



CGS Safeguarding Policy

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mr TA Hamilton

The Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection are Mr J Frew, Miss L Magee and Mrs S Taggart

The Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance is Mrs H Hamilton

The Deputy Designated Governor is Mrs J Stewart

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, which values individuals for their unique talents and abilities and in which all of 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, recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. Under our duty of care we will listen to the pupils and take any necessary steps to ensure their safety and well-being, including UNOCINI referral to Social Services if the child is in need of protection from potential harm or to protect the child from an imminent risk. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active role to play in protecting our pupils from harm.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Governors, Headmaster, Senior Management Team and Staff of Coleraine Grammar School acknowledge their responsibilities under the Children (N.I.) Order 1995 and the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 to safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered pupils in their care and to take whatever steps are necessary to protect them from all forms of abuse. This school document has been written in accordance with the advice contained in the DENI circular 2017/04 "Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools" (updated September 2023) which provides guidance to schools and others on their responsibilities in relation to child protection, including the action to be taken to enable cases of suspected abuse to be properly considered and pursued along with guidance on how complaints against school staff should be handled. It is expected and required that all teaching and support staff will have familiarised themselves with the advice and guidance given in this policy.

This policy is a working document which is designed to ensure that the difficult and sensitive issues of child protection are dealt with properly, consistently and effectively by all staff. The guidance contained in this policy is designed to protect the pupils of our school and to enable staff to discharge their legal obligations to look after the safety and welfare of the children in their care.

- 1.2. The school follows the guidance provided by the Safeguarding board for Northern Ireland (SBNI). Their role is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland through a coordinated approach and sharing of information between agencies.

2. Legislation

2.1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC lists a number of statements, setting out the rights which all children and young people up to the age of 18 should have, no matter where they live or whatever their circumstances are. In the context of this guidance, the most important of these are in three articles:

- Article 19 provides that children have *the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.*
- Article 12 further provides that *a child who is capable of forming his own views should be assured the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, those views being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*
- Finally, and most fundamentally, Article 3 provides that *when organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.*

2.2. Other Legislation

In addition to legislation mentioned above, this Policy is set within the context of:

The Children Northern Ireland Order 1995

The Human Rights Act (1998)

The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland Order) 2007

Sexual Offences Order (NI) 2008

Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011. This Policy takes account of additional guidance within the following documents:

1999/17 Parental responsibility

Promotion of Positive Behaviour (2001) DENI

Section 73 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 amended the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 to include FGM protection orders (FGMPOs).

Children's Services Cooperation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (came into operation on 01 September 2021, requiring BoG of the school to determine the measures pursued at the school to prevent, respond to and record all incidents of alleged and/or confirmed bullying type behaviour involving registered pupils).

The Domestic Abuse Information-sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Protection from Stalking Act NI 2022 (Stalking Prevention Orders (SPOs) came into effect by law here during October 2023. The new orders give the police the ability to set boundaries by implementing specific SPOs to stop the escalation of stalking).

Government Policies and Strategies

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017)

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

A new Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2023-2030 is being developed jointly by the Departments of Justice and Health and will be published in 2024.

Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Prevention in Partnership

The Children and Young People Strategy 2020-2030 is a requirement of the Children's Services Cooperation Act (NI) 2015. It is the overarching strategic framework for government to improve health and wellbeing of all children in Northern Ireland

Public Service Ombudsman

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016 gives a power to investigate and report on complaints about maladministration in all grant aided schools in Northern Ireland.

If having escalated a safeguarding and/or child protection concern and you are not satisfied with how your concerns have been addressed, you may revert to the school's complaints policy. This policy may culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

Each school is responsible for setting its own complaints policy and procedures which is available on the school's website, or by contacting the school directly. Please note that this complaints process, although similar, is separate from the escalation of safeguarding and child protection concerns, and is in relation to the way in which your concerns were dealt with.

Details of how to make a complaint to NIPSO may be found on their website at: www.nipso.org.uk or, by telephone on 0800 34 34 24. However, please bear in mind that usually, before you complain to the Ombudsman, you will be expected to have exhausted the school's internal complaints procedure. For further information, see: www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/4/part/2/crossheading/procedure-for-making-complaint-to-the-ombudsman

3. Basic Principle

- 3.1. Enshrined in the Children [Northern Ireland] Order 1995 is the fundamental principle that ***it is the welfare of the child which must be the paramount consideration.***

This principle then underpins our response to the challenge of ensuring child protection and is the cornerstone of this policy document i.e. when decisions are taken as to the appropriate course of action in a given set of circumstances then it is the welfare of the child that should guide the decision-making process.

4. Definition of a child

4.1. For the purpose of this guidance a child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order.

5. The Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team consists of

The President of The Board of Governors: Mr W Oliver

The Vice-President of The Board of Governors: Mr G Montgomery

The Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Mrs H Hamilton

The Deputy Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Mrs J Stewart

Headmaster: Dr D Carruthers (Chair of Safeguarding Team)

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mr TA Hamilton

The Deputy Designated Teacher(s) for Child Protection: Mr J Frew / Miss L Magee / Mrs. S Taggart

Where schools employ an individual with social work qualifications/experience, the postholder may be included in the school safeguarding team. However, only teachers in schools can assume the safeguarding role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher.

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Team include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school.
- Support for the Designated Teachers in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.

As part of the evaluation of their arrangements for child protection and safeguarding, schools/organisations may choose to use the ETI proforma for self-evaluation purposes, and/or during inspections or other ETI visits if they so wish.

The team attend Child Protection Training delivered by CPSS, as required. The ETI will seek assurances that all initial and update safeguarding training has taken place within agreed timeframes. This will include specific dates for training relating to all designated staff and governors which should correlate with issued certificates of attendance and the update training for all.

Designated Teachers

- 5.1. Every school is required to designate a teacher to have specific responsibility for child protection matters. If, for some reason, the designated teacher is unavailable then the Deputy Designated Teacher will fulfil the role.
- 5.2. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mr. T A Hamilton
- 5.3. The Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection are Mr J Frew / Miss L Magee / Mrs. S Taggart

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. *Role of the Designated Teacher*

- a) *The Designated Teacher will assume primary responsibility for all matters pertaining to the Children Order and lead the planning, implementation and development of procedures for Safeguarding in Coleraine Grammar School*

- b) *All staff are made aware who the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers are and understand their role as the first point of contact when abuse is suspected. The DT and DDTs will be available to discuss concerns with staff and receive reports from staff on possible or actual instances of Child Abuse.*
- c) *The Designated Teacher, after consultation with the Headmaster and Education Authority Child Protection Support Services (CPSS) staff, will refer all reported allegations to Social Services/PSNI using the UNOCINI process and proceeding through Single Point of Entry (SPOE) if this is felt to be necessary (see procedures in Appendices 1 and 2) and liaise with parents concerned as appropriate. If a referral is sent electronically this will be password protected.*
- d) *The President of the Board of Governors will then be notified as soon as possible.*
- e) *The Designated Teacher will ensure that appropriate reporting forms (See Appendix 3) are available and will keep copies of these in a secure place. The Designated Teacher will also maintain a Child Protection Record where initial concerns will be recorded in chronological order.*
- f) *The Designated Teacher will provide support for the pupil(s) concerned.*
- g) *The Designated Teacher will advise the person who has reported the concern of follow-up procedures.*
- h) *In the event of the absence of the Designated Teacher the Deputy Designated Teachers will act in his / her place.*
- i) *The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers will receive Child Protection training as required by DENI and will provide consultation and advice on contacting the Child Protection Agencies when necessary.*
- j) *The Designated Teacher is responsible for induction and training of teaching and support staff and promote a safeguarding ethos in school.*
- k) *The Designated Teacher has responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.*
- l) *The Designated Teacher will liaise with outside agencies.*
- m) *The Designated Teacher will liaise with all parents re Child Protection Policy every two years.*
- n) *The Designated Teacher will review the Child Protection Policy annually.*
- o) *The Designated Teacher will provide a written Child Protection report at least annually to Board of Governors*

6.2. *Role of Deputy Designated Teacher*

The role of the Deputy Designated Teachers is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling his/her responsibilities. The Deputy Designated Teachers will support the Designated Teacher and undertake duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required. It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required.

6.3 *Role of the Headmaster*

The Headmaster will assist the Board of Governors to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from the Department of Education is shared promptly, and timely inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. The Headmaster takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Headmaster has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.

The Headmaster must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

In the event of an allegation, suspicion or instance of Child Abuse, the Headmaster will:

- a) *consider the report received from the Designated Teacher*

- b) ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented, including the immediate safeguarding of a pupil considered at risk
- c) in conjunction with the safeguarding team, decide on the need for a referral, either informal or formal, to Social Services, to the Designated Officer of EA (Northern Area) and to other agencies, as appropriate
- d) maintain records of disclosures of abuse, suspicions of abuse and complaints against staff (Guidelines for record keeping are available in appendix 10))
- e) inform parents, as and when appropriate
- f) initiate vetting procedures for all new staff and volunteers
- g) respond to concerns under the School's Complaints Procedure

6.4 Role of Board of Governors

The President of the Board of Governors plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment. In the event of a safeguarding and child protection complaint being made against the Headmaster, the President will assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department, employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

The President is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries.

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the appropriate Child Protection Policy and procedures are in place rests with the Board of Governors. Mrs H Hamilton is the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection, Mrs J Stewart is the Deputy Designated Governor with responsibility for Child Protection. The Designated Governor will keep other governors informed about Child Protection matters.

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, places a statutory duty on Board of Governors to keep a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school.

6.5 Role of Staff

- a) know who is the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers
- b) be familiar with the School's Child Protection Policy
- c) take steps to ensure that pupils in their care are protected from harm
- d) be alert for signs and symptoms of possible Child Abuse
- e) be familiar with the School's Anti Bullying Policy
- f) report disclosures or concerns re possible abuse to Designated Teacher or Deputy in the first instance
- g) keep a brief written record of details
- h) ensure that their own professional conduct is prudent
- i) alert the DT if they have any concerns

7 Types of Abuse

7.1 Definitions are taken from Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017).

Child abuse may take a number of forms, including:

- 7.1.1 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.
- 7.1.2 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.
- 7.1.3 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. Sexual abuse is any behaviour (physical, verbal,

virtual/digital) 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 or sexual orientation) without their informed consent or understanding.

