

# **Saint Eithne's Primary School**

## **SAFEGUARDING**

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



## **Child Protection Ethos**

We in St Eithne's PS have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety 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 non-teaching 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 neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

## **Principles**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" (DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

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

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

## **Other Relevant Policies**

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

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Intimate Care
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- E-Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing a copy should contact the School Principal or visit the school website at [www.steithnes.net](http://www.steithnes.net)

## **Role and Responsibilities**

### **School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding team

- Chair of the Board of Governors: Patrick Mc Daid
- Designated Governor for Child Protection: Majella Doherty
- Principal: Terence Mc Dowell
- Designated Teacher: Leona Mc Cusker
- Deputy Designated Teacher: Julie Spence & Vincent Feeney

### **The Board of Governors**

Board of Governors must ensure:

- That the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Relevant Child Protection training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same;
- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

### **School Staff**

Teachers see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse.

The teacher must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/deputy teacher for Child Protection;
- listen to what is being said and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (appendix 4)
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed through the written "Record of Concern" proforma (appendix 4) or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- **NOT** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- **NOT** investigate

## **The Parents**

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
- letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
- familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

## **Definition of Harm**

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. 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 occurs. Abuse can happen outside the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from 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 a way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and on-going information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm can be caused by:

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

The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child. The main types of abuse as well as their physical and behavioural indicators are included in Appendix 3.

## **Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Procedures For Reporting Suspected Or Disclosed Child Abuse**

#### **How a Parent can make a Complaint**

We aim to work closely with the parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or the Principal/Designated teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the **flowchart in Appendix 5**.

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

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 her and make full notes.

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

The Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal and may also seek advice from the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services (Gateway Team). Where

it is evident that a young person has been or is at risk of being abused and/or a criminal offence may have been committed then the school must make a referral.

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

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in Appendix 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 Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If a complaint is made against the Principal then the Designated Teacher should be informed and he/she will inform the Chairperson of The Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with employing authority. This procedure as outlined in **Appendix 7** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance (DE Circular 2015/13).

### **Attendance At Child Protection Case Conferences And Other Social Services Meetings**

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

### **Consent from Pupils and Parents**

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

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

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

## **Record Keeping**

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

## **Appendix 5 Record-keeping Proforma**

## **Safeguarding in the Curriculum**

The school seeks to promote pupils’ awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school’s personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Furthermore, school displays include information directing a pupil on how to seek help, advice and support within the school and from external agencies and professionals.

## **Vetting Procedures**

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

## **Code of Conduct for all Staff Paid or Unpaid**

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

All members of staff are expected to comply with the school’s Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which included as Appendix 2 to this policy.

## **Staff Training**

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

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

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

Date of Next Policy Review: June 2019



## **Appendix 1**

### **The School Safeguarding Team**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chair of the Board of Governors is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a Child Protection policy is in place and that a safeguarding ethos is maintained in the school.
- Ensuring that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- Ensuring that Governors receive relevant training in Child Protection and Recruitment and Selection.
- Assuming responsibility in the management of a complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure the Board of Governors receive regular updates in relation to child Protection activity including a full written annual report.

##### **Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The Designated Governor is responsible for advising the Governor on matters related to child protection including the child protection policy, reports to Governors, the recruitment, selection and vetting of staff and the role of the Designated Teacher.

##### **Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all relevant DENI guidance in relation to child protection and safeguarding in particular '*Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection*' (1999) is implemented within the school.
- Enabling the Board of Governors fulfil their child protection duties by keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to child protection and ensuring the inclusion of child protection activities on their agenda.
- Maintaining and securely storing the School Record of Child Abuse Complaints and to make it available at least annually to the Board of Governors.
- The appointment of suitable staff to posts (teaching and non-teaching) within the school and the appointment of suitable teaching staff to the roles of Designated and Deputy Teacher for Child Protection.
- Ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedures every 2 years.
- Managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

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

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. They must also appoint a Deputy Designated Teacher who as a member of the safeguarding team and who will actively support the Designated Teacher in carrying out the following duties:

- Providing child protection training for all teaching and non-teaching staff (whole school training) to be delivered a minimum of once every two years
- Taking lead responsibility for the development and annual review of the school's child protection policy.
- Promoting a child protection ethos in the school.
- Acting as a point of contact for staff (and parents) in relation to child abuse concerns.
- Liaison with the Principal and Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected Child Abuse.
- Making referrals to other agencies, with the Principal's knowledge.
- Maintaining and securely storing appropriate child protection records.
- Attending child protection case conferences and other relevant case planning meetings where appropriate and practicable.
- Providing an annual report to the Governors on Child protection activity.

