

# St Patrick's & St Brigid's College Child Protection Policy



Date adopted:  
To be revised:

## **1. Child Protection Ethos**

We in St Patrick's & St. Brigid's College 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

## **2. Principles**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 the 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.

## **3. Other Relevant Policies**

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. The child protection policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including some of which are currently under review:

- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying 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 [www.spbcollege.com](http://www.spbcollege.com)**

## **4. Roles And Responsibilities**

### **4.1 The School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors ( Mr E Kerlin )

- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Mrs M Hargan)
- Principal (Mrs D O’Kane)
- Designated Teacher (Miss M Cleary)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs A Toner)

The roles and responsibilities of members of the Safeguarding team are summarised in **Appendix 1**.

#### **4.2 The Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors as a body must ensure that the school fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance including:

- approving the schools child protection policy every 2 years and all other safeguarding policies on a regular basis.
- receiving annual child protection reports .
- ensuring there is a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- attendance at relevant child protection/safeguarding training for Governors

#### **4.3 School Staff**

Teachers, Classroom Assistants and other Support staff in school see children on a daily basis over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and a child may choose to disclose to them allegations of abuse.

Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal. In addition class teachers, Form Teachers and Year Heads should also keep the Designated Teacher informed in writing or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse. A pro-forma for reporting a concern or disclosure is included at appendix 4.

If member of staff does not feel their concerns are being taken seriously or action to safeguard the child is not being taken by professionals and the child is considered to be at risk of continuing harm then they should speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Principal, WELB Child Protection Support Service for Schools or to Social Services.

#### **4.4 Parents**

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child’s absence, or sending in a note on the child’s return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child’s well-being;
- making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child

- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child from school; Such persons must produce photographic identification on arrival at reception.
- familiarising themselves with the schools safeguarding policies e.g. Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the school office when they visit the school
- sharing any concerns they may have in relation to their child with the school.

## **5. Definition of Child Abuse**

*“Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them”.* Area Child Protection Committees’ Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2005).

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**.

## **6. Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse**

The following are guidelines for use by 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 in writing using the proforma in Appendix 4. Respect confidentiality i.e. the matter should only be discussed on a need to know basis.

## **7. Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse.**

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

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their 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/Form Teacher/Year Head, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal. 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**.

### **7.2 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 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 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 Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. He/she will discuss the matter with the Principal and may also seek advice or clarification from the Western Education and Library Board Designated Officer for Child Protection or from 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 within 24 hours 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 the WELB 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**.

### **7.3 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 the complaint is 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 the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in **appendix 7** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

### **8. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings**

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences, 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.

### **9. Consent from Pupils and Parents**

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 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.

### **10. 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 protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

### **11. 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. The School's own child protection records will be stored until the pupil is 30 years old.

### **12. 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, the pupil diary includes information directing a pupil on how to seek help, advice and support within the school and from external agencies and professionals

### **13. 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.

### **14. 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 which is included as **Appendix 2** to this policy.

### **15. 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 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 child protection training courses specific to their roles which is provided by the WELB Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

### **16. 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 Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Board of Governors)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Designated Teacher)

## Appendix 1.

### The School Safeguarding Team

#### Roles & Responsibilities

##### 1. 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 lead responsibility in the management of a complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive regular updates in relation to child protection activity including a full written annual report

##### 2. Designated Governor for Child Protection.

The Designated Governor is responsible for advising the Governors 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.

##### 3. 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.

#### **4. 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 will support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role including undertaking key duties in their absence. The role of Designated Teacher includes:

- 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 WELB 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.**

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

#### **Introduction**

All actions concerning 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 young people in their charge must be above reproach. The Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

**Employees should be aware that failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension/dismissal.**

#### **Purpose , Scope & Principles**

The Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe, and the college should notify staff of this code and expectations therein. School staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within the school. As a member of the school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the college, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff who are employed in the school, including the Principal.

## **Code of Conduct**

#### ***Setting an Example***

- All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- Staff must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- Staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- The Code of Conduct will help staff understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

#### ***Safeguarding Pupils***

- Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from
  - physical Abuse
  - sexual abuse
  - emotional abuse
  - neglect
- The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns of a child protection nature to the Designated Child Protection Teacher (M Cleary) or the Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher in the absence of the first teacher (A Toner).
- Staff have access to the college's Child Protection Policy and must be familiar with this document.
- Staff must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents/carers or colleagues.
- Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

### ***Private Meeting with Pupils***

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

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

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with students.
- Staff should never touch a student unless it is necessary to protect the student, others or property from harm. See 'Use of Reasonable Force' Policy.
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer First Aid to a student should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other students 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 student, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager or the Principal.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising students in residential settings, or in approved out of schools activities, where staff may be in proximity to students in circumstances very different from normal school/work environment.

### ***Confidentiality***

- where staff have access to confidential information about pupil or their parents/carers, staff must not reveal this information, except on a professional level to appropriate members of staff.

- All staff may, at some point, witness actions which need to be confidential. School procedures for reporting of such need to be followed. It should not be discussed outside the school. Should guidance be required, this should be sought from the Principal or Assistant Principals.

### ***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 should be aware of the danger that their application, either by students 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***

- All staff should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the students, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.
- Attitudes, dress code, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

### ***Social Networking***

- Individuals who work with young people should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and should never enter into inappropriate relationships with young people. This may include;
  - Communication of a personal nature
  - Inappropriate dialogue through the internet via Facebook, Beebo, MSN, Twitter, online gaming sites etc.
  - Staff should not, ‘befriend’ any current pupil or their parents on social media sites. Staff may wish to add past pupils as, ‘friends’ after the pupil has turned 18 years of age.
  - The sending of emails or text messages to young people via personal email addresses or mobile phones is not acceptable.
- All communications with young people in our school should be of a professional nature and communicated via official school email addresses or a school phone.
- Every adult has a right to use social networking as a means of communicating with other adults. The school would however like to highlight the risks associated with your communications being accessible to the general social networking public. It is advisable to consider using privacy tools when communicating via this media. Staff should at all times be mindful of the nature of their communications on forums not controlled by themselves (e.g. friends or relatives networking sites) and how these communications might be interpreted by others.

### ***Conclusion***

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees’ professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct, will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this policy, or how they

should act in particular circumstances they should consult with the Principal/Assistant Principal or a representative of their professional association/trade union.

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

***Monitoring and Evaluation***

SPB College, will update this Code of Conduct in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary, and review it regularly. Participation and consultation with staff will be undertaken.

**Appendix 3**

**Types of Abuse and Physical/Behavioural Indicators**

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
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 there is no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.

**Physical Abuse** is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
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<p>Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (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</p>	<p>Self destructive tendencies; aggression 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; coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories</p>
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**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).</p>	<p>Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.</p>

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self esteem; self devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material.

**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 Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The policy does however state that the damage inflicted by bullying 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; bullying is persistent and severe, resulting in the victim suffering/likely to suffer significant harm; there are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the bully 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 victim or bully).

#### **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 a WELB 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.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

**“Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.”**  
(SBNI 2014, adopted from CSE Knowledge Transfer Partnership NI).

The key factor that distinguishes 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 for the 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 not 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/phone 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;
- Truanting from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Concerning use of the internet;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis;
- New peer groups;
- Significantly older ‘boyfriend’ or ‘girlfriend’;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Low self-esteem;
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less);
- Self harm and other expressions of despair;
- Evidence or suspicion of substance 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.

When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity or, where we have concerns about a 16/17 year old in a sexual relationship the Designated Teacher has a duty to share this information with Social Services.

### **Indecent Photographs**

The offence of taking indecent pictures of children under 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 others. In such circumstances the PSNI and Social Services will be contacted. The school also has a mobile phone and electronic devices which has 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-harming 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 judgement and each case will be considered individually with advice sought from a WELB Designated Officer for Child Protection. The criminal aspects of such cases will be dealt with by the PSNI.

### **Domestic Abuse**

The definition of domestic abuse is:

*“threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation”*. DHSSPS / NIO Tackling Violence at Home, 2005, p10

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 WELB Designated Officer for Child Protection PSNI 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. Patrick's & St. Brigid's College** ***Child Protection Record of Concern or Disclosure***

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

<b>Pupils Name:</b>	<b>Class/Year Group :</b>	
	<b>DoB:</b>	
<b>Concern identified by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	
	<b>Time:</b>	

**Nature of Concern / details of disclosure / other relevant information. If a disclosure has been made record actual words used by the child/young person**

Continue on reverse if needed

**Passed to:**

**Received by:**

**Date:**

**Action taken by DT/DDT /Principal**

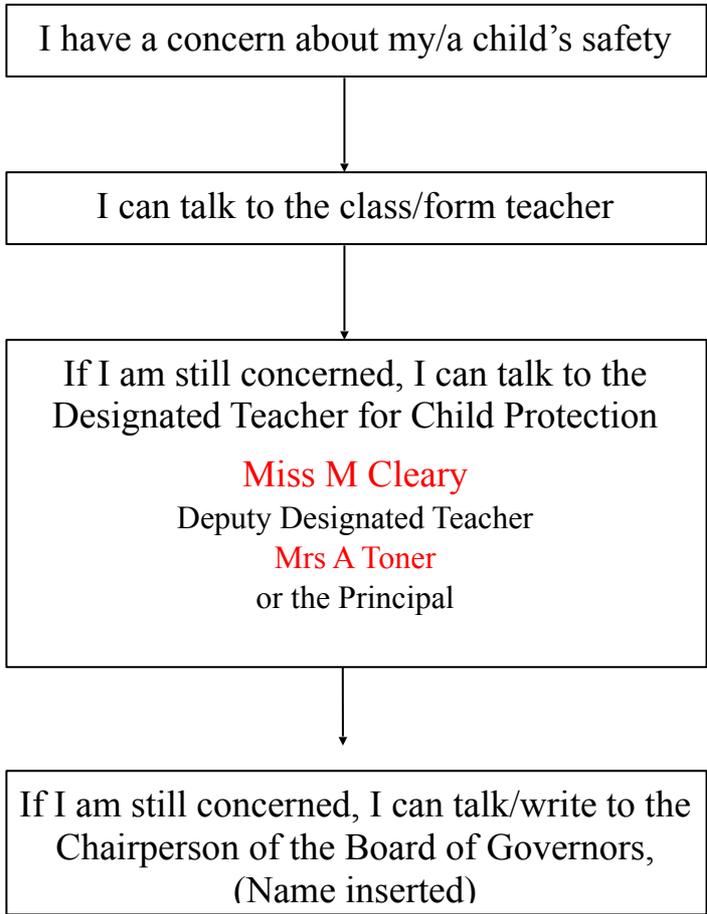
**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(DT/DDT/Principal)

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

This form to be filed in pupils CP file

## Appendix 5

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



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**

...k to a social worker at  
**Tel: 028 71314**  
 or the  
**PSNI at the Public**  
**Tel: 999 (Emergency)**

**CONTACT NUMBERS**

WESTERN EDUCATION & LIBRARY BOARD  
 Designated Officer for Child Protection  
 1 Hospital Road Omagh  
 Tel: 028 82411480

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST  
 Gateway Team, Whitehill,  
 106 Irish Street, Londonderry  
 Tel: 028 71314090

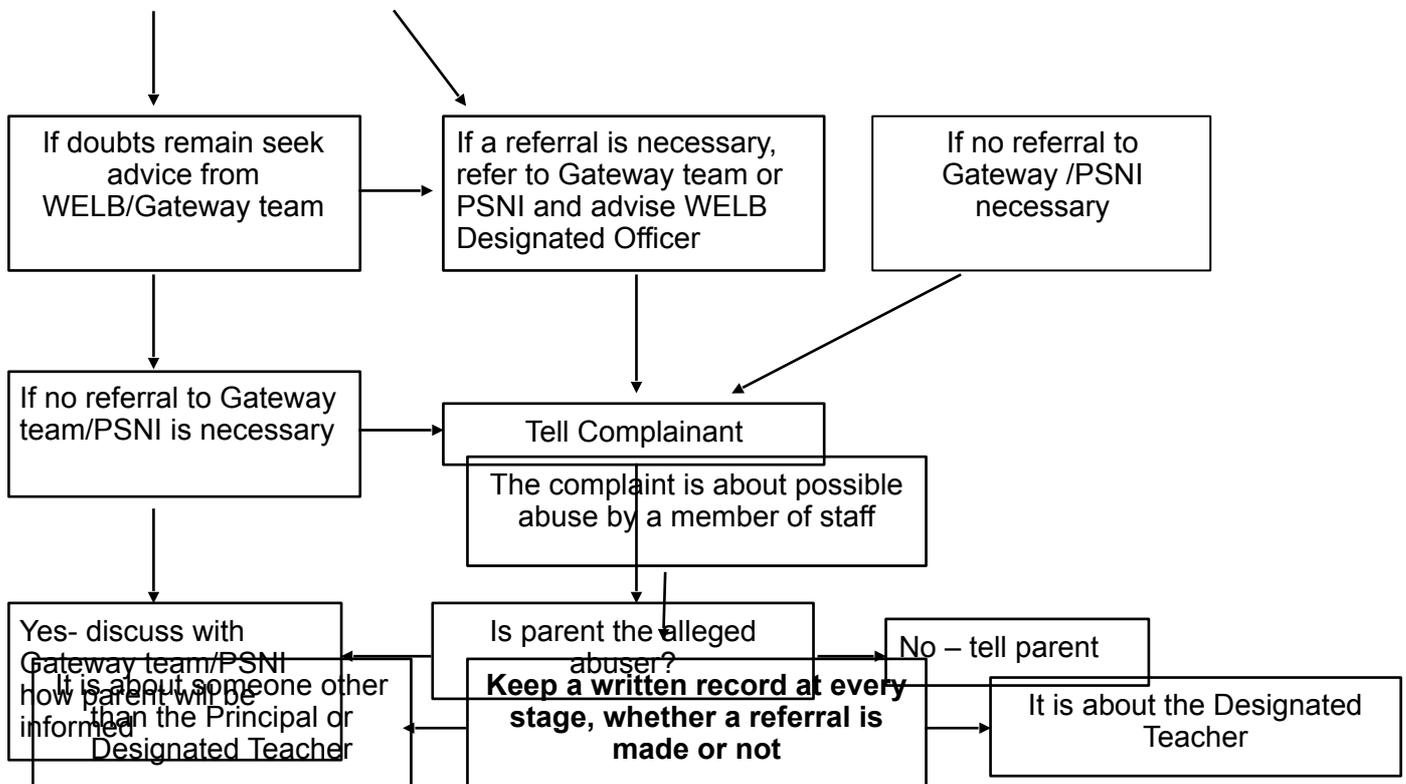
PSNI (Public Protection Unit)  
 Tel: 999 (Emergency)  
 or 101 (Non-Urgent)

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.

## 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**

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