- 7.1.4 Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones.
- 7.1.5 Domestic abuse** is threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'
- 7.1.6 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.

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of appropriate supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.

7.2 Identifying signs of possible abuse

Teaching and support staff alike are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such changes may be the result of abuse, but it should always be remembered that there might be other explanations. The following may be noticeable:

- 7.2.1** Bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks or burns, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities;
- 7.2.2** Possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition;
- 7.2.3** Possible indicators of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence, or attention seeking;
- 7.2.4** Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs' or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- 7.2.5** Any or any combination of the above may be accompanied by or solely manifested in marked deterioration in performance and/or increased absenteeism.

Signs such as those described above and others can do no more than give rise to concern – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. Teachers and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated. Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he /s he must report it immediately to the designated teacher. The existence of a designated teacher should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff in being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed.

8 Procedures

8.1 What to do when you have cause for concern:

Coleraine Grammar School recognizes that it takes courage and determination for a pupil to tell an adult that s/he is being abused and issues around disclosures are usually complex and very sensitive.

Staff can find a summary of these guidelines set out in the staff planner and must pass on all information to:

*The Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Mr TA Hamilton**, or in his absence*

*The Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection: are **Mr J Frew / Miss L Magee / Mrs. S Taggart***

If no one is available, the Headmaster should be informed.

If the DTCP/DDTCP has a concern that a young person is engaging in high-risk behaviour, parents will be contacted in addition to accessing further support if necessary through the UNOCINI process.

Staff should use the following guidelines along with the advice provided in Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017 when dealing with potential safeguarding issues.

It is essential that the member of staff acts promptly.

NO member of staff should investigate the incident. This is a matter for Social Services.

The teacher in whom the child chooses to confide should:

- **not promise confidentiality**
- **never attempt to cross-examine the pupil or press for evidence** as this may jeopardise future investigations
- ensure that the pupil is safe from risk
- **listen** carefully and quietly; ask questions for clarification only
- be sympathetic and supportive, reassuring the pupil that it is not their fault and that it is right to tell
- believe what the pupil is saying
- remain calm and reassuring
- try not to show revulsion or pass judgement
- try to control feelings about the perpetrator

When the disclosure has been made, the teacher in question must:

check out understanding of what has happened with the pupil

Staff should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.

Staff should not, therefore, ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?".

The priority at this stage is to actively listen to the child, and not to interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is freely recalling significant events (the child must not be asked to unnecessarily recount the experience of abuse), and as soon as possible afterwards to make a record of the discussion, using the appropriate form in Appendix 3 to pass on to the Designated Teacher. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed, nor a photograph taken.

refrain from discussing concerns and fears with parents or anyone else. If the allegations prove to be untrue, reporting them to someone who is not concerned may be deemed defamatory

Be available to support pupil as appropriate after the disclosure

Get support for self

Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred, should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used.

Staff should not give the child or young person undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should, of course, reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.

Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings. Guidance on record keeping is available in "Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools" 2017 (updated September 2023), 'Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools' circular 2016/20 (updated 2019/08, Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools update')

It should be emphasised that lack of proper records will not, of itself, exempt the school from any subsequent requirement to give evidence in court. It is therefore essential that accurate contemporaneous records are maintained.

Staff should not ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

Children whose first language is not English/Newcomer pupils should be given the opportunity to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred. DTs and other relevant school staff should seek advice and support from the EA's Intercultural Education Service if necessary. All schools should create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils

for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

In summary:

- 8.1.1 RECEIVE** - *listen* to what a child says but do not ask leading questions. You may clarify that you have understood what the pupil has told you but under no circumstances should you investigate as this may prejudice an official investigation at a later date.
- 8.1.2 REASSURE** - ensure the child is reassured that he will be safe and his interests come first e.g. “I’m glad you’ve told me about this”, I’m sorry this has happened to you”, “This is not your fault”. **You cannot, however, promise confidentiality as you have a responsibility to refer the case to the designated teacher in the best interests of the child.** See Appendix 4 for further guidance on confidentiality.
- 8.1.3 REACT** - only to ensure that the child is safe and secure.
- 8.1.4 RECORD** - make a note of what you have seen or heard and the date and time.
- 8.1.5 REPORT** - report to the designated teacher, using the official report form (See Appendix 3) as soon as you have **any** concern for a child.

8.2 Child displaying symptoms of, or school alerted to, possible abuse

- 8.2.1** In all cases where symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or about the welfare of the child the person receiving the complaint (or information), or noticing signs of possible abuse, must notify the designated teacher for child protection;
- 8.2.2** The designated teacher should consult with the Headmaster or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. Advice should be sought from a CPSS member of staff. The designated teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/parents/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required to the Social Services and/or PSNI.

8.3 When an adult (not a school employee) makes a disclosure to the school concerning a pupil

- 8.3.1** A parent or other carer may also give information to a member of staff of the school which gives rise to concern about possible child abuse by someone outside the school, or by a person working in the school in a volunteer capacity. The person making the complaint should be advised of their responsibility to refer to the local Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team.
- 8.3.2** The staff member should also inform the designated teacher responsible for child protection matters in the school who will refer, if necessary to the appropriate statutory authorities.
- 8.3.3** In order to form a view on whether a child or children may indeed be being abused, or at risk of possible abuse, the Headmaster/DT/DDT may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information, or from others who may have relevant information.
- 8.3.4** While such clarification will often help to confirm or allay concerns, it is not the responsibility of teachers and other education staff to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse, or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child’s family or other carers.
- 8.3.5** The EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) can offer advice on all child protection issues.

8.3.1 Person receiving the complaint or report should

- *follow recommended guidelines for “listening to a disclosure”*
- *write a record of the disclosure for the Designated Teacher*
- *report details to Designated Teacher (or Deputy) as soon as possible*

8.3.2 The Designated Teacher (or Deputies) should

- *consider need for immediate safeguarding of pupil at risk*
- *inform the Headmaster*
- *place a detailed report in the Child Protection File*
- *place a brief note in the pupil file*

Headmaster and Designated Teacher then decide if additional information is required. If this is the case then discreetly consult with Form Teacher, informally contact Social Services and contact EA Designated Officer (CPSS). Parents should be consulted as soon as possible (unless parent is implicated in the abuse)

Headmaster /Designated Teacher makes a decision:

EITHER a referral is necessary

- *Inform Social Services or PSNI (UNOCINI proforma)*
- *Inform parents/carers (unless implicated)*

OR no referral is necessary

- *Inform person making complaint or providing information*
- *Inform parents or carer (unless implicated)*
- *Record details, including reasons for no referral, in Child Protection File*
- *Place a note in the pupil file*

Designated Teacher ensures that a detailed record is retained.

8.4 Complaint against a Volunteer

Any complaint about the conduct of a person working in the school in a voluntary capacity will be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is not on the school's staff, and the above procedures followed.

8.5 A summary of the procedures in the above instances can be seen in Appendix 5 of this policy.

8.6 Complaint against a member of the school staff (See Appendix 2)

8.6.1 Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures in DE Circular 2015/13 should be followed.

8.6.2 In all decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration and the child should be listened to and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed.

8.6.3 Any complaint regarding a member of staff should be made directly to the Headmaster who will carry out a discrete preliminary clarification of the grounds for the complaint. The Headmaster will not investigate the allegations.

8.6.4 Having been satisfied that a complaint has indeed been made, the Headmaster should immediately:

- inform the designated teacher (if they are not the subject of the complaint) who will initiate the record of the complaint;
- consult as a matter of urgency and in confidence with the designated child protection officer from the EA (NE region) to form an initial assessment as to whether or not the allegation warrants further action; and
- consult the President of the Board of Governors

8.6.5 In deciding what to do the Headmaster and the President will remember that the need to protect the child is paramount, but the need to protect members of staff against unfounded, but nonetheless potentially damaging, allegations is also important.

8.6.6 In the light of any advice taken, the Headmaster (where he / she is not the subject of the complaint), in consultation with the President of the Board of Governors, will decide that:

- a) the allegation is apparently without substance, and no further action is necessary; or
- b) an immediate referral to the Social Services or PSNI is warranted; or
- c) the allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedures.

If outcome a) - the member of staff should be advised about the nature of the complaint and that no further action is being taken. The Education Authority CPSS Staff should be similarly informed. The Complainant should be informed about the decision in writing. A brief record should be appended to the pupil's file.

If outcome b) - the Social services, Police, Education Authority CPSS Staff and President of the Board of Governors should be notified immediately. There should **either** be a precautionary suspension with pay **or** immediate removal from pupil contact. The alleged offender should be advised to seek legal or professional advice after being informed in writing of the allegation. The Complainant should be informed as soon as

possible of the action. A detailed written record of the complaint should be signed and dated by the Headmaster and countersigned by the Designated Teacher.

If outcome c) - this would result if the teacher's conduct was not deemed to warrant a formal referral. Appropriate procedures as agreed by the Disciplinary Committee of the Board of Governors should be taken. The complaint and action taken should be noted on the file of the member of staff and pupil and kept for five years.

In the interests of all involved the issue should be dealt with as a priority and unnecessary delays should be avoided. Every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity must be made. Allegations should not be shared with other staff or children.

8.7 A summary of the procedures in the above instances can be seen in Appendix 2 of this policy.

8.8 Complaint against a member of the Board of Governors

Where a member of staff receives a complaint concerning possible child abuse by a member of the Board of Governors, all aspects of the above procedures should be followed. The Headmaster should immediately inform the President, unless he / she is the subject of the complaint, in which case the President 's role should be carried out by the Vice- President.

8.9 Procedures for Parents

If a parent has a concern about the safety of their own, or another, child they can raise those concerns using the procedure outlined in Appendix 6.

8.10 Reporting Form

The reporting form to be used by staff to record any concerns is shown in Appendix 3. This form is available in the staff folder on the computer system and should be completed and passed to the Designated Teacher.

9. Recruitment, Vetting and Induction of Staff and Volunteers

The responsibilities and processes to be followed are clearly set out in:

DE Circular 2013/01 (currently under review) 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools':

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201301-guidance-schools-and-employing-authorities-pre-employment-safer

DE Circular 2012/19 (currently under review) 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Schools from 10 September 2012:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201219-changes-pre-employment-vetting-checks-volunteers-working-schools

Schools must ensure that volunteers, e.g. coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc, who are employed by others, have the necessary clearances in place and a record of these should be maintained by the Headmaster.

