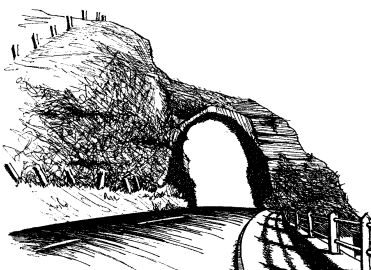


# **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



## **ST PATRICK'S P.S. GLENARIFF**



June 2023

Chairperson of the Board of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## **Our School Child Protection Ethos**

The Governors and staff of St Patrick's Primary, Glenariff, have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and will carry out this duty through our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This policy aims to provide a caring, supportive environment, in which all of our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. We seek to protect our children by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviours in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The purpose of this policy and related procedures on Safeguarding Children is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in the school and the parents/guardians of our children have clear guidance on the action required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child.

## **Guiding 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 Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011, The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016, The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016) and The Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for School (DENI 2017)

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.

## ROLES AND 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 by:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils;

Having a written child protection policy;

Addressing the prevention of bullying in school behaviour management policies.

The Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed;
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors;
- Safeguarding and child protection is a standard item on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents receive a copy every two years;
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed every three years;
- The school ensures other safeguarding policies are reviewed every three years;
- There is a code of conduct for all staff;
- All staff and unsupervised volunteers are recruited and vetted;
- They receive an annual report on all child protection matters;
- The school maintains the following child protection records:
  - Safeguarding and child protection concerns
  - Disclosure of abuse
  - Complaints against staff
  - Staff induction and training

### Safeguarding Team

Chair of the Board of Governors	Mrs Anne Harvey
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mrs Patricia Allen
Principal	Mr Mark Dinsmore
Designated Teacher	Miss Mairead McQuillan
Deputy Designated Teacher	Mrs Clodagh McAuley

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Team include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school.
- Identifying any actions required to address audit findings or ETI inspection of its safeguarding/ child protection arrangements.
- Providing support for the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training.

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

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

The responsibilities include:

- Ensuring a Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy is in place;
- Ensuring a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- Ensuring child protection records are kept;
- Ensuring Governors are notified of and attend relevant training for Child Protection, Recruitment and Selection;
- Signing and dating the Record of Child Abuse Complaints at every Board of Governors meeting, even if there are no entries;

In the event of a safeguarding and child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation.

## **Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The Board of Governors will delegate a specific member of the governing body to take lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to be able to advise the governors on:

- The role of the designated teachers;
- The content of the child protection policies;
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school;
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report;
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

## **The Principal**

The Principal, will assist the Board of Governors to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to DENI guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection. In addition, the Principal takes lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff. Duties also include:

- Responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school;
- Appointment of staff to teaching and non-teaching posts in the school and appointment of suitable staff to roles of DT and DDT for Child Protection;
- Ensuring parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at intake and are directed to the school website to view any updates/ revision of policies related to safeguarding;

## **Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

The role of the Designated Teacher involves:

- Providing annual safeguarding and child protection training of all school staff including support staff;
- Inducting all adults working for a planned length of time in the school, whether they are paid or unpaid;
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff;
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns;
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services;
- Making referrals to Social Services Gateway Team or PSNI Central Referral Unit where appropriate;
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection;
- Keeping the school Principal informed;
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy;
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school;
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Attending child protection case conferences and other relevant case planning meetings where appropriate and practicable;

## **Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities.

The Deputy Designated Teacher will deputise for the Designated Teacher in her absence.

## **School Staff**

Teachers, Learning Support and other non-teaching 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.

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 e.g. Anti - Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the school office when they visit the school;
- sharing any concern they may have in relation to their child with the school.
- Notifying the school if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child;
- Contacting the school to inform of any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility;

## DEFINITIONS OF HARM AND TYPES OF ABUSE

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and on-going information sharing is key between professionals. (Co- operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)

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

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect;
- Exploitation;
- Domestic Violence;
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Bullying
- Grooming
- Forced Marriage
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- E- Safety / Internet Abuse
- Sexting
- Children Displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Self- Harm and Suicide

**1. Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

**2. Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing.

It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**3. Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers.

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

**See Appendix 1 to view possible indicators, both physical and behavioural, of the four main types of abuse mentioned above.**

**5. Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

## **6. Domestic Violence**

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

Psychological

Physical

Sexual

Financial

Emotional



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

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

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

If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who will follow advice as to whether to refer to social services.

## **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. (**Appendix 2** shows communication with parents, informing them that we are an Operation Encompass school)

**7.Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse** 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).'

Coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour also includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent

**8.Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** 'Multi-agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (DFP 2014)' states: 'FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.' The school will follow the procedures outlined in the above guidelines if FGM or proposed FGM is disclosed or suspected.

**9.Bullying** In line with recent legislation, The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act ( Northern Ireland) 2016, it is recognised that bullying is not limited to the repeated use of intentional, negative behaviours to other/s. As a school we will look at each incident and make a decision as to whether the behaviour can be classed as bullying. Records of bullying concerns will be kept digitally on the SIMS network. (This came into place in Sep 2021). If the behaviour does not meet the criteria of bullying behaviour it will be recorded on part 1 of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) and steps in the Positive Behaviour Policy will be followed. If the incident is identified as a bullying behaviour the BCAF form (Parts 1-4) will be

completed showing in detail the action taken to address the behaviour and measures put in place to support the target child and the child displaying bullying behaviour.

