

Lumen Christi College



Child Protection Policy



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The Child Protection policy is an intrinsic part of the overall pastoral programme of the college and aims to ensure that the welfare of all children in Lumen Christi is safeguarded and their safety preserved. The ethos of a “listening” college with its emphasis on openness and honesty of communication between Leadership Team and staff, teacher and teacher, teacher and parent, teacher and pupil, parent and pupil and pupil and pupil is the cornerstone of ensuring such safety. Children who feel threatened in any way are encouraged to speak out to another person and the college’s ethos, pastoral programme and administrative structures are designed to ensure that opportunities for and encouragement towards such openness is paramount. The emphasis on the caring role of the teacher and the centrality of good relationships inherent in our school vision places considerable responsibility on all teaching staff to be alert to the risk of emotional abuse of children, such as persistent sarcasm, verbal bullying or severe and persistent negative comments and actions. Equally, it is incumbent upon the school to ensure that the protection of children is at a maximum by reducing the likelihood of physical or sexual abuse within school. All members of staff are thus encouraged to reflect on every aspect of their contact with children so they will promote an atmosphere in which trust and openness can do much to detect the potential abuse of children while sensitive and sensible professional behaviour towards pupils will significantly reduce the risk of allegations against staff being made.

Aims

The specific aims of the policy are:

- ◆ To enhance the pupils’ self-esteem, self-confidence, assertiveness and personal safety by developing appropriate skills to make reasoned, informed choices, judgements and decisions through a pastoral programme offering opportunities for class and group discussion of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of tolerance and trust
- ◆ To ensure that staff and parents are well-informed about Child Protection issues and that staff are familiar with procedures for reporting concerns, their duty of care and responsibility to report and the various indicators of child abuse and neglect
- ◆ To provide a model for appropriate and effective communication between children, teachers, parents and other adults working with children
- ◆ To monitor children’s welfare and physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.

Other relevant policies

This policy complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Addressing Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Medicines Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Mobile Phones Policy
- E-safety and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policies
- Intimate Care (within this Child Policy Policy)

**These policies may be accessed via
the school office or on the school
website at
www.lumenchristicollege.co.uk**

- Prevention of Violence Policy
- Disposal of Record and Schedule Policy

SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors (Mrs E Moore)
- Designated Governors for Child Protection (Mrs E Moore/Mr M Harron)
- Principal (Dr Marie Ferris)
- Designated Child Protection Teacher (Ms Amanda King)
- Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher (Mrs Brónach O'Hare)

Heads of Key Stage 5 (Miss C Hughes), Heads of Year (Mr N Hanna, Mrs A O'Kane, Mrs E McCaffrey, Mrs R McDermott), School Counselling Lead (Mr Stephen Doherty), Head of Digital Technology (Mrs Lean McShane) and SENCO (Mrs Kate McNay) also attend a half termly/termly meeting as required, chaired by the Child Protection Teacher, to assist with monitoring of whole school Pupil Safeguarding.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Chair of the Board of Governors:

- 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 EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the EA 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

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 Child Protection 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 Child Protection Teachers' report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

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.

The Principal

The Principal must ensure that: -

- A Designated Child Protection Teacher and Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher are appointed
- All staff receive child protection training
- All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- The Board of Governors is kept informed
- An annual child protection report features on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings
- 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.
- Confidentiality is paramount and information is only passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

The Child Protection Teacher (And Deputy)

The designated teacher and deputy must: -

- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities, and role
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff (before they commence their role).
- Ensuring staff are aware that Notes of Concern should be completed using the template provided in DE circular 2020/07 (Appendix 6 of this policy).
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of 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 EA's Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Maintain records of all child protection concerns
- Keep the School Principal informed
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding child protection

The Class Teacher

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

- Refer concerns to Ms Amanda King, the Designated Child Protection Teacher or in her absence, Mrs Brónach O'Hare the Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher.
- Listen to what is being said and support the child
- Act promptly
- Make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child using the Note of Concern (appendix 6)
- Keep the Child Protection Teacher informed through written records or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- **NOT** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- **NOT** investigate

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in communities, agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Child abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse. Those working with children and young people must have an awareness and understanding of the nature and prevalence of different manifestations within their practice area.

It is always preferable to prevent abuse, or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Through their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff, especially teachers, but also non-teaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development.

There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. 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. ‘Harm’ means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development, and the question of whether harm is significant is determined in accordance with Article 50(3) of the Children Order. More detail on the concept of harm and significant harm can be found in Section 2.4 of Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017) and in the Children (NI) Order 1995.

