



JORDANSTOWN SCHOOL

**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD
PROTECTION POLICY**

September 2023

Title	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Summary	<p>Guidance for all stakeholders regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definitions of risk under the heading of Safeguarding and Child Protection; • measures the School has in place to safeguard pupils; • roles and responsibilities of School staff and governors; • the procedures to be followed where a pupil of the School may be at risk of harm.
Purpose	To ensure an effective response to Safeguarding and Child Protection issues by the whole School community.
Next Review Date	September 2024 or on receipt of new guidance
Operational Date	September 2023
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Supersedes previous	Yes
Author	Designated Teacher for Child Protection
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To be posted on School website	Yes
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CONTENTS

1	Our School's Child Protection Ethos and Key Principles of Safeguarding
2	Roles and Responsibilities
3	Child Protection Definitions
4	Signs and Symptoms of Possible Abuse or Harm
5	Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns
6	Consent, Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Record Keeping
7	Safe Recruitment Procedures
8	Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers
9	The Preventative Curriculum
10	Off-Site Activities
11	Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
	Appendices
	Appendix 1 Note of Concern
	Appendix 2 Specific Types of Abuse and Other Risks of Harm
	Appendix 3 Children with Increased Vulnerabilities
	Appendix 4 Adult Safeguarding
	Appendix 5 If a Parent Has a Potential Child Protection Concern Within the School
	Appendix 6 Procedure Where the School Has Concerns, Or Has Been Given Information, about Possible Abuse By Someone Other Than a Member of Staff
	Appendix 7 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff
	Appendix 8 Staff Code of Conduct for Safeguarding
	Appendix 9 Related Policies

1 OUR SCHOOL'S CHILD PROTECTION ETHOS AND KEY PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING

We in Jordanstown School have a responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and support, should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, "Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DHSSPSNI, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" Circular 2017/04 (amended September 2019; updated June 2020, updated June 2022) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

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

- In accordance with the Children (NI) Order 1995, the welfare of the pupil will be the paramount consideration in all decisions taken about him/her by staff of the school.
- All children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- The school has a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and staff should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- The school will maintain a preventative curriculum which seeks to prevent harm coming to any child.
- The school will endeavour to maintain a positive and supportive working partnership with parents, carers and other family members, in the best interests of the child
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is a conflict of interest, the child's interests must always come first.

In drawing up this policy, due attention has been paid to the advice given in the following documents:

- Children (NI) Order 1995
- Regional Policy and Procedures, The Area Child Protection Committee, 2005
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, Procedures Manual, 2018
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2017
- Circular Number 2020/07, (Child Protection: Record-Keeping in Schools), Department of Education for Northern Ireland, 2020

All staff – teaching, support and voluntary – will have, before employment begins, undergone the Access NI vetting process. The staff of the School have adopted a Code of Conduct for behaviour towards pupils.

All visitors to the school are expected to report to the School Office where they will be provided with a lanyard identifying them as a guest. Staff are asked to challenge any unfamiliar person on school premises who is not wearing a lanyard. An exception regarding the wearing of lanyards will be made for parents attending school events.

The School will maintain a range of policies whose aims are to safeguard all pupils and to promote resilience and positive behaviour. See Appendix 9. These policies may be viewed on the School web site in the policies section.

Adult Safeguarding

Concerns relating to pupils who are aged 18 years or over will be dealt with under the principles of adult safeguarding outlined in Appendix 4.

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| • Chairperson of the Board of Governors | Mrs C Magowan |
| • Designated Governor for Child Protection | Ms C Gray |
| • Principal | Dr C Scully |
| • Designated Teacher | Mr S Murray |
| • Deputy Designated Teachers | Ms R Sturgeon and Mr G Adams |

Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed in their school.
- A Designated Teacher and at least one Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their school.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.

- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19 and DE Circular 2013/01.
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (it is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

Chair of Board of Governors

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

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

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

Designated Governor for Child Protection

The BoG delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to advise the governors on: -

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

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Every school is required to have a Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT) and at least one Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DDT). These are highly skilled roles developed and supported through a structured training programme, requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues. The role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.

- Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- The promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the BoG regarding child protection

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection

The role of the DDT is to work co-operatively with the DT in fulfilling his/her responsibilities. It is important that the DDTs work in partnership with the DT so that they develop sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by the Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) of the Education Authority to help them in their role.

Ideally, at least one of the DT or DDTs should be fluent in BSL in order to address safeguarding concerns with children and/or parents who are first-language BSL users. If this is not possible, the school's sign language support staff or a professional interpreter may be used.

The School Principal

The Principal, as the Secretary to the BoG, will assist the BoG 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 DE are shared promptly, and timely inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. In addition, the Principal takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal 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 DT and DDT posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme. It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the DTs to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role.

The Principal 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.

Other Members of School Staff

- Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the DT or to a DDT if he/she is not available.
- Staff should complete the Note of Concern ([See Appendix 1](#)) if there are safeguarding concerns
- **Staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions

Parents

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

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school:

- If the child has a medical condition or educational need
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility
- If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school
- If their child is absent unexpectedly, and they should inform the school immediately by telephone or digital means. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence.

It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.

More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

3 CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

Definition of Harm

The Children (NI) Order 1995 defines harm as 'ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development.' There is no absolute definition of 'significant harm', as this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Children (NI) Order 1995 provides further information.