We will follow the steps outlined in our Anti- Bullying Policy. This policy is available from the school office/website. All concerns will be investigated diligently by DT for Child Protection or the Principal and the necessary action taken to ensure our children receive the support they need.

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

**11.Forced Marriage** is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

**12.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.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. The filtered internet service provided by C2K functions as a safety net allowing our pupils to access material online. Pupils are also taught how to stay safe online when they participate in Safer Internet Day. The school audits their current online safety provision using the 360

degree safe website as recommended in DE circular 2016/17 Online safety. Online safety messages are integrated across the curriculum for pupils in all Key Stages. All pupils and their parents are asked to agree to an Acceptable Usage Policy and sign a consent form for the use of digital and video images.

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

- **Sexting between individuals in a relationship** Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases the PSNI will be contacted.
- **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress** Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent - see Articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail. Police will be contacted to help prevent further such incidents.

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

### **15. Children Displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between normal childhood and adolescent sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate abusive or aggressive behaviour. Professional judgement may be required. As a school we support children to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality, primarily using the Wonder of My Being Programme and PDMU. We are in a good position to consider when a child's behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise. Inappropriate touching or using age inappropriate sexually explicit words would be a matter for concern. Advice from CPSS will always be sought in matters of this nature and guidance followed. A one off incident may simply mean liaising with parents on setting clear direction that a behaviour is unacceptable. In more serious instances social services and PSNI may be involved.

### **16. Self Harm and Suicide**

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate, and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse, however this is not always the case. Appropriate advice should be sought from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

## **Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, sexual orientation and lack of fluency in English. Information about children with increased vulnerabilities is noted in **Appendix 3.**

## **IDENTIFYING ABUSE**

The teaching and ancillary staff are made aware of signs and symptoms of abuse in their annual child protection training held at the end of August or start of September.

**Even though these observations may signify abuse it must be remembered that alternative explanations may exist for these signs or symptoms.**

## **PROCEDURES FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS**

We have adopted the procedures set out by the EA for reporting child abuse. **(Appendix 4)**  
In the absence of the designated teacher or deputy designated teacher, the Principal, should be directly informed of any concerns.

Child protection concerns may originate from:

### **(1.) The child**

- reported to the class teacher/designated teacher

### **(2.) School Staff**

- reported to the class teacher/designated teacher

### **(3.) Parents or others**

- as a complaint to the Principal/designated teacher or Chairperson of the Board of Governors and may relate to possible abuse by either

(a.) A member of school staff or

(b.) Someone other than a member of school staff.

## **Staff advice when talking to children on Child Protection Matters**

During training staff are reminded of the **5 Rs** when speaking to a child on a child protection matter.

### **Receive**

Listen to what a child says but do not ask leading questions

Accept what is said

### **Reassure**

Ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and their interests come first

### **React**

React to the child only to ensure that he/she is safe and secure

Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk

### **Record**

Make notes at the time or as soon as possible

Record the date, time, any noticeable behaviour and the words used by the child.

Record statements and observable things - not your interpretations

### **Refer**

Report to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher

The way questions are asked to the children concerned in these cases is of the utmost importance. Staff must be aware that questions must not be too leading i.e. they must not put ideas into the child's mind. Instead the approach should be more open ended ***Tell me about...*** not ***Did x do that?***

Staff must listen and let the child speak freely when relating an incident. Notes should be made of what a child says to pass on to the designated teacher. The time, date, place and names of people present should also be recorded if given. **(Appendix 5)** If there appear to be signs of physical injury this too should be noted but under no circumstances should clothes be removed.

Subsequent remarks made by the child, parent or another adult about the cause of the injury should also be noted - quoting the actual words used if possible.

**Staff cannot and should never give a promise of confidentiality when abuse is alleged.**

## **REFERRAL TO APPROPRIATE AGENCIES**

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

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, and a referral needs to be made, the designated teacher will telephone the Social Services Gateway Team (Single Point Of Entry) SPOE. The EA North Eastern Region's Designated Officer for Child Protection will be notified. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team. A copy will be sent to the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection and a copy will also be kept in the Child Protection records in school.

### **Record Keeping**

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

## **Steps taken to create a safe environment in St Patrick's**

### **Who can the children talk to about their concerns?**

The children in our school are kept informed about who they can talk to if they have something they wish to discuss. There is a sign placed in every classroom with the name and photograph of the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher in school responsible for child protection. This information will be included in a designated area of the school website.

Of course children may feel more comfortable talking to their own class teacher. This information may then be passed on to the designated teacher if the child's teacher feels it is necessary to take further action. Records of these discussions are kept in school in a locked cabinet to be seen only by the principal and designated teacher for child protection. Guidelines on who to talk to and contact numbers are displayed in language suitable for the children's understanding. **(Appendix 6)**

The emphasis on social guardians in The Helping Hands programme will enable children in our school to identify adults that they can talk to about their concerns.