Appointment of a new teacher

DE Circular 2013/01 (updated September 2015, currently under review) sets out vetting requirements for schools.

Recruitment procedures will include an Access NI check of the possible criminal background of an applicant who will have substantial unsupervised access to children. Teachers, examination invigilators and Private contracted transport providers (named drivers) must have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) from Access NI before taking up post. With the applicant's knowledge and approval, a standardised form may be forwarded through the Department of Education for Northern Ireland for police processing. In addition, when appropriate, an unofficial enquiry may be made with the applicant's referees.

Vetting of persons who are not members of staff who will be working with pupils

All such individuals involved in extra-curricular school activities or involved in any other way must be informed that school policy requires checks on their suitability:

- (a) The school will obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Check for those working without supervision.
- (b) The school may decide to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Check for those working with supervision.
- (c) Using a suitable pro forma, references will be sought from at least two sources.
- (d) The individual may not undertake any school activity until advised by the Headmaster.

10.1 Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in supporting the work of the school. It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken to ensure children are not placed at risk through allowing unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an EDC. A volunteer who works under supervision is not required to obtain an EDC, Schools will determine whether the level of supervision meets the statutory standard – as set out in DE Circular 2012/19 (currently under review). The school may canvass for volunteers to come forward and offer assistance and many will already be known to the school. Others may come from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is undertaken with the agreement of the Board of Governors. The code of conduct in Appendix 8 should be followed as good practice.

10.1.1 A volunteer is an individual who

- *Assumes unpaid duties in school on more than 2 occasions*
- *Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist with a school trip, residential activity or sporting activity.*

10.1.2 Volunteers may be involved

- *during school hours involving direct contact with pupils*
- *outside school hours involving direct contact with pupils*
- *during school hours not involving direct contact with pupils*

10.1.3 Before beginning volunteer work, all volunteers are asked to provide the following information:

- *personal details*
- *qualifications and previous work with children*
- *a declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or of a Bound over Order*
- *a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for Child Protection*
- *agreement to a criminal record check being carried out through Access NI (via EA (Northern Area)). It is important that the boxes H7 and H8 on the Access NI form are completed correctly to take account of the guidance in circular 2012/19 (currently under review)*
- *names of two referees who are not family members or members of the school staff*
- *proof of identity*

10.1.4 When the procedures have been followed and the school is satisfied that:

- *the person is suitable to work with children and support the work of the school*
- *well defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the person to undertake and the person is capable of carrying these out*

The school will notify the individual that they have been accepted for voluntary duties in the school.

10.2 Volunteers are covered by the following principles:

Volunteers

- *support the work of staff. They are not substitutes for staff or used to cover duties normally carried out by paid staff who are absent or to release staff to carry out other duties.*
- *work under the supervision of paid staff and these arrangements minimise opportunities for unsupervised direct contact with children*
- *are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, equipment or premises*
- *should understand the tasks they are to undertake and be properly trained to carry these out*
- *are allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the staff members with which they will be most closely involved. Teachers or other staff are not under pressure to accept a volunteer to help in their work*
- *are not given access to records of other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception may be made if a child has a medical condition and the information is shared with those working with the pupil and agreement from the parent is sought*

10.3 *Volunteers are owed a duty of care under Health and Safety legislation. Coleraine Grammar School ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees.*

A time limit may be placed on a volunteer's period of service. If this is likely to be long term, then the volunteer is informed that this will be subject to a trial period during which the Headmaster will monitor the volunteer's effectiveness in contributing to the life and work of the school.

Volunteers are given information, guidance and training to allow them to carry out their duties effectively.

As a minimum that will receive training on

- *Child Protection and Pastoral care, including access to related policies and procedures.*
- *Health and Safety policy*

Arrangements will be made to have a formal line of communication to the VP Pastoral to report any concerns relating to the welfare of children.

Volunteers will be expected to sign in at the school's security system each time they are on the premises.

10.4 Visitors to Schools

Visitors to schools, such as parents, suppliers of goods and services, to carry out maintenance etc do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require.

Visitors should be:

Met/directed by school staff/representatives.

Signed in and out of the school-by-school staff.

If appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school.

Where possible, escorted by a member of staff/representative.

Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.

Access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.

If delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

11 Staff Code of Conduct

The staff code of conduct is available to all staff and is set out in Appendix 8

11.1 Members of staff (including volunteers involved in extra-curricular activities) must be exceptionally careful in today's climate not to put themselves in any situation where an allegation of abuse could be made. They must always err on the side of caution. However, an excessively negative emphasis could lead to a loss of vital contact and helpful relationships.

11.2 In extreme cases a teacher might have to restrain a pupil physically. Guidance on the circumstances where this is permissible is included in the school's Policy on the Use of Reasonable Force which is summarised in Appendix 7

11.3 To help avoid placing themselves in a difficult situation the Staff Code of Conduct shown in Appendix 8 has been drawn up.

11.4 The coaching of sports can produce a different set of circumstances for staff and volunteers in terms of the potential for allegations to be made. To provide additional guidance in this area the Coaching Code of Conduct shown in Appendix 9 has been drawn up and will be provided to all staff and volunteers undertaking coaching activities.

12 Hosting of pupils on educational or sports trips

It is not reasonable to expect that all parents who act as hosts are vetted but risk management measures should be put in place as follows:

12.1 Prospective hosts must be informed that school policy requires checks on their suitability:

12.2 The Headmaster should run a list of prospective hosts past social services (duty social worker) to ascertain if there are any concerns

12.3 The host school should enquire from prospective hosting families as to the accommodation on offer to the visiting child/children. The school should state its preference that the child has a bedroom to himself or with another visiting child of the same gender from the same trip

12.4 The school should ensure that all children have the name and phone number of someone in the host area who speaks their language and is available by phone at all times to a child in distress

12.5 The school should ensure that all children have the name and phone number of someone from their own school

12.6 Supervising teachers should have daily contact with the children and should be vigilant to any distress

12.7 All children should be taught self-protection/personal safety measures

12.8 When Northern Irish children are going to another jurisdiction, the home school should ask the host school about its risk management measures

13 Bullying

13.1 Bullying constitutes a form of abuse by another child or young person although in most cases it will not lead to the implementation of the child protection procedures.

13.2 Coleraine Grammar School has adopted the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 definition of bullying as:

(1) ... "bullying" includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of —

(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication

(b) any other act, or

(c) any combination of those,

by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), "act" includes omission.

13.3 The main types of bullying are physical acts, verbal or written acts, indirect and/or electronic acts.

13.4 CGS recognises its responsibility to keep its pupils safe from harm and to provide a secure learning environment. To this end CGS has an anti-bullying policy which is communicated to all pupils, staff and parents.

13.5 Where child abuse carried out by another child is suspected, the appropriate child protection procedures will be followed for both the child experiencing bullying behaviours and the child displaying bullying behaviours.

14 E-media and Child protection

Our policy on the internet and digital technologies is set out in a separate document, which is informed by DENI and C2K guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks involved in using these technologies. It specifically addresses safeguarding issues that may arise from the use of the internet. This policy also covers the taking and storage of images.

14.1 The school will follow the advice given by the EA (NE Region) regarding the taking and use of images of pupils.

14.2 The school will follow the advice given in the Department of Education Circular 2007/1 "Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools".

14.3 Signed consent will be sought from parents at the beginning of a pupil's time at CGS for the use of their image. When a parent does not agree to their child being photographed, the Headmaster will inform staff and make every effort to comply with the request.

14.4 Parents will be given the opportunity each year to withdraw their consent for the use of images of their child.

14.5 The use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Designated Teacher in the same way that you would report any other child protection issue.

14.6 The school's Social Networking Policy will be used to prevent the abuse of pupils or staff via social networks.

15 Female Genital Mutilation

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation. This is a serious offence and anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

An FGM protection order is a civil measure which can be applied for through a family court. The FGM protection order offers the means of protecting actual or potential victims from FGM under the civil law.

Applications for an order can be made by:

- the person who is to be protected by the order*
- a relevant third party (such as the local authority)*
- any other person with the permission of the court (for example, teachers, health care professionals, police, family member).*

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. Anyone who suspects a child is at risk should report the matter immediately to the DT.

16 Use of the Preventative Curriculum

- 16.1** The school is strongly committed to developing positive relationships and a caring ethos across the whole school and promotes a preventative curriculum 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. The personal development curriculum and wellbeing of pupils has a high priority in the school development plan and keeping safe messages are embedded throughout the school.
- 16.2** 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 school's positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred. 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 - 2022/02 - Children Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202202-children-who-display-harmful-sexual-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 should be sought. The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.
- 16.3** Children need to learn how to recognise abusive behaviour and understand that abusive and manipulative relationships are never right or acceptable. They also need to have the skills to challenge such relationships, and know how best to access appropriate help and support. Through the personal development aspect of Learning for Life and Work, which is delivered to all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4, the school will provide opportunities for pupils to consider how to safeguard themselves and others. An ETI report "The Preventative Curriculum in Schools and EOTAS Centres (April 2023) may be found at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/preventative-curriculum-schools-and-eotas-centres>

CCEA has established an RSE Hub (Relationships Sexuality Education) which includes resources and guidance information for teachers, parents/carers and children and young people.

<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse>

More information and RSE guidance documents may be found on the Department website at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/relationship-and-sexuality-education-rse> including new guidance published by DE (Circular 2024/01).

Harmful sexual behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when: there is no informed consent by the victim; and/or the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim. Harmful sexual behaviour can include: using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases; inappropriate touching; using sexual violence or threats; 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; 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 sexual 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.

17 School Trips and Visits

Schools will also be concerned to ensure the welfare of their pupils on work experience and on residential trips.

Guidance on organising work experience is available from the EA and from the Health and Safety Executive.

www.eani.org.uk/school-management/educational-visits

For guidance on vetting of supervisors/volunteers see DE Circulars 2013/01 (currently under review) and 2012/19 (currently under review).

The School Educational Visits/Trips/Tours Policy is based on the guidelines produced by the Education Authority, "EA Educational Visits Interim Guidance for Schools 2017" <https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/ea-educational-visits-interim-guidance-2017> and "EA Educational Visits During Covid-19 Guidance for Schools October 2021" <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/policies-and-guidance/educational-visits>

18 CALP

The CALP coordinator liaises with other schools to ensure the safety of pupils when in CALP schools other than their own.

19 Vetting Procedures

The School's vetting procedures are compliant with the practice advised in DE circulars 2006/07; 2006/08; 2006/09; 2008/03; 2012/19 (currently under review) and 2013/01 (updated September 2015, currently under review). Copies are available on the DENI website.

20 Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Policy reflects the consideration we give to the protection of the pupils both while within the school environment and when undertaking school trips and visits.

21 Physical Restraint

The policy on Use of Reasonable Force to restrain a child is set out in a separate policy. Staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that there are times when it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to the pupil or another person. See appendix 7.

22 Intimate Care

EA (Northern Area) and DENI guidelines will be sought and adhered to if a pupil requires intimate care.

23 School Security

Personal safety in school, as with all other aspects of school management, is maximised by examining customs and practices which may in the past have unconsciously, or otherwise, exposed staff to behaviours by either parents, pupils or visitors which have, at the very least, been distressing, or more seriously, resulted in them being verbally abused, or even assaulted. It is preferable that pupils are protected from witnessing such events.

The Department of Education has posted a relevant document on its website "The Security and Personal Safety in Schools". Their site address is: www.deni.gov.uk. Part 2 gives specific advice on Personal Safety.

24 Security Arrangements

There are various systems and arrangements in place to safeguard employees and pupils. These systems and arrangements are regularly reviewed. They include:

- all exterior Fire Doors should be kept closed at all times (except during emergency use);
- visitors are required to sign in at the Front Office, and wear the identity badge issued by school staff. Badges should be surrendered at the end of the day. Visitors without badges will be challenged;
- CCTV coverage of the school is regularly viewed;
- teaching staff supervisors and prefects are watchful for intruders, or incidents or events that give rise to concerns;
- pupils and staff on trips and visits are watchful for the safety of pupils and employees

25 Responding to Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

25.1 The Children (NI) Order 1995 (Article 17) states that a child shall be taken to be in need if:

- He is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by an authority under this Part;
- His health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired without the provision for him of such services; or
- He is disabled,
- and 'family', in relation to such a child, includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child and any other person with whom he has been living

25.2 Responding to Children with Increased Vulnerabilities are children who:

- are considered to be failing at school;
- have offended
- are experiencing behavioural difficulties
- are in need of protection
- are experiencing ill-health, either physical or psychological

- are having difficulty accessing services
- are homeless
- are unaccompanied and seeking asylum
- are suffering family breakdown
- are exposed to domestic violence
- are LGBTQ+
- non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).
- are misusing substances
- are teenage parents
- are carers
- are disabled
- may also include

Schools should strive to provide a happy environment where all young people feel safe and secure. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably, e.g. due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. The EA has published guidance on how schools can support transgender young people: www.eani.org.uk/school-management/policies-and-guidance/supporting-transgender-young-people

26. Participation and consultation

26.1 Stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in the review of this policy. After initial review, all major changes will be subject to participation and consultation by stakeholders.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) enshrines the right of all children and young people to say what they think should happen and to have their opinions taken into account when adults are making decisions that affect them.

Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement (ESaGS), School Development Planning, Together Towards Improvement and the 10-year Strategy for Children and Young People offer advice on how to facilitate this.

CGS recognises the value of all forms of pupil participation and the important contribution these can make in supporting pupils as key stakeholders and decision-makers within their school. The school is committed to encouraging all pupils to have a voice which is listened to and respected and taken into account.

The views of all staff and pupils are taken into consideration regularly to promote engagement among staff, pupils, parents, families and the wider community.

School Council is one aspect of participation. All pupils need to have the opportunity to be involved and know they are listened to and that their views are valued. Consequently, all stakeholders will have greater understanding and ownership of this policy.

The concept of participation builds upon existing engagement in a positive and pro-active way so that children and young people are given the opportunity to voice their opinions and have a real say in decisions that affect their lives in schools and within their local community. CGS endeavours to create an ethos of participation within the school.

Effective participation requires the provision of structures that will ensure children and young people's opinions are encouraged, listened to, respected and valued when taking decisions that impact upon them.

26.2 Principles of Participation

- It has to be meaningful and ongoing;
- Pupils, Parents and Teachers need to talk to each other to make participation work;
- It is a process which includes respect for all those involved;
- The language used must be clear and appropriate to the age of the pupils;
- Pupils should have an understanding of the type of decisions their views can change (i.e. it is not a wish list);
- Engagement must be responsive and relevant to pupils' age and interest;
- Pupils need trained, supported and encouraged to help them make positive contributions to issues that relate not just to them both in the schools and the wider community;
- Pupils' opinions need to be encouraged, listened to, respected and valued when taking decisions that impact upon them.

In practice, this means schools providing ways to communicate with pupils as part of the on-going decision-making process and engaging with them as stakeholders in issues that impact on the school and the wider school community. By adopting this approach pupils will see that they have a valuable contribution to make in ensuring the effectiveness of their school.

26.3 WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL PUPIL PARTICIPATION LOOK LIKE?

For successful pupil participation, it is important that the school has an ethos where pupil participation is valued highly in all realms of its work. The school, therefore, needs to demonstrate consistently its core values of cooperation with pupils, mutual respect and a commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity. The success of pupil participation will also depend on how well the structures put in place ensure that they capture the opinions and concerns of the wider school population and on how well the outcomes of any consultations are communicated to those participants. It is therefore important that schools have in place effective evaluation methods to assess the impact that participation structures have had across the school community.

Of course, whilst pupils have the right to have their voice heard, it is also important to recognise that participation is a two-way process. Pupils need to be aware that there are certain responsibilities placed on them to ensure that participation is effective. Appropriate support should be put in place to ensure that pupils develop an understanding of the extent to which they are personally responsible for their own learning as well as the impact their behaviour and general conduct can have on themselves and those around them including their peers, teachers and other adults who form part of the school community.

Channels of communication may include:

- Assemblies;
- Evaluation of learning;
- Suggestion/comment boxes placed at regular intervals throughout the school;
- Use of imagery such as 'This is a listening school' to demonstrate to pupils that their views are listened to;
- Email box and/or a dedicated school webpage;
- Questionnaires/surveys to pupils or specific year group pupils;
- A notice board(s);
- Form classes to hear pupils' views on specific school development issues;
- Pupil elections of Prefects/School Council;
- Recognition for pupils who engage in participation activities such as a letter of thanks to recognise their contribution; and
- Pastoral Google Classroom(s).

27 JUSTICE (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND TRAFFICKING VICTIMS) ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2022

The Act which became law in April 2022 gives effect to the Justice Minister's desire to improve the operation and effectiveness of the justice system. At its core are two key aims, which are:

- a) to enhance public safety by implementing certain elements of the Report of the Gillen review of serious sexual offence cases and from a review of the law on child sexual exploitation and sexual offences against children; and,
- b) to improve services for victims of trafficking and exploitation.

The Act created several new offences, including non-fatal strangulation, up-skirting and down-blousing, cyber-flashing, and masquerading as a child online, and implements certain elements of the Gillen report on serious sexual offence cases. The Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 legislation may be viewed at the following link <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2022/19/contents/enacted>

The Domestic Abuse Information-sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

Section 26 of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 enables the Department of Justice to bring forward regulations to provide for an Operation Encompass model for Northern Ireland.

28 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always include physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

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.

Potential indicators of CSE:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation.

- Truantiing/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 sexual 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.

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 Northern Health and Social Care Trust 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.

29 SHARING NUDES AND SEMI-NUDES

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes is a term used to describe the sending or posting of naked or partially naked images, videos or livestreams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via text, email, social media and gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. Sharing nudes is sometimes called 'sexting', however this term is often used by young people to talk about sharing sexual messages and not imagery. Staff must be aware that an image can be shared non-consensually, or a child can be groomed, tricked or coerced into sending nude and semi-nude images. 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 Designated Staff should seek advice from CPSS and contact local PSNI on 101 for advice and guidance. If a child 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. Childline's Report Remove Tool may be able to assist in having an image blocked or removed to prevent further distribution <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/>

30 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, the police 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. Police will only share enough information to allow an educational setting to provide the necessary pastoral care and support to the child. The type of information that would be received may include the timing of the incident; the child or children involved and where the incident took place if relevant; who was involved in the incident, their relationship to the child and where appropriate, the level of the incident (offence type, injuries etc); and whether the child would have been present, in the vicinity or a witness to the incident. 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.

For further information see, *The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2022/146/contents/made>

CONCLUSION

The safeguarding and protection of children and young people is an essential part of the pastoral care of the school.

The experiences that children gain from School depend upon relationships of trust between teachers and pupils and from a feeling of security within School's environment. The area of Child Abuse can be difficult and sensitive, and this Policy offers clear procedures for action; draws attention to areas of potential risk and provides guidance to staff in respecting the rights of children in their care whilst also keeping themselves safe.

In making a report on suspected child abuse, a teacher, who is acting within the course of his/her employment and following the correct procedure, will receive full support from the Board of Governors.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

By its very nature this Child Protection Policy has close links with a number of school policies and documents:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Educational Visits/Trips/Tours Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Period Dignity and Menstrual Well-Being Policy
- Privacy Policy (Parents and Pupils)
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pupil and Parent/Carer Acceptable Use Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy
- Social Networking Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Scheme for the Suspension and Expulsion of pupils' policy
- School Counselling Service Policy
- Uniform Policy

These policies share the goal of creating an environment in which pupils feel secure and confident in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and dealt with by members of staff in a sympathetic and appropriate manner.

Addendum to Coleraine Grammar School Child Protection Policy re.Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

1. CONTEXT

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend some or most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

2. PROCEDURES

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety during periods of lockdown/blended learning:

- The school email info address info@colerainegrammar.com main school phone number 02870344331 and an emergency Child Protection mobile number (07544500306) have been made available to all parents. Parents have been informed that any CP concern may be disclosed on this emergency mobile number during school hours (08.55-3.25pm), and at any time a pupil or parent-carer with a safeguarding concern may talk to Children's Services Gateway Team 0300 1234 333 or PSNI Central Referral Unit 02890259299 / 101 / cru@psni.police.uk , or 18+ Adult Safeguarding Team - Northern Area 02894413659, email: adultsafeguarding@northerntrust.hscni.net
- Teachers provide online learning via the school email/C2k platform with procedures in place to minimise risk.
- The school website provides parents with updates and a range of resources and links to additional online learning, support and guidance, including Guidance from DE, Headmaster's notices, Learning and Teaching and Pastoral Care, Safeguarding and Wellbeing C-19 updates.
- We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.
- The Familyworks Independent School Counsellor (ISC) remains available for phone consultation and parents are made aware of this via the website and updates on the school Facebook page.
- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the EA CPSS, teachers may make phone calls to parents. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding team.
- If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff

3. ONLINE SAFETY

Online safety means acting and staying safe when engaging in the online world. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, making comments on social media posts, 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 overall strategic direction for child safety online is the Keeping Children and Young People Safe: An Online Safety Strategy, published in February 2021 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/online-safety-strategy-and-action-plan> . It sets out the Northern Ireland Executive's ambition that all children and young people enjoy the educational, social and economic benefits of the online world, and that they are empowered to do this safely, knowledgably and without fear.

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing or platforms recommended by and available via C2K.

- Parental consent will be sought before their child attends online sessions.
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school.
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

Live Video Streamed Lessons. Guidelines for pupils and parents:

- The usual school pastoral and positive behaviour policies apply.
- Where possible find a quiet place but with easy access for parents, leave the door slightly open. Parents should not sit in on the lesson but can discreetly keep an eye from time to time.
- You should not be your bedroom – unless you are sitting at a desk.
- Dress appropriately – no pyjamas or sleepwear.
- You will need to be able to concentrate on what is going on in the lesson and have pens, paper, textbooks, resources with you.
- Pupils must never share a link to a meeting, a meeting ID or a password with someone not in their class for the subject.
- Teacher guidance on use of chat function etc. must be followed at all times.
- Pranks, disruption or 'hacking' of the lesson will result in its immediate termination by the teacher. This is for everyone's safety and benefit.

Staff are expected to use a model of "*Triangulation*" when contacting individual pupils via C2k email e.g. always cc'ing another applicable member of staff, e.g. a Curriculum Leader, to avoid 1-1 direct email contact with individual pupil(s). When using platforms such as Google Classroom, staff should include a colleague such as a Curriculum Leader as a "Teacher" in the Google classroom, to triangulate correspondence/feedback with pupil(s).

Staff are reminded to make use of the usual safeguarding protocols and principles when making contact with pupils at home. Staff should consider the following steps when making use of online tools. Irrespective of which platform is used for communication with pupils/parents, the central focus is supporting pupils.

- Online teaching is an extension of the classroom and should be covered by the school Acceptable Use Policy. All principles outlined by the Acceptable Use Policy will apply to all online teaching activity.
- Staff should avoid the use of personal mobile phones. If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff.
- Staff should use only their school email accounts such as C2k and should avoid using personal accounts if contacting children or their parents.
- Staff should be aware that in the interaction with young people all conventional professional teaching norms and standards will apply to online learning with children. Consider using camera-free

conferencing, where the focus is on the content rather than the webcam images. Using the C2K platforms, teachers are able to maintain full control of the audio and video content and what is shared on the platform.

- Staff are advised not to add pupils as friends on Social Network Sites.
- Should staff have any concerns about what they see or hear online, this should be brought to the attention of the Designated Teacher in school, in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

4. HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

5. IF SCHOOL IS OPEN DURING COVID-19 CLOSURES

If school is open for vulnerable pupils and key worker children the school will adhere to any EA guidance.

If our school is part of a cluster of schools which are open, we will share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Teacher and/or Headmaster. In accordance with our Child Protection procedures this information will be shared on a need-to-know basis.

In any event, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

6. HOW A CHILD CAN RAISE A CONCERN?

We know that while many children may enjoy their time at home and remain almost unaffected by the unusual situation of not being in school during term time, there may be others who feel scared, lonely and those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our children and young people:

- Year Group Pastoral Classroom(s)
- Respond to emails via C2k email addresses only.
- Respond to any concerning comments our young people post through the Google Classroom or other online similar platforms.
- When contacting parents via phone we may also ask to speak to their child or young person.
- All our children have a C2k email address as one way to connect with school.
- Other Agencies (see signposting via school website: <http://www.colerainegrammar.com/about-covid-19/pastoral-care-and-wellbeing>
 - NSPCC 0808 800 500 help@nspcc.org.uk
 - Childline 08001111 www.childline.org.uk
 - Lifeline 0808 808 8000 www.lifelinehelpline.info

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- Safer Schools App <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/your-app/>
- The Samaritans Freephone 116 123

7. SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: –

At any time, a pupil or parent-carer with a safeguarding concern may talk to Children’s Services Gateway Team 0300 1234 333 or PSNI Central Referral Unit cru@psni.police.uk , or 18+ Adult Safeguarding Team - Northern Area 02894413659, email: adultsafeguarding@northerntrust.hscni.net . The Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS) provides an out of hours basis central telephone number: (028) 0800 197 9995.

Two further useful contact groups are the NSPCC (0800 800 5000) and The Samaritans (free phone 116 123).

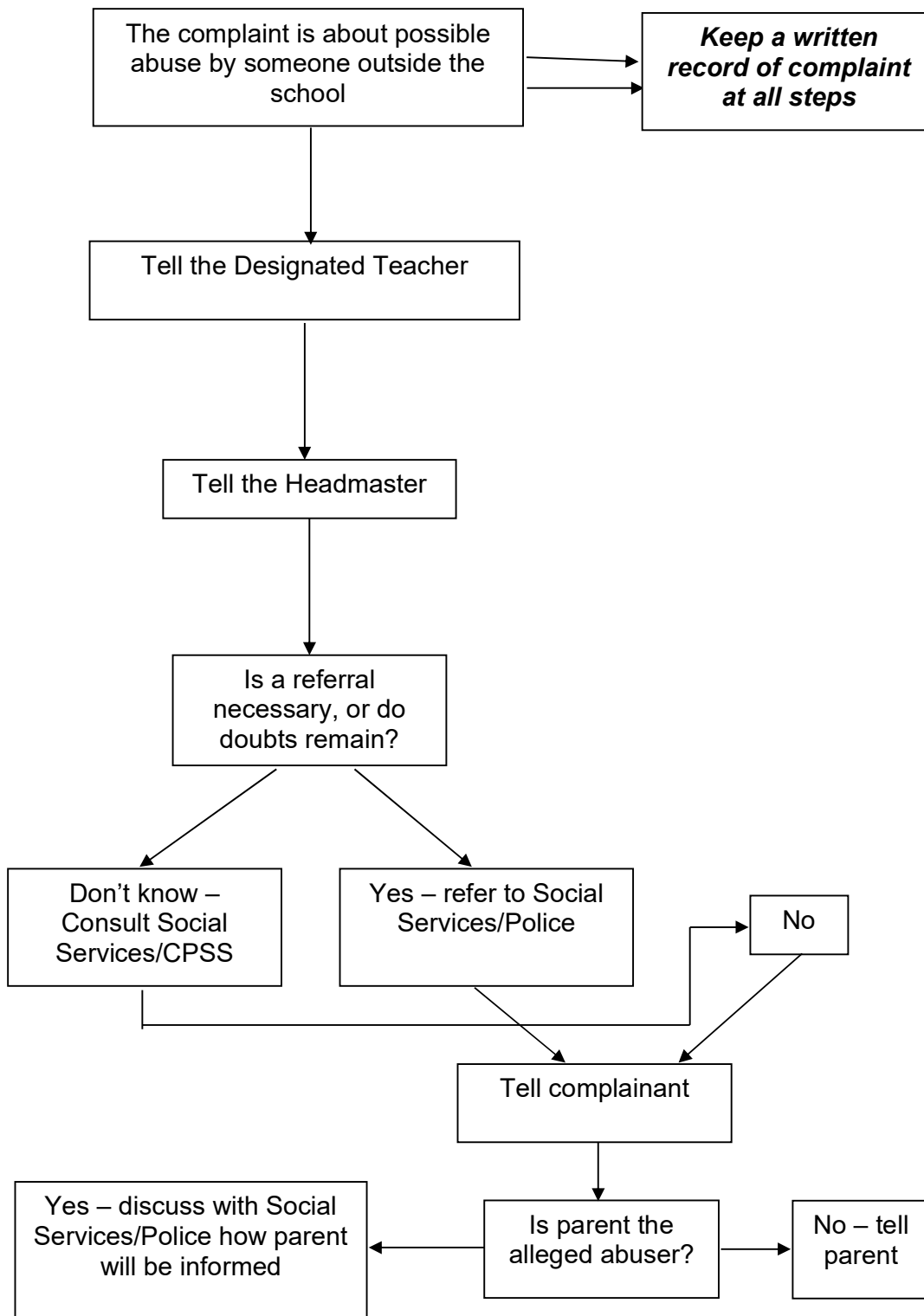
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

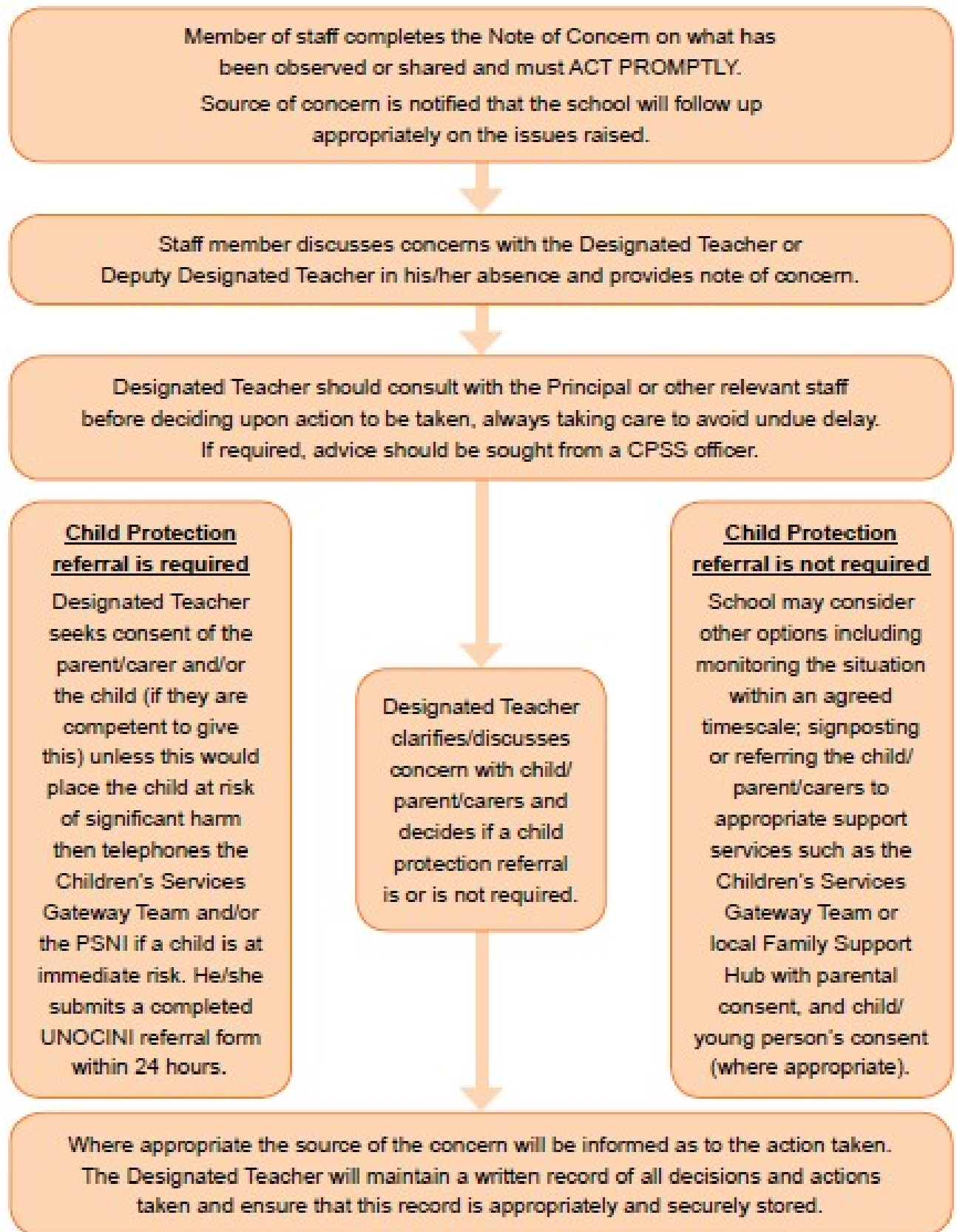
The Safeguarding team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the period of Covid-19 school closure in line with Departmental guidance and advice.

Appendix 1

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

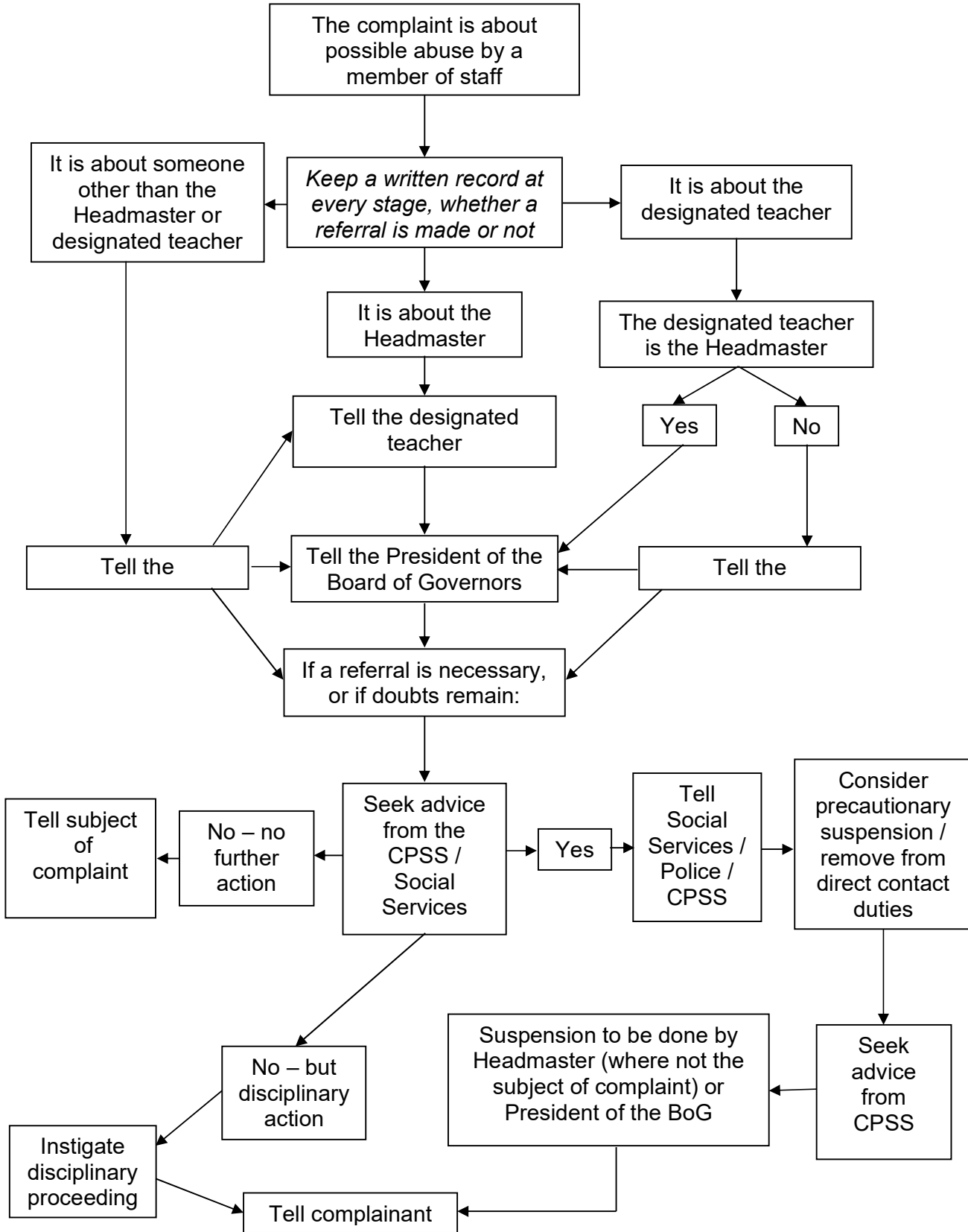


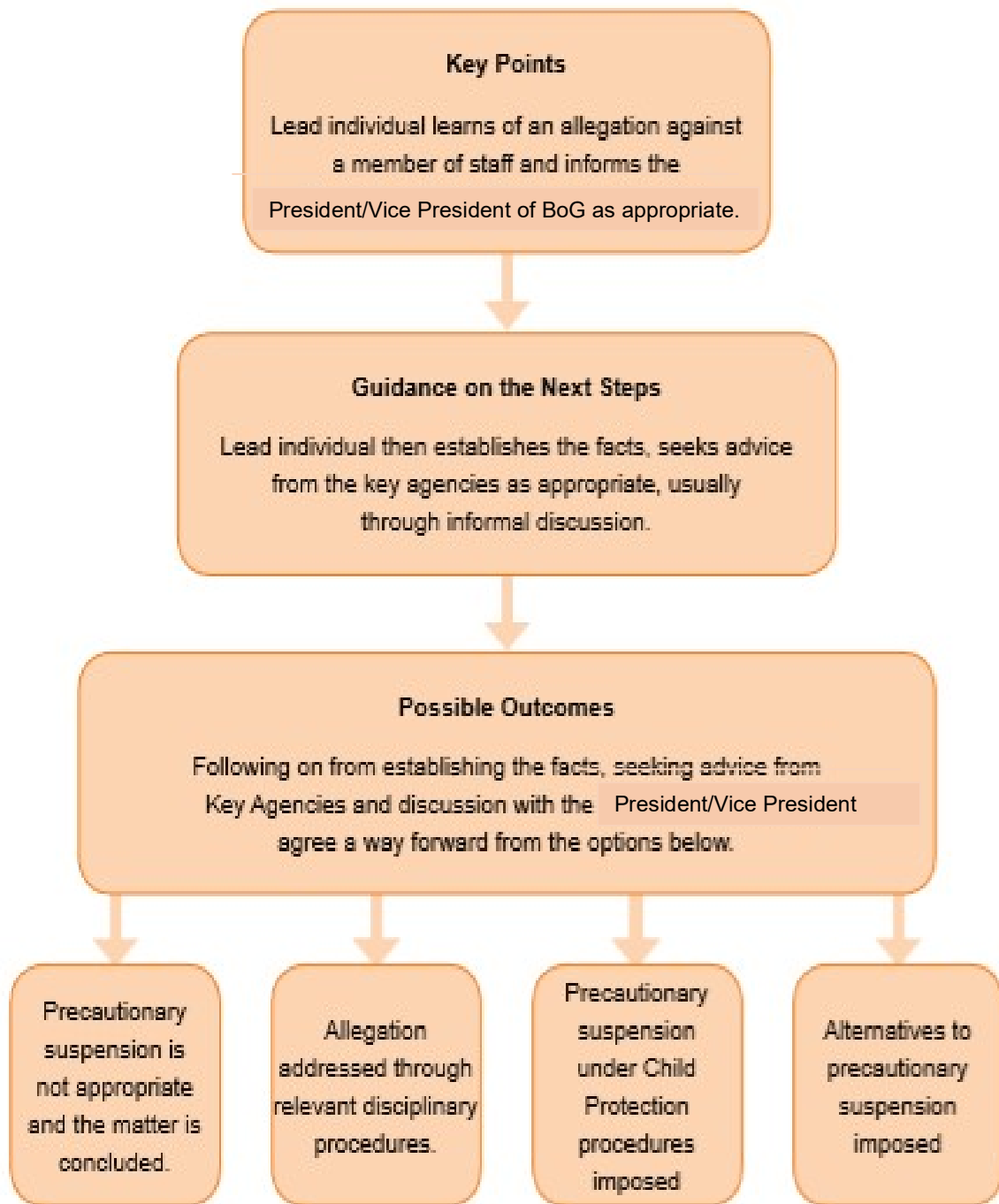
Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff ^{7,8}



Appendix 2

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







Appendix 3

Child Protection Record Form – Note of Concern

(NB It is imperative that only factual and neutral information is recorded.)

Name of Pupil.....

Form..... Form Teacher.....

| |
|--|
| Name of Pupil: |
| Year Group: |
| Date, time of incident / disclosure: |
| Circumstances of incident / disclosure: |
| Nature and description of concern: |
| Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom: |
| Action taken at the time: |
| Details of any advice sought, from whom and when: |
| Any further action taken: |

Written report passed to Designated Teacher: Yes: No:
If 'No' state reason:

Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:

Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file
If 'No' state reason:

[PLEASE NOW FORWARD TO DESIGNATED TEACHER WITHOUT DELAY]

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

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

Advice should be sought/conversation with – Education Authority CPSS Staff, Social Services, PSNI Central Referral Unit, date, time, place, advice.

Action as a result of advice – who spoken to, day, date, time, what was said and agreed etc...

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

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

Signed by Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher.....
Date.....
Signed by Headmaster..... Date.....

Appendix 4



Child Protection Information Log

Only factual and neutral information should be recorded on this form.

Name of person raising the concern with the designated teacher or deputy designated teacher (please print)

Details

Details of anyone else involved, conversations held with anyone else, potential witnesses

Signed _____
(DTCP/ DDTCP)

Date _____

Appendix 5

CHILD PROTECTION - CONFIDENTIALITY

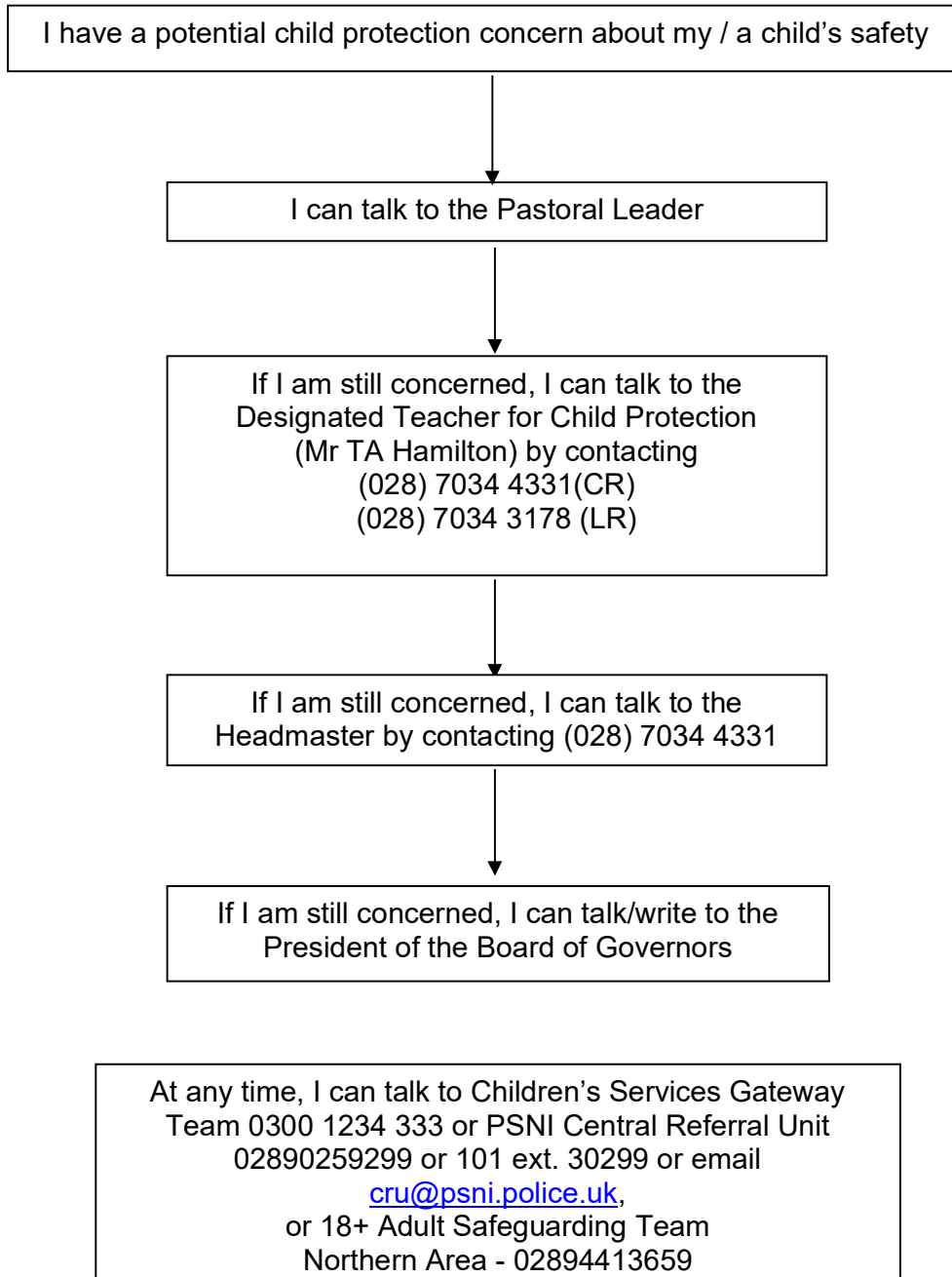
CONSIDERATIONS TO BEAR IN MIND

- Precautions should be taken to ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person
- All staff should be aware of the confidential nature of personal information about a child or young person and the means of maintaining that confidentiality
- Personal information about a child's family should be regarded as confidential material
- Any disclosure by a child or young person should be led by them at their pace, without pressure for detail from the adult
- If abuse is suspected, information should be given only to the relevant person, such as the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, or in their absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher.
- Other members of staff or volunteers 'need to know' only enough to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed child or young person. They do not need to know all the details.
- The person to whom the disclosure is made may need to decide on some person from whom they might need support. This can be done without divulging details about the child or young person and even without naming them.
- The child or young person, depending on their age and level of understanding, should be kept informed of who knows, and what they know, at all stages of the procedures.
- If the child is 'looked after' such as a foster home or children's home, all staff and volunteers closely involved with him should know about their circumstances, as it may affect practical matters such as who collects them from school, permission to go on outings or residential, who is contactable in an emergency. Nevertheless, few children want to talk openly with adults or other children about changed circumstances, so there is a need for sensitivity and discretion in handling such matters.

Charis Consultancy Services, 04/04

Appendix 6

If a parent has a potential child protection concern within the school:



If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart, and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school's complaints policy. This policy includes the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint. If a parent has a concern about a child's safety or suspect child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.

Appendix 7

'Power of a member of staff to restrain pupils'

Definition of Reasonable Force

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (part II Article 4 (1)) states:

"A member of the staff of a grant-aided school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

- committing any offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise."

Based on this legal framework, the working definition of "reasonable force" is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming himself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned. 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 the back; or
- (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

Guidance - Limits on the Use of Force

The law strictly prohibits the use of force, which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment. The use of force as a punishment or to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation would contravene our Child Protection Policy.

Staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- holding around the neck;
- any hold that might restrict breathing;
- kicking, slapping or punching or using any implement;
- throwing any object at a pupil;
- forcing limbs against joints;
- tripping;
- holding or pulling by the hair;
- holding the pupil face down on the ground;

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

The use of reasonable force is only to be employed in exceptional circumstances or an emergency where a pupil appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and whose behaviour is presenting a threat to himself or others. A member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help if there is a risk that he/she may be injured or may endanger his/her life.

Safe handling/ use of reasonable force review

The Department of Education is currently producing new guidance relating to safe handling and the use of reasonable force following a review on the use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings in Northern Ireland. A report on the review was published on 25 March 2022: "*Review of restraint and seclusion in educational settings published*". The recommendations of the report, which have been endorsed by the Minister for Education, include the principles on which the guidance should be based along with definitions which allow for a clear understanding of restrictive practices and supportive practices and when it is appropriate to use these. The report may be accessed through the following link: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/review-restraint-and-seclusion-educational-settings-published>

Interim guidance was also issued from DE on 10 May 2021 Circular 2021/13 – “*Interim Guidance on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings*” <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202113-interim-guidance-use-restraint-and-seclusion-educational-settings>

The underpinning principles of safe handling and the use of reasonable force are that these should be in line with the rights of the child under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and should never be used as a punitive measure, i.e. as a form of punishment.

This is reiterated in the abolishment of corporal punishment, making it illegal for education staff to use physical harm to punish a child under their care.

In relation to seclusion, a child should never be placed involuntarily in any environment in which they are alone and/or physically prevented from leaving as a form of punishment, as this may constitute an act of ‘Deprivation of Liberty’ without the appropriate authority to do so.

Supportive practices in meeting the health and wellbeing needs of pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs, should be agreed with the appropriate health care professionals and parents/carers of the pupil.

Appendix 8

Staff Code of Conduct

Introduction:

The protection and promotion of the welfare of children and young people is a responsibility for all members of staff, teaching and support staff. In meeting this, staff should work towards a culture of mutual trust and respect in school through which the interests of the children and young people entrusted to their care is paramount.

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, which applies to all staff and volunteers, is designed to give guidance on the standards of behaviour which should be observed. School staff and volunteers are role models, in a unique position of influence and trust and their behaviour should set a good example to all the pupils within the school.

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 issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. The Code cannot address every possible circumstance in which staff might find themselves, however it is intended that staff will be mindful of the Code which will raise awareness of issues and situations which can potentially arise. In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their safe practice.

All staff have a responsibility to maintain confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. Integral to this is a clear understanding of standards of behaviour expected and in particular the acceptable boundaries of physical contact with pupils. School staff must accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny and that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued.

The Code of Conduct makes it clear that whilst, as a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children and young people, it is also unnecessary and unrealistic to suggest that physical contact should only happen in emergencies.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. As a general rule, when physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in schools may occur most often with younger pupils, for example, physical comforting can give welcome reassurance to a distressed younger child.

1. Setting an Example

1.1 All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times, and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.

1.2 Staff and volunteers must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

2. Relationships and Attitudes

2.1 All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times and sexual relationships with current pupils are not permitted and may lead to criminal conviction.

2.2 Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school; perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be

aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.

2.3 Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner, which within the context of this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- respect for school property;
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

3. Private Meetings with Pupils

3.1 It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place. As far as possible, staff and volunteers should conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with an open door and ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

4. Physical Contact with Pupils

4.1 To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.

4.2 Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force as per Section 10.3 of the main safeguarding guidance document (Circular 1999/09 and guidance document 'Towards a Model Policy in Schools on Use of Reasonable Force <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/model-policy-reasonable-force.pdf> – see Appendix 7).

5. Honesty and Integrity

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

5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (eg a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Headmaster. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents eg at Christmas or the end of the school year. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

6. Conduct outside of Work

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

6.2 Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school. Advice should be sought from the Headmaster when considering work outside the school.

7. E-Safety and Internet Use

- 7.1 A staff member or volunteer's off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's E-safety policy and Social Networking Policy.
- 7.2 Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social media and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. It is expected that any contact with pupils is made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary. The school recommends that members of staff should not have pupils as 'friends' or 'followers' on personal social networking accounts.
- 7.3 Staff are expected to use a model of "Triangulation" when contacting individual pupils via C2k email e.g. always cc'ing another applicable member of staff, e.g. a Curriculum Leader, to avoid 1-1 direct email contact with individual pupil(s). When using platforms such as Google Classroom, staff should include a colleague such as a Curriculum Leader as a "Teacher" in the Google classroom, to triangulate correspondence/feedback with pupil(s).

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
- 8.2 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.
- 8.4 If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headmaster.
- 8.5 Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Headmaster or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.
- 8.6 The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.

Source: Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (updated September 2023)

Appendix 9

CGS Coaches Code of Conduct

- Do not criticise or harass referees, coaches or parents in front of the pupils.
- Do not use language that is unacceptable in a school environment.
- Foul play should never be condoned.
- Under no circumstances should there be any physical contact between adults and pupils (*use 2 adults to demonstrate, or the pupils themselves*).
- Avoid confrontation with pupils, let the member of staff present deal with any incidents.
- Avoid one on one situations with pupils i.e. In changing rooms or lifts home.
- Always change in the staff changing area.
- Remember at all times that you are a representative of the school and that your actions reflect on the school. Lead by example.

Appendix 10

Record Keeping

The guidelines in circular 2020/07, Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools, are the basis for all record keeping.

Accurate records are kept of all cases of potential child abuse, detailing actions taken.

Each school has a responsibility to maintain its records and record keeping systems. The Board of Governors should ensure that the arrangements operated by the school for the retention, management and release of public records comply with statutory requirements, including data protection legislation, most recently the new Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). GDPR provides a legal framework for keeping everyone's personal data safe by requiring organisations to have robust processes in place for handling and storing personal information based on the following principles:

Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;

- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes;
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary;
- Accurate and where necessary kept up to date;
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which those data are processed; and
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of personal data.

Each school should have a Records Management Policy. While there is no specific legislation in respect of child protection records, schools should ensure that the principles of the requirements of the legislation, in particular the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Data Protection Act 2018, and guidance in DE Circular 2020/07 is adhered to.

Requests for information

- Before providing access to information the Headmaster should consider whether the request is being made in the parent's own interests rather than the child's. Child Protection records may be exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 in cases where disclosure may cause serious physical or emotional harm to the child or any other person. This means that neither pupils nor their parents have an automatic right to access them. However, the exemption only applies to the information that may cause harm and is not a blanket exemption for the file as a whole. In addition, the exemption can only be relied upon if it is endorsed by the opinion of an appropriate health professional. (Data Protection (Subject Access Modification) (Health Order) 2000).
- In addition, if a member of staff requests information in relation to an allegation made against them, then if there is any doubt whether information should be disclosed the EA (Northern Area) should be consulted.

Maintaining Records

| complaint received about possible child abuse | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is not referred to Social Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the school should maintain the record on the child's file• send a confidential copy to any school to which the child subsequently transfers. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• or following referral, the Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register | |

| If Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintain a record of this fact, and place associated documentation from Social Services, on the child's file (in the Child Protection File) while she continues to attend.• ensure that when a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school, the receiving school is informed immediately that her name is on the Register and all Social Services documentation relating to the child is destroyed.• Retain all school-initiated records on the child's file.• The school to which the child is transferring should contact Social Services for relevant information. |

| |
|---|
| <p>If the Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been removed from the Register,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences and should inform the child's Case Co-ordinator in Social Services. Retain any school-initiated records on the child's file |
|---|

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|---|
| <p>When a child, whose name is on the Child Protection Register is admitted into school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Services should be contacted for relevant information. |
|---|

NB Child Protection Records should be **kept indefinitely. They are NO LONGER DESTROYED when the child reaches 21.**

It is recommended that, in general, child protection records should be retained by the school for the following periods:

| Record | Retention Period |
|--|--|
| Pupil Child Protection Case Files | DOB + 30 years |
| The school's confidential Record of Child Abuse Complaints | Indefinitely* |
| If Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register | Maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's file while he/she continues to attend. On transfer, the school should inform the new school and destroy all social services records. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years. |
| If Social Services inform the school that a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register | On transfer to a new school, the school should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years. |
| Complaint against a member of staff Staff members file* Child's Child Protection File Record of Child Abuse Complaints | Indefinitely* unless totally exonerated (see para. 3.16) D.O.B + 30 years Indefinitely* |
| Complaint to be pursued under the school's disciplinary procedures | |
| Staff members file | 7 years |
| Child's Child Protection File | D.O.B + 30 years |
| Record of Child Abuse Complaints | Indefinitely** |

* The Department of Education Disposal Schedule recommends that a staff file is retained for 7 years after leaving employment. In the case of child protection concerns the file should be retained for the time periods specified in the school Child Protection Records Retention and Destruction Policy.

** *as a general guide 'indefinitely' should be a minimum of 40 years.*

Child Protection Conferences

When a referral has been made of a case of suspected or alleged abuse, a member of staff, either the Designated Teacher or the member of staff who knows the child best, may be asked to contribute the school's knowledge of the child to the Child Protection Conference convened by Social Services to assess the child's circumstances and decide on further action.

The school may also be asked to prepare a report. This should focus on

- the child's educational progress
- achievements,
- attendance,
- behaviour,
- participation,
- relationships with other children and adults within the school
- where appropriate, the child's appearance.

- if relevant, reports should include what is known (without making specific investigation) about the child's relations with his/her family and the family structure.

Reports should be objective and based on evidence.

They should **contain only fact, observations and reasons for concern.**

They should be prepared on the form provided in the appendices.

Reports will be made available to the child's parents at the Child Protection Conference, and may be used in court.

All reports should be checked and signed by the Designated Teacher or by the Deputy Designated Teacher who has assumed these responsibilities in his/her absence.

Monitoring and supporting pupils on the Child Protection Register

Pupils whose names are on the Child Protection Register will be monitored in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan.

This includes alerting the child's Case Co-ordinator from Social Services, or the Education Welfare Officer, when a pupil on the Child Protection Register is absent for more than a few days, or on a regular basis, or to any signs which suggest deterioration in the pupil's home circumstances.

The School's Record of Child Abuse Complaints

Where a complaint is made about a member of staff, and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record should be entered by the Headmaster on a Record of Child Abuse Complaints, maintained for the purpose and kept in a secure place.

In addition, where a formal referral is made, it is particularly important that the Headmaster should ensure that a detailed written record of the complaint, including dates and times, is maintained.

This should include:

The summary should include:

- the date and brief details of the nature of the complaint;
- by whom, to whom and against whom it was made;

If the complaint was formally referred,

- who referred the allegation, to whom and the date of referral;
- what supplementary evidence, if any, was offered, from whom, and its nature;
- details of any physical injury noted;
- from whom advice was sought, and its nature;
- the decision taken and how, when, by whom and to whom it was conveyed, and the reasons for it;
- a copy of any correspondence in relation to the complaint should be attached.

If the complaint was dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.

The record is signed and dated by the Headmaster, countersigned by the Designated Teacher (where neither is the subject of the allegation) and retained in the school, on the files of both the child and the member of staff concerned; an entry should also be made on the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints. (Hard back book kept in Child Protection file.)

The school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints should be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually. This is provided as a written report. The Education and Training Inspectorate will ask to see the Record during inspections.

If, following subsequent investigation by one of the investigating agencies, the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record on the file of the member of staff concerned must be expunged, and the entry in the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints deleted or struck through. The record on the child's file should be noted accordingly and should be retained indefinitely in case there should be subsequent complaints. In all other cases, the record on both the child's file and the staff member's file should be maintained indefinitely. The following form should be completed and stuck into a hard back book which is signed by the Headmaster and the President of the Board of Governors.

Appendix 11

Coleraine Grammar School
Record of Child Abuse Complaints against a Member of Staff

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Date | | |
| Nature of complaint | | |
| Complaint made by: | Complaint made against : | Complaint made to: |
| Evidence presented including record of any physical injury: | | |
| Advice and Nature of Advice sought: | | |
| Decision taken: | | |
| Referred to: | Referred by: | Date: |
| Outcome of any disciplinary measures: | | |
| Signed: | Headmaster | Date: |
| Signed: | Designated Teacher | Date: |
| Correspondence attached | Yes | No |

Appendix 12 Useful Contacts

Education Authority (Northern Area)
Education Welfare
(Child Protection)
Antrim Board Centre
Tel: 028 9448 2223

Mrs Linda O'Hara,
Education Welfare (*CPSS)
(Child Protection)
County Hall
Tel: 028 2566 2563
Linda.O'Hara@eani.org.uk

*Child Protection Support Services

Public Protection Units
Coleraine H District
Coleraine PSNI Station
17 – 19 Lodge Road
Coleraine
BT52 1LY
Tel: 028 9065 0222 ext. 83133

Northern Gateway Team
Coleraine Child Care Team
7a Castlerock Road
Coleraine
BT51 3HP
Tel: 0287032 5462 Fax 7035 7614

Single Point of Entry
0300 1234 333 / 02894424459
02895049999 –out of hours

Adult Safeguarding team – Northern Area
Telephone: 028 9441 3659
Email: adultsafeguarding@northerntrust.hscni.net