Types of Abuse

From Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, August 2017: Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

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

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

Harm can be caused by:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **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 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 – 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, and 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.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register (CPR), professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

Specific Types of Abuse and Other Risks of Harm

There are specific types of abuse and other risks of harm that require a safeguarding approach which we include under this policy. See [Appendix 2](#).

4 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE OR HARM

Because of their day-to-day contact with individual pupils, school staff – especially teachers, but also support staff, including supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff – are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances.

Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse. For example, indicators of physical abuse may be:

- 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 (also the most likely indicator of self-harm)
- bite marks
- burns

These may be apparent particularly when pupils change their clothes for Physical Education, swimming and other sports activities.

Possible indicators of neglect may be:

- inadequate clothing
- poor growth
- hunger
- apparently deficient nutrition

and of emotional abuse:

- excessive dependence
- attention-seeking

Sexual abuse may result in physical signs, or a substantial behavioural change including:

- precocity
- withdrawal
- inappropriate sexual behaviour

Signs of plans for forced marriage may include:

- request for leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. Also, it must be remembered that alternative explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described above. 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, but teachers and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and be alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated.

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English or sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see [Appendix 3](#).

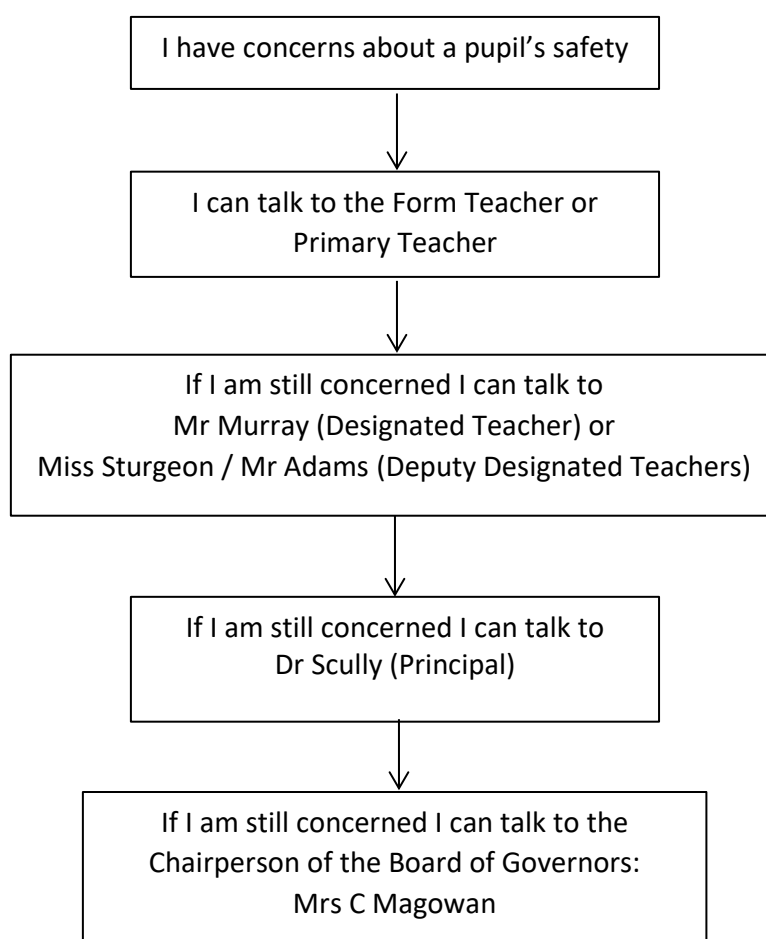
5 RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

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

In Jordanstown School we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and wellbeing. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.

HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CONCERN



Any of the people listed above may be contacted by telephoning the school on 028 9086 3541 between 8.30 a.m. and 4.15 p.m. At any point, the DT/DDT or Principal may be contacted directly, should the concerns relate to the Primary or Form Teacher.

At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway Team, or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Contact details are shown in [Appendix 5](#).

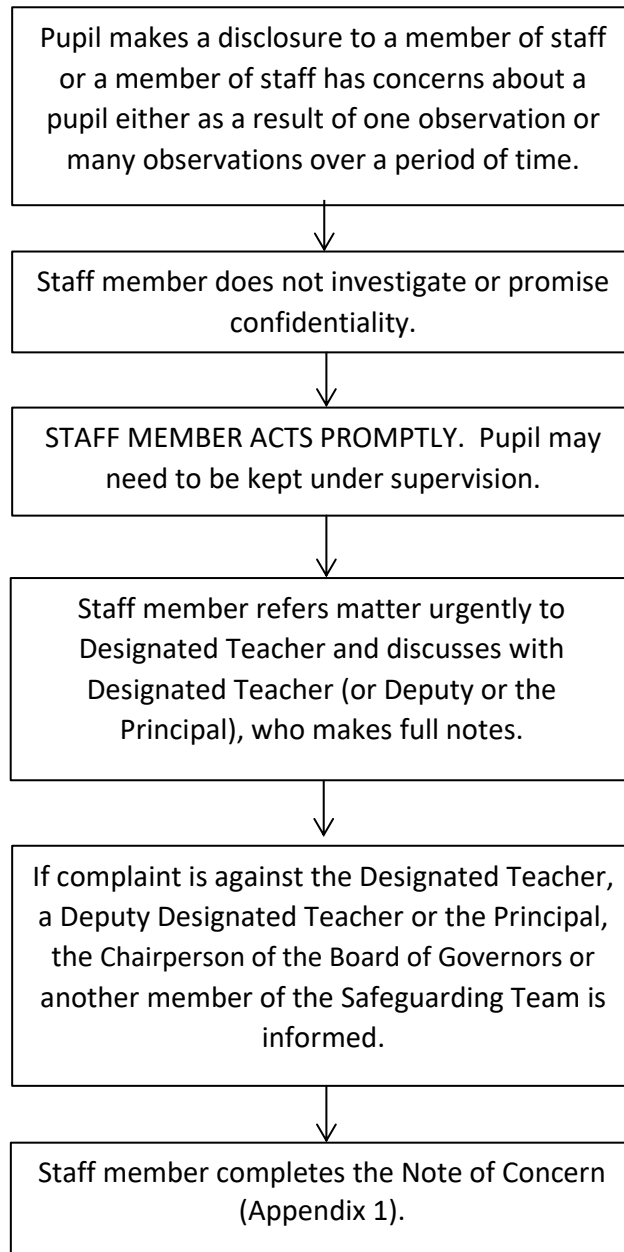
Where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff

If, at any time, a pupil makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff that gives rise to concerns about possible abuse or other risk, or if a member of staff has concerns about the safety of a pupil, **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 DT (or, in his/her absence, the DDT or the Principal), explaining the matter to him/her. The member of staff should not ask the pupil for a written record, but forward the **Note of Concern**, (see Appendix 1) to the DT promptly. The pupil may be at immediate risk, therefore he/she should not be left unattended. If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a pupil or is unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse or harm, he/she should speak to the DT immediately. It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible abuse or other risk cannot be held in confidence since, in the interests of the pupil’s safety, safeguarding staff may need to share this information with other professionals. The informant should be advised accordingly but assured that only those who need to know will be told. The above procedures will apply unless the complaint is against the DT, a DDT or the Principal, in which case the Chairperson of the Board of Governors or another member of the Safeguarding Team should be informed.

If a concern regarding significant harm is brought to any adult in the School community, it is important that the adult takes the situation seriously and responds using the advice below:

Do: listen to the pupil sensitively and carefully. Praise the pupil for telling you.	Do not: ask leading questions which can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the pupil’s mind
Do: give reassurance but tactfully explain you will have to tell someone else, but only those who need to know.	Do not: give a promise of confidentiality – it cannot be kept.
Do: say, for example, “Tell me what happened.”	Do not: make suggestions, for example, “Did they do X to you?”
Do: if possible, establish what happened, where it happened, when it happened and who did it.	Do not: interrogate or investigate and do not dwell too much on the alleged perpetrator.
Do: immediately afterwards complete the Note of Concern using the actual words used.	Do not: write as the pupil talks to you. Give your whole attention to the pupil.
Do: immediately afterwards talk to the Designated Teacher who will inform the Principal.	Do not: wait until your next non-teaching period, or the end of the day to notify the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher.

Summary of Actions:



The DT will consult with the Principal or other relevant staff, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required, advice may be sought from the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection. The DT may also seek clarification from the child or young person, or their parent/carer.

If a child protection referral is not required, the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent.

If a child protection referral is required, the DT will seek consent from the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm (see Section 6).

The DT will phone the appropriate Gateway Team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form.

If the concern relates to a student aged 18 or over, the DT will discuss the concerns with the relevant Health Trust's Adult Safeguarding Team or the team with responsibility for Vulnerable Adults. This team will assess the level of risk.

Where appropriate, the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

For further details please see [Appendix 6](#)

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

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the DT/DDT if the Principal is not available, unless the complaint relates to the DT/DDT) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal then the DT should be informed and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in [Appendix 7](#) will be followed.

6 CONSENT, CONFIDENTIALITY, INFORMATION SHARING AND RECORD KEEPING

Consent

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

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

There is a difficult balance between gaining consent for a referral into Adult Protection Gateway and also ensuring a vulnerable adult is protected from harm. The principle of consent is central to the school's safeguarding ethos and the application of this policy, and the implications of this in the context of adult safeguarding are outlined in [Appendix 4](#).

Confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis. Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school, we will consider what information should be shared with the DT in the receiving school.

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

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

In accordance with DE guidance, we have clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns. In order to meet these requirements, all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in Jordanstown School are stored securely and only the DT, DDT and Principal have access to them. If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, it is encrypted or appropriately password protected.

In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records, these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years.

7 SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system, and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate if they are engaged in regulated activity. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Jordanstown School are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

8 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

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. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's general Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers. See [Appendix 8](#) for the specific Staff Code of Conduct for Safeguarding.

9 THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

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

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make positive choices in a range of situations.

Throughout the school year, child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues are organised on a regular basis, including school visitors such as police, mental health staff, and voluntary agencies who work with deaf and/or vision-impaired pupils. Counselling and therapy services are provided throughout the year, including separate counsellors for Primary and Post-Primary pupils. Parent programmes with pastoral themes are run at intervals.

Jordanstown School takes very seriously its responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and will be proactive in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe while using digital technologies. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is understood to be the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities. The school's actions and governance of online safety are reflected in our E-Safety Policy.

10 OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. This may include:

- Visits to local shops for promoting education and living skills
- Attendance at classes with partner schools in the Newtownabbey Learning Community
- Attendance at local training colleges or colleges of Further Education
- Work experience placements
- Musical performances
- Attendance at conferences
- Educational visits
- Day trips
- Residential Trips

We will follow the relevant Department of Education and Education Authority guidance to ensure our current safeguarding and health and safety practices are adhered to, and that appropriate staffing levels are in place. This will always include the completion of a risk assessment exercise, shared in advance with the Principal and Vice Principal and all other relevant staff.

All members of staff taking pupils on a residential school trip will be required, as part of their risk assessment, to forward, at an early stage in making the arrangements, a provisional list of the pupils involved to the DT, specifically requesting that any significant risk to any pupil on the list should be made known to the staff with responsibility for the trip. If there is deemed to be a significant risk to a pupil who wishes to participate in the trip, consultation will take place between:

- the Principal
- the DT and/or DDTs
- the staff with responsibility for the trip
- at least one parent

regarding whether or not the pupil can be supported to participate in the trip and if so, under what circumstances. In taking this decision, the school will consider the welfare of:

- the pupil
- the other pupils on the trip
- the staff with responsibility for the trip.

The final decision regarding whether or not a pupil shall participate in the trip will rest with the Principal.

11 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Safeguarding Team. It will be implemented through the school's staff induction and training programmes and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the School's Safeguarding Team. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher and Principal.

Date Policy Reviewed by Safeguarding Team:	May 2023
Signed:	Designated Teacher
Signed:	Principal
Signed:	Chair of Board of Governors



CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF CONCERN

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER

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

Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:

(N.B. Good practice would be to obtain the full name of the person that you are speaking to and notify them that you are making a note of the advice given)

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? Yes:

No:

If 'No' state reason:

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical injury. This may include hitting, pushing, rough handling, exposure to heat or cold, force feeding, improper administration of medication, denial of treatment, misuse or illegal use of restraint and deprivation of liberty.

Sexual Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy (2016) defines sexual violence and abuse as follows: 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).' Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non-penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, irrelevant of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation. Coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

Psychological/emotional abuse is behaviour that is psychologically harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/non-verbal conduct. This may include threats, humiliation or ridicule, provoking fear of violence, shouting, yelling and swearing, blaming, controlling, intimidation or coercion.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, appropriate and adequate care and support which is required by another adult. It may be through a lack of knowledge or awareness, or through a failure to take reasonable action given the information and facts available to them at the time. It may include physical neglect to the extent that health or well-being is impaired, administering too much or too little medication, failure to provide access to appropriate health or social care, withholding the necessities of life, such as adequate nutrition, heating or clothing, or failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others particularly when the person lacks the capacity to assess risk.

Financial Abuse

Financial abuse is actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It is the misappropriation or misuse of money, property, benefits, material goods or other asset transactions which the person did not or could not consent to, or which were invalidated by intimidation, coercion or deception. This may include exploitation, embezzlement, withholding pension or benefits or pressure exerted around wills, property or inheritance.

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

Adults may misuse online settings e.g. chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms of digital communications, to try and establish contact with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared. Those working or volunteering with children or young people should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming, and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs. Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given to any punitive approach or 'criminalising' young people who may, themselves, still be victims and/or acting under duress, control, threat, and the fear of, or actual, violence. In consultation with the PSNI and where necessary the PPS, professionals must consider whether children used to groom others should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child 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 involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI, DHSSPS version 2.0 2017.)

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

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

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

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

Domestic Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy (2016) defines domestic violence and abuse as follows: 'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school Safeguarding Team. This will allow the school Safeguarding Team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the DT greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the Safeguarding Team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the Safeguarding Team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Further information about The Domestic Abuse Information-Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 can be found by following the link: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nidsr/2022/9780338018694?view=plain>

Institutional Abuse

Institutional abuse, also known as organisational abuse, is when an individual or group of individuals are neglected or suffer because of poor care practices within an organisation or

care setting. It can be a one-off incident or happen regularly over a long period of time. It involves the collective failure of a service provider or an organisation to provide safe and appropriate services, and includes a failure to ensure that the necessary preventative and/or protective measures are in place.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM this should be reported to the PSNI without delay. Contact can be made directly to the Sexual Referral Unit (based within the Public Protection Unit) at 028 9025 9299. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, referral should be made to the relevant HSCT Gateway Team.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and if in Jordanstown School we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

Honour Based Violence

The term 'Honour based violence' is used to refer to a range of violent practices used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to sustain or promote perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative or another has shamed, or may shame, the family and/or community by breaking their 'honour code'. The punishment can include assault, abduction, restrictions of liberty, confinement, threats and murder.

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)

Harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Fabricated or induced illness by parents or carers can cause significant harm to children. FII involves a well child being presented by a carer as ill or disabled, or a child who is ill or has disabilities being presented with a more significant problem than he or she has in reality and suffering harm or potentially suffering harm as a consequence.

Children Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. As a school we support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the

curriculum, and through individual interventions where appropriate, 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 normal, inappropriate, abusive or violent. Normal sexual behaviour will generally have no need for intervention; however, consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. Inappropriate sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. The CPSS will advise if contact with PSNI or Social Services is required. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2022/02 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

Abuse of Digital Technologies

E-safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern. In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

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

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

1/Sexting

The advice of the police will be sought in all instances of sexting. Sexting situations involving pupils may include the following:

- A child who takes a sexually explicit image of him/herself has committed an offence. If that child then sends the image to another person, then the child has committed a further offence of distributing the image and the person who receives the image will also be liable for an offence of possessing the image. If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil is involved in any such activity, the matter should be reported

immediately to the DT or a DDT, who will contact the police for advice and guidance. The matter will be dealt with sensitively, taking account the age of the young person and the people involved.

- Any text/chat which incites a child to engage in sexual activity or to make or distribute sexual images of themselves or another child will be reported to the police for further guidance. Every attempt will be made to ensure that relevant material is not deleted.

The appropriate responses in other sexting situations are outlined in ‘Sexting and the Law’, published by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

2/Sharing an Inappropriate Image with an Intent to Cause Distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is **not forwarded to anyone else**. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual’s consent. For further information see:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted

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

Bullying, including cyberbullying

These are also highly distressing and damaging forms of abuse which put young people at risk. They are the subjects of the School’s Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyberbullying policies respectively.

Self-harm and suicidal thoughts

Self-harm is deemed to be any deliberate act by a person which causes actual physical harm to themselves. A young person may succumb to harming him/herself for a number of reasons, including poor mental health or a response to trauma or distress caused by environmental factors. Self-harm is not necessarily accompanied by suicidal thoughts, though may be a predictor that the young person is at increased risk of this. Suicidal thoughts can occur in the absence of actual self-harm.

APPENDIX 3 CHILDREN WITH INCREASED VULNERABILITIES

• Children With a Disability

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and those working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues.

Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

- **Children With Limited Fluency in English**

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.

- **Gender Identity Issues and Sexual Orientation**

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 due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. The Department of Education requires all grant-aided schools to develop their own policy on how they will address Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) within the curriculum. It is via this policy that schools are expected to cover issues relating to relationships and sexuality, including those affecting LGBTQ+ children and young people.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBTQ+ community, we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

APPENDIX 4 ADULT SAFEGUARDING

The following principles will be followed when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over.

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount at all times.
- Maximising the student's choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights.
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

An '**Adult at risk of harm**' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) Personal characteristics and/or
- b) Life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.

Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An **'Adult in need of protection'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) Personal characteristics and/or
 - b) Life circumstances
- and
- c) Who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and
 - d) Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

The decision as to whether the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' is met will demand the careful exercise of professional judgement applied on a case by case basis. The seriousness and the degree of risk of harm are key to establishing whether the threshold for protective intervention has been met and to determining the most appropriate response. The DT will discuss the concerns with the relevant Health Trust's Adult Safeguarding Team or the Team with responsibility for Vulnerable Adults. This team will assess the level of risk. For further information see: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document>

Consent

Consideration of consent is central to adult safeguarding. Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service, including a protection service. It may be signalled verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. No one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special legal provision for particular purposes has been made for this. For consent to be valid, it must be given voluntarily by an appropriately informed person who is able to consent to the intervention being proposed. In cases where the individual lacks capacity, decisions will usually be made on behalf of the individual in accordance with current legal provisions.

A consent-driven approach to adult safeguarding will always involve:

- a presumption that the adult at the centre of a safeguarding decision or action is able to give or withhold consent unless it is established otherwise;
- acknowledging that an adult who lacks capacity to make a decision cannot give consent but that he or she should still be involved in decision-making as far as possible and given appropriate support;
- acknowledging that everyone who has capacity to make a certain decision has the right to pursue a course of action that others may judge to be unwise, but that sometimes a balance must be struck between an individual's human rights and the need to intervene to protect others;
- providing support to an adult where they have withheld consent and this has been overridden;

- ensuring consent/non-consent is informed through the provision of full and accurate information, making sure that the information is conveyed in a way which the adult fully understands and taking all practicable steps to help the person make and communicate the decision;
- understanding that the choices and decisions made by the individual at any one time are not seen as irrevocable or non-negotiable.

Where there is a concern that an adult may be at risk of, or experiencing, harm and there are concerns about coercion or undue influence, this should be referred to the HSC Trust in accordance with section 11.

Capacity

An adult will always be assumed to have capacity to make a decision unless it is suspected otherwise. Capacity can fluctuate, and is both issue and time specific, therefore should be kept under regular review in connection with any safeguarding intervention, in particular a protection intervention. Where there is a reasonable doubt regarding the capacity of an adult to make a specific decision or series of decisions, a referral must be made to the HSC Trust. The organisation or individual making the referral may need to consider any reasonable and proportionate interim steps necessary to protect the adult pending further enquiries by the HSC Trust. An HSC professional within the HSC Trust will conduct a capacity assessment in accordance with existing legislation and guidance.

Lack of capacity

Tensions between an adult's autonomy and the need to intervene to keep an adult safe makes deciding whether or not to intervene when an adult lacks capacity to make a decision particularly difficult, and one that must always require professional judgement in respect of the individual circumstances of the adult. Where an adult lacks capacity to make a certain decision, they should be supported so they can be involved to the fullest extent in the decision that affects their life. Any interventions and actions taken by the HSC Trust must be in the best interests of the person being safeguarded, and in accordance with existing legislation and policy. HSC Trusts should, where appropriate, consult relevant family members or carers when considering action to be taken regarding an adult who lacks capacity to make a decision.

Lack of Consent

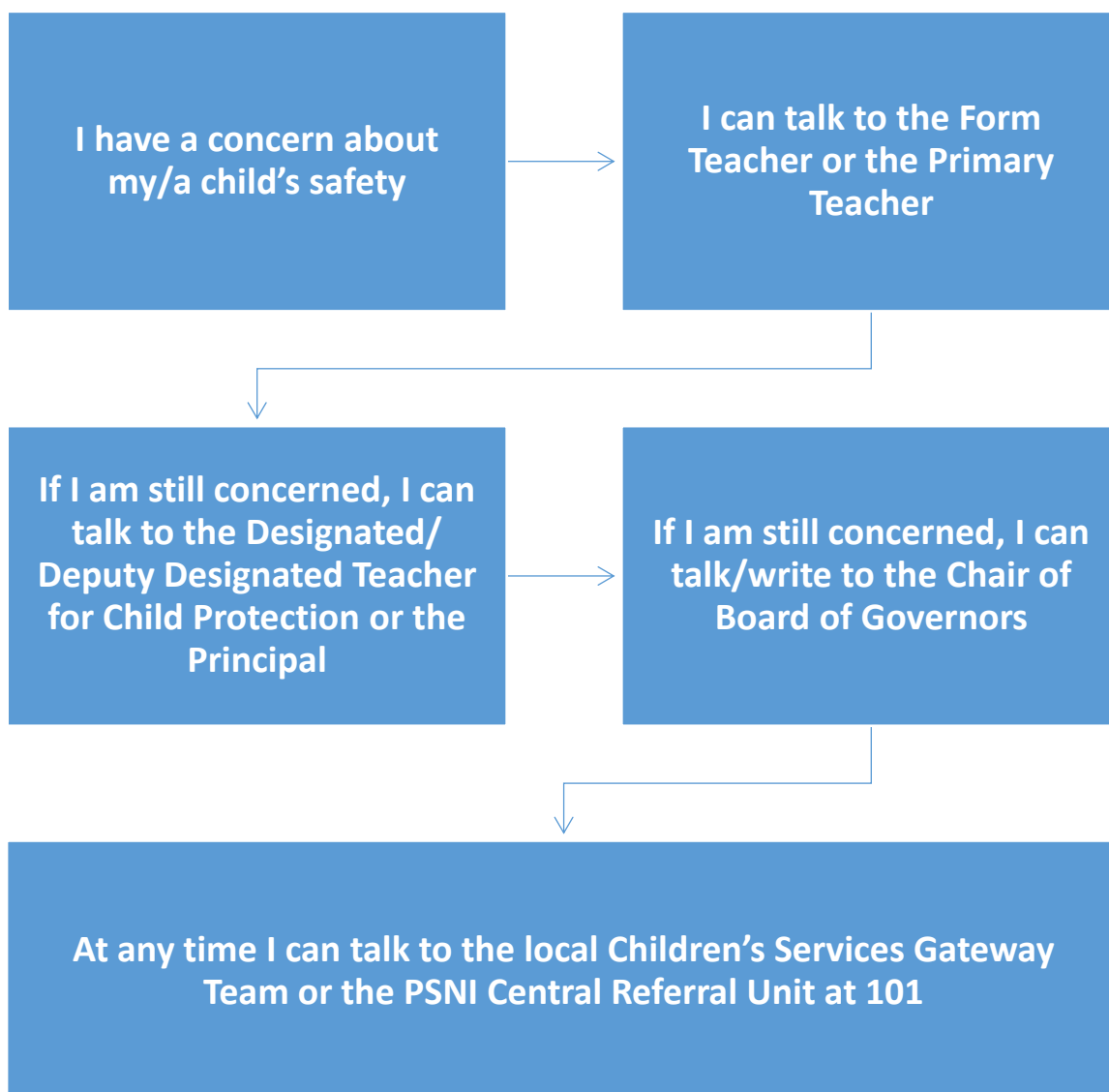
In some circumstances it may be necessary for the withholding of consent to be overridden. Where consent to intervene is not provided by the adult at risk, action to progress a case may still be taken in circumstances where there is a strong overriding public interest, or where a crime is alleged or suspected. This may happen when:

- the person causing the harm is a member of staff, a volunteer or someone who only has contact with the adult at risk because they both use the service;
- consent has been provided under undue influence, coercion or duress;
- other people are at risk from the person causing harm; or
- a crime is alleged or suspected

In these circumstances, the adult should be informed of that decision, the reason for the decision, and reassured that as far as possible no actions will be taken which affect them personally without their involvement. Consideration should be given to any support the adult may need at this time, as they may be distressed by the prospect of their information being shared without their consent.

APPENDIX 5

IF A PARENT HAS A POTENTIAL CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN WITHIN THE SCHOOL



Children's Services Gateway Team Contact Details:

Monday – Friday 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Northern Gateway Service 028 9442 4459

Belfast Gateway Service 028 9050 7000

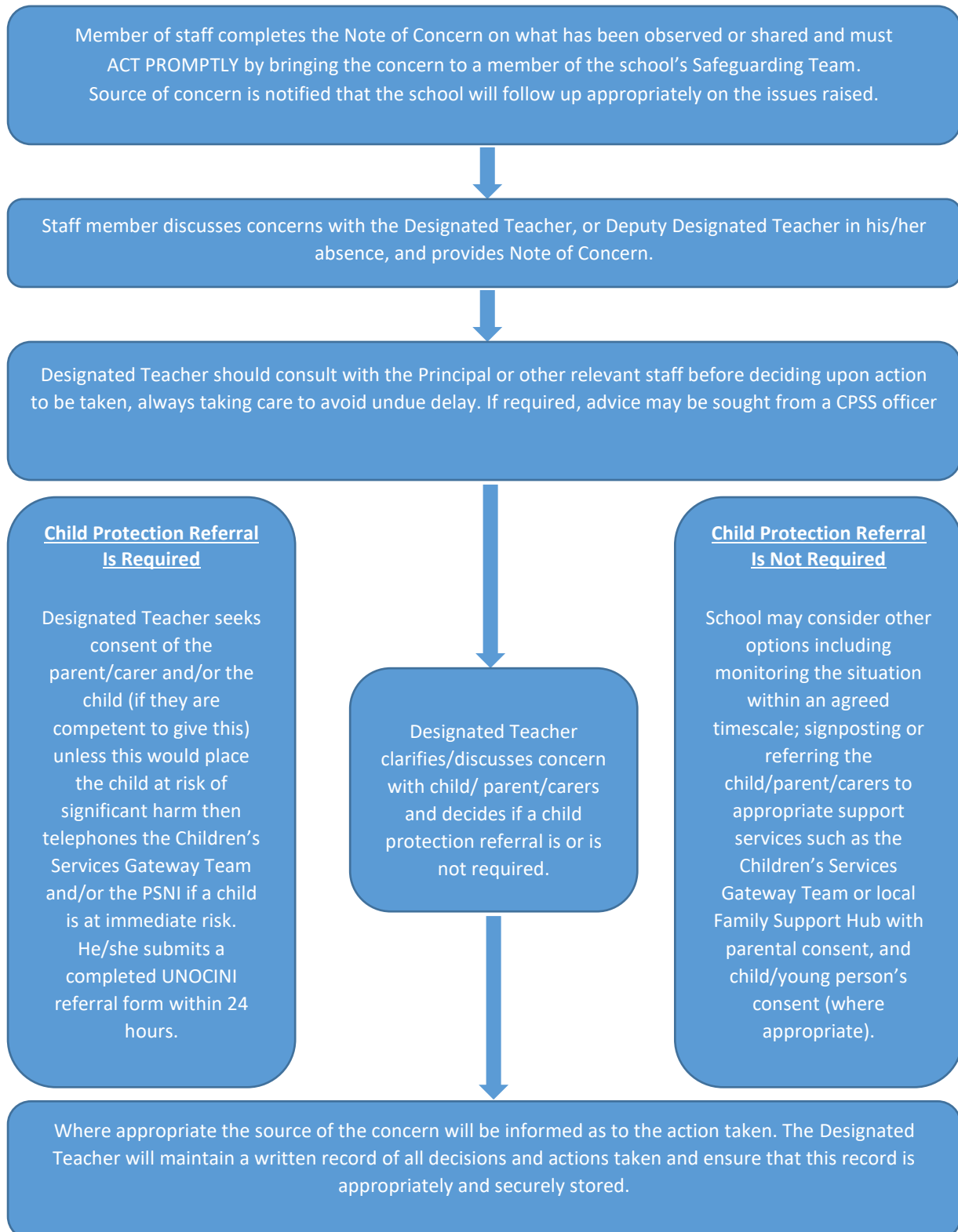
Emergency Out of Hours Service 028 9504 9999

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 Procedure, available on the school website. This procedure should culminate in 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 suspects child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.

APPENDIX 6

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

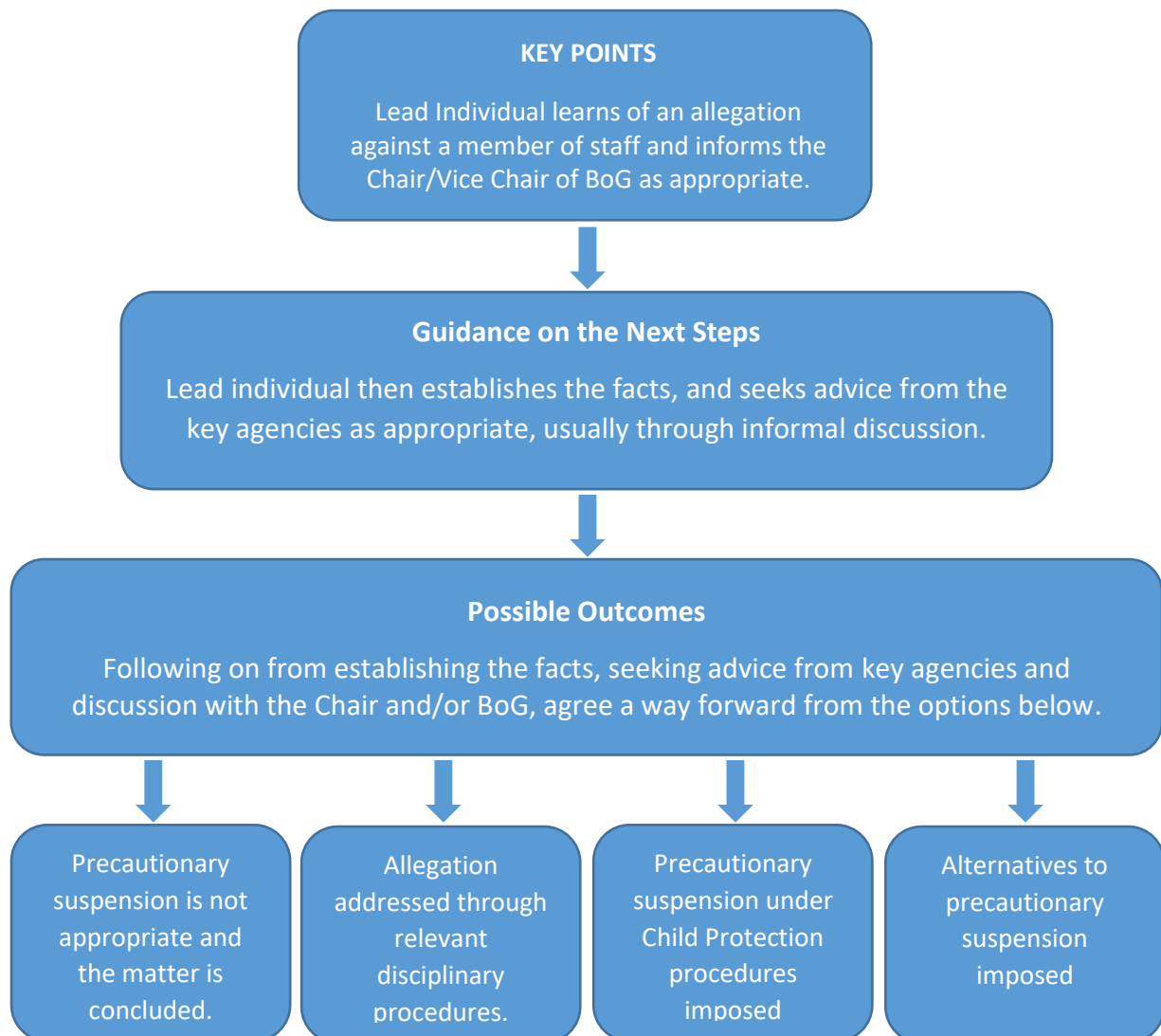


APPENDIX 7

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

The school will follow the procedures outlined in the guidance provided by the Department of Education in Circular 2015/13:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/2015-13-dealing-with-allegations-of-abuse-against-a-member-of-staff.pdf>



APPENDIX 8:

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFEGUARDING

- 1** The proper functioning and success of our School depends directly on the quality of the relationships between staff and pupils. Interest, concern, trust, mutual respect, patience, understanding, tolerance, compassion and good humour are all of central importance.
- 2** In our dealings with young people it is undesirable and unnecessary for us to be suspicious, unduly wary or fearful, but we should understand that innocent motives, words and actions can sometimes be misconstrued.
- 3** In the context of our teaching, pastoral, examination, tutorial or other professional responsibilities, we may be involved in one-to-one situations with pupils. These meetings should generally take place in school time, in the vicinity of and with the knowledge of other teachers and pupils. If the circumstances are to be outside the normal run, it is advisable to alert a senior colleague about the nature, purpose and locality of the meeting.
- 4** We should exercise special care during residential activities and work undertaken before or after school, at weekends and in the holidays.
- 5** Physical contact between a staff member and pupils should be avoided in general. However, where it is necessary, for example, in the public demonstration of a particular skill, it should be impersonal and beyond the risk of misinterpretation.
- 6** Members of staff should make themselves familiar with the advice in the school's Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy. All staff receive training at the earliest opportunity in the principles of Team Teach, which focus on de-escalation, and risk and restraint reduction. These principles reflect the interim guidance which has been provided by the Department of Education on use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings (Circular Number 2020/13).
- 7** If a child or young person becomes distressed, verbal reassurance and comfort rather than physical comfort should in general be offered. However, on occasion, for example in the Primary department, physical reassurance may be required. In this case, the physical contact should be transparent, beyond the risk of misinterpretation, and clearly in the child's best interests. In a one-to-one situation, an additional member of staff should always be called to give assistance.
- 8** Staff should not become deeply involved in a young person's problems outside school. Senior colleagues can, where appropriate, secure help from external agencies.
- 9** Staff should not have social contact with a pupil for the purpose of establishing a friendship or strengthening a relationship. Where there are, coincidentally, social contacts between staff and pupils, for example where the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle, these contacts should be openly acknowledged and care should be exercised that they are not misconstrued.

- 10 If a member of staff finds him/herself to any marked degree the subject of a young person's attentions, friendship or immature affections, a suitably distant (but not unkind) professionalism should serve, and include alerting the DT.
- 11 Staff should avoid communication with pupils using electronic media except for purposes related to their professional responsibilities and then only in a manner which is transparent and open to scrutiny. Detailed guidance on this area is included in the School's eSafety Policy.
- 12 Except in circumstances of emergency, illness or extreme necessity it may be inadvisable for a member of staff to give a child a lift on his or her own. Where practical, the permission of a parent should be sought before providing a lift in these circumstances.
- 13 Staff need at all times to keep in mind that we have a duty of care and a legal responsibility. We should not believe an allegation of abuse could never happen to us - or rely only on our good name to protect us. Members of staff should be clear that a relationship of a sexual nature with a pupil, up until the pupil officially leaves school, will be considered to be gross misconduct and a criminal offence and, in all probability, will lead to suspension followed by dismissal.

APPENDIX 9: RELATED POLICIES

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

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Anti-Cyberbullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers
- Code of Conduct for Family Members and Visitors
- eSafety Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Administration of Medication in School Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the School office or visit the school website at <https://www.jordanstownschool.org>.