### **Who can parents talk to about their concerns?**

A safeguarding information board for parents is displayed in the front entrance of the new building, highlighting staff who can be contacted about safeguarding concerns. Further information for parents is available on the school website and includes useful contact numbers if parents wish to seek advice or guidance from outside agencies.

### **(APPENDIX 7)**

## **The Preventative Curriculum**

In the classroom, regular Circle Time sessions and Personal Development and Mutual Understanding lessons are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates.

The Designated teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection attended training which focused on the impact of domestic violence on children. Members of Woman's Aid delivered this training and introduced the teaching resource pack Helping Hands designed to support children affected by or at risk of such abuse. This has been incorporated into our curriculum. Not only does Helping Hands help teachers to be social guardians to the children in their care, it also helps children to recognise unsafe feelings i.e. when they feel in danger or need help and what action to take. It is suitable for all primary school classes and provides clear teaching objectives and stimulating activities to involve children in making good decisions about their own safety.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through assemblies and Religious Education.

Other initiatives which address child protection and health and safety issues:

- Religious and Sexual Education Programme - Wonder of My Being
- Global learning- fundraising for charities eg. Trocaire,
- Eco Learning
- Healthy Eating
- Walk to school week
- The Big Pedal - Sustrans
- Catholic Schools' Week
- School Council
- Shared Education Programme
- Class visits from the NSPCC
- Primary 5 pupils take part in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service talks on Fire Safety.
- Each year Primary 7 pupils participate in the "Street Wise" Activity Day which raises awareness of stranger danger. RADAR visits are also organised for P.7 pupils.
- Primary 7 children attend the "What's Inside" programme to support their Relationships and Sexual Education.
- Primary 1 and Primary 7 receive visits from the local PSNI to deliver the CASE programme.
- Internet Safety is highlighted throughout the year from Primary 1 to Primary 7. It is also reinforced on the National Internet Safety Day.
- Bullying Issues are also highlighted throughout the year in all classes and an extra focus is placed on this in the National Anti-Bullying week.
- Instruction to all children on the importance of following good hand hygiene and social distancing to prevent/control the spread of Covid-19 in our school, home and wider community.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing.**

We recognise the importance of good mental health and wellbeing in both staff and children. As a result of Covid, this area has come to the fore and we have been fortunate to have received Take 5 training to support both pupils and staff. We include the 5 steps to wellbeing in our preventative curriculum - connect, being active, taking notice, keep learning, give. These steps have been built into our school life in a range of different ways eg. drama- Mr Hullabaloo, music- Fun with Drums, silent discos, singing clubs, music lessons sport- Healthy Kidz, Hurling, art- online lessons and competitions, WAU -visits from experts in various topics, Armagh Planetarium staff, RSPB, etc.

In addition, children enjoy Accelerated Reading time in the library, visits from the Book Fair and investigative work in maths and science.

Funding through Healthy Happy Minds has meant that those children who required support were given some one to one play therapy to relax and a chance to share their thoughts.

Staff have received training to help their wellbeing - they learned breathing techniques to manage feelings and discussed the importance of mindfulness and managing time.



## **Security**

The entrance doors in both the new and older school buildings are locked during class time. They can only be accessed using the door buzzer. Children are trained to only open the door to staff members or pupils attending the school.

## **Vetting Staff**

We follow the necessary procedures to ensure that our children are under the care of a responsible member of staff who has been instructed in the content of our Safeguarding and Child-Protection Policy and will follow the agreed procedures.

All members of teaching and auxiliary staff have been authorised by Access N.I. prior to taking up a post in the school.

## **Volunteers**

We use both supervised and un-supervised volunteers who have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other staff. Relevant screening and selection processes take place to ensure the safety of the children is always adhered to. Unsupervised volunteers are all Access NI checked. From September 2012 DENI Circular has stated that supervised volunteers do not need Access NI checks. We have occasions in the school when members of the community are invited to share their knowledge with the children. These volunteers do not require Access NI checks as they are not in a position where they have unsupervised contact with pupils.

## **Visitors to the school**

Visitors to the school are met at the front door (reception area) by a member of the school staff - the caretaker, secretary or a teacher. The reason for their visit is clarified first and checked out thoroughly. They are allowed into the school under the permission of the Principal and the supervision of the staff.

Visitors from voluntary and/or statutory organisations whose expertise or skills are used by the school must comply with the ethos of our school (**Appendix 8**) and EA guidelines.

## **Students on work experience or teaching practice**

Students will be given a code of conduct document when they arrive at our school and will be made aware of procedures in place for Child Protection. (**Appendix 9**)

## **Supervision arrangements at break, lunch and home times**

At break time, when the weather is suitable, the children go outside to the two play areas at the front and back of the school. The younger classes occupy the front play area and the older children play at the rear of the school. Non-teaching staff are assigned an area to supervise and a teacher is also on duty to move between the two areas during break.

When the weather is not appropriate for outside activities during break the children remain in their own classroom areas. They are supervised by both non-teaching staff and the two teachers on duty. Staff are made aware of the areas they must monitor at the start of the school year. There are two lunch sittings in our school and there are supervisors fulfilling dinner hall duties and yard/classroom duties at this time.

At the Primary 1/2 home time (2:00pm) parents/carers come into the school and pick up their children at the front door of the new building. Only adults authorized on the relevant information sheets are permitted to pick the children up at this time. Parents must notify the school of any changes.

At 3:00pm (2.00pm Friday) class teachers are on duty to assist children leaving the school. The children are encouraged to leave the school carefully - walking along the paths. Those children travelling home by bus remain at the school gate until they are directed onto the bus by a teacher. If a child needs to cross the road they wait until the teacher is ready to guide them safely.

### **Data Protection**

Permission from a parent or guardian is necessary before a child is photographed in school. This requires that the parent/guardian complete a form stating if their child can or cannot be photographed. Photos in school are sometimes taken for educational purposes by the teaching staff - to be used in class lessons. On occasions children may be photographed for newspapers or magazine publications during sports events. We are aware that some parents may not be comfortable with this so we respect their wishes not to photograph their children.

Parents and children are asked to sign a consent form to agree with the school's E-Safety Policy. We also request permission from a parent/guardian to place photos of the children participating in school activities on our school website. No child's photograph will be added to this webpage without permission from a parent/guardian.

### **Training**

St Patrick's Primary School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. Staff and Board of Governors will receive basic safeguarding and child protection awareness instruction through annual refresher training. This includes the importance of e-safety and Child Protection when using the Internet and digital devices. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support service for Schools.

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

Organisations such as Barnardo's and Woman's Aid provide courses for teachers to develop good safeguarding strategies. Teachers in our staff, who have attended this training, feel more equipped to help pupils who may be at risk of harm or need guidance and support. We feel it is important to access help from agencies who have expertise in these areas. As with all areas of the curriculum, teachers who attend safeguarding training ensure that good practice and knowledge is disseminated to the staff back in school.

## **School trips**

### **Parental permission**

When the pupils in St Patrick's Primary School are going to venues away from the school we ensure that they have written parental permission to attend.

At various times in the school year the children may be studying our locality. This may require exploring grounds outside the vicinity of our school i.e. the beach, Waterfoot village and our chapel. One general parental permission slip covers these local trips.

### **Transport**

When children need to be taken to venues away from school by car we ensure that the teacher/s driving has the correct car insurance to permit this travel.

Bus companies used by the school are vetted on matters of insurance and child protection.

## **Related Policies/ School Documents**

Other policies in the school linked to child protection include:-

- Retention and Storage Policy For Child Protection Records
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
  
- Safe Movement around the School Policy
- Policy for the Use of Reasonable Force
- Intimate Care Policy
- First Aid Policy
- E - safety and Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones/Digital Devices in the School
- Safeguarding Against Covid-19 (Risk Assessment and Controls)
- Covid 19 Information for parents

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Safeguarding Team in St Patrick's Primary School will update this Policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the child protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

To ensure the effectiveness of the Policy, parents, staff, children and Governors will be consulted.

## APPENDIX 1

### Signs and Symptoms of Abuse - Possible Indicators

#### NEGLECT

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• looks very thin, poorly and sad;</li><li>• constant hunger;</li><li>• lack of energy;</li><li>• untreated medical problems;</li><li>• special needs of child not being met;</li><li>• constant tiredness;</li><li>• inappropriate dress;</li><li>• poor hygiene;</li><li>• repeatedly unwashed;</li><li>• smelly;</li><li>• repeated accidents, especially burns.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tired or listless (falls asleep in class);</li><li>• steals food;</li><li>• compulsive eating;</li><li>• begging from class friends;</li><li>• withdrawn;</li><li>• lacks concentration;</li><li>• misses school medicals;</li><li>• reports that there is no carer is at home;</li><li>• low self-esteem;</li><li>• persistent non-attendance at school;</li><li>• exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.</li></ul>

#### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unexplained bruises - in various stages of healing;</li><li>• grip marks on arms;</li><li>• slap marks;</li><li>• human bite marks;</li><li>• welts;</li><li>• bald spots;</li><li>• unexplained/untreated burns - especially cigarette burns (glove like);</li><li>• unexplained fractures;</li><li>• lacerations or abrasions;</li><li>• untreated injuries;</li><li>• bruising on both sides of the ear - symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion;</li><li>• injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-destructive tendencies;</li><li>• aggression to other children;</li><li>• behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive);</li><li>• appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults;</li><li>• improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway;</li><li>• uncomfortable with physical contact;</li><li>• coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home;</li><li>• clothing inappropriate to weather - to hide part of body;</li><li>• violent themes in art work or stories.</li></ul>

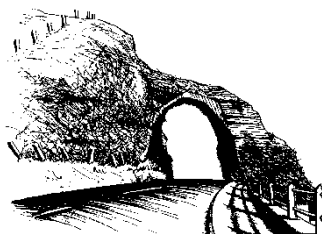
## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well below average in height and weight - failing to thrive;</li> <li>• poor hair and skin;</li> <li>• alopecia;</li> <li>• swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet;</li> <li>• recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders;</li> <li>• signs of self mutilation;</li> <li>• signs of solvent abuse e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness;</li> <li>• extremes of physical, mental and emotional development e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apathy and dejection;</li> <li>• inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;</li> <li>• rocking/head banging;</li> <li>• inability to play;</li> <li>• indifference to separation from family;</li> <li>• indiscriminate attachment;</li> <li>• reluctance for parental liaison;</li> <li>• fear of new situation;</li> <li>• chronic runaway;</li> <li>• attention seeking/needing behaviour;</li> <li>• poor peer relationships.</li> </ul>

## SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs;</li> <li>• bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas;</li> <li>• torn, stained or bloody underclothes;</li> <li>• chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches;</li> <li>• difficulty in walking or sitting;</li> <li>• frequent urinary infections;</li> <li>• avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers;</li> <li>• unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague;</li> <li>• anorexia/gross over-eating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the child tells you;</li> <li>• Withdrawn;</li> <li>• chronic depression;</li> <li>• excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness;</li> <li>• children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal;</li> <li>• over concerned for siblings;</li> <li>• poor self esteem;</li> <li>• self devaluation;</li> <li>• lack of confidence;</li> <li>• peer problems;</li> <li>• lack of involvement;</li> <li>• massive weight change;</li> <li>• suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts;</li> <li>• lack of emotional control;</li> <li>• sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour;</li> <li>• inappropriate sex play;</li> <li>• repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories;</li> <li>• vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation;</li> <li>• promiscuity;</li> <li>• exposure to pornographic material.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 2



Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to update you about our school's participation in Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between Police and Schools. It is aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence.

Operation Encompass is already established across all of England and Wales and is now coming to Northern Ireland. It is a very simple idea, but one that will help us to support and protect vulnerable children. When the Police attend an incident of domestic violence where one of our pupils is present, they will inform the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection at the start of the next school day. This information is shared in strict confidence and school staff are only told on a need-to-know basis.

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

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

Signed

*M. Dinsmore*

Mark Dinsmore  
Principal

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

#### **Looked After Children (LAC)**

Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) have a duty to act as a 'corporate parent' in respect of looked after children and must ensure that the child or young person's needs are met, including their need for protection from harm or risk of harm the child may face while in care. HSCTs must remain alert to opportunities for harm to occur to looked after children, and take appropriate and timely actions to mitigate or remove any risk of harm occurring. Each Review of Looked After Child - Review of Arrangements Meeting (LAC Review) must consider the child's protection needs, and take any further steps or put appropriate measures in place to protect the child from harm.

It is important that children, young people and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the looked after child participate in the review. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child or young person, should remain a primary focus of professional involvement, throughout the review process.

A member of school staff will attend LAC meetings and provide a written report. School support for the child will be put in place and information shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

#### **Children / Young People Who Go Missing**

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

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

School staff will work in partnership with others providing care, including parents, kinship carers, foster carers and residential care staff and the children and young people themselves, to understand and address the underlying factors which are driving the behaviour resulting in them going missing. We will collaborate with parents and others providing care to ensure effective prevention strategies are developed and to put into place strategies to reduce any risks of harm occurring to children and young people who run away or go missing. This may involve completing a risk assessment.

#### **Children with Limited English**

Children limited in spoken English will receive strategies to help them communicate. It is important that they can express themselves to staff, particularly where there may be safeguarding concerns. Close partnership with the Designated teacher, school SENCo, class teacher and the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service will help to identify /respond to the communication needs of children who do not have English as their first language.

#### **Young People in Supported Accommodation**

Staff will work in partnership with agencies directly involved with children living in supported accommodation. The wellbeing of these children will be monitored and pastoral care needs addressed.

## **Young People who are Homeless**

Young people who are **homeless** may be at risk of harm. If we become aware of a child in our school who is homeless, we will contact social services to access support for the child. We will follow procedures to fulfil the pastoral care needs of the child in school and meet with external agencies to help address any safeguarding concerns.

## **Children of Parents with Additional Support Needs**

Children can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development.

The school safeguarding team will follow guidance to ensure a child who falls into this category is given appropriate support at school and home. Advice from external agencies will be followed so that the child's welfare is paramount and he/she is safeguarded as effectively as possible. Consideration will be given to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

## **Separated, Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children and Young People**

**Separated children** are children who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver. **Unaccompanied** children are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian.

In all cases separated and unaccompanied children and young people should be treated as 'children in need' and the relevant HSCT should undertake a comprehensive assessment of their needs, including any safeguarding needs as a matter of urgency.

Consideration must also be given to the possibility that a separated or unaccompanied child or young person may be a victim of human trafficking. **Child trafficking** is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation.

When a child in our school is identified as separated, unaccompanied and/or trafficked we will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## **Children with Disabilities**

Children with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse. Staff working with children with disabilities will be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues. They must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff working with children with a disability will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early, to allow preventative action to be taken.

## **Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender Young People (LGBT)**

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

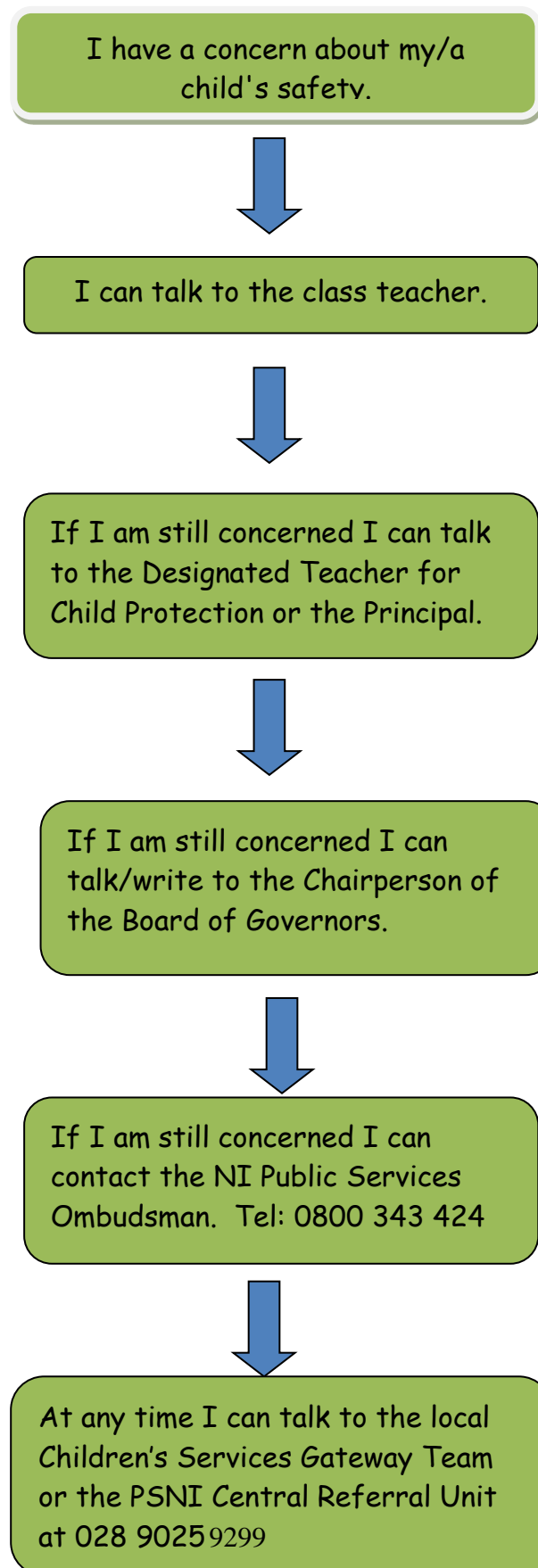
All staff working with young people from the LGBT community will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.



