Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit

(Reviewed August 2023)

Introduction

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in the Child Protection and Safeguarding of children.

In keeping with our Mission Statement, Pastoral Care policy and the above statement we in St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit seek to provide a 'caring, supportive and safe' environment for our pupils, where individuals are valued for their unique talents and abilities and where each pupil can learn and develop to his/her full potential. We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge:

NOT JUST CHILD PROTECTION BUT ALSO SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is the proactive means we use to protect every child in our school from potential dangers. Safeguarding is our Preventative Curriculum. Sadly, whilst Safeguarding is proactive, Child Protection is often reactive to an event which has occurred. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order (2007) requires our school to work in partnership with internal education agencies and external agencies to ensure the safety of children.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration.* The Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools' (DENI, April 2017) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) are other documents which underpin our work.

In keeping with good practice, within this policy we are now adding our Online Safety Policy as an appendix. Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

Covid 19

We will continue in this academic year to follow all PHA guidance and continue to adhere to strict routines with regards to handwashing and sanitisation to safeguard all pupils, staff and visitors in our school.

Paramountcy

The 'Paramountcy Principle' means that when there is a possible child protection concern priority should be given to ensuring the safety and welfare of the child. This may mean that the needs or wishes of adults are overridden because the welfare of the child must always come first. A crucial responsibility is to ensure that the rights of children and young people are upheld and that their protection and welfare is paramount.

School staff play a particularly important role in the child protection and safeguarding of children because they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children which prevents concerns from escalating.

Staff at St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit are aware of the importance of their role in safeguarding children and recognise that they form part of the wider safeguarding system for children.

The Child Protection & Safeguarding of Children Involves:

- **protecting** children from maltreatment
- **preventing** impairment of children's health or development
- **ensuring** that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- **taking action** to enable all children to have the best outcomes

This policy applies to all staff, whether teaching or support, full or part-time and to voluntary helpers and students on placement.

St Mary's staff are aware that protecting children is everyone's responsibility and not just the responsibility of the designated and deputy designated teachers.

Every member of staff knows how to raise a concern with the designated teachers, but they are also aware that they have the right and responsibility to report an issue to social services themselves if they feel that others are failing to do so. They are also aware that it is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

Links with other Policies

- Safeguarding Policies including Pastoral Care Policy, Addressing Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, ICT Policy, Drugs Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Medication Policy, RSE Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy, Professional Code of Conduct Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Reasonable Force Policy and Complaints Procedure Policy, CLA Policy (Child Looked After).
- Inclusion and SEN Policy

CPOMS
CPOMS is our online digital tool for recording and monitoring all aspects of safeguarding, well-being and pastoral issues throughout the school. All school staff can report their concerns via this portal with members of the Safeguarding Team.

How do we protect children at St Mary's?

i.   Designated/Deputy Designated Teachers and School Safeguarding Team

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection & Safeguarding is Mrs Denise Mahon.
The Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection & Safeguarding are Mrs Jennifer Maguire, Ms Hannah Magorrian and Ms Catherine Conaghan (Nursery).
The School Safeguarding Team includes Mr Declan Murray (Principal), Mrs Jennifer Maguire (Vice-Principal), the DT and DDTs. (Mrs Maguire is currently on secondment in another school)
At St Mary's the DT and School Principal have responsibility for:

- Referring all cases of suspected abuse to Children's Services either directly or via a UNOCINI
- Acting as a source of training (annually), support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child protection and safeguarding
- Liaising with relevant agencies e.g. Children's Services, CPSS, PSNI, Education Authority, CCMS
- Attending Child Protection Case Conferences and CLA Reviews
- Record keeping through the digital CPOMS portal
- Informing other schools during a child's transition of Child Protection issues
- Ensuring the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly
- Ensuring the Child Protection Policy is available in school office and on the school website and that parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- Child Protection & Safeguarding induction for new staff and annual update training for all staff.
- Convening regular meetings with the Safeguarding Team, including the BOG Child Protection Governor, Mrs Marie Curran.
- Responding to all Operation Encompass calls from PSNI in relation to domestic violence (DV) in the family home.

The DT and the DDT's receive appropriate Child Protection & Safeguarding refresher training every two years from the EA's CPSS. **The DT and School Principal raise staff awareness through annual training:**

- Ensuring that the school's Policy and Procedures are known and used appropriately by all staff.

ii.   The Responsibility of the Governors

We have a nominated Governor for Child Protection (Dr Gavin Devlin) and a Governor who is a member of the Safeguarding Team (Mrs Marie Curran).

The Governors ensure:

- the Child Protection & Safeguarding policies, procedures and training at St Mary's are implemented, effective and always comply with legislation.
- that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed (Mrs Marie Curran)
- they lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal
- that they receive Child Protection updates at each meeting and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity. (Mrs Marie Curran, attends regular safeguarding meetings in her role as Child Protection BOG within the Safeguarding Team.)

iii.   The Responsibility of the Principal

The Principal must ensure:

- That DENI's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools' (April 2017) is implemented within the school
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed
- That all staff receive child protection training
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- That the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (and the Board of Governors) is kept informed
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of all Board of Governors' meetings and is noted in the Annual BOG Report
- That confidentiality is paramount, information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors regarding a referral on a need-to-know basis.
- That the school child protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy at least once every 2 years
- That the following policies are issued to parents at intake – Child Protection and Safeguarding (including online safety), Pastoral Care, Addressing Bullying, Positive Behaviour and Complaints

iv.   The Responsibility of Teachers/Classroom Assistants/School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse. Remember the 5 R's if you hear an allegation of abuse: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer.

The member of staff must:

- refer concerns to the DT/DDT's/Member of Safeguarding Team for Child Protection & Safeguarding
- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- act promptly

- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child on our CPOMS digital platform.
- 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
- **Not** ask leading questions

In addition, the Class Teacher should:

- Keep the DT/School Principal informed 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 incidences of bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

v.   Raising Pupils' Awareness

All staff raise children's awareness of safeguarding issues through school assemblies participation in the NSPCC Keeping Safe programme (P1-P7) and various curriculum activities, equipping them with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop self-esteem and self-worth. We offer a positive and preventative curriculum that teaches children how to make choices about healthy, safe lifestyles and how to ask for help.

We create an atmosphere where children feel secure and confident and are encouraged to talk in the knowledge that they will be listened to and valued. Every classroom has an updated list of the Safeguarding Team with photographs to remind the children there is someone for them to talk to (Appendix 1). We expect that our pupils will be confident, will not endure bullying or racism and know that their medical and social needs will be met.

vi.   Raising Parents' Awareness

A paragraph is included in the school prospectus identifying the Safeguarding Team, informing parents that we have a duty to report concerns we may have, a brief summary of the procedures we follow and that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration.

Online Safety workshops are provided for parents.

Copies of our Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures are available in the Parents' and Visitors' Zone on the school website.

Posters at all the main entrances and exits in the School/Nursery Unit advertise 'Our Safe School' (Appendix 2) and who parents should contact if they have any Child Protection or Safeguarding concerns.

Parents are encouraged to let the school know about absences via telephone/letter; report to the office when they visit the School/Nursery; raise concerns they have in relation to their child with the School/Nursery.

vii.   Recruitment of Staff & Vetting Procedures

At St. Mary's there is a culture of safe recruitment and procedures are in place that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children.

For all appointments, an Access NI check with barred list information is obtained from the Education Authority/CCMS as the majority of staff will be engaging in regulated activity. A person is considered to be in 'regulated activity' if as a result of their work they will be responsible, on a regular basis, in any setting for the care or supervision of children.

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, is conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

When appointing new staff, we:

- verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address
- obtain an Access NI check with barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity (in line with the requirements of the Employing Authority)
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (in line with the requirements of the Employing Authority)
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate

Staff who are not directly employed by the school, but who take after school activities are required to produce an Access NI check with barred list information before they can undertake an activity.

Volunteers who will not engage in regulated activity with pupils are not required to produce an Access NI check; however, they must not be left unsupervised by a member of staff.

viii.   Code of Conduct

All staff at St Mary's are required to read and sign a code of conduct which is intended to safeguard the well-being of children and offer protection to adults whose vulnerability in some situations is recognised. See our Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

The school has a Reasonable Force Policy.

ix.   Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff

Systems are in place for managing allegations that might indicate that a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. These systems are followed in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff (including volunteers) in a school has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child

- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

All St Mary's staff are aware that if they have concerns about a colleague or any person working with children at St Mary's, these concerns must be passed on to the DT or Principal. If the concern is about the Principal, then it must be reported to the Chair of the Board of Governors without delay.

Although rare, allegations may be so serious that they require immediate intervention by Children's Services and/or the PSNI. In these cases, an Education Authority CPSS/CCMS Designated Officer would be informed of all allegations that come to a school's attention.

St Mary's recognises that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in a school must be dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

x. Inter-agency Working

St Mary's contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. The Safeguarding Team are pro-active in initiating a multi-agency response, and if necessary, pursue what they consider to be a satisfactory outcome. The DT and School Principal are also involved in working with external agencies through CP Case Conferences and CLA Reviews.

xi. Looked After Children

The DT and School Principal are responsible for looked after children and have received appropriate training necessary for this role. (See CLA Policy)

xii. Confidentiality

Previously, pupils' child protection records were kept in a secure, locked cabinet in the school Only the DT and School Principal had access to these records. Child Protection information is shared with colleagues when it is in the best interests of the child. All CP and safeguarding concerns are now stored digitally on CPOMS. This information is shared with all members of our Safeguarding Team. Keeping children safe from harm requires professionals and others to share information. Often it is only when information is put together from a number of sources that it becomes clear that a child is in need or at risk of significant harm. Therefore, St Mary's shares information with partner agencies as and when appropriate.

Child Protection is on a need-to-know basis and once an issue has been reported to the DT, DDT or member of the Safeguarding Team, the staff member may not receive any additional information about the issue he/she relayed to them. Those who disclose information to the DT or member of the Safeguarding Team, or a third party who then discloses this information to the DT or member of the Safeguarding Team, also have to be aware that the rule of

confidentiality is not absolute i.e. if a child makes an allegation and asks that the person they are telling the allegation to is not to tell anyone else, the person listening to the allegation cannot reassure the child that they will not tell anyone the information disclosed, however the 'listener' should reassure the child that telling is the correct thing to do and it can help to stop the issue.

xiii. The Preventative Curriculum

The Preventative Curriculum is our attempt to proactively promote the positive emotional wellbeing of pupils within our school. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional, and health issues, developing the confidence, resilience and coping skills of pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing certain difficulties.

Our Preventative Curriculum aims to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resilience of each child so they can make positive choices in a range of situations. To achieve an effective Preventative Curriculum, we seek support from the entire school community, pupils, Governors, senior leadership, teachers, assistants, other school staff, parents, the local community etc.

Our school achieved the *'Rights Respecting School'* Silver award by UNICEF. This award recognises how the school's curriculum recognises the rights of children as detailed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

We continue to deliver the NSPCC Keeping Safe Project throughout the school, delivering nine lessons in each year group throughout the academic year. Our whole school staff received TAP training in Trauma and Attachment in September 2019. The DT will continue to liaise with the EA CLA team, particularly for P7 children transitioning to secondary education.

Our school has a 'School Council' and participates with a range of external agencies that promote child protection and human rights e.g. NSPCC, PSNI Stranger Danger as well as other projects involving online safety, road safety, drug education, health education and sex education (See associated School Policies). Our school is designated as a 'Health Promoting School' and has a wide range of Extra Curricular activities however we still need to be mindful of Covid restrictions and adhere to PHA advice.

What is 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 complete stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them …." ACPC Regional 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.

There are many types of Child Abuse in addition to those listed below and which we are alert to, including sign and symptoms relating to *Grooming, Child Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Exploitation, Forced Marriage, Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour, Online Abuse* and *Sexting.* In addition, cognisance must be taken of children with increased vulnerabilities e.g. children with a disability, children with

limited fluency in English, pre-school settings, children with gender identity issues/sexual orientation and children who partake in residential settings.

Types of Abuse from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children & Young People in NI' (for Signs and Symptoms please see Appendix 3):

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

2. **Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

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

4. **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers.

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

Child abuse may also be categorised under these sub-headings:

1. **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse:**

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

'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.'

Sexual Violence and Abuse

'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.

Background

Statistics available for Northern Ireland in 2016 indicated an increase in the number of calls to PSNI and deaths due to domestic abuse, with approximately 27,628 calls made and six deaths recorded. At least 15,000 children are estimated to be living in a culture of/or are survivors of violence in the home.

Please Note – The school is required to and will take a zero-tolerance approach to domestic violence. This means any reported cases of domestic violence will be referred directly to Social Services.

Operation Encompass

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

When the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day, to share this information with a member of the safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete the online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

2. ***Bullying (not officially recognised as a Child Protection strand but one we feel needs to be recognised due to our intolerance towards it):***

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our School. Our Addressing Bullying policy is set out in a separate document available from the school office/website. Our whole school staff received ABSIT (Addressing Bullying in Schools) training in August 2023, delivered by Jason Boon from EA. Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening to protect and reassure the victim. Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the DT or DDT for Child Protection. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures.

Procedures for Making Complaints in Relation to Child Abuse

How a Parent can make a Complaint? (FIGURE 1)

At St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit we aim to work closely with parents/carers 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 to any member of the Safeguarding Team. If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. Further concerns can be raised with the NI Public Services Ombudsman. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI CRU (Central Referral Unit). Details for these organisations 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 (FIGURE 2)

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child, they should not investigate, **this is a matter for Social Services,** but they should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher/member of the Safeguarding Team and full notes should be uploaded to CPOMS. The 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 assigned/alerted to Mrs Mahon and Mr Murray. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The DT/School Principal will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. In the case of concerns about or a direct disclosure about Domestic Violence the matter will be passed on immediately to Social Services.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

The DT or school Principal may consult with the Education Authority CPSS Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. Details

for these organisations are shown in the flowchart in Appendix 5. During consultation with the Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our prime priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made, the DT/School Principal will telephone the Services Gateway Team. He/she will also notify the Education Authority CPSS Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will be completed and forwarded to the Gateway Team with a copy sent to the Education Authority CPSS Designated Officer for Child Protection.

If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff (FIGURE 3)

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or DT if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated Teacher.)

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the DT will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

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

Do:	Do not:
✤ Listen to what the child says	❖ Ask leading questions.
✤ Assure the child they are not at fault	❖ Put words into the child's mouth.
✤ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret	❖ Ignore the child's behaviour.
✤ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words	❖ Remove any clothing.
✤ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality	❖ Panic
✤ Stay calm	❖ Promise to keep secrets
✤ Listen	❖ Ask leading questions
✤ Accept	❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
✤ Reassure	❖ Delay
✤ Explain what you are going to do	❖ Start to investigate
✤ Record accurately	❖ **Do Nothing**
✤ Seek support for yourself	

<u>Receive</u>
- Listen to what a child says but do not ask leading questions
- Accept what is said

Reassure

- Ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and their interests come first

React

- React to the child only to ensure that he/she is safe and secure
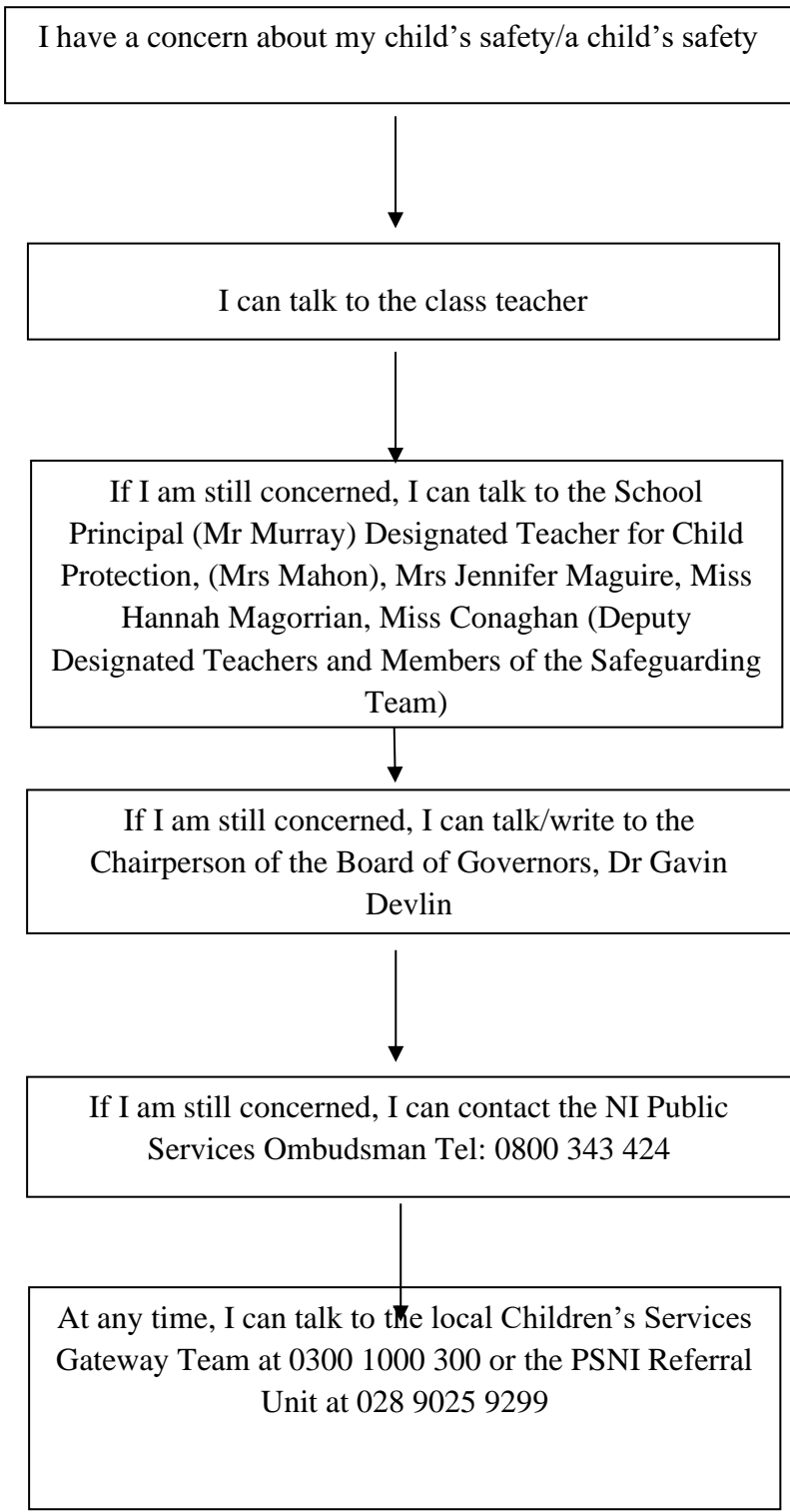- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk

Record

- Make notes at the time or as soon as possible
- Record the date, time, any noticeable behaviour and the words used by the child.
- Record statements and observable things – not interpretations

Refer

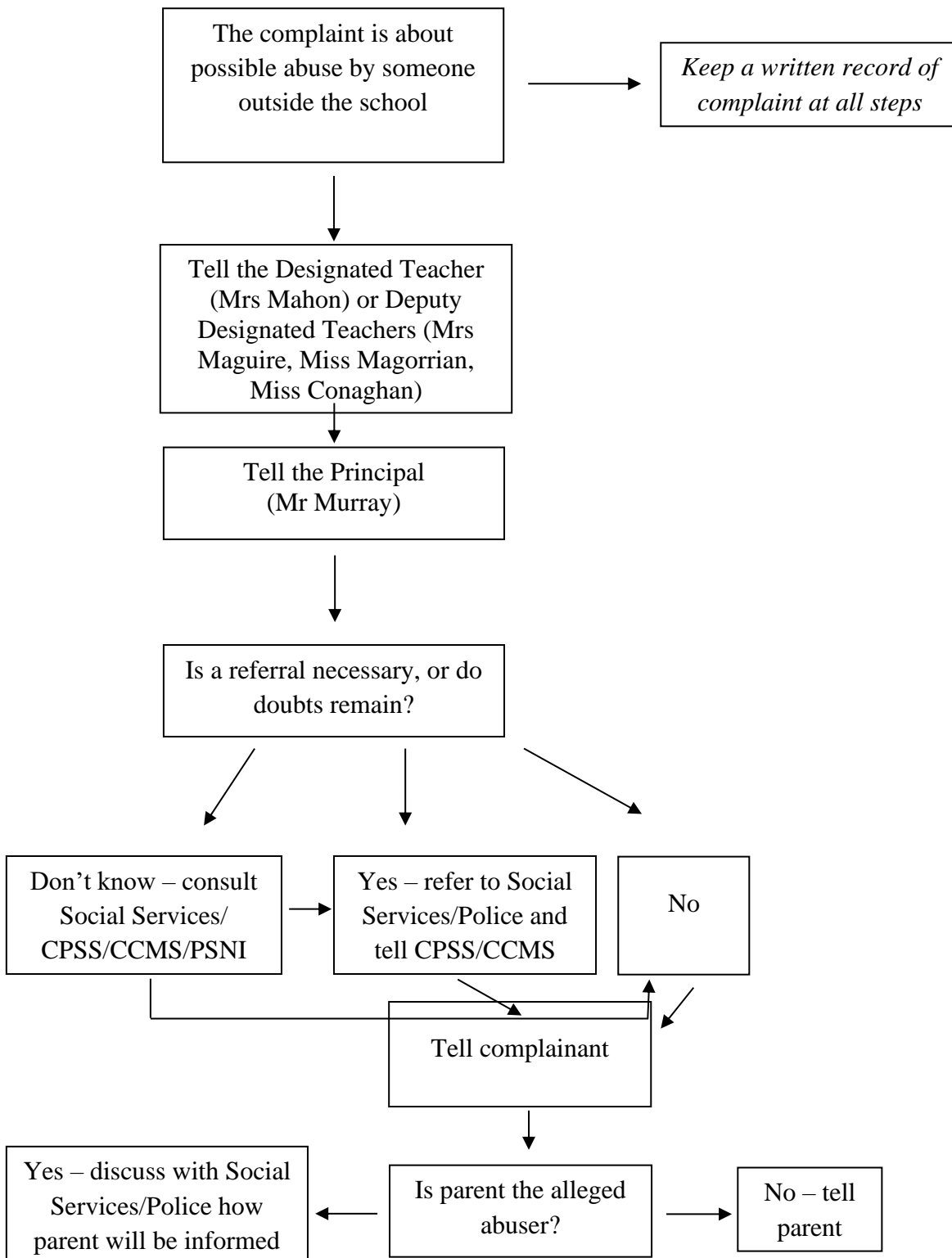- Report to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher

FIGURE 1

How a parent can report a concern relating to Child Protection?

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

I can talk to the class teacher

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the School Principal (Mr Murray) Designated Teacher for Child Protection, (Mrs Mahon), Mrs Jennifer Maguire, Miss Hannah Magorrian, Miss Conaghan (Deputy Designated Teachers and Members of the Safeguarding Team)

If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Dr Gavin Devlin

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

At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team at 0300 1000 300 or the PSNI Referral Unit at 028 9025 9299

FIGURE 2

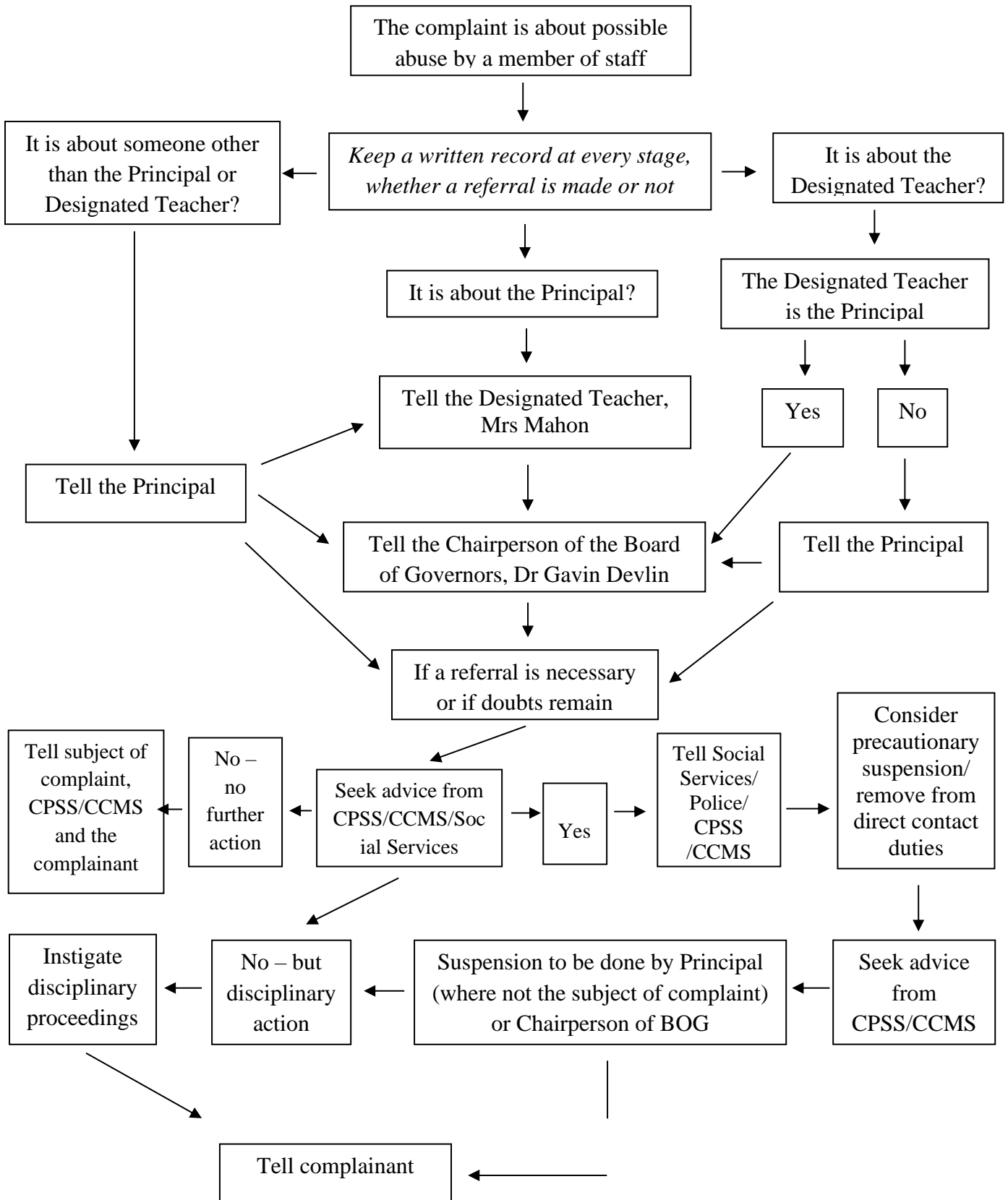# Procedures where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff

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The complaint is about possible abuse by someone outside the school

→ *Keep a written record of complaint at all steps*

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Tell the Designated Teacher (Mrs Mahon) or Deputy Designated Teachers (Mrs Maguire, Miss Magorrian, Miss Conaghan)

↓

Tell the Principal (Mr Murray)

↓

Is a referral necessary, or do doubts remain?

- Don't know – consult Social Services/ CPSS/CCMS/PSNI
- Yes – refer to Social Services/Police and tell CPSS/CCMS
- No

Tell complainant

↓

Is parent the alleged abuser?

Yes – discuss with Social Services/Police how parent will be informed

No – tell parent

FIGURE 3

Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of our school staff

The complaint is about possible abuse by a member of staff

It is about someone other than the Principal or Designated Teacher?

Keep a written record at every stage, whether a referral is made or not

It is about the Designated Teacher?

It is about the Principal?

The Designated Teacher is the Principal

Tell the Designated Teacher, Mrs Mahon

Yes

No

Tell the Principal

Tell the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Dr Gavin Devlin

Tell the Principal

If a referral is necessary or if doubts remain

Tell subject of complaint, CPSS/CCMS and the complainant

No – no further action

Seek advice from CPSS/CCMS/Social Services

Yes

Tell Social Services/ Police/ CPSS /CCMS

Consider precautionary suspension/ remove from direct contact duties

Instigate disciplinary proceedings

No – but disciplinary action

Suspension to be done by Principal (where not the subject of complaint) or Chairperson of BOG

Seek advice from CPSS/CCMS

Tell complainant

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Mr. Murray

Principal

Mrs. Maguire

Vice Principal

Mrs. Mahon

Designated Teacher Child Protection

Miss Magorrian

Deputy Designated Teacher Child Protection

Miss Conaghan

Deputy Designated Teacher Child Protection (Nursery)

Mrs Marie Curran

Child Protection Officer

Board of Governors

OUR SAFE SCHOOL

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at St Mary's Primary School is a priority.

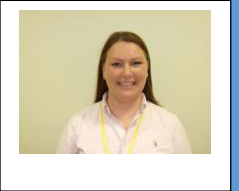**If you have any concerns, talk in confidence to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection:**

Mrs D. Mahon
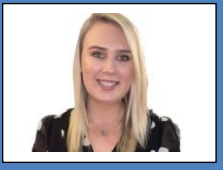
If you have any concerns, talk in confidence to the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection:

Miss H. Magorrian

If you have any concerns, talk in confidence to the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Nursery):

Miss C. Conaghan

If you have any concerns, talk in confidence to the Vice-Principal and Designated Teacher for Child Protection:

Mrs J. Maguire

If you have any concerns, talk in confidence to the Principal and Member of the Safeguarding Team:

Mr. D. Murray

APPENDIX 3

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse – Possible Indicators

Neglect

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

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing – grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns especially cigarette burns; unexplained fractures; lacerations or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. evident 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

Sexual Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Well below average in height and weight; "failing to thrive"; poor hair, skin and 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)	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

APPENDIX 4

Useful Addresses and Contact Numbers

St Mary's PS & Nursery Unit – (028) 4372 3730

GATEWAY SERVICES FOR EDUCATION AUTHORITY SOUTHEAST REGION
Telephone for Referral: 0300 1000 300
Down Gateway Team
Children's Services
81 Market Street
Downpatrick
Co. Down
BT30 6LZ
Tel: 028 4461 3511

REGIONAL CENTRALISED OUT OF HOURS GATEWAY SERVICE FOR NI
028 9504 9999 (5pm-8am Monday-Thursday, Friday 5pm-Monday 8am)

PSNI
To make contact with the PSNI about suspected child abuse contact the Central Referral Unit (CRU) based in Belfast and they will take the details. The case will then be allocated to the Child Abuse Investigation Unit *in whose area the alleged offence occurred.*
Tel: 028 9025 9299 (or 101 extension 30299)

EDUCATION AUTHORITY SOUTH EAST REGION

EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) 02895985590

APPENDIX 5

Online Safety Policy

Introduction

The Board of Governors ensure that St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit has a policy on the safe, healthy, acceptable and effective us of the Internet and other digital tools e.g. digital cameras, tablets, acceptable use of mobile phones and gaming hand-held devices which have downloadable capabilities e.g. iPads, Nintendo DS or PSP's. This Online Safety Policy is integrated as part of our Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures and Policy. The Governors also promote safe and acceptable practices for all staff and pupils in line with DENI Circulars, specifically the most recent Circular, 2016/27 'Online Safety'.

This Policy will be reviewed annually or when required if any significant issues arise. Should a serious incident occur, the relevant agencies will be informed e.g. PSNI, C2k, Capita, Social Services, CEOP.

This Policy provides a set of guiding principles for keeping pupils and the wider school community safe online. It is part of the school's Preventative Education Curriculum.

Online safety, in all cases, in schools and elsewhere, remains a paramount concern. Schools play a crucial role in raising awareness of the risks, highlighting the impact of behaviour when engaging with online technologies and educating children and young people about how to act appropriately and stay safe.

We want pupils to have the opportunity to avail of all the positive benefits that come from learning, exploring and connecting with each other online. However, in doing so, they need to know how to protect themselves.

It is essential that pupils and adults are kept safe online whilst in school and on school-organised activities. We have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content. We are and will continue to be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe in the digital world and, as a result, should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like for themselves.

The Safeguarding Board for NI published a report in January 2014 in relation to 'e-safety'. It highlighted four risk categories for children in relation to being online. This Policy aims to protect and educate our pupils in relation to these risk categories:

Content Risks: The child or young person is exposed to harmful materials
Contact Risks: The child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity and / or is at risk of grooming
Conduct Risks: The child or young person is a perpetrator or subject to bullying behaviour in peer-to-peer exchange and / or is at risk of bullying, entrapment and / or blackmail
Commercial Risks: The child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs / fraud

A Consistent Whole School Approach

- All teaching and non-teaching staff can recognise and are aware of online safety risks
- Online safety messages are integrated across the curriculum for pupils in all Key Stages
- Online safety messages are distributed amongst pupils, staff, parents/carers and the wider community
- The school's leadership and management have clearly prioritised online safety and safeguarding across all areas of the school
- Knowledge is shared amongst staff and there are good capacity-building opportunities

General

- The use of ICT in the Northern Ireland education community must be in support of the aims and objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum
- All users must comply with all copyright laws
- All users will have access to the Internet for school related purposes – examples of this include the use of email, the use of the Internet to investigate and research school subjects and staff using the Internet to further develop their professional development
- All users are expected to behave in an appropriate manner when communicating with others
- All users must be aware that the use of the Internet in schools is a privilege and not a right and this privilege will be withdrawn if it misused
- All users must respect the hardware and software that has been made available to them
- All users must respect the work of others

The Principal, ICT Coordinator and Senior Leadership Team are all aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a serious e-safety issue.

Child Protection / Safeguarding Teachers

The Safeguarding Team are trained in online safety issues and aware of the potential for serious child protection and safeguarding issues to arise from:

- sharing of personal data
- access to illegal / inappropriate materials
- inappropriate on-line contact with adults / strangers
- potential or actual incidents of grooming
- cyber-bullying

In cases of Internet abuse or where a child is at risk our Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures will be implemented.

Filtering

We use the secure C2k network which is responsible for the provision of an information and communications technology (ICT) managed service to all schools in Northern Ireland. This is a filtered service and the school monitors online activities that the children use on site.

The UICT Coordinator will keep a signed log in their Coordinator's File of any issues and also report any breaches to C2k.

Securus

Securus Education is a software system provided through the C2k System which helps us to ensure that our computer network is being used safely. Securus also acts as an educational tool, helping children to recognise unsafe situations and encouraging them to use new technologies responsibly.

Securus alerts staff to any words on our network that would lead us to believe that our very high standards of safeguarding, reflected in our Acceptable Use Policy, might be being jeopardised.

Securus is effective both online and offline across all programmes used by the school. Incidents flagged by Securus would include any evidence of bullying, inappropriate language, indicators of emotional distress, searches for harmful websites and so on.

The immediacy of this system can help prevent issues from spiralling into something more serious.

A screen 'capture' is taken of every incident, showing what was displayed at the time, who was involved and when the incident took place. These captures enable staff to respond to potentially serious or disruptive situations with confidence. Crucially though, in order for this confidence to realise its potential, **users must be logged on as themselves at all times.** This is at the heart of Online Safety. **Password security must always be effective and passwords should never be shared between staff and staff, staff and pupils or between pupils.**

Mobile Technology

All teachers have a minimum of 6 iPads in their room and have been trained in the use of key apps for curriculum use. Pupils have access to these iPads and teachers are aware that they do not merely digitize an existing activity in a way that does not add value to the teaching and learning. We use iPads to enhance and transform learning through:

- Capturing and collecting information across a variety of settings
- Communicating and collaborating with others
- Consuming and critiquing media
- Constructing and creating personal forms of representation

Teaching and Support Staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- They have an up to date awareness of Online Safety matters, policies and practices
- They have read, understood and signed the Staff Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- They report any suspected misuse or problems to the Principal / Safeguarding Team for investigation, action or sanction

- All digital communications with pupils, parents and carers should be on a professional level and only carried out using official school systems
- They monitor the use of digital technologies, mobile devices, cameras etc. in lessons and implement current policies with regard to these devices
- In lessons where internet use is planned pupils should be guided to sites checked as suitable for their use
- Processes are in place for dealing with any unsuitable material that is found in internet searches i.e. reported directly to the UICT Coordinator, DT or member of Safeguarding Team
- SMART internet Safety Rules are displayed in all classrooms and regularly referred to by teachers with the children.

Pupils

- Pupils must not enter the folders or files of anyone else
- Pupils must be aware that teachers have the right to enter any pupil folder in their own class
- The UICT Coordinator and Principal reserve the right to enter any pupil's folder
- Pupils must not use the Internet for unapproved purposes
- Pupils should be discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school. Parents/Carers must write to the Principal and ask, in exceptional circumstances, for a child to take a mobile phone to school. Mobile phones, if permitted to be brought to school must be given to the Office to look after until home time
- Children are regularly reminded of how to stay safe online
- Children take part in Safer Internet day every February, other school Online Safety organised events and a planned progression of lessons is in place from P1-P7 throughout the school year

Parents/Visitors

- Parents are aware that the access to the Internet provided to staff and pupils in school is filtered through the C2k service. They also understand that Securus software is installed to monitor key strokes for Child Protection purposes
- Parents are aware that the use of the Internet in school is closely monitored by staff
- Parents are aware that there will be no use of the Internet without the supervision of staff and that this will be in full view of others e.g. the classroom or the resource areas
- Parents should, in co-operation with staff, make pupils aware of the rules and expectations within this document
- Parents are aware that the use of ICT is complimentary to the teaching already done i.e. the use of computers/tablets in the classroom is a tool
- Parents agree in writing annually that their child's photograph could be made available online e.g. on the school website
- Parents should discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones to school on the grounds that Internet access becomes very difficult to police going to or from school
- If a parent or visitor requires access to the ICT system, they will be provided with a secure login from the UICT Coordinator. This will be restricted, monitored and time bound. They will be expected to adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy.
- **Parents have been advised that sites such Facebook, Instagram and SnapChat etc. adhere to a strict 'over 13's' age policy**

The school will to provide information and awareness to parents and carers through:

- Curriculum activities
- Letters, newsletters, school website
- In school sessions
- High profile events e.g. Safer Internet Day
- Reference to the relevant web sites or publications to help keep their child safe online

Training

- The Principal, UICT Coordinator and Designated Teacher completed training developed by CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) and the NSPCC entitled KSCO (Keeping Children Safe Online) in January 2018
- If CEOP Ambassador training comes to NI some of these personnel will attend this training which will allow these personnel will hold Online Safety Training courses for Parents
- An alternative training outlet for these personnel could be EPICT (European Pedagogical ICT Licence) provided by the SWGfL
- On our Staff Area on the C2k system we have a folder full of Internet Safety lesson plans for teachers to use in class
- Online Safety Training will be a part of Safeguarding training for all staff every 18-24 months and will be part of the induction briefing for all new staff members
- Throughout the year staff will be appropriately briefed about whole school Online Safety events
- The Principal and UICT Coordinator will attend relevant course updates and disseminate information to staff

Use of Digital and Video Images

The development of digital imaging technologies has created significant benefits to learning, allowing staff and pupils instant use of images that they have recorded themselves or downloaded from the internet. However, staff, parents, carers and pupils need to be aware of the risks associated with publishing digital images on the internet. Such images may provide avenues for cyberbullying to take place. Digital images may remain available on the internet forever and may cause harm or embarrassment to individuals in the short or longer term. It is common for employers to carry out internet searches for information about potential and existing employees. The school will inform and educate users about these risks and will implement policies to reduce the likelihood of the potential for harm:

- When using digital images, staff should educate pupils about the risks associated with the taking, use, sharing, publication and distribution of images. In particular, they should recognise the risks attached to publishing their own images on the internet e.g. on social networking sites.
- Staff and volunteers are allowed to take digital images to support educational aims, but must follow school policies concerning the sharing, distribution and publication of those images. Those images should only be taken on school equipment; the personal equipment of staff should not be used for such purposes.

- Care should be taken when taking digital / video images that pupils are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute
- Pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission

Social Networking

The increasing popularity of social media in recent years has allowed many teachers to enhance their classroom practice, introducing their pupils to new tools and delivering the curriculum in innovative and engaging ways. The majority of teachers using these tools do so without encountering any difficulty. However, staff and volunteers working in St Mary's should be aware of the many challenges and ramifications associated with the use of electronic communication and social media. Guidelines for all teaching, non-teaching staff and volunteers on using social networking sites can be found in the school's 'Professional Code of Conduct Policy'.

Summary of St Mary's Good Practice

Everything that is contained in this Policy is important in terms of good practice in relation to Online Safety. In summary, St Mary's will continue to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of our current online safety provision by auditing our current provision through registering on the '360 degree safe' website
- Review and develop safeguarding procedures and the roles of staff responsible for advising and reporting on online safety concerns
- Audit staff training needs on a regular basis and identify suitable updates / courses for the information of / attendance by key members of staff
- Communicate important online safety advice, concerns and current issues to parents and carers
- Deliver an age-related online safety curriculum to enable pupils to become safe and responsible users of technology
- Operate a risk register to record possible online safety issues and highlight where data security might be potentially breached
- Operate a 'Register of Access' which clearly outlines who has access to the different pupil and staff data available on the school system
- Have acceptable use agreements in place for pupils and staff on using the internet, school-based technologies and personal mobile devices which will, in the case of pupils be signed by parents / carers

Addendum

Network administrators reserve the right to review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that the users are using the system responsibility. They will respect the right to privacy whenever possible.

Any parent or member of staff who wishes to discuss this document can put any questions to the School Principal, Mr Murray.

This document is based on advice from:

Online Safety (DENI Circular December 2016)
Effective Educational Uses of Mobile Digital Devices (DENI Circular December 2016)
Safe Guarding and Child Protection (DENI April 2017)
Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools (DENI Circular 2007/1)
SBNI Report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' (SBNI January 2014)
Future Classrooms Managing Mobile Technology 2015: A Revised handbook for all schools in Northern Ireland

Our Policy will be used in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Professional Code of Conduct Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Positive Behaviour

As part of our teachers' commitment to child protection procedures, the following points have been adapted from part of the Code of Values and Professional Practice written by the GTCNI (September 2004)

Commitment to Learners
Teachers will:
- maintain professional relationships with those pupils / learners entrusted to their care which respect the learner as a person, and encourage growth and development

Commitment to Colleagues and Others
Teachers will:
- work with colleagues and others to create a professional community that supports the social, intellectual, spiritual / moral, emotional and physical development of pupils
- promote collegiality among colleagues by respecting their professional standing and opinions and, in that spirit, be prepared to offer advice and share professional practice with colleagues
- cooperate, where appropriate, with professionals from other agencies in the interests of pupils
- ensure that relationships with the parents, guardians or carers of pupils, in their capacity as partners in the educative process, are characterised by respect and trust
- respect confidential information relating to pupils or colleagues gained in the course of professional practice, unless the well-being of an individual or a legal imperative requires disclosure

Commitment to the Profession
Teachers will:
- as reflective practitioners, contribute to the review and revision of policies and practices with a view to optimising the opportunities for pupils or addressing identified individual or institutional needs in keeping with the concept of professional integrity

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Safeguarding Team in St Mary's Primary School will monitor this Policy to ensure its effectiveness, will update procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of this policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.