The Deputy Designated Teacher will deputise for them in their absence.

## Appendix 2

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

#### Introduction

This Code of Conduct 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. It is built on the premise that 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 approach. However, it is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff.

#### Private Meetings with Pupils

- Staff should be aware of the possible misconceptions or potential risks which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that in the normal course of school life 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. While it may be appropriate to use a sign indicating that the room is in use it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- If a member of staff has concerns that a private interview with a pupil may be misinterpreted or may give rise to concern he or she should ensure that another adult (or if this not possible another pupil) is present or nearby.
- Staff should be mindful of the potential risks involved in the use of social networking sites accessed by pupils.

#### 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 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.
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who need to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid 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 Principal or Vice Principal.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of schools activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

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

- 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 after the event be criticised.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

### **Relationships and Attitudes**

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.

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

- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times.
- Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
- Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that may have, including written content, video or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others.
- Contact with students should only be made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate.
- Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for the 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 stored in accordance with the schools procedures on school equipment.

## **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. It is therefore important that staff exercise judgement and seek advice if unsure about a situation.

From time to time it will be prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young children, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions.

## Appendix 3

### Types of Abuse and Physical/Behavioural Indicators

**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. **(Co-operating To Safeguarding Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
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 (glove like); 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	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

**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. **(Co-operating To Safeguarding Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2015)**

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.	Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class 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.

**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 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. **(Co-operating To Safeguarding Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p><b>Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”;</b>            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>

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when other use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or for the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact assault by penetrative (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, 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. **(Co-operating To Safeguarding Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p><b>Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs;</b>            bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas;            torn, stained or bloody underclothes;            chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches;            difficulty in walking or sitting;            frequent urinary infections;            avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers;</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;</p>

<p>unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.</p>	<p>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>
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**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, professionals should recognise that the abuse anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective; the bullying behaviour is persistent and severe resulting in the target of the bullying suffering/likely 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 (**Co-operating To Safeguarding Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016**)

**A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.**

### **Child Abuse in other Specific Circumstances**

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is not defined as a category of abuse within the Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The policy does however state that the damage inflicted by bullying behaviour can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and at the extreme cause them significant harm (including self-harm).

The procedure for referral and investigation of abuse may therefore be implemented in certain circumstances such as when anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective ; the bullying behaviour is persistent and severe resulting in the target of bullying suffering/likely to suffer significant harm; there are concerns that bullying behaviour is indicative of the child exhibiting this behaviour suffering/likely to suffer significant harm or where concerns exist in



relation to the parents/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child (either the target or the child exhibiting this behaviour).

### **Children who Sexually Abuse others or display Sexually Harmful Behaviour**

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in section 7 of this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved. The above guidance follows DE Circular 2016/05 subject Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point'. **(Co-operating To Safeguarding Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)**

The key factor that distinguished cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity **in return for something** they need or desire and/or gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and /or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

### **The potential indicators of CSE can include, but are limited to:**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc. without plausible explanation
- Leaving home/care without permission
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phones calls prior to leaving;
- Agitated/ stressed prior to leaving home/care
- Returning distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return;
- Truancy from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;

- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis
- Concerning use of the internet;
- New peer groups
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend';
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Low self-esteem;
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less);
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair;
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse.

Whilst these indicators can be usefully used to identify potential risk, it is important to note that their presence does not necessarily mean that CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence, mean that it is not.

### **Indecent Photographs**

The offence of taking indecent pictures under the age of 18 years can apply in a situation where a pupil has taken an indecent picture using a mobile phone of others under 18 years of age. It is also an offence to distribute, possess with intent to distribute or show such photographs to other. In such circumstances the PSNI and Social Service will be contacted. The school also has an e-safety and mobile phone policies which have been circulated to parents and pupils and which is available from the school.

### **Young Person whose behaviour places him/her at risk of significant harm**

A child whose own behaviours e.g. 'self-harm behaviour, leaving school without permission etc.' places him/her at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse as defined in Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The decision to initiate child protection procedures is a matter for professional judgements and each case will be considered individually with advice sought from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection. The criminal aspects of such cases will be dealt with by the PSNI.

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

Is defined by 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' (**Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016**)

### **Sexual Violence and Abuse**

Is defined as 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).'