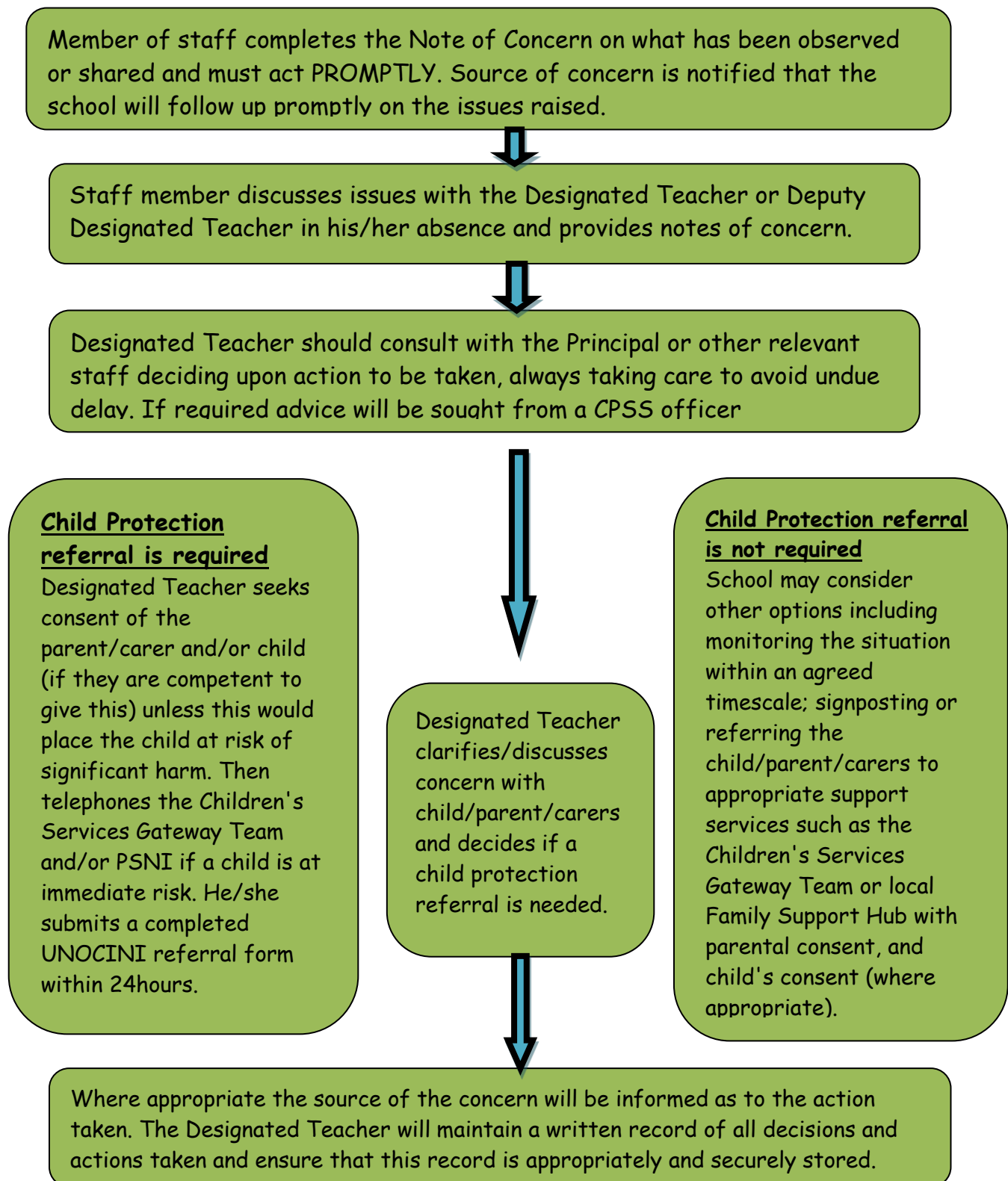
## APPENDIX 4

### Procedures

**Figure 1:** How a parent can make a complaint



**Figure 2: Procedure when the school has concerns, or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff**

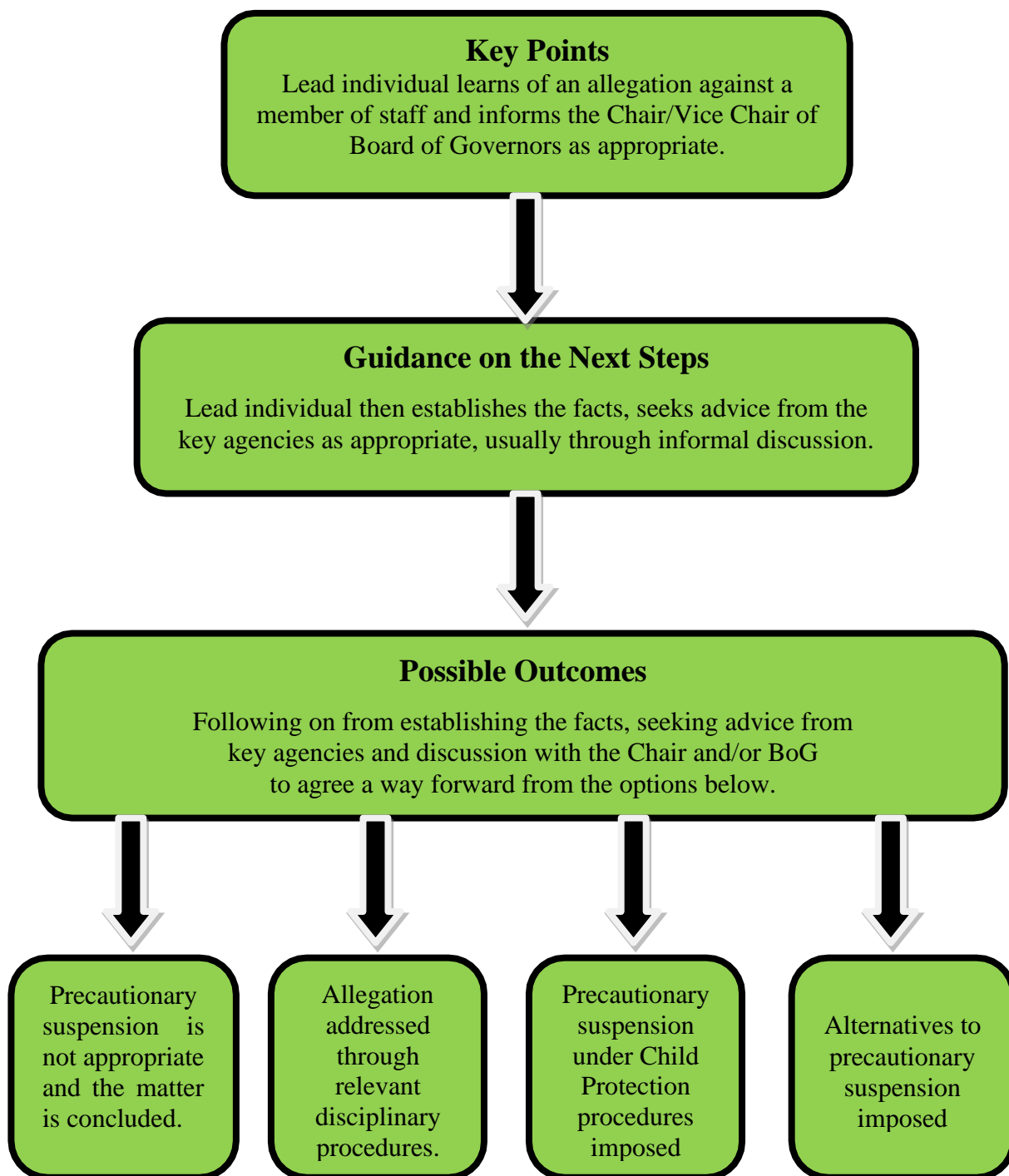


Designated Teacher: Miss McQuillan

Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs McAuley

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.

