

**Safeguarding/ Child Protection
Policy
2018**



CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

It is our aim in Desertmartin P.S. that our pupils will, among other things:

- develop sound moral attitudes and respect themselves and others
- be prepared for their place in society by the promotion of physical, cultural, intellectual and physical development
- develop healthy self-esteem

In dealing with all issues concerned with child protection, Desertmartin Primary School will be guided by advice from DENI and SBNI (safeguarding Board NI). The Designated Teacher/Principal should ring CPSS (Child Protection Support Service) on **028 9598 5590** should they have any queries/need to pass on information.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Desertmartin Primary School has a pastoral responsibility to the children in its care, to ensure their welfare is safe guarded and their safety preserved. This principle is paramount in our work with all our pupils.

3. PRINCIPLES

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, The Education and Libraries (NI) guidance, "Pastoral Care in Schools-Child Protection" (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

- The welfare of the children in our care is paramount, even if there is a conflict between the interests of the children and the interests of the family. However, every effort must be made to work with families and carers wherever possible. Families should be given every opportunity to exercise their responsibilities.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously (taking account of their age and understanding).
- It is imperative that all concerned (the child, carers and relevant professionals) understand the need to exchange information when necessary.
- Parents need to be supported in order to prevent harm and alert them to potential dangers.
- Any action taken to protect a child must be taken in such a way as to prevent further damage to pupils.
- The ideal situation is one where all professionals concerned work closely together across professional disciplines in order to protect children from harm.
- Children should only be seen in a family setting, not in isolation.
- All decisions made must be guided by what is in the child's best interests.
- Any action taken must seek to minimise disruption and further distress to the child/ren concerned.
- All agencies involved should seek to understand one another's professional values, role, powers and responsibilities.
- Any action taken by any agency involved must be considered and well informed, based specifically on the needs of the individual child/ren concerned.

4. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

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

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Portable Technology
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Safe Handling Policy
- Intimate Care of Pupils
- Complaints Procedure
- Selection and Use of Volunteers/Sports Coaches
- Safe handling policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the school office.

5. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION TEAM AT DESERTMARTIN P.S

The following members are the school's Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors (Mr Sam Hudson)
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Mr Sam Hudson)
- Designated Teacher (Miss Jillian Jones)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Miss Fiona Brown)

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chair of Board of Governors

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/ allegation against the school Principal
- Ensure that the school has a current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that the school's child protection records are kept efficiently.

Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Designated Governor will provide the lead in keeping the Governors informed of:

- 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, vetting and induction of staff

School Principal

The Principal will assist the Board of Governors to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties and will take the lead role in managing child protection concerns relating to adults in the school. The role of the Principal is to ensure that:

- A Designated Teacher is appointed
- Policies are adopted and followed in the school
- The Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Governors are kept informed where appropriate
- The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed
- Confidentiality is maintained

Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher

The role of the designated teacher is to ensure that school procedures are followed, and to tell Social Services about the relevant concerns of any member of school staff about individual children. Investigation of such matters is the role of Social Services. In her absence, the deputy designated teacher assumes this responsibility. Close liaison between the designated teacher and deputy designated teacher will clearly be in the best interests of all pupils.

In any situation where

- (a) abuse is suspected,
- (b) an allegation has been made by a pupil or a 3rd party,
- (c) concerns exist about the welfare of a child,

all staff should report this to the designated teacher. The designated teacher, after discussion with the principal and other appropriate bodies, will initially consult with the designated officer at the Education Authority. Should this discussion conclude there are sufficient grounds for further investigation, Social Services will be informed.

Any allegations by a child that s/he is suffering/has suffered abuse will be treated seriously.

If there is any suspicion or allegation that the designated teacher has abused a child, these concerns should be raised immediately with the principal. Equally if any suspicion/ allegation is made against the principal, the designated teacher should be informed immediately. In either cases, normal reporting procedures should be instigated as above. In these instances, the Chairman of the Board of Governors must also be informed.

The designated teacher should ensure s/he is informed as to the timing of the strategy discussion which will decide whether and how to investigate. Such contact will also clarify with investigating agencies when, how and by whom parent and children will be told if a referral has been made.

The designated teacher can refer to various resources of advice/ guidance when there are non-specific concerns about a child's welfare (appendix 1)

The school is legally required to make a referral if there are any concerns that a child may be at risk. Unless there are concerns that a parent is the abuser, parents will be informed immediately.

Role of Teacher/ Ancillary Staff

All staff in Desertmartin Primary School acknowledge the unique opportunities given by the school situation to observe the children in our care. We are all aware of the potential implications of possible signs of abuse (appendix 2 for staff) and will report any concerns immediately to the designated teacher or principal.

Should such a situation arise, the following issues will be kept in mind:

- (1) no promises of complete confidentiality will be made. However, information should only be available on a 'need to know basis'. Any attempts to seek clarification from the child must be carried out in a sensitive way. Members of the ancillary staff who feel they have observed any cause for concern will immediately bring them to the attention of the class teacher and/or the designated teacher.
- (2) teaching staff who observe any cause for concern should bring them to the designated teacher.
- (3) if such a situation arises, staff will seek to listen to pupils rather than either ask leading questions or impose any personal assumptions.
- (4) any comments/observations will be recorded in writing as soon as possible, as will any comments made by siblings/parents/carers which may be relevant. Such notes would be available for use in court proceedings. Staff are advised to keep their own copy of such notes.
- (5) school staff understand that formal investigations or physical examinations of a child does not form part of our responsibility.

INTER AGENCY PROCEDURES

The following chart (Figure 1 & 2) provides an overview of the stages involved from the suspicion that a child has been harmed or abused right through the whole Child Protection Process. It is important to understand that information obtained at each stage will dictate how the case is handled.

In no circumstances should concern (at whatever level) be ignored but it is important for all professionals/disciplines to remember that the issue under consideration and circumstances will determine the speed and type of intervention.

Figure 1

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

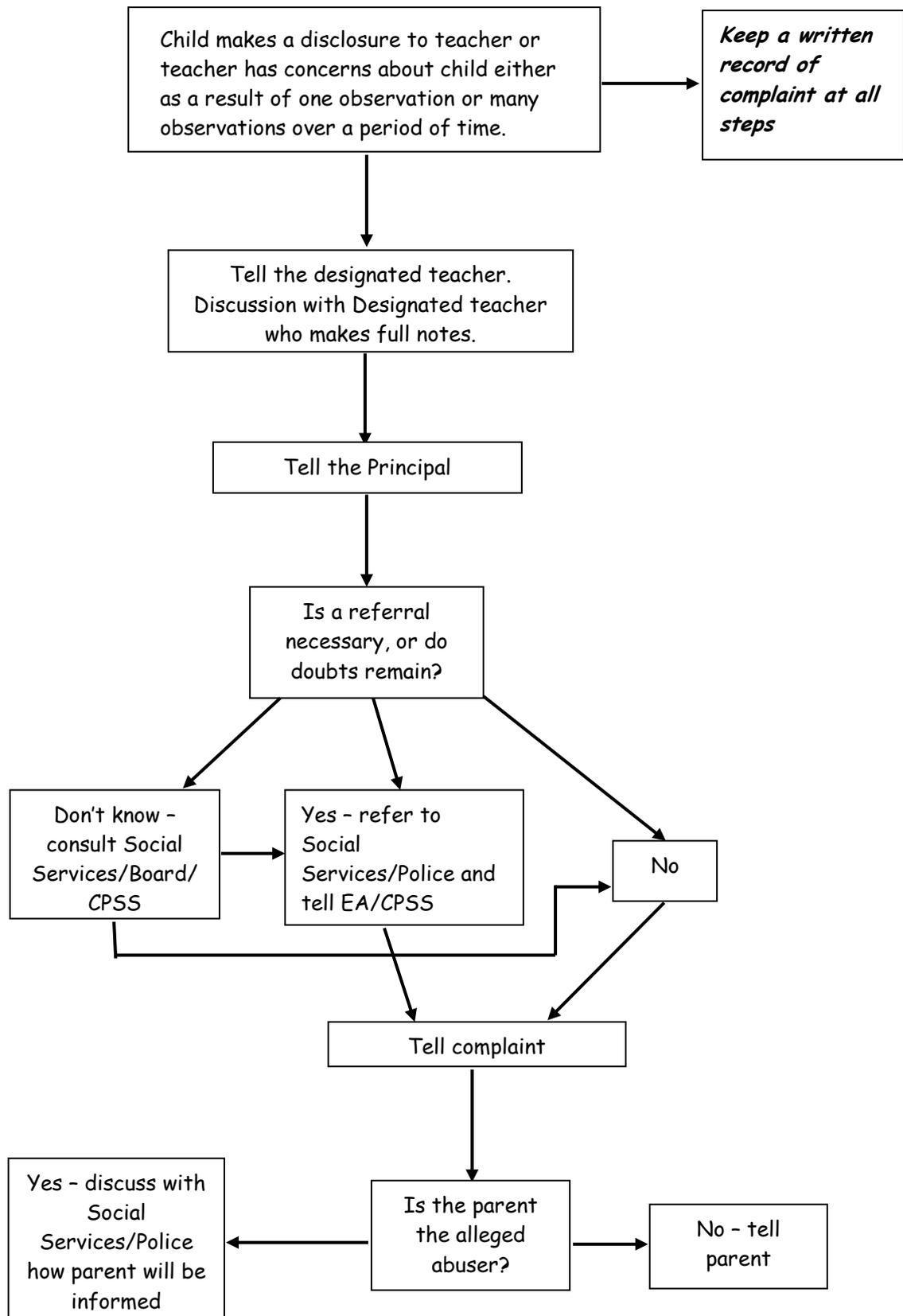
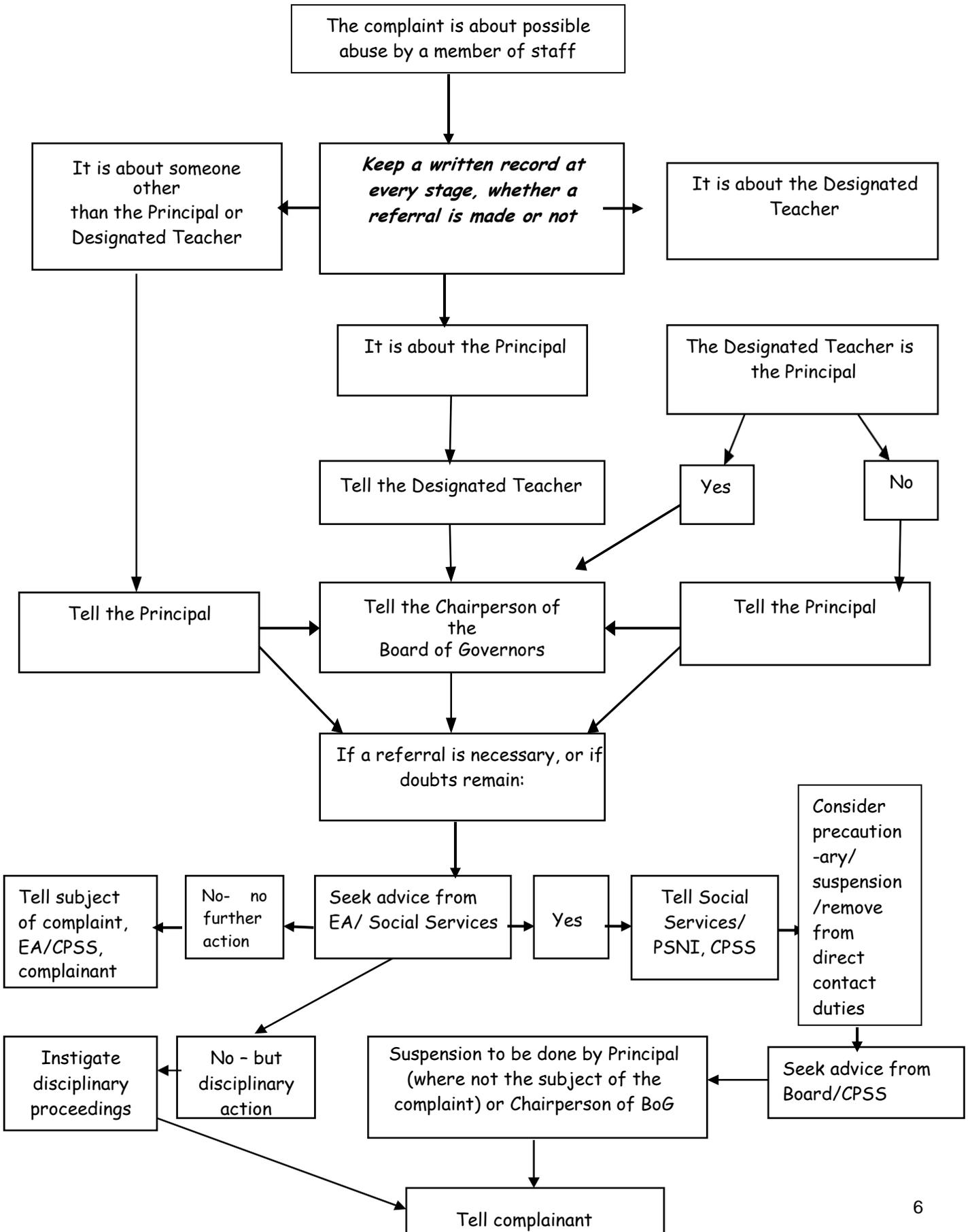


Figure 2

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



ROLE OF INTER -AGENCY SUPPORT

Desertmartin Primary School can best contribute to effective child protection by developing good quality, mutually supportive liaison with other agencies

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

Given the very distressing nature of these issues, it is critical that neither teaching nor non-teaching staff feel alone in dealing with these issues. It is the role of the designated teacher and the deputy designated teacher to provide initial support, both for one another and for all other staff. However, (as outlined in the inter-agency procedures), it is perfectly appropriate for the designated/deputy designated teacher to check out these concerns with the designated officer at the Education Authority/CPSS or with Social Services.

CURRICULUM

Child Protection issues will be considered both as they arise naturally throughout the curriculum and will also be addressed through specific PDMU lessons.

7. WHAT IS ABUSE?

The following definitions are taken from the document "Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland".

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

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

Types of Abuse

Harm from abuse is not always straight forward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

Physical Abuse: deliberately physically hurting a child, or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child. It might take on a variety of forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment or rejecting of a child resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/ or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment, but this is where it is the main or only form of abuse.

Sexual Abuse: When others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. It is the involvement of children in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles. It may include non-contact activities such as involving children in the production of sexual images or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology).

Neglect: 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 serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation: 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.

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

8. SPECIFIC TYPES OF ABUSE

The following definitions are taken from the "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" guide.

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of a child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends, or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence 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, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).'*

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural and other non-medical reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary and extremely painful.

Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

Self Harm and Suicide

If a child show evidence or discloses, or a concern is raised that's a child has or has a wish to self-harm or expresses suicidal ideation, the school will contact the parent and request that they collect their child and visit their GP.

E-Safety/Internet Abuse

The SBNI report "An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland" identified the following risks around online safety:

Content risk: The child or young person is exposed to harmful material

Contact risks: The child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity

Conduct risks: The child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange

Commercial risks: The child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs

Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Child Observation Records

Records of child observations (whether in the context of general observations of children in the Foundation Stage or more specific observations regarding concerns about behaviour, learning difficulties etc.) will be stored securely, either in the mobile filing cabinet or in the secure filing cabinet.

Teaching staff and support staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigate agencies (Social Services and the Police). Staff should not give the child undertakings of confidentiality, but

reassure that information disclosed is on a 'need to know' basis. School staff are aware of the need to record and report child protection issues and appropriate procedures to follow. The Child Protection Files are held in a separate, secure confidential filing system. This is only accessible to the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher.

10. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

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

Receive: Listen to what they child says, without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said, making brief cursory notes. These notes should be retained.

Reassure: Ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and his/her interests will come first. No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be made.

Respond: Listen, rather than ask direct questions. Use open questions. Do not ask leading questions.

Record: Make notes and write these up as soon as possible. Note the time, date, place, people present as well as what is seen and said.

Refer: Pass all information directly and immediately to the DT/DDT.

11. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) & volunteers are issued with a copy of the School Code of Conduct on appointment.

A complaints book is maintained to be used in the event of such complaints. This is inspected annually by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors.

All such complaints will be investigated following the procedures outlined above.

12. INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents of all new entrants to the school will receive a full copy of the Child Protection Policy. Parents of pupils in P3, P5 & P7 will also receive an updated document to remind them of the contents of the policy. The Designated Teacher will be able to provide a full copy of the policy to be seen in school at any time.

13. STAFF TRAINING

This will involve all staff, volunteers & members of the Board of Governors. It will take place at least every 2 years. Records of content & attendance at such training will be kept.

14. VETTING OF VOLUNTEERS

See the school's Volunteer Policy.

15. INTIMATE CARE POLICY

See the school's Intimate Care Policy.

16. USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL

See the school's Policy on the use of Portable Technology/Staff Code of Conduct.

Appendix 1: Sources of advice/guidance if there are non-specific concerns about a child's welfare.

- * social services

- * the NSPCC

- * the Clinical Medical Officer

- * the Education and Library Board's designated officer for child protection

- * the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- * the Educational Psychologist.

Appendix 2: Possible Signs of Abuse

PHYSICAL INJURY

Most injuries to children are accidental and can be explained simply. Children receive bumps and bruises as a result of the rough and tumble of normal play.

It is important to remain aware however, that injuries may not have been accidental in origin. The presence of the following factors should raise concern.

1. Where the explanation is not consistent with the injury or with the stage of development of the child.
2. Any bruising on the child who has not attained mobility is of concern, as is a child's reluctance to move limb(s) or where there is tenderness on touching the child.
3. Where there are changes of explanation or no explanation.
4. Where there has been an unreasonable delay in seeking medical advice.
5. Where there is a history of frequently repeated injury even though the explanation of each individual occurrence appears adequate. This may indicate a lack of supervision or possible medical problems.
6. Where there are bruises of different ages on the child at any one time, other than on the common sites of accidental injury in a child of that age.
7. Where there is facial bruising, particularly round the mouth, eyes or ears.
8. Where there are unexplained or inadequately explained burns, bite marks, severe bruising or any combination of these.
9. Poisoning, particularly if there is more than one incident.

NEGLECT

Neglect results from the persistent failure to meet the basic needs of the child. This may include failure to provide food, warmth, clothing, appropriate stimulation or consistent care taking resulting in impairment of the child's health or development.

The signs in the child of neglect may include:-

1. Failure to thrive, where medical investigation has excluded any medical reason for the problem.
2. Food stealing or gorging of food.
3. Lack of appetite and increased feeding difficulties.

4. Inappropriate or inadequate clothing or hygiene, (taking account of cultural norms and family means).
5. Lack of appropriate supervision.
6. Persistent failure to seek or to follow any necessary medical or nursing advice.
7. Developmental delay.
8. Poor academic attainment or school attendance.
9. Poor peer group relationships, but attention-seeking from adults.
10. Physical signs of long-standing neglect, including poor growth, thinning hair, protuberant abdomen and persistently cold, reddened hands and feet.

Other factors to be borne in mind are the state of housing and physical environment.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

There are elements of emotional harm in all forms of abuse. Whilst physical care and environments may appear to meet children's needs it is important to remain aware of the interactions and relationships that occur between children and their carers. An emotionally abused child may be subject to constant criticism and scape-goating, the continuous withholding of approval and affection, severe discipline or a total lack of appropriate control.

Alternatively, the child may be exploited to fulfil the parent's emotional needs.

As a consequence, the child may

1. Have an impaired ability for enjoyment and play.
1. Lack curiosity and natural exploratory behaviour.
2. Be delayed in language development and play skills.
3. Have low self-esteem and a feeling of worthlessness.
4. Show eating disturbance or growth failure.
5. Severe cases may show physical signs of deprivation as described under **neglect**, even when physical care appears adequate.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Many of the signs and behaviours associated with sexual abuse can be found in some medical or emotional conditions. A good rule to follow is that when there are worries about a child's behaviour which cannot be explained satisfactorily, sexual abuse should be borne in mind as a possible explanation. A child who alleges sexual abuse should be listened to carefully and the listener should consult with appropriate professionals immediately (e.g. Social worker, R.U.C, Paediatrician) for advice. Sexually abused children are frequently obedient to adults and anxious to please but peer -group relationships are often poor. Many children are asymptomatic, particularly in the younger age range. Other signs which may be present are:-

1. Physical signs: -

Genital or anal lacerations, bleeding or other trauma; genital or perineal inflammation or irritation; persistent or recurrent vaginal discharge; sexually transmitted disease, including perineal or genital warts; pregnancy.

2. Medical problems:-

which may be connected with sexual abuse:-

Recurrent urinary tract infection or 'cystitis'; secondary enuresis or encopresis (wetting or soiling); recurrent unexplained abdominal pain.

3. Behavioural problems may include:-

In younger children -

over sexualised behaviour; compulsive masturbation; acting out and aggressive behaviour; drawing or play activities which are explicitly sexual.

In older children - withdrawn, overly compliant behaviour; depression and suicidal behaviour self-mutilation; running away; school refusal; truancy; drug and alcohol abuse.

At any age -a sudden change in normal behavioural patterns, or a sexual awareness and knowledge well in advance of what would be expected at the child's level of development, may be an indicator of sexual abuse.

Children who are being abused do not necessarily display any behavioural disturbances.

It should be remembered that for some children these symptoms will be present and are not always associated with abuse.