Staff should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations, including reporting of offences - Section 5 of the **Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence. This includes crimes against children.

Observation of signs and symptoms of possible abuse can do no more than give rise to concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. It must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological, or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. However, teachers and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are repeated regularly.

Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he/she must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher who has specific responsibility for child protection. ***The designation of a teacher for this purpose should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff in being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed***, including those in cases where an allegation is made against any member of the school’s staff, teaching or non-teaching (see Section 5.5 on Dealing with Allegations Against a Member of Staff - DE Circular 2015/13).

It is imperative that any disclosure by a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk, is reported ***immediately*** to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk of the child at home. Contact details for the PSNI Central Referral Unit and Duty Social Workers can be found in the Contacts Section.

Pupils who are the victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties which may require a holistic assessment of need to determine appropriate level and types of intervention. Victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties, but the signs described below can do no more than give cause for concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. More detailed indications of abuse are to be found in the document “**Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools**” with which all teachers should be familiar. Copies are available from Ms King or the Principal

or can be found using the following weblink: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/publications-and-guidance-child-protection-issues-schools>

Categories of and Identifying Abuse:

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.

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; Repeated accidents, especially burns.	Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); Steals food; Compulsive eating; Begging from class friends; Withdrawn; Lacks concentration; Misses school medicals; Reports that there is no carer is at home; Low self-esteem; Persistent non-attendance at school; Exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.

Physical Abuse is 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.

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 (glove like); Unexplained fractures; Lacerations or abrasions; Untreated injuries; Bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; Injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday	Self-destructive tendencies; Aggression to other children; Behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); Appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; Improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; Uncomfortable with physical contact; Coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; Violent themes in artwork or stories

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 the 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.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Well below average in height and weight; "failing to thrive"; Poor hair and skin; Alopecia; Swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and Swollen hands and feet; Recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; Sudden speech disorders; Signs of self-mutilation; Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); Extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).	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.

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.

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
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Exploitation: is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, 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 – known as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Specific types of abuse:

1. **Child sexual exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology
Any child (i.e. a person under the age of 18) can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited. Both young females and males can be victims of CSE. CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males. While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, **the majority of CSE victims are living at home.** CSE can be very difficult to identify and a young person may not see themselves as a victim. However, it is our statutory responsibility to protect all children and young people from abuse, irrespective of whether or not they view themselves as a victim of abuse. **Professionals need to be able to identify vulnerability in the midst of challenging behaviour and frequent resistance to, or even apparent disregard for, professional support.** Research repeatedly shows that young people rarely report abuse through CSE. Most concerns are identified by professionals, friends or family or by proactive investigation by authorities. In recognition of this, good practice guidelines state that all areas should assume that CSE is occurring within their area unless they have evidence to indicate otherwise. As such, **schools should be alert to the likelihood of CSE and plan to protect children and young people accordingly.**

Potential indicators of CSE:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation.
- Truanting/leaving school without permission.
- Persistently going missing or returning late.
- Receiving lots of texts/ phone calls prior to leaving.

- Change in mood - agitated/stressed.
 - Appearing distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances.
 - Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.
 - Physical symptoms eg bruising; bite marks.
 - Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis.
 - New peer groups.
 - Significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend.
 - Increasing secretiveness around behaviours.
 - Low self-esteem.
 - Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less).
 - Self harm and other expressions of despair.
 - Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse.
- 2. 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.

- 3. Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes:** is a term used to describe the sending or posting of naked or partially naked images, videos or livestreams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via text, email, social media and gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. Sharing nudes is sometimes called 'sexting', however this term is often used by young people to talk about sharing sexual messages and not imagery. Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual Specific Types of Abuse 51 relationship) and in these cases you should contact local PSNI on 101 for advice and guidance. Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. Please remember that schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent - see Articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail. By contacting the PSNI you could help prevent further distribution of the image and further such incidents contain the damage it can cause. If a child has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures should be followed. Childline's Report Remove Tool may be able to assist in having an image blocked or removed to prevent further distribution.
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/>

4. Grooming: Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the 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. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify. Adults may misuse online settings e.g. chat rooms, social and gaming environments, and other forms of digital communications, to try and establish contact with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared. Those working or volunteering with children or young people should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming, and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs.

5. Children who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour: harmful sexual behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- there is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim.

Harmful sexual behaviour can include:

- Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexual behaviour will always require intervention and schools should refer to their own child protection policy and seek the support that is available from the CPSS. Harmful sexual behaviour may take place in school, in a family home or in the wider community and the guidance provided in DE Circular - 2022/02 - Children Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour should also be used to assess and manage risks which may arise in school as a consequence of harmful sexual behaviour which has taken place in a family home or the wider community.

Adult Safeguarding (for students aged 18+)

For further information see: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document>

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount at all times.
- Maximising the student's choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights.
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over.

See Appendix 7 in the Child Protection Policy for further information.

Disclosure Procedures

(No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged)

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's non-teaching staff sees such signs, he/ she should immediately bring them to the attention of either the class teacher or the Designated Teacher, and it may be appropriate for the necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher. Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family is in need of intervention by statutory, voluntary or community-based services through a 'child in need' referral (with parental consent).

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers' information which amounts to that. In some circumstances, talking to the child will quickly clarify initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred, and point to the need for an immediate referral. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can influence the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore, be kept to a minimum:

- Staff should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- Staff should not, therefore, ask questions which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Can you tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?" When, where, who questions are appropriate.
- The priority at this stage is to actively listen to the child, and not to interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is freely recalling significant events (the child must not be asked to unnecessarily recount the experience of abuse) and as soon as possible afterwards to make a record of the discussion. This should be passed on to the DT, using for example, the template 'Note of Concern' from the DE 'Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools' circular 2020/07. The note should record the time, date, place, and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, **but under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed, or a photograph taken.**
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used.
- Staff should not give the child or young person undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should, of course, reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.
- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings. Subsequent sections of this booklet give guidance on record-keeping. It should be emphasised that lack of proper records will not, of itself, exempt the

school from any subsequent requirement to give evidence in court. It is therefore essential that accurate contemporaneous (i.e. recorded as soon as possible after the event) records are maintained.

- Staff should not ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.
- As soon as possible, refer the matter to **Ms Amanda King.**, the designated teacher with specific responsibility for child protection. She will then:
 1. Make sensitive enquiries of the child concerned
 2. Refer the case to or consult with social services (or the police, where appropriate)
 3. Notify the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors
 4. Notify the Vice-Principal in charge of liaison with the EWO (Mrs Brónach O'Hare)
 5. Make clear to both Principal and Chairperson how they will be kept informed
 6. Make sure that they are informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between the statutory agencies, contribute to this discussion by telephone and clarify with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the child will be told that a referral has been made.
 7. Co-operate with the preparation of any case conference held by the Social Services Department

A detailed procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff is shown in Appendix 2 in the Child Protection Policy. Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures in DE Circular 2015/13 should be followed - **Circular 2015/13 - Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff.**

In all decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration and the child should be listened to and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed. In some cases, this may require consideration of suspension as a precautionary measure.

- *Where the designated teacher is suspected to or alleged to have abused a child, the member of staff who is made aware of the possible offence should inform the principal immediately, who will instigate normal reporting procedures.*
- *Where the Principal is suspected to or alleged to have abused a child, the matter should be reported to the designated teacher who will report the matter immediately to social services (or the PSNI, where appropriate) and to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.*

A detailed procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by a member of staff is shown in Appendix 5 in the Child Protection Policy.

Responsibility for referral of suspected abuse cases lies with the Child Protection Teacher, who will find it helpful to establish a good working relationship with colleagues from the other agencies, especially the Social Services and the PSNI. These agencies have wide experience in dealing with such cases, and regular communication should help to build the understanding, trust and confidence which will help to secure effective co-operation in cases of actual or suspected abuse. The Designated Child Protection Teacher/Deputy Child Protection Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an Initial and/or Review Child Protection Case Conference or Core Group meeting convened by the Western Health & Social Care Trust and where possible a school representative will be in attendance. A written report will be provided for these meetings and will be compiled after discussion with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection Register will be monitored in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan.

Other Considerations

The Preventative Curriculum

The overarching aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum is to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. The preventative curriculum is a term used to encompass safeguarding practices, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). At post-primary level it is covered within the Pastoral Programme, Learning for Life and Work (LLW) and through other relevant and appropriate curricular areas. The provision of a high-quality preventative curriculum provision is crucial to safeguarding our children and providing them with the knowledge and information they need to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, beliefs and attitudes and to navigate the complex world around them.