**Fig 3: Complaints procedure against a member of the school's staff**



Designated Teacher: Miss McQuillan

Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Mc Auley

Principal: Mr Dinsmore

Chair of Governors: Mrs Harvey

The Lead Individual to manage the handling of an allegation will be the Chair of Governors when the allegation of abuse is against the Principal. On all other occasions the Lead Individual will be the Principal.

**APPENDIX 5**  
**CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT RECORD FORM**  
**ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY, GLENARIFF**

**Part 1**

Details of the incident/concerns/disclosure- date, time, place, who dealt with it, observations or circumstances, description of physical/behavioural indicators, child's statements

Details of anyone else involved: conversations held with anyone else; witnesses e.g. parent, other staff member, designated teacher- day, date,time,place,factual content of conversation

Referral to which designated teacher in the school- who, when (date and time), how, place and advice given by designated teacher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT RECORD FORM**  
**ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY, GLENARIFF**

Part 2- to be completed by the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher

Advice sought/conversation with- EA North Eastern Region Officers for CP, CCMS  
Diocesan Officer, social Services, Police CPSA Unit, date, time, place, advice

Decision to refer and why. Other action plus type of feedback to all those involved-  
how, when

Decision not to refer and why. Other action plus type of feedback to all those  
involved- how, when

Designated Teacher:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 6



# TELL:



**Miss McQuillan**

Designated Teacher for Child Protection



**Mrs McAuley**

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

### Also in school:

- School Principal-Mrs McCarry
- Your Teacher
- Teaching Assistants
- Lunchtime Supervisors
- Caretaker/Secretary

In the holidays and  
at **any** time

# Childline

# 0800 1111

## APPENDIX 7

### **Useful Contact Details**

#### **1. Social Services**

Health and Social Care Trust Children's Services Gateway Single Point of Entry  
Team Contact details are as follows:

- **Northern HSC Trust**  
Tel: 0300 1234 333;
- **Regional Emergency Social Work Service - out of hours**  
Tel: 028 9504 9999

#### **2. Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)**

Telephone: 101 or 999 in an emergency

#### **3. NSPCC**

to report a concern about a child/young person - 0808 800 5000  
children can contact Childline for advice- 0800 1111

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

028 9598 5590

#### **5. Barnardo's NI Safe Choices**

028 9065 8511 (open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

#### **6. Domestic & Sexual Violence**

0808 8021414 (24 hour helpline)

#### **7. Copies of safeguarding circulars are available on the DE website.**

Click on '**Circulars**' at [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **CRITERIA IN DETERMINING THE USE OF MATERIALS/THE EXPERTISE OF AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS COMING INTO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Schools may wish to make use of materials, as well as the expertise and skills of visiting speakers from voluntary and/or statutory organisations from the local community. The activities which the agency or individual is to undertake must firstly comply with the ethos of the Catholic school and secondly should complement the on going RSE curriculum. While many agencies and individuals are professionals in their approach, the school authorities may find it useful to apply the following checklist in determining their participation in the school:

#### **Does the individual/agency have a specified Child Protection Policy?**

A copy should be provided before the visit.

#### **Does the individual/agency agree/comply with the ethos of the school?**

#### **Does the individual/agency have a clear set of values and moral code that supports the presentation and programme?**

A copy of this should be given to the school before the presentation.

#### **Has the individual/agency worked in any other Catholic schools?**

This is an effective way of checking the credentials of the individual/agency by contacting other Catholic schools.

#### **Has the individual/agency read the school's RSE policy and is prepared to adhere to it (the ethos, morals and values of the school)?**

#### **Is the individual speaker/agency willing to give his presentation to the teachers of the school?**

#### **Do parents know that the individual/agency is being used by the school?**

It is important that parents are contacted and aware of any presentation, so that they have opportunity to raise any objections prior to the event.

#### **What is the individual/agency stance on issues such as Contraception, Abortion and Euthanasia?** These should be contained in the individual/agency's policy/ mission statement and available to the school.

#### **Are resources such as DVD/video/PowerPoints/role plays appropriate to the ethos of the school?** Principal and/or Co-ordinator should examine all materials/resources being used before presentation.

#### **Will teachers be present during the presentation?** Teachers should always be present during presentation/sessions with classes.



## **APPENDIX 9**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **Introduction**

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 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 within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issues of child abuse by drawing attention to the areas of risks for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

#### **Private Meetings with Pupils**

- (a) Staff should be aware of the dangers which may rise 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.
- (b) Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- (c) Where possible another pupil or preferably another adult should be present or nearby during the interview and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

#### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

- (a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- (b) It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, 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 inhibited from providing this. Whenever possible another staff member should be present or nearby.
- (c) Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact- unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 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).
- (d) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.

- (e) Staff, who have to administer first aid to a pupil, should ensure, wherever possible, that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, *no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- (f) Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- (g) 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 Principal.
- (h) 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/ work environment.

### **Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

- (a) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for choice.
- (b) When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger of their application. They could be criticised by pupils, parents or other teachers for the resource choice made.
- (c) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

### **Relationships and Attitudes**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of St Patrick's Primary School and the employing authority, 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.

All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups or tutoring. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections.

### **Honesty and Integrity**

All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

## **E-Safety and Internet Use**

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given.

## **Confidentiality**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others' advantage.

Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

## **Dress and Appearance**

All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.

## **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 and young people or where the opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

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