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent. (**Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016**)

A child may live in a family where there is domestic abuse or a young person may be in a relationship where they become the subject of domestic abuse. In high risk cases involving domestic abuse Social Services and/or the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection will contact the school in order to help assess the child/ young person's needs and to ensure that he/she is receives appropriate support.

**Appendix 4**

**St Eithne's PS Primary School**

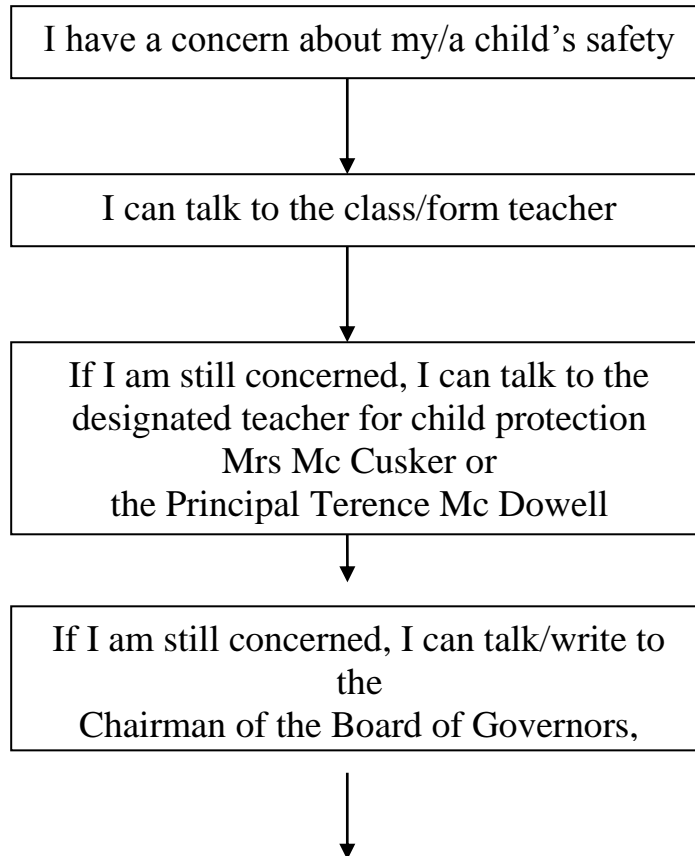
**CHILD PROTECTION PROFILE OF CONCERN OR DISCLOSURE**

Complete and pass to Designated Teacher as soon as possible on the same day.  
If not available pass to Deputy DT or Principal.

Pupils Name:	Year Grp:	
	DoB:	
Concern Identified by:	Date:	
	Time:	am/pm
Nature of concern/ details of disclosure/ other relevant information. If a disclosure has been made record words used by the child/young person.		
Passed to:	Received by:	Date:
Action taken by DT/DDT/Principal		
Signed _____ (DT/DDT/Principal)		Date _____

## Appendix 5

### Procedure for Parents who wish to raise a Child Protection Concern



*At any time a parent can talk to a social worker at the Gateway Team (Western Trust)*  
**Tel: 028 71314 090**  
*or the*  
PSNI at the Public Protection Unit  
**Tel: 0845 6008000**

**Appendix 6**

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

**Child makes a disclosure to teacher or teacher has concerns about child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time.**  
*Teacher should make notes of what was said or observed and must **ACT PROMPTLY***

Teacher refers matter to Designated Teacher. Discussion with Designated Teacher who makes full notes.

Designated Teacher meets with Principal to plan course of action and ensures that a written record is made and treated confidentially.

**CONTACT NUMBERS**

WESTERN EDUCATION & LIBRARY BOARD  
 Designated Child Protection Officer  
 1 Hospital Road Omagh  
 Tel: 028 82411289

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST  
 Gateway Team, Whitehill, 106 Irish Street, L'Derry  
 Tel:028 71 71314090

PSNI (Public Protection Unit)  
 Public Protection Unit  
 Tel:0845 6008000

If doubts remain seek advice from EA Designated Officer/ Gateway team

If a referral is necessary, refer to Gateway Team or PSNI and advise EA Designated Officer

