found in DoH Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016), Section 7.2.7.

Further Information

DoH Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016), Section 7.2.7 gives further information on CSE and steps to be followed.

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) has developed a public information campaign on CSE - "The More You Know, The More You See". For further information go to www.safertoknow.info

A Professional Information Guide is also available on the SBNI website at www.safeguardingni.org

The Education Training Inspectorate report "An evaluation of preventative education and the statutory curriculum to inform the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation" (September 2014) can be found at:

www.etini.gov.uk/publications/evaluation-preventative-education-and-statutory-curriculum-inform-independent-inquiry

More information on CSE, including a guide on "What can schools do to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation" can be found on the NSPCC website at www.nspcc.org.uk

Barnardo's also have special expert services that can help those affected and information on identifying and dealing with CSE can be found on their website at: www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/cse-home

Resources for schools can be found on the EA website under the heading 'Child Sexual Exploitation': www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/

Free confidential 24-hour support is available from:

Childline
Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC
Tel: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

6.3 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

(see also Section 5 under Preventative Curriculum)

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

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

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

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.

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy can be found at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy

Background

Statistics available for Northern Ireland in 2016 indicated an increase in the number of calls to PSNI and deaths due to domestic abuse, with approximately 27,628 calls made and six deaths recorded. At least 15,000 children are estimated to be living in a culture of/ or are survivors of violence in the home.

NSPCC research carried out in 2009 'Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships' highlights partner violence as a significant concern for young people's wellbeing, providing unequivocal evidence for the need to develop more effective safeguards in this area of child welfare. The survey identified that three-quarters of girls in a relationship experienced emotional violence of some form, a third reported sexual violence and a quarter experienced physical violence with one in 10 girls the physical violence was defined as severe. Half of boys in a relationship reported emotional violence, 18 per cent experienced physical violence and 16 per cent

sexual violence. Thus, a substantial number of young people will experience some form of violence from their partner before they reach adulthood.

www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/partner-exploitation-violence-teenage-intimate-relationships-report.pdf

Process

Schools should ensure that:

- Training for Designated Teachers (DTs) for Child protection includes awareness of domestic violence and its impact on children;
- The Child Protection Policy includes recognition of the impact on children of an abusive family setting and states that cases will be reported to the appropriate statutory agency;
- Domestic and sexual violence and abuse is included in the school's preventative curriculum - see Section 8.2 for more information.

The DT can contact CPSS for advice at any stage (details are in the Contacts Section).

Further Information and Resources

The EA website has information on domestic and sexual violence and abuse within its resources on child protection and safeguarding:

www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/

Live link to The Hide Out (site includes an educational toolkit with lesson plans for each year group and resources)

www.thehideout.org.uk/young-people/adults-young-people-and-domestic-abuse/resources/educational-toolkit/

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2016, and action plan published 2016

More information is available at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/domestic-violence. You can also contact the 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline on:

Phone: 0808 802 1414 (Freephone)

Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Text: 'support' to 077 9780 5839

Children and young people can contact the Childline Free Helpline at 0800 1111.

'Safe Learning: How to support the educational needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence' was produced by Save the Children in conjunction with Women's Aid in 2006. It is a guide for educational professionals offering an insight into children's experiences of domestic violence and how these may affect their learning. It offers suggestions as to how educational professionals can respond to support children and minimise any disruption to their education.

www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/safe-learning-how-support-educational-needs-children-and-young-people

Organisations that can offer advice and support:

- Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland - www.womensaidni.org - 028 9024 9041
- Mens Advisory Project (MAP) - www.mapni.co.uk - 028 9024 1929
- Men to Men - 028 9024 7027
- Mens Aid NI - www.mensaid.co.uk/ni.html - 077 0385 8130

Other Useful Numbers

- Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre - 028 9032 9002
- Nexus - 028 9032 6303
- Victim Support - 028 9024 3133
- Citizen's Advice Bureau - 0300 1 233 233
- Law Society (Legal and Local Solicitor Advice) - 028 9023 1614
- Parents Helpline - 0808 8010 722

6.4 Female Genital Mutilation

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

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

In the UK, FGM has been a specific criminal offence since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Serious Crime Act 2015 further strengthened the law on FGM.

FGM is a complex issue with many men and women from practising communities considering it to be normal to protect their cultural identity. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of five and eight, putting children in this age bracket at highest risk.

Statutory Responsibilities

Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 - Article 17 - schools have a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of its pupils.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 repealed and re-enacted the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 to set the maximum penalty for FGM to 14 years imprisonment and to make it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to perform FGM overseas or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where FGM is legal.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced a new offence of failing to protect a girl from FGM and lifelong anonymity for victims of FGM has been guaranteed. New FGM Protection Orders (FGMPO) were introduced in July 2015 (Section 73) and allows for the making of an FGMPO for the purpose of protecting a girl against the commission of a genital mutilation offence or protecting a girl against whom such an offence has been committed.

A new mandatory FGM reporting duty was also introduced. This duty does not extend to Northern Ireland, however, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 - Section 5 - makes it an offence to fail to report a "relevant offence" where a person has information which could lead to the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of such an offender. FGM would be such an offence.

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/58/section/5

The Department issued Multi Agency Practice Guidelines on FGM to all Principals, Designated Teachers, Boards of Governors and the CPSS in July 2014 and FGM is included as part of Child Protection training.

Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM, this should be reported to the PSNI without delay. Contact can be made direct to the Sexual Referral Unit (based within the Public Protection Unit) at 028 9025 9299. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, referral should be made to the relevant HSCT Gateway Team.

All staff should be aware of warning signs, appropriate response and signposting to further information and sources of help.

The EA CPSS can offer advice on all safeguarding and child protection issues. Contact details are included in the Contacts Section.

Further Information

Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines are available on the DFP website at:
www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/multi-agency-practice-guidelines-female-genital-mutilation

Tackling FGM in the UK: Intercollegiate recommendations for identifying, recording and reporting

External links which may be helpful:

The NSPCC has a FGM helpline. The helpline is open 24/7 and can be called if you're worried a child is at risk of, or has had, FGM. The helpline is free and anonymous.

Phone: 0800 028 3550 Email: fgmhelp@nsocc.org.uk

ACSONI (African and Caribbean Support Northern Ireland) can also offer support and advice on FGM, including links with the local community.

Phone: 028 9043 4090 Email: info@acsoni.org

6.5 Forced Marriage

A 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 immediately¹⁴.

14 Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety publication 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (March 2016)

There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with support needs, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

Statutory Responsibilities

Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007

A Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO) issued under the 2007 Act offers protection to a victim from being forced into marriage. A FMPO may contain prohibitions, restrictions or requirements and any other such terms as the Court considers appropriate. An application for a FMPO can be made by a victim, a person obtaining the court's permission to apply for an order on behalf of the victim, a relevant third party, or by the Court itself. Breach of a FMPO is a criminal offence.

All agencies with responsibility towards safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children must comply with The Right to Choose: Statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage published by the Department of Finance and Personnel in April 2012 to protect persons from being forced into marriage against their will. This guidance is designed to assist with the operation of the 2007 Act and to ensure that the protections which the Act offers are widely promoted in Northern Ireland.

Warning signs within the school environment:

- Absence and persistent absence.
- Request for extended leave of absence/failure to return from visits to country of origin.
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins.
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.
- Poor exam results.
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home.
- Not allowed to attend extracurricular activities.
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger.
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education.

Due to the nature of forced marriage the involvement of the child's or young person's family may increase the risk of significant harm to the child or young person. The family may deny that the child or young person is being forced to marry and they may expedite any travel arrangements and bring forward the marriage.

It is, therefore, advised that in all cases where there is a suspicion that a child or young person is being, or has been forced into a marriage, schools should contact CPSS for advice and assistance.

The EA CPSS can offer advice on all safeguarding and child protection issues. Contact details are included in the Contacts Section.

Further Information

The Right to Choose: Statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage published by the Department of Finance and Personnel in April 2012.

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

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland

6.6 Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It must also be borne in mind that sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the schools positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centered.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. More details on each type of behaviour can be found in DE Circular 2016/05 'Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour'.

Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting.

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required.

The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

6.6.1 What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?

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

- 1. There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- 2. the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

- 1. Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- 2. Inappropriate touching.
- 3. Using sexual violence or threats.
- 4. Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- 5. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and schools should refer to their own child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS - see the paragraph on 'Advice and Support', below.

Further Information

DE Circular 2016/05 provides guidance for schools and other education settings about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201605-children-who-display-harmful-sexualised-behaviour

The EA CPSS can offer advice on all safeguarding and child protection issues. Contact details are included in the Contacts Section.

6.7 E-Safety/Internet Abuse

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

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

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

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

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

It is recommended that rather than having a stand-alone online safety policy, schools should integrate their online safety policy (and, where applicable, their mobile learning policy) into existing safeguarding, behaviour, code of practice and anti-bullying policies.

The online safety policy should incorporate agreements on the acceptable use of (i) the internet and school-based digital technology and (ii) personal mobile technology.

6.8 Managing the Risks

Twenty-first Century life presents dangers including violence, racism, radicalisation and exploitation. Whilst children and young people need to be protected from these dangers, they also need to be educated about how to recognise and avoid the risks and become 'Internet Wise'. Pupils need to know how to cope if they come across inappropriate material or situations on line and should be encouraged to seek help and advice when they need it without fear of censure or criminalisation.

Schools also need to perform risk assessments on the technologies within their school to ensure that they are fully aware of and can mitigate the potential risks involved with their use.

DE Circular 2016/27 provides schools with information on the characteristics of good online safety practice and recommended actions for schools to consider in developing or reviewing their online safety procedures. The Department's website also provides further advice and links to relevant DE Circulars and sites providing advice for teachers, pupils and parents.

www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/education-safe-and-effective-practices

The EA/C2k has procured a filtered internet service for and on behalf of all pupils and staff in schools in Northern Ireland. This is provided as part of the core C2k service available to all schools. However, where a school decides to provide alternative internet access, then the responsibility for the filtering of any inappropriate online content rests with the school's Board of Governors (unless otherwise agreed in a written contract with the service provider).

It is appreciated that schools cannot cover every scenario and that parents have the primary responsibility for the protection and safeguarding of their children but the reality is that many parents are intimidated by the complexity of modern technology and feel inadequate in the face of the ready familiarity with which their children use them. It is recommended that schools, so far as is reasonably possible, engage with parents to share information, advice and guidance on the appropriate and safe use of digital technology.

Advice and links to appropriate training providers is available via the C2k Online Safety Fronter page.

Some schools have provided excellent training to parents through pupil-led workshops and presentations. There are many other websites that can offer support (see below) and other links are available from the DE website.

Cases of Inappropriate Use

A school may become aware of pupils or members of staff affected by internet abuse, either in school or outside school hours, eg trolling, sexting, cyber-bullying, online grooming etc.

Cyber-bullying should be considered within the schools overall Anti Bullying Policy. Article 2(2) of the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 will expressly permit schools to include in their Anti-Bullying Policy measure to tackle cyber-bullying between pupils, even when the incidents take place outside the normal school day.

While there is no specific legislation for cyber-bullying, the following may cover different elements of cyber-bullying behaviour:

Protection for Harassment (NI) Order 1997 www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1997/1180

Malicious Communications (NI) Order 1988 www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1988/1849

The Communications Act 2003 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21

6.9 Sexting

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:

6.9.1 Sexting between individuals in a relationship

As adults we can question the wisdom of this but the reality is that children and young people consider this to be normal.

Clearly 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 you should contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of

the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record.

It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of sexual images. Advice should be sought from CPSS.

6.9.2 Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that you do not forward it to anyone else. Please remember that 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) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent - see Articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail. By contacting the police you could 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.

The UK Safer Internet Centre (contact details below) may be able to assist in having the image blocked or removed to prevent further distribution.

It is also vital to ensure that the victim of abuse gets the correct support. They are likely to be ashamed and embarrassed and worried about parental reaction - some may wish to speak to the school independent Counsellor. A list of organisations offering advice and support is included below.

Departmental Guidance

DE Circular 2007/1 - guidance on Internet Use Policy

DE Circular 2011/22 - advice on the safe use of the internet and digital technologies

DE Circular 2013/25 - guidance on e-Safety policy and Acceptable Use Policy

DE Circular 2016/27 - guidance on online safety

DHSSPS Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016) - Section 7.2.9 offers advice on Risks of Misuse of Digital Technologies.

The SBNI recommend the SWGFL (South West Grid for Learning) '360 degree safe' online safety self-assessment tool for use across schools and colleges. The tool is free to use and is intended to help schools review their online safety policy and practice.

The tool can be found at www.360safe.org.uk/ or via the O2k Online Safety area on Frontier.

Further Information

O2k can offer advice on internet safety and has produced resources including 'better safe than sorry' and 'Internet Safety Room'. In cases of internet abuse a number of organisations offer support and help including:

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) 'thinkuknow' website contains advice and resources for teachers exploring the risks which children and young people are exposed to when online. CEOP have produced targeted advice and guidance for 11-13 year olds, 14+ years, parents or carers, and teachers.
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Go to www.getsafeonline.org for lots of useful advice and information on how to stay safe online. Safeguardingni.org will also provide information for parents and carers on online safety.
- The UKCCIS (UK Council for Child Internet Safety) has published guidance for England and Wales 'Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People'.
www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis
- The UK Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk/) offers online safety tips, advice and resources to help professionals, children and young people to stay safe on the internet.
- PSNI/SBNI leaflet 'Sexting and the Law' - a basic guide to help professionals and the public deal with incidents of sexting.
www.psni.police.uk/contentassets/f4e34aff4af6409e9ad393130043ec55/sexting_the_law_leaflet_trifold.pdf



Contacts

Child Protection Support Service

EA Offices	Contact Number
Belfast	028 9056 4289
Antrim	028 9448 2223
Dundonald	028 9056 6216
Armagh	028 3834 1975
Omagh	028 8241 1461

Duty Social Worker Gateway Team (Health & Social Care Trusts)

Gateway Teams	Contact Number
Belfast	028 9050 7000
Northern	0300 1234 333
South Eastern	0300 1000 300
Southern	028 3741 5285
Western	028 8283 5156
Out of Hours for All Areas	028 9504 9999

PSNI

The Central Referral Unit (CRU) based in Antrim Road PSNI Station is part of the Public Protection Unit and is the central referral point for child sexual and physical abuse allegations.

The office is open Monday to Friday 8 am to 9 pm and weekends and public holidays 9 am to 5 pm.

Telephone: 028 9025 9299

Appendix

3

**Staff pro-forma for
reporting a concern or
disclosure.**

PROFORMA

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF CONCERN

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER

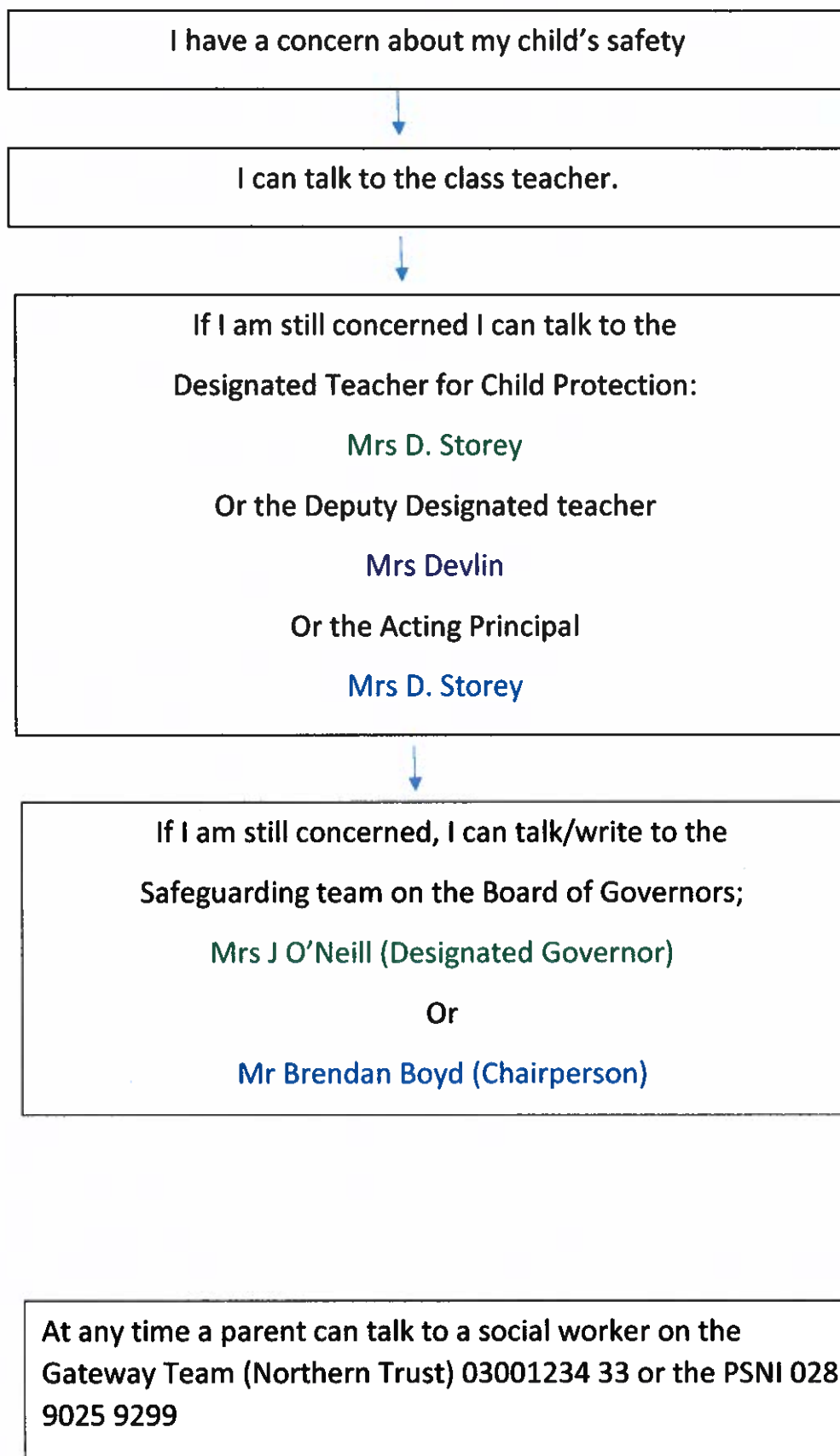
Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:

Appendix

4

Details of who to contact
if a parent has a concern.

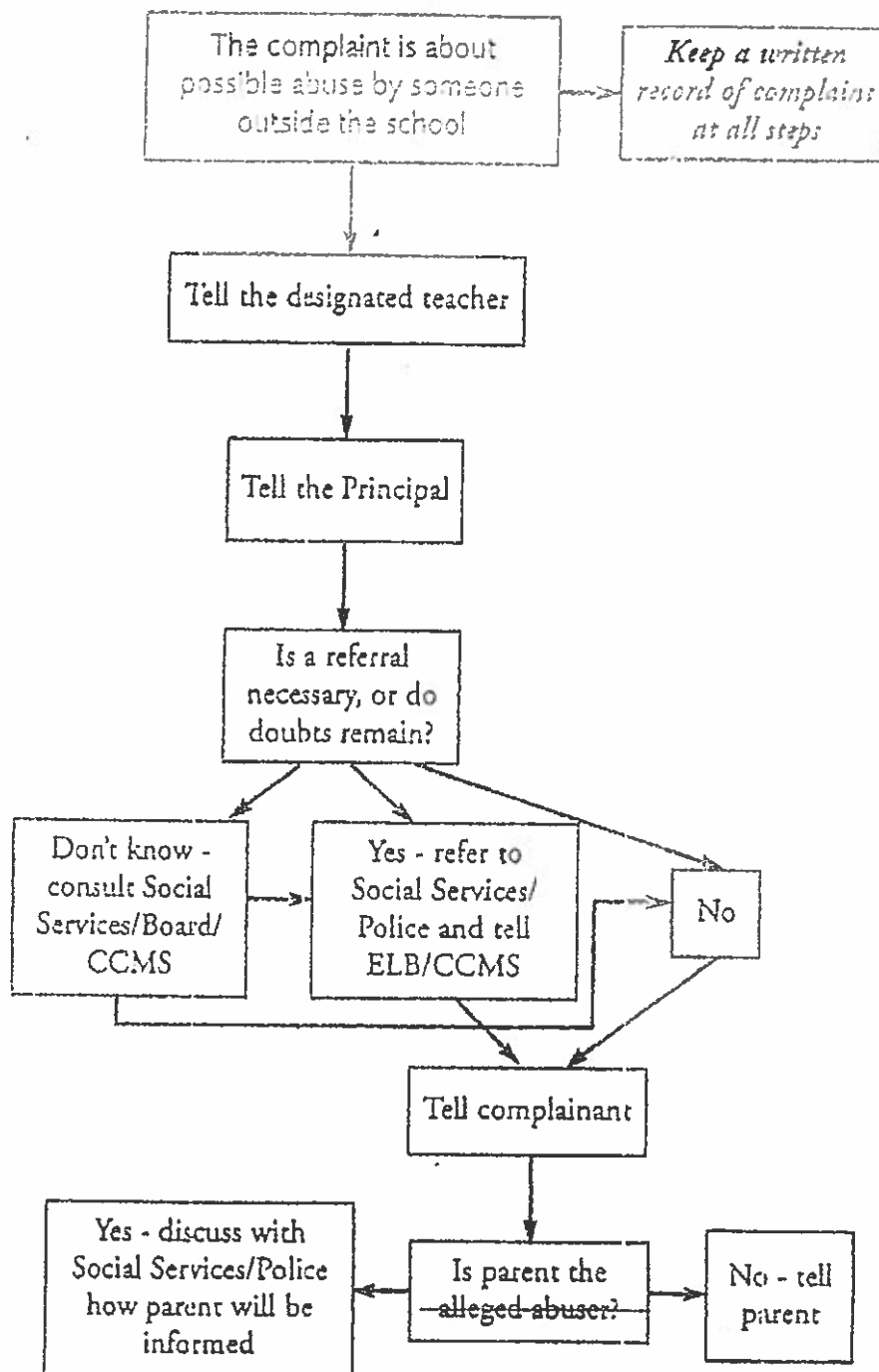
Procedure for Parents who wish to Raise a Child Protection Concern.



Appendix

5

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.



5.7 Processes for Referral are set out in the Flowcharts below:

Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff⁷

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.

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

Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.

Designated Teacher should consult with the 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

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

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

Child Protection referral is not required

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

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

7 It is imperative that any disclosure by a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk, is reported immediately to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk of the child at home. Contact details for the PSNI Central Referral Unit and Duty Social Workers can be found in the Contacts Section.

8 DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools.

Appendix

6

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

Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

Key Points

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

Guidance on the Next Steps

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

Possible Outcomes

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

Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.

Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed

Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed

9
10

DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools.
As noted previously a Lead Individual to manage the handling of an allegation should be identified from the outset, normally the Principal or a designated senior member of staff.