Crossroads Primary School



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

POLICY AND PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION AND PASTORAL CARE

Crossroads has been at the heart of a thriving rural community since 1921 and underpinning our school is the ethos that children are special to us and our community.

We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them learn behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of our school have also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils. The Code is set out in the Appendix to this policy statement.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount

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consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

As well as our statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils' learning, we have a pastoral responsibility towards our pupils and recognise that the children and young people in our charge have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. We are expected to do whatever is reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, to safeguard or promote our pupils' safety and well-being. Children cannot learn effectively or develop unless they feel secure. We aim to create an ethos which contributes to the care, safety and well-being of children. Children in our care should feel secure in the sense that they can trust their teachers and feel able to approach them with confidence if they are worried about any issue.

Safeguarding at Crossroads Primary School

In order to protect our pupils we adhere to the following procedures.

- All staff and volunteers undergo a vetting procedure in order to maintain the highest standard of professional care towards our children.
- All teaching and ancillary staff attend a Child Protection training programme organised by the Designated Teacher.
- Children are supervised at all times while in the school grounds.
- When it is necessary to change the child's normal travel arrangements permission is only given on receipt of a written request or telephone call by a parent/guardian.
- All visitors to the school report to the school office.

• Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will be responded to sensitively in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times and aim to prevent bullying by raising an awareness with pupils, staff and parents about bullying, its forms and consequences.

Safeguarding is also addressed through the preventative curriculum. Each class has designated Circle Time sessions which are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through **assemblies** and there is a **permanent child protection notice board** in the foyer and relevant posters in the shared corridors outside classrooms which provides advice and displays Childline / NSPCC numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in staff room.

Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues:

- We take a consistent approach to promoting E-Safety throughout from P1-P7. All pupils participate in Internet Safety Day, through listening to stories, watching video clips and producing art work related to the theme.
- Staff have also undergone E-Safety training through NSPCC (*Keeping Children Safe Online*) to ensure best practice is carried out in the classroom.

- Primary 5 pupils take part in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service talks on Fire Safety.
- Primary 5/6 pupils follow the 'Helping Hands' programme, which promotes the idea of social guardianship amongst their peer group.
- Each year Primary 7 pupils participate in the "Bee Safe" Activity Day which is run jointly by Health Promotion Agency and the Western Health and Social Services Trust and involves all the emergency services. They also attend RADAR (Belfast) which promote personal safety and wellbeing.

Related Policies

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

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- First Aid/Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT / E- Safety / Use of Mobile Phones/Camera
- Intimate Care

School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team

- Designated Teacher Mrs Anna Marron
- Deputy Designated Teacher / Principal Mr Eugene Mullan
- Designated Governor for Child Protection T.B.C
- Chair of the Board of Governors Mr R. McAllister

Roles And Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher

The designated teacher and deputy designated teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role.
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training).
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents.
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents.
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate.
- Liaise with the North Eastern Education & Library Board's Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Maintain records of all child protection concerns.
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:-

- DENI 1999 / 10 is implemented within the school.
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed.
- That all staff receives child protection training.
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner.
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed.
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided.
- 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 confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Designated Governor will provide the child protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

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

The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment.
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy.
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the SELB Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the SELB Governor Support and Human Resource departments.
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity.

Other Members of School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse. 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.**

Remember the 5 Rs:

• **Receive-** Listen to what a child says but do not ask leading questions and 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 and explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk
- **Record:** Make notes of statements and observable things at the time or as soon as possible with date, time, any noticeable behaviour and the words used by the child.
- Refer:- Report to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher

The member of staff must:

- 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 Designated Teacher 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 serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- sending a note or making a phone call in regarding any absences;
- inform class teacher / secretary if there are any changes to home time routines – changes to transport or adult collecting the child;
- letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
- reading and becoming more familiar with the school's pastoral care, positive behaviour, anti-bullying and child protection policies;
- making an appointment to raise concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure that:

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

CHILD ABUSE

The following is an extract from 'Co-operating to Protect Children' (Children (N.I.) Order 1995 Volume 6) and clearly defines the categories of abuse.

"Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child, such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms including:

- NeglectThe actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of
a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure
to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or
persistent failure to carry out important aspects of
care, resulting in significant impairment of the child's
health or development, including non-organic failure
to thrive.
- <u>Physical Injury</u> Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.
- **Sexual Abuse** Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Emotional Abuse Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional illtreatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse"

The following principles underpin the guidance issued by the four Area Child Protection Committees, the five Education & Library Boards and CCMS.

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- At all times there must be a multi disciplinary and multi agency approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.
- Each agency involved must have an understanding of each other's professional values and accept each other's role, powers and responsibilities.
- Any actions taken by agencies must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child's sex, age, stage of development, religious culture and race.

• The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

All concerns should be recorded in writing by the person having or witnessing the issue. This written concern should be passed to the designated teacher, or deputy, who, in turn, will share the issue with the Principal. The issue should be factual (who/what/why/where/when/how)

The Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services via the use of the relevant form - **UNOCINI** (Understanding the Needs of Children In Northern Ireland) If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Board's Designated Officer or Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform

- the Social Services
- the EA's designated officer for Child Protection
- the PSNI

(Contact numbers found in Appendix)

This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION.

The statutory responsibility rests with Health & Social Services; it is consistent with the aims of Catholic Education that all teachers have a duty to help protect children from abuse or the risk of abuse.

Complaints against members of staff

We acknowledge our responsibilities in relation to child protection, including the action to be taken to enable cases of suspected abuse to be properly considered and pursued and how complaints against school staff should be handled. If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or Designated Teacher, if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the members of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and maybe suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors (Mr R. McAllister) will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher or her deputy (if she is not available) must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if she/he has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All 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 and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be being bullied will be fully investigated by the Principal, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Principal within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

The sequence of events will follow those described in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Record Keeping

There is a confidential (locked) record keeping file maintained in the Principal's office. This file will only be accessed by the Principal, Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher. All allegations of suspicions of abuse, disclosure of abuse, complaints against staff and other related issues will be maintained.

Training

All staff employed by the school **must** receive Child Protection training. This should be organised on an annual basis. Once trained, an 'update' training session can be delivered every two years. Any significant policy changes should be shared with staff. Board of Governor training is not the responsibility of the school. At least one member of the BOG should be trained by EA. The Designated Teacher is responsible for staff training in Child Protection.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Safeguarding Team in Crossroads Primary School will update this Policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and <u>review it annually</u>.

The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the child protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

The policy will be shared will all new pupils, and with existing parents every two years.

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

Date Policy Reviewed:	
Signed:	_ (Designated Teacher)
	_ (Principal)
	_ (Chair of Board of Governors)

<u>Appendix</u>

- 1. Code of Conduct for Employees
- 2. Child Protection Contact Log
- 3. Procedure for parental complaint
- 4. Procedure for staff/others concerns about abuse
- 5. Procedure for concerns about abuse concerning staff
- 6. Sample UNOCINI
- 7. Teacher's Guidelines for protecting children
- 8. Contact numbers
- 9. Sources of Advice
- 10. References

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

Introduction

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

Code of Conduct

Private Meetings With Pupils

a. Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with a visual access, or with the door open.

- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

Physical Contact with Pupils

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).

- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e. Schools should, in particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas like the photographic darkroom, draw up their own guidelines for these circumstances.
- f. Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- g. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- h. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

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Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.
 Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials such as the AIDS education for schools and in connection with sex education programmes.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

Relationships and Attitudes

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

Conclusion

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

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 booklet, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult their line manager or a representative of their professional association.

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

Child Protection Contact Log

School

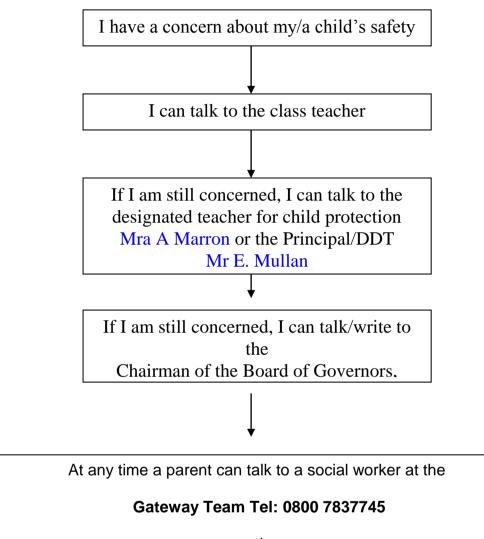
Name of Child

D.O.B

Date/Time	With Whom	Details (Include details of agreed actions)	Signature

Appendix 3

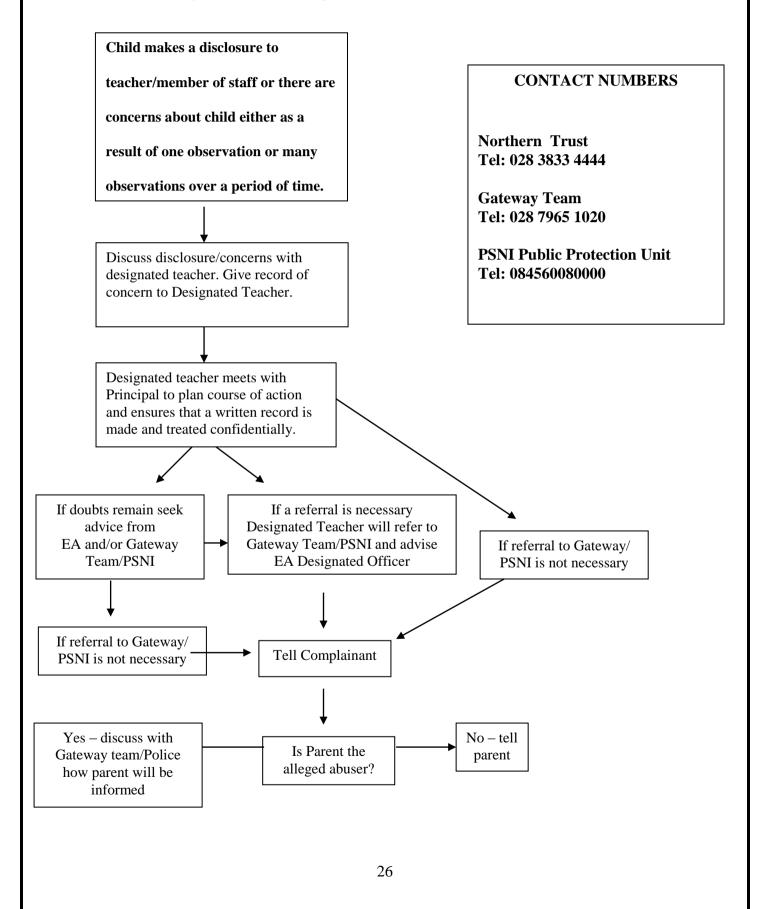
How a Parent can make a Complaint

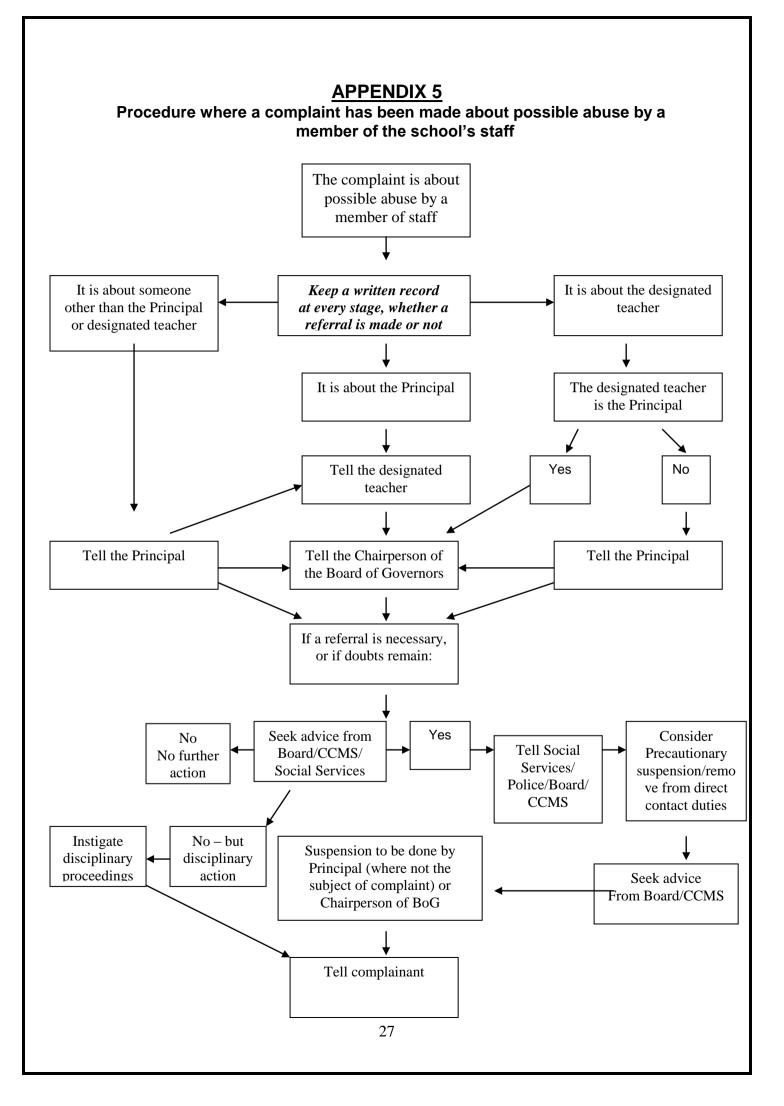


or the

PSNI Public Protection Unit Tel: 0845 600 80000

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





<u>UNOCINI</u>

TEACHERS' GUIDELINES

Notes on Protecting Children

Teachers are in a unique position to detect early signs of child abuse because of their day to day contact with individual children.

Abuse may be revealed by the child making an allegation; a disclosure by a friend or relative; by the behaviour of the child; or because you observe an injury.

This guide offers brief advice about what to do if you suspect a child has been abused. Use these guidelines alongside your school's policy.

More comprehensive guidance is contained within the Department of Education and Employment Circular 10/95 entitled "Protecting Children from Abuse: The Role of The Education Service". A copy should be available at your school.

What is Child Abuse?

- **Physical Abuse** where a child is physically hurt and there is no reasonable explanation.
- **Sexual Abuse** where children are exploited sexually by adults or by other children to meet their sexual needs.

- **Neglect** where parents fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their children like food, clothes, warmth and medical care.
- Emotional Abuse where a child consistently faces a lack of love and affection or is continually threatened by verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.
- Bullying bullying is an abuse of children and it can take many forms including physical assault, verbal abuse, name calling, teasing and taunting which can cause emotional distress.

What Action Shall I Take?

- You are skilled at communicating with children, but dealing with a suspected case of child abuse may affect your confidence and upset you. Do not worry - your skills are still very valid.
- You should have an appointed designated teacher at your school. Often at primary schools, this is the head teacher. This person has responsibility for liaison with social services departments and other agencies about cases of abuse. Do not hesitate to speak to this person if you are concerned that a child may be abused. The designated teacher will have received training to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral to another agency.
- The child needs your help and support, so do not over react and try to keep calm. Show the child that you are treating the matter seriously. However, do not make promises which you are unable to keep such as promising total confidentiality. Explain to the child that you may have to share the information you have been given and who will be told.

- if you suspect that a child is being abused, do not ask needless questions. Keep your questions to the minimum necessary to clarify whether or not you think there is cause for concern. More intensive questioning should be left to other professionals skilled in carrying out child abuse inquiries.
- listen carefully to what the child has to say. Do not interrupt and allow the child to proceed at his or her own pace. Reassure the child that it was right to tell you about the abuse and that they are not to blame.
- Once you have reported your concern to the designated teacher, make a comprehensive written report of the incident which should include date, time, details of what the child said, the child's demeanour, and any action you took. This record may be required for a case conference and subsequent legal proceedings.
- Child abuse cases can be very upsetting, therefore your school should have a support system in place which will help you through any trauma. Check what the systems is in your school and how it can be accessed.

REMEMBER

 Child abuse can affect children of all ages, of both sexes, different races and cultures and occurs in all social classes. Do not ignore your suspicions. Your reluctance to act could result in a child receiving further abuse.

Appendix 8

Contact Numbers

Name	Address		Telephone Number
Referral Gateway Team	NHSCT Referral Gateway Team Oriel House 2-8 Castle St, Antrim. BT414JE		0300 1234 333 email SPOE.Referrals@northern trust.hscni.net
PSNI	Galgorm Road Ballymena		028 25653355
ESA North Eastern Acting Head of CPSSS	Elaine Craig 028 2566 2563		Elaine.Craig@eani.org.uk
ESA Designated Officers for Child Protection for North Eastern area		Paula McCreesh Margaret Brady Colleen Ellison Michael Kelly 028 9448 2223	
National Society For the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)		0808 800 5000 028 90351135	
Childline		0800 1111	

SOURCES OF ADVICE

Whether or not to make a referral which could activate a Child Protection investigation is a serious decision.

Confidential advice is available from:

- The Senior Management Officer (Schools); CCMS
- The ELB Designated Officer for Child Protection;

or

• Social Services (without disclosing names) as indicated in the 'Flow Chart'.

However if a designated teacher or principal has a general concern about a child's health or development, he or she may wish to seek advice, information or guidance from a number of local services in addition to those listed above namely:

- NSPCC;
- Clinical medical Officer;
- School Nurse;
- Education Welfare Officer;

Educational Psychologist.

References

"Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures" - File

(Northern Health & Social Services Board)

"Protecting Children" - Video

(NICLR)

"Pastoral Care In Schools - Child Protection" - Book

(DENI)

*ALL STAFF HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH A COPY OF:

1. "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" DENI 1999

2. The schools draft policy on Pastoral Care.

*Staff have been asked to familiarise themselves with these documents.