If no referral to Gateway /PSNI necessary

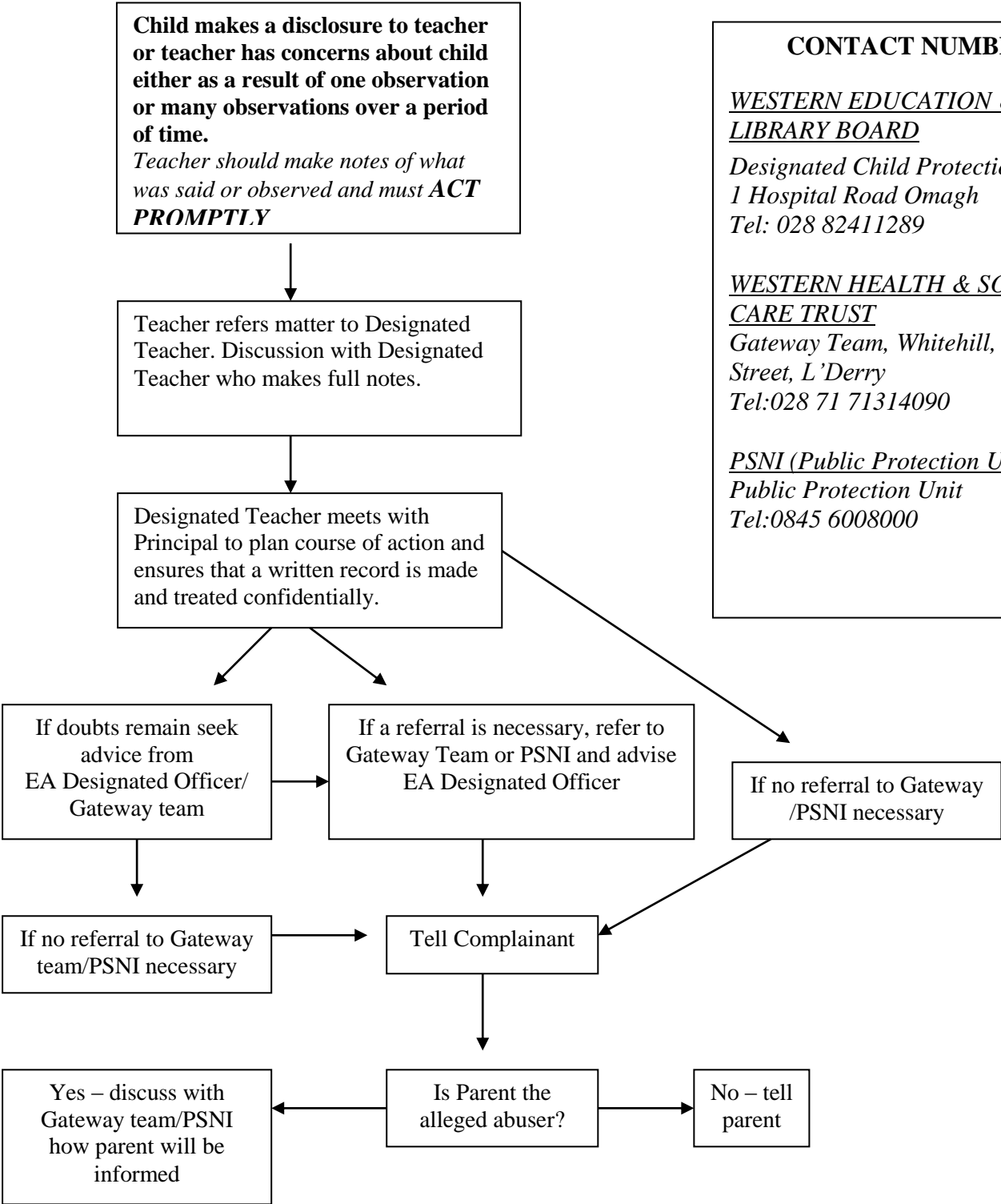
If no referral to Gateway team/PSNI necessary