Parents & Carers

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. As part of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents/ carers, the school should help parents/carers to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the children and young people in its charge. All policies, including child protection, pastoral care, anti-bullying, positive behaviour, online safety, and complaints, should be issued to parents/carers at intake. The child protection policy, in particular, should be re-issued, at a minimum, every two years.

It should be clear that the school will always protect the best interests of the child and, in cases of suspected abuse, may refer cases directly to the investigative agencies. It is important that parents take time to read these policies and know they are required to inform the school:

- If the child has a medical condition or educational need;
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- Parents of primary school children should tell the teacher if there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school
- Parents should contact the school if their child is absent and send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer. The arrangements for parents to make known to staff any concerns they may have about the safety of their (or another) child should be clear, including how to contact the school, the class teacher, the DT for Child Protection, or the Principal if they are worried about a safeguarding or child protection concern. The process for a parent who has a potential safeguarding or child protection concern is set out below and should be personalised for the school.

Parents receive a summary of the pastoral care provision in the school from the designated teacher each year. Parents' and other adults can follow the procedures in Appendix 3 in the Child Protection Policy, if they wish to make a complaint. Child Protection Information can be found on the school's website under Important Information, Child Protection'.

Staff and Governors

All governors are familiar with the DE "School Governors Handbook on Child Protection". The college complies with the statutory requirements on vetting of all staff and governors, employment of substitute teachers and recruitment of staff in accordance with 2006 Circulars.

The Board receives an annual report on Child Protection and maintains records of any suspicions or allegations of abuse by staff.

All staff receive annually a copy of the Child Protection Policy, a Code of Conduct for staff (Appendix 4 in the Child Protection Policy) and appropriate training from the Designated Child Protection Teacher.

Members of staff are specifically made aware of the Sexual Offences Act 2003: a new criminal offence of abuse of trust and a new offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming.

Appendix 5 outlines the procedure where a complaint has to be made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies and where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. However, only those who need to know will be told.

Record keeping

Schools must create and retain reliable records to demonstrate accountability for decisions and actions taken. As part of developing child protection/safeguarding arrangements organisations must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, sharing, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child welfare concerns.

Each school has a responsibility to maintain its records and record keeping systems. The Board of Governors should ensure that the arrangements operated by the school for the retention, management and release of public records comply with statutory requirements, including data protection legislation, most recently the new Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

GDPR provides a legal framework for keeping everyone's personal data safe by requiring organisations to have robust processes in place for handling and storing personal information based on the following principles:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes;
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary;
- Accurate and where necessary kept up to date;
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which those data are processed; and
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of personal data.

A child protection record might be commenced if there is evidence of a safeguarding risk of, for example, self-harm, suicidal ideation or other behaviours that cause concern. All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person. The filing system, whether physical or electronic, should be accessible to only the DT, DDT or Principal.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is received by the school and is not referred to Social Services – or if it is referred and Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register – a record on the child's file will be permanently preserved and a confidential copy will be sent to any school to which the child subsequently transfers.

If the Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, a record of this fact and associated documentation from the Social Services will be maintained on the child's file, while he or she continues to attend our school.

When the child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register then all Social Services records will be destroyed and only the school records retained for permanent preservation. Should a child transfer to another school whilst their name is on the Child Protection Register then we will inform the receiving school that his/her name is on the Register and the name of the child's Social Worker will be forwarded as well. All Social Services records held by us in relation to the child will then be destroyed. The schools' own child protection records in relation to the child will be held in secure and confidential storage for permanent preservation.

Where an allegation is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the school, the procedures set out in DE Circular 2015/13 should be followed.

Every school must have a Record Retention and Destruction Policy and a Disposal of Records Schedule. At the end of the agreed retention period, records should be securely disposed of, for example in the case of physical copies, incinerated or shredded in the presence of a member of the school, or entrusted to a firm specialising in the destruction of confidential material.

Vetting Procedures

All staff including volunteers who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance. Other adults helping school staff or leading out of school activities which result in having substantial access to children will be subject to vetting by a Police check. Parents and helpers will be required to provide their written consent to such vetting.

The responsibilities and processes to be followed are clearly set out in:

- DE Circular 2013/01 '**Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools**': Circular 2013/01 - Guidance for schools and employing authorities on pre-employment safer recruitment practices (currently under review)
- DE Circular 2012/19 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Schools'

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure appropriate ID checks are undertaken for all staff and volunteers working/volunteering in the school.

Access NI: DE Circular 2013/01 (currently under review) sets out vetting requirements for schools. In brief, the following groups must have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) from AccessNI **before** taking up post:

- All new paid teaching and support staff.
- Examination Invigilators.
- Private contracted transport providers - named drivers.

Volunteers

There are two types of volunteers working in schools: those who work unsupervised and those who work under supervision. Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an EDC. A volunteer who works under supervision is not required to obtain an EDC, however, schools/ organisations must determine whether the level of supervision meets the statutory standard - see DE Circular 2012/19 (currently under review).

Schools must ensure that volunteers, eg coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc, who are employed by others, have the necessary clearances in place and a record of these should be maintained by the Principal.

Visitors to the school

Visitors to schools, such as parents, suppliers of goods and services, to carry out maintenance etc. do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors

should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require. Visitors should be:

- Met/directed by school staff/representatives. An electronic access system requires all visitors to call at and register in the Reception.
- Signed in and out of the school, by school staff. On signing in they will receive an identification badge. Any visitor without a badge is challenged by staff.
- Given restricted access to only specific areas of the school, if appropriate.
- Escorted by a member of staff/representative, where appropriate.
- Given access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- Cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons if delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repairs.

CCTV cameras operate on some corridors, all locker areas and external areas of the school.

Staff Training

Lumen Christi College is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their role and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Child Protection Teacher; Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses. When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school Child Protection Policy and code of conduct and given a copy of the policy which includes what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused.

Policy Review

The Principal and Designated Child Protection Teachers will conduct an annual review of the child protection procedures and policy statements each June to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Parents are free at any time in the course of the year to suggest improvements/amendments to the procedures for consideration at the next review meeting. Parents are also consulted biennially via questionnaire on the school's Child Protection procedures.

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.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, 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 school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an

Operation Encompass call from the Police 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 online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

Safer Schools App

Safer Schools Northern Ireland App DE currently fund iNEQE Safeguarding Group to provide the Safer Schools Northern Ireland app to schools in Northern Ireland. The app provides safeguarding and child protection support for school staff, and includes functionality that can be adapted to individual school needs, including connecting them to their wider school community. Resources are available on the app for teachers and for parents/carers and pupils, who can also register to use the app. To learn more about the Safer Schools Northern Ireland app, visit the Safer Schools homepage: <https://saferschoolsni.co.uk>

Reasonable Adjustment

Lumen Christi College will comply with their reasonable adjustment duty.

Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with a child/young person. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with menstruation.

Our approach to best practice

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff at Lumen Christi College will work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Lumen Christi College is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. Lumen Christi College recognises that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given.

Wherever possible staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, in certain circumstances this principle may need to be waived where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence, for example female staff supporting a boy if no male staff is available.

Arrangements

Upon the request of or after contact with parents, intimate care arrangements for a child will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

All children who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. Each child's right to privacy will be respected.

Appendix 2

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

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY. Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.

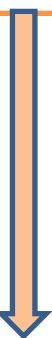


Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Child Protection Teacher or Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.



Designated Child Protection Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay.

If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.



Child Protection referral **is** required

Designated Child Protection Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) **unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm** then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the

PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.

Child Protection referral **is not** required

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the

Children's Services

Gateway Team or local

Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person's consent (where appropriate).

Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken.

The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

Useful Contacts

CHILD PROTECTION SUPPORT SERVICE

The helpline number is 028 9598 5590 and operates from Monday to Friday from 9.00 am until 4.30 pm.

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST

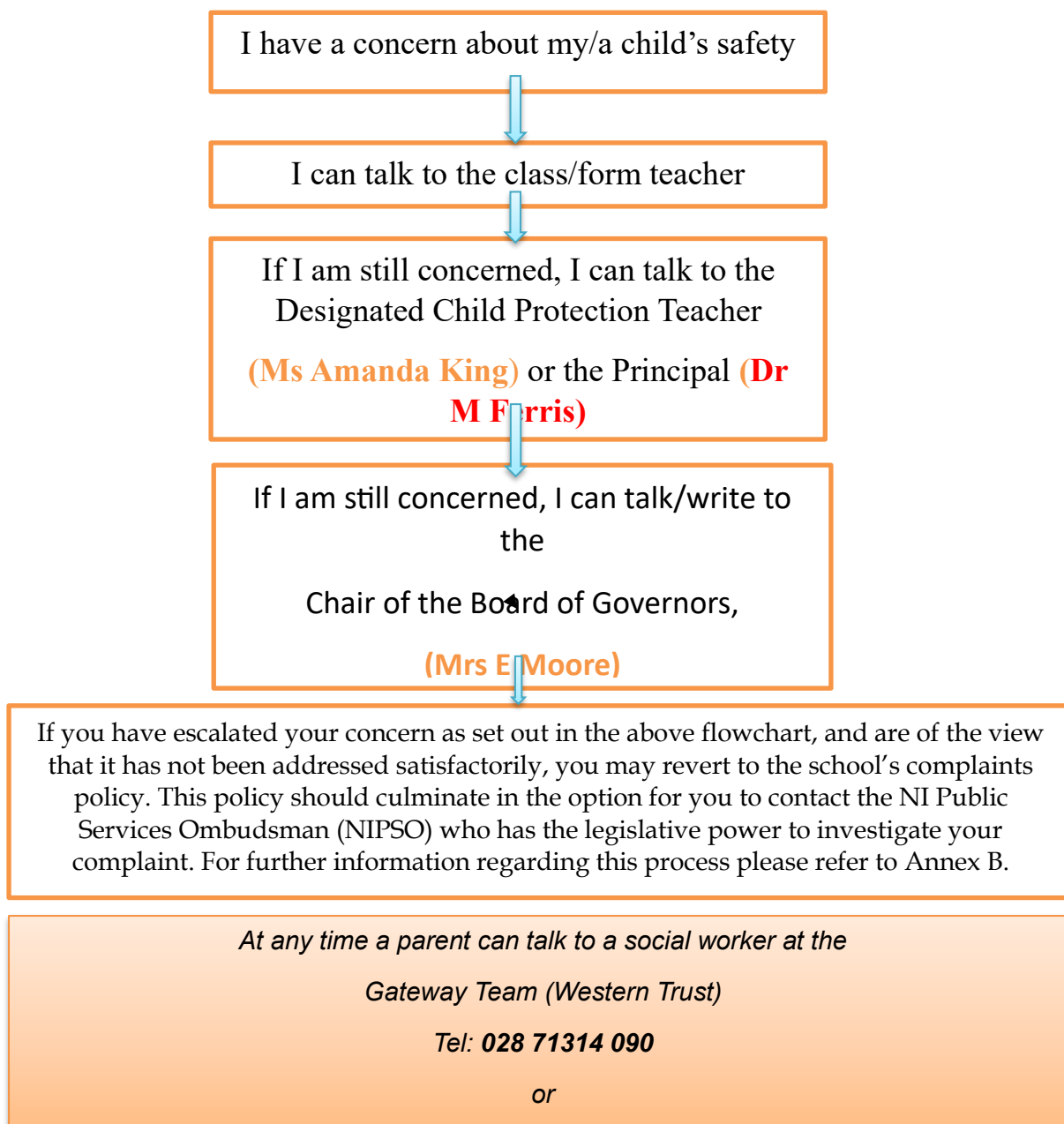
Gateway Team, Whitehill, 106 Irish Street, L'Derry

PSNI (Public Protection Unit)

Public Protection Unit
Tel: 0845 6008000

Appendix 3

How a parent/carer/adult can make a complaint



KEY AGENCY CONTACTS:

- Child Protection Services for Schools: 02895 985590
- Education Authority HR Manager Western 028 8241 1341
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Helpline - 03000 200 190
- PSNI Police Exchange - 028 90 65 0222
- Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit Central Referral Unit - 028 9025 9299
- Social Services – Gateway Services/Child Protection - 028 7131 4090
- Out of hours Western Health & Social Care Trust - 028 9504 9999

Appendix 4

Code of Conduct for Staff

All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times, and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.

1. Setting an Example:

- All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times, and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.
- Staff and volunteers must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

2. Relationships and Attitudes:

- All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times and sexual relationships with current pupils are not permitted and may lead to criminal conviction.
- Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school; perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.
- Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner, which within the context of this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as: acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders; co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service; respect for school property; taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises; being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers; respect for the rights and opinions of others.

3. Private Meetings with Pupils:

- It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place. As far as possible, staff and volunteers should conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with an open door and ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

4. Physical Contact with Pupils:

- To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.
- Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force (Circular 1999/09 and guidance document 'Towards a Model Policy in Schools on Use of Reasonable Force').

5. Honesty and Integrity:

- All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (e.g. a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents e.g. at Christmas or the end of the school year. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

6. Conduct outside of Work:

- Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school.
- Advice should be sought from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

7. E-Safety and Internet Use:

- A staff member or volunteer's off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's Online Safety Policy.
- Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social media and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. It is preferable that any contact with pupils is made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary.

8. Confidentiality:

