



# Cookstown High School

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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## **Ethos**

We in Cookstown High School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and to acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. **In school, we often refer to this as the ‘preventative curriculum’ which is addressed through Personal Development lessons, assemblies, pupil noticeboards, guest speakers/organisations and other arranged events throughout the school year.**

### **Linked Policies**

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Use of reasonable Force
- School Trips Policy
- Use of the Internet
- Critical Incident Policy
- Bereavement Policy
- Anti-bullying

### **Rationale**

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also criminal offences.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching are vetted prior to employment in Cookstown High School by Access Northern Ireland. This vetting procedure also applies to any volunteers and to members of the Board of Governors.

### **Types of Abuse**

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

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

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

Harm can be caused by:

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

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms,

including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

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

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

### **Safeguarding in Specific Circumstances:**

**Domestic Violence** may include behaviour in any of the above categories. *Tackling Violence at Home, Northern Ireland Office 2005* makes clear our duty to deal with domestic violence. If a child is a recipient of domestic violence or a witness and a disclosure is made to staff in Cookstown High School, we will be obliged to progress the disclosure in keeping with this policy. If you are a victim of domestic violence support can be gained by contacting the Domestic Violence Helpline on **0800 9171414**.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It refers to a number of different possible scenarios in which children or young people are exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity, in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person. Barnardo's 2011 identify the following as possible linked behaviours:

- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Suffering from STIs;
- Mood swings or changes in behaviour;
- Drug and alcohol misuse;
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education;
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is a form of child abuse and within education falls within the responsibility of the school's Safeguarding Team to recognise warning signs and respond appropriately. Incidents of FGM may occur in within specific ethnic groups and responses to such occurrences will require multi-agency support.

### **Bullying**

Not all bullying is a child protection issue and the majority of cases will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. The school has a full and detailed anti-bullying policy. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will follow up, to protect and reassure the victim and, where appropriate to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully may be contacted when bullying behaviour is identified. Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be followed up – facts gathered and perceptions clarified, by the child's Year Head or Form Tutor and action will be taken to help the victim. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response, as soon as possible, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken. The designated teacher for child protection will be notified. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, further action will be taken and in some cases this may be to instigate the child protection procedures described below.

### **Children in Need**

Children in need 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 expose to domestic violence;
- Are misusing substances;
- Are teenage parents;
- Are carers;
- Are disabled.

Staff at Cookstown High School are committed to supporting any pupil who is a child in need by working closely with a range of agencies and the child's family and within the scope of this policy, to ensure the pupil's needs are met and that they are protected.

### **Young Carers**

Young carers are pupils who may have caring responsibilities at home. They may fulfil this role well but may struggle with keeping up with school work. Depending on the specific scenario, they or other siblings may be at risk. Young carers are defined as children in need. **Appendix 5** outlines Cookstown High School's approach to identifying and supporting young carers. These procedures are in keeping with advice from Action for Children.

## **Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

The Designated Teacher for child protection is **Mr S Thompson**, Pastoral Vice-Principal. The Deputy Designated Teachers are **Mrs C Porte, Mrs C Hall, Mrs J Freeburn and Mr N Graham**. If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly. He/she should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with him and make full notes. (see **Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 – please record factual points given**)

The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal (if available), as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made. The Designated Teacher will act on his own authority if the Principal is not available.

The Principal, in consultation with the Designated Teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately. The Principal/Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice from the Duty Social Worker in the appropriate Trust Gateway Team, before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

When necessary the Designated Teacher or Principal may contact the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection 028 95985590 for advice.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal/Designated Teacher will (initially by telephone) inform:

- Gateway - Northern Trust 028 94424459
- Gateway - Southern Trust 028 37415285/0800783 7745

This will be followed up within 24 hours with a UNOCINI form and sent in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION' to:

1. Northern Trust referrals:  
Referral Gateway Team  
Oriel House  
2-8 Castle Street  
Antrim  
BT41 4JE
2. Southern Trust Referrals:  
SHSCT Central Gateway  
Lisnally House  
Lisnally Lane  
Armagh  
BT61 7HW

A UNOCINI form may be emailed to Gateway. However, the form must be password protected. The password must be sent in a separate email.

Southern Trust: [duty.service@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:duty.service@southerntrust.hscni.net)

Northern Trust: [SPOE.Referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:SPOE.Referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net)

### **Procedure for Parents (see Appendix 2)**

If a parent has serious concerns about a child they should contact the school and speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, **Mr S Thompson** or in his absence to a Deputy, **Mrs C Porte, Mrs C Hall, Mr N Graham and Mrs J Freeburn.**

**Designated Safeguarding governor: Mr Derek Weir**

### **Procedures in case of emergency**

If you have serious concerns about a child after school hours, please contact any of the following numbers:

- **The PSNI: 101**
- **Regional Out of Hours Emergency Social Services: 028 95049999**

### **Regional Out of Hours Emergency Social Services will accept referrals where:**

- There are concerns that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm;
- There are concerns in relation to children who are Looked after by a health and social care Trust or their carers including foster carers;
- There is suspected or confirmed abuse of a child;
- In cases where there is a serious and imminent risk of family breakdown both in the community, foster care or kinship placements;
- An appropriate adult is required for young people who are subject of a care order;
- There is need for authorised professionals to make an enquiry to the Child Protection Register.

### **Procedures if a member of staff is allegedly involved (see Appendix 4)**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal. The Chairman of the Board of Governors, **Mrs Lynne Dripps**, will be informed immediately. If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. He will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

### **DE circular 205/13:**

In all child related decisions the welfare principle must inform the handling of all cases, and this is the primary reason for taking precautionary measures. The child/pupil must be listened to and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by the member of staff named in an allegation needs to be effectively evaluated and managed, including the child/pupil involved in the allegation, and any other children in that member of staff's home, work or community life. In some cases this will require consideration being given to suspending that person as a precautionary measure.

### **Review of Policy**

The school will monitor the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and carry out an annual review.

## Signs and Symptoms of Abuse – Possible Indicators

### Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing – grip marks on arms                      Slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns; unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions;                      Untreated injuries;                      Bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion;                      Injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday;</p>	<p>Self-destructive tendencies;                      Aggressive to other children;                      Behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive)                      Appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults;                      Improbable excuses to explain injuries;                      Chronic runaway;                      Uncomfortable with physical contact;                      Come to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home;                      Clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body;                      Violent themes in art work or stories</p>

### Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Well below average in height and weight:                      Failing to ‘thrive’                      Poor hair and skin; alopecia;                      Swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet;                      Recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling;                      Sudden speech disorders;                      Signs of self-mutilation;                      Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness;                      Extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping)</p>	<p>Apathy and dejection;                      Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;                      Rocking/head banging;                      Inability to play;                      Indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment;                      Reluctance for parental liaison;                      Fear of new situation;                      Chronic runaway;                      Attention seeking/needing behaviour;                      Poor peer relationships.</p>

## Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Looks very thin, poorly and sad;            Constant hunger; lack of energy;            Untreated medical problems;            Special needs of children not being met;            Constant tiredness;            Inappropriate dress;            Poor hygiene;            Repeatedly unwashed; smelly;            Repeated accidents especially burns;</p>	<p>Tired or listless (falls asleep in class)            Steal food; compulsive eating;            Begging from friends;            Withdrawn;            Lacks concentration;            Misses school medicals;            Reports that no carer is at home;            Low self-esteem;            Persistent non-attendance at school;            Exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.</p>

## Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs;            Bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas;            Torn stained or bloody underclothes;            Chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches;            Difficulty in sitting or walking;            Frequent urinary infections;            Avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers;            Unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague;            Anorexia/gross over eating;</p>	<p>What the child tells you;            Withdrawn; chronic depression;            Excessive sexual precociousness;            Seductiveness;            Children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g young child who can describe details of adult sexuality;            Parent/child role reversal;            Over concerned for siblings;            Poor self-esteem; self-devaluation;            Lack of confidence; peer problems;            Lack of involvement;            Massive weight change;            Suicide attempts (especially adolescents)            Hysterical/angry outbursts;            Lack of emotional control;            Sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour;            Inappropriate sex play;            Repeated attempts to run away from home;            Unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories;            Vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity;            Exposure to pornographic material;</p>

## Responding to a disclosure

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

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

<b>Receive:</b>	listen, accept, take and retain notes;
<b>Reassure:</b>	<b>do not</b> promise confidentiality;
	reassure and alleviate guilt if child refers to it;
<b>Respond:</b>	<b>do not</b> ask leading questions;
	<b>do</b> ask open questions;
	<b>do not</b> criticise perpetrator;
	<b>do</b> explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk;
<b>Record:</b>	make notes and write them up;
	<b>do not</b> destroy original notes;
	record date, time, place and noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words the child used;
	record actual words used;
	injuries/bruises may be recorded on a diagram showing position and extent;
	note down when the suspicions were reported and to whom.
	sign and date all notes.
<b>Refer:</b>	to designated member of staff.

## **Protocols for Safeguarding Training (Child Protection Training)**

### **New members of teaching and non-teaching staff**

#### **1. Teaching Staff**

- a) As part of their induction process, the **Vice-Principal (Pastoral)** will ensure that the new member of staff is familiar with key designated personnel and ensure that they receive Child Protection Training by arranging appropriate training with the Designated or Deputy Designated teacher using the Safeguarding Training (Child Protection Training) Guidelines (updated annually).
- b) It is the responsibility of the new staff member to read through, sign and date the guidelines after the training has taken place to ensure all aspects and procedures are understood. The Designated or Deputy Designated teacher will address any issues or questions raised.
- c) When training is completed the name of the new staff member will be placed on the Register of Safeguarding Training (updated annually).

#### **2. Non-teaching Staff**

- a) As part of their induction process, the **Vice-Principal (Pastoral)** will ensure that the new member of staff is familiar with key designated personnel and ensure that they receive Child Protection Training by arranging appropriate training with the Designated or Deputy Designated teacher using the Safeguarding Training (Child Protection Training) Guidelines (updated annually).
- b) It is the responsibility of the new staff member to read through, sign and date the guidelines after the training has taken place to ensure all aspects and procedures are understood. The Designated or Deputy Designated teacher will address any issues or questions raised.
- c) When training is completed the name of the new staff member will be placed on the Register of Safeguarding Training (updated annually).

#### **Substitute Teachers**

- a) Substitute teachers will meet with the **Cover Manager** after arrival at school to receive details on assigned cover for that particular day(s). On their first day in an academic year the substitute teacher should be made familiar with the Safeguarding Guidelines, which should be signed and dated.
- b) It is the responsibility of the substitute teacher to read through, sign and date the guidelines after the training has taken place to ensure all aspects and procedures are understood. The Designated or Deputy Designated teacher will address any issues or questions raised.
- c) Where it is planned that the substitute teacher will be employed in the school for a more prolonged period of time, the substitute teacher should follow the procedures for new staff.
- d) Where a substitute teacher is new to school, **Cover Manager** may be used as an initial point of contact (if there is a need to report an incident), the **Cover Manager** will then contact the Designated or Deputy Designated teacher, redirect the substitute teacher and a full disclosure/report can be made.

#### **Visitors to School**

Please consult **Cookstown High School's Visitor Management Protocol**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Recording of a concern**

Cookstown High School recording procedures are compliant with DE circular2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools

Concerns should be reported quickly, and records should be concise and unambiguous as possible.

All records should:

- Clearly identify which pupil the record refers to, leaving no room for mistaken identity.
- State the name, designation and signature of the person completing the record.
- Give the date the record was written.
- Show the date(s) and time(s) of any incidents or when a concern was observed.
- Provide details of any witnesses to an incident.
- Distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay.
- Describe the concern in sufficient detail.
- Recount anything the pupil has said in their own words. Swear words, insults, or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim.
- Be written free of jargon, and in a professional manner without stereotyping or discrimination.
- Cross-reference any siblings or extended family members, if relevant.
- Include, if relevant, a record of any visible injuries.
- Indicate who the record has been given/sent to.

**The Note of Concern pro forma at the end of this policy must be used to communicate any concerns to the Designated Teacher.**

## Appendix 2

## How a parent can make a complaint

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:

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



I can talk to the class/form teacher



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



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



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



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors



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



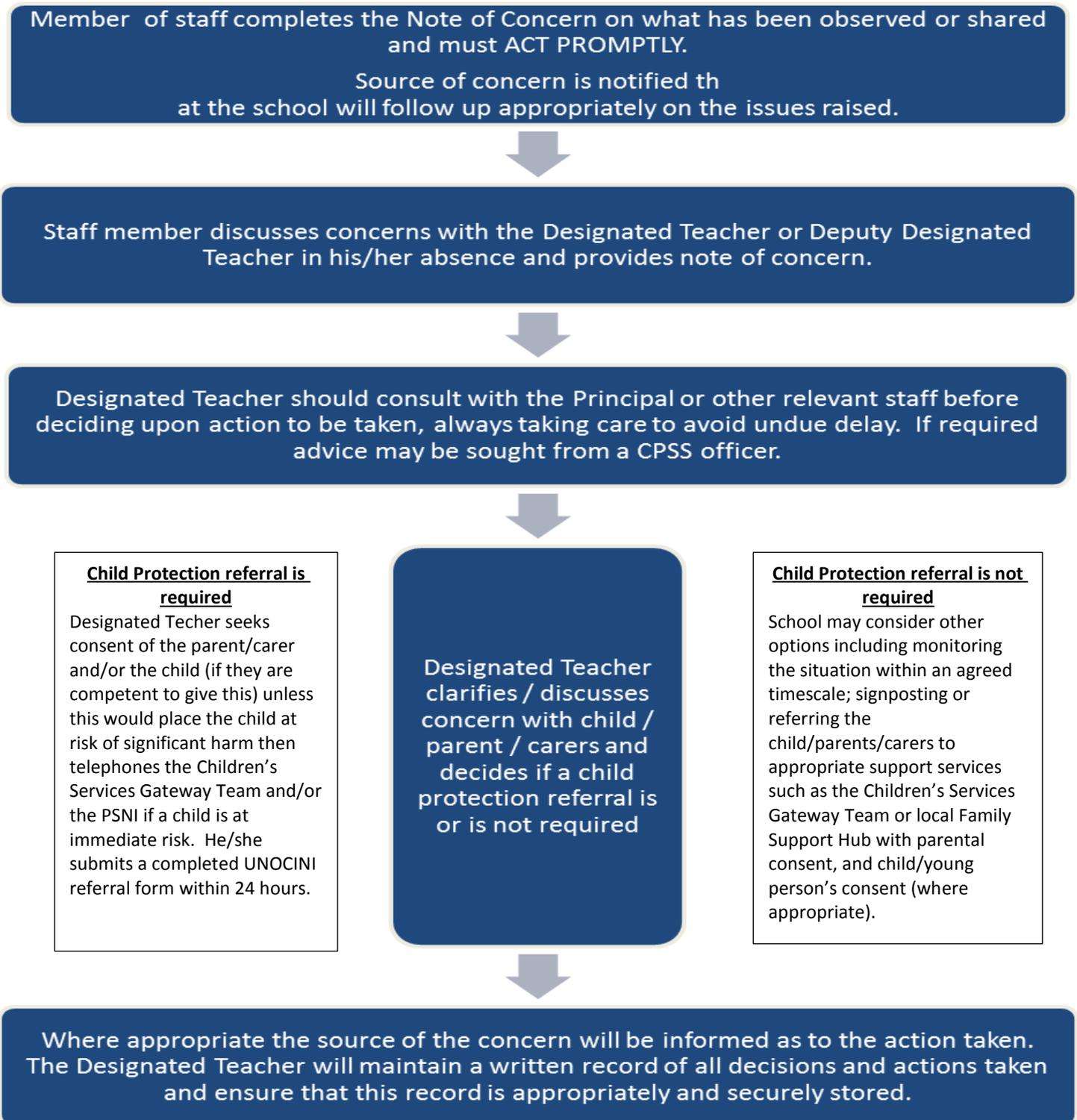
At any time I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team (028 94424459/ 02937415285)  
or the PSNI Central Referral Unit at 028 9025 9299

## Appendix 3

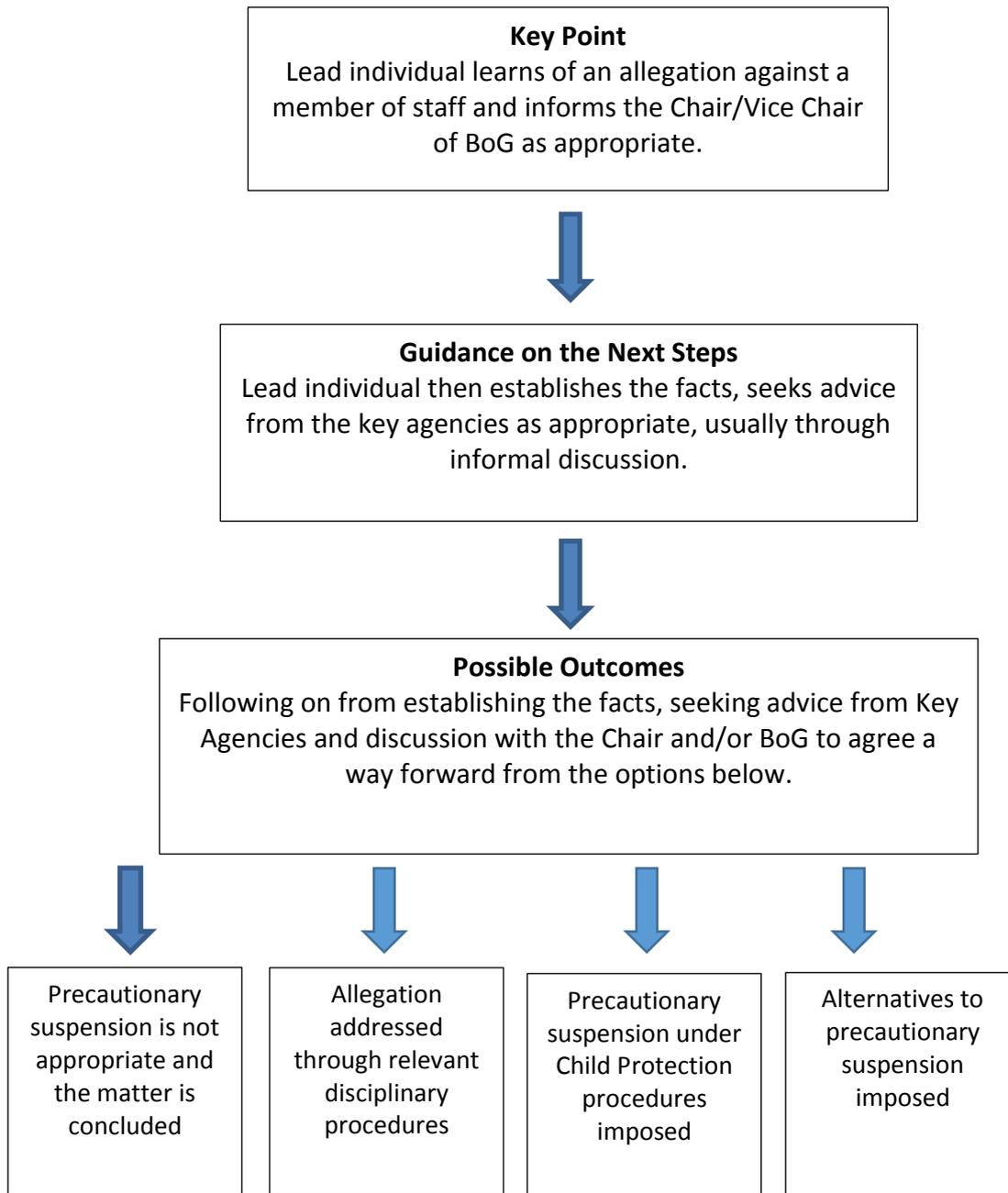
## Processes for referral

Processes for referral are set out in the flowcharts below:

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

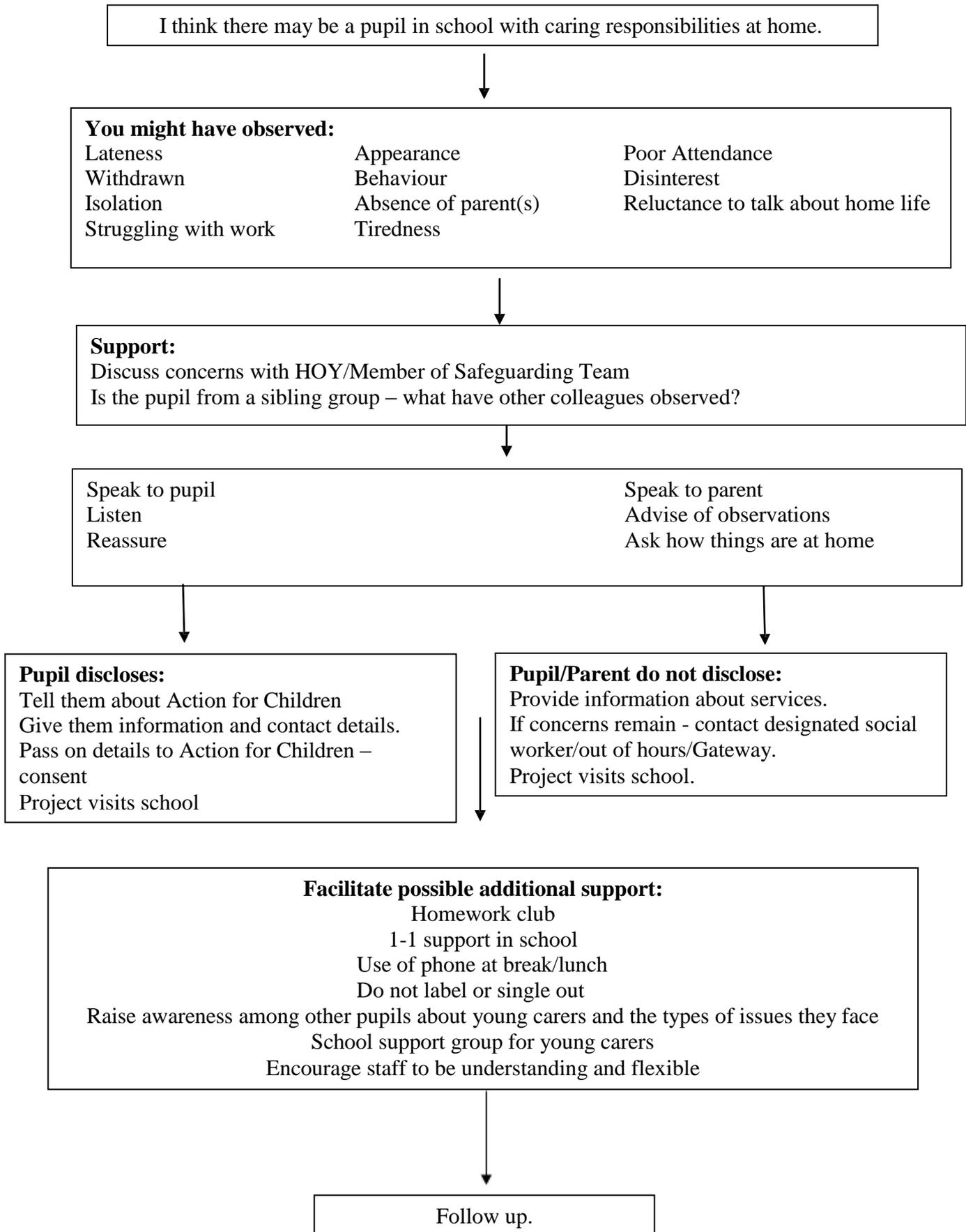


## Appendix 4 Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff



Appendix 5

Identifying a Young Carer



## **Appendix 6**

### **Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools**

2.1 All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.

2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague to a member of the school's safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal).

The school's DT is: \_\_\_\_\_

Date ratified by the Board of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

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

2.3 All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents and other relevant school policies e.g. e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

2.4 All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.

2.5 All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.

2.6 All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

#### **3. Relationships with Students**

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

3.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

#### **4. Pupil/Student Development**

4.1 All staff and volunteers must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.

4.2 All staff and volunteers must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.

#### **5. Honesty and Integrity**

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

5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Principal with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action.

## **6. Conduct Outside of Work**

6.1 All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.

6.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual’s work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

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

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

7.2 Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by ‘liking’ certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

7.4 Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.

7.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

## **8. Confidentiality**

8.1 Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others’ advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

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

8.3 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

8.4 If a member of staff 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 senior leadership.

8.5 Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.

8.6 Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

## **9. Dress and Appearance**

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

9.2 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

9.3 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

## **10. Disciplinary Action**

Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

## **11. Compliance**

All staff and volunteers must complete the form to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

## Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student outside of school, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring.
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school.
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally.
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**

**Child protection Record – Reports to Designated Teacher**

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:
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: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If 'No' state reason:

Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:

Written note from staff member placed on pupil's child protection role

If 'No' state reason:

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

Signature of staff member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# **A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector whose work brings them into contact with children/young people**

## **Introduction**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

## **1. Private Meetings with Pupils**

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access or with the door open.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present, or nearby, during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.
- Staff should not conduct pair private tutoring on school premises

## **2. Physical Contact with Pupils**

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer First-Aid to a pupil in the absence of the school nurse, should ensure, wherever possible, that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide First-Aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be the norm and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

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

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might be criticised, after the event.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal or Vice-Principal before using it.

### **4. New Technologies**

- Staff are advised not to share personal mobile numbers with pupils. If this is necessary in a school related event the number should be deleted after the event.
- Staff are advised not to communicate with pupils through internet chat rooms.
- Staff should not be 'friends' with pupils on Facebook or other social networking sites.
- Staff are advised not to befriend former pupils on social networking sites for 2 years after they have left school.
- Staff are advised to ensure they have high and robust privacy settings on their social media profiles.

### **5. Relationships and Attitudes**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

### **6. Visitor, volunteers and contractors**

All visitors must sign in at Reception and provide full details as set out in the Visitors Procedure.

Volunteers who are involved in any aspect of school life must sign in at reception on arrival and follow the Visitor Procedure. In addition to this, all volunteers must remain in the company of a member of staff during their visit, or receive Safe Guarding training, as well as clearance through Access Northern Ireland.

All contractors are EA board appointed, have been vetted and have had Safe Guarding training. All contractors engaged to carry out any work must sign in at Reception and also sign the Asbestos register.

### **7. School Photography**

Staff should only take photographs of pupils for official school photography/specified purposes. The photographs should be deleted afterwards and should never be taken in a private place.

Use of personal devices should be avoided. Efforts should be made to have school equipment available when representing school. Use of personal devices should be the exception and should be reported to a designated teacher.

All staff are required to sign to indicate their acceptance of school policy:

***When representing the school, I will endeavour to ensure that school iPad/camera/equipment is used. In the event that it is necessary to use a personal device I will inform a designated teacher. If a personal device is used I commit to deleting the image(s) immediately after it is uploaded/used for official school use.***

***I accept that school can request to view my personal device.***

## **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interact with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances, employees' professional judgment should be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about the points in this policy, or how they should act in particular circumstances or if they are concerned about how a pupil is behaving towards them, they should consult their line manager or the Designated Teacher.

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