Tell Complainant

Yes – discuss with Gateway team/PSNI how parent will be informed

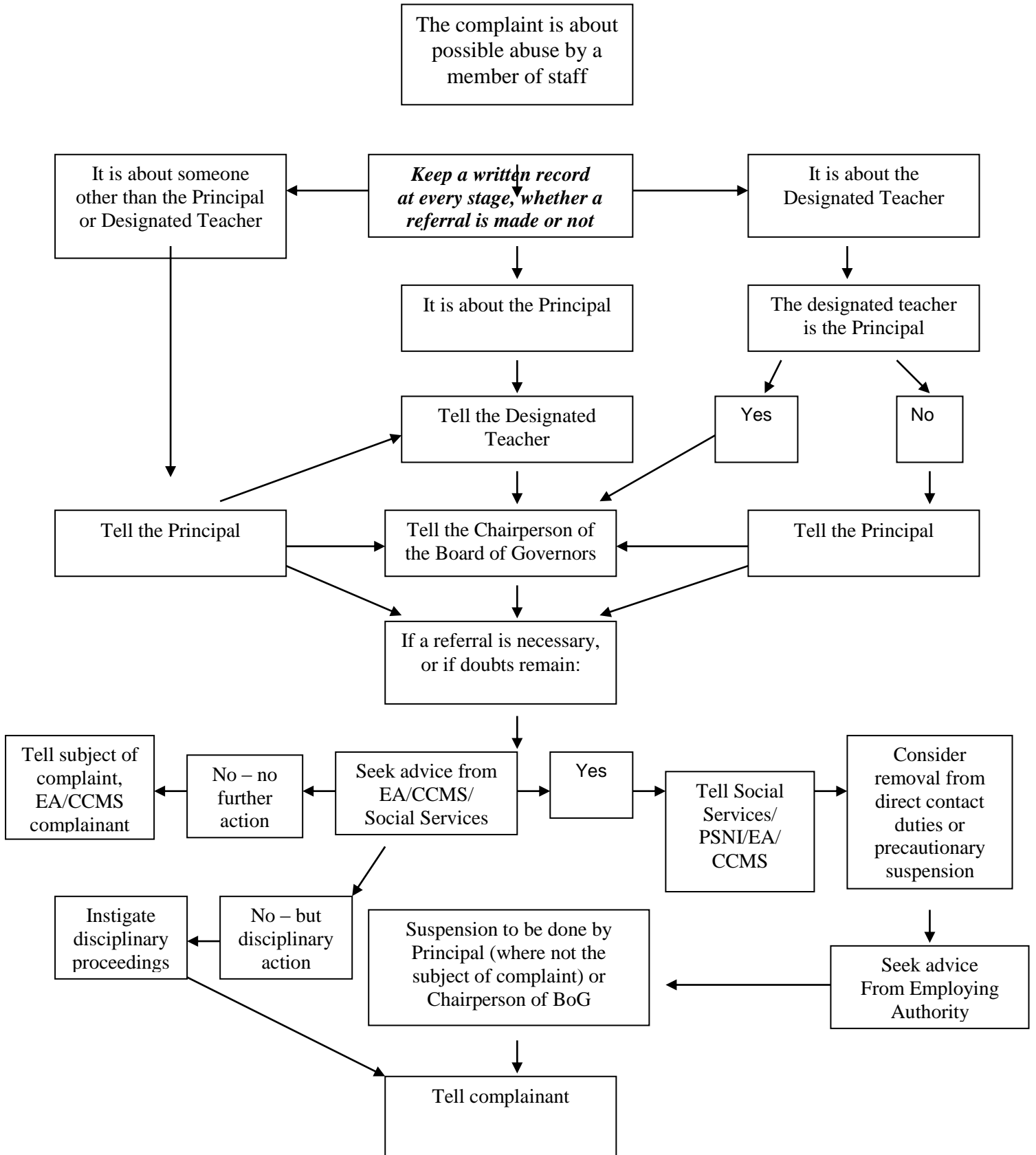
Is Parent the alleged abuser?

No – tell parent



## Appendix 7

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



## Appendix 8

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This Code of Conduct 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. It is built on the premise that 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 approach. However, it is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff.

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

- Staff should be aware of the possible misconceptions or potential risks which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that in the normal course of school life 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. While it may be appropriate to use a sign indicating that the room is in use it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- If a member of staff has concerns that a private interview with a pupil may be misinterpreted or may give rise to concern he or she should ensure that another adult (or if this not possible another pupil) is present or nearby.
- Staff should be mindful of the potential risks involved in the use of social networking sites accessed by pupils.

#### **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 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.
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who need to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid 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 Principal or Vice Principal.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of schools activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

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

- 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 after the event be criticised.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

### **Relationships and Attitudes**

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.

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

- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times.
- Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
- Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that may have, including written content, video or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others.
- Contact with students should only be made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate.
- Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for the 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 stored in accordance with the schools procedures on school equipment.

## **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. It is therefore important that staff exercise judgement and seek advice if unsure about a situation.

From time to time it will be prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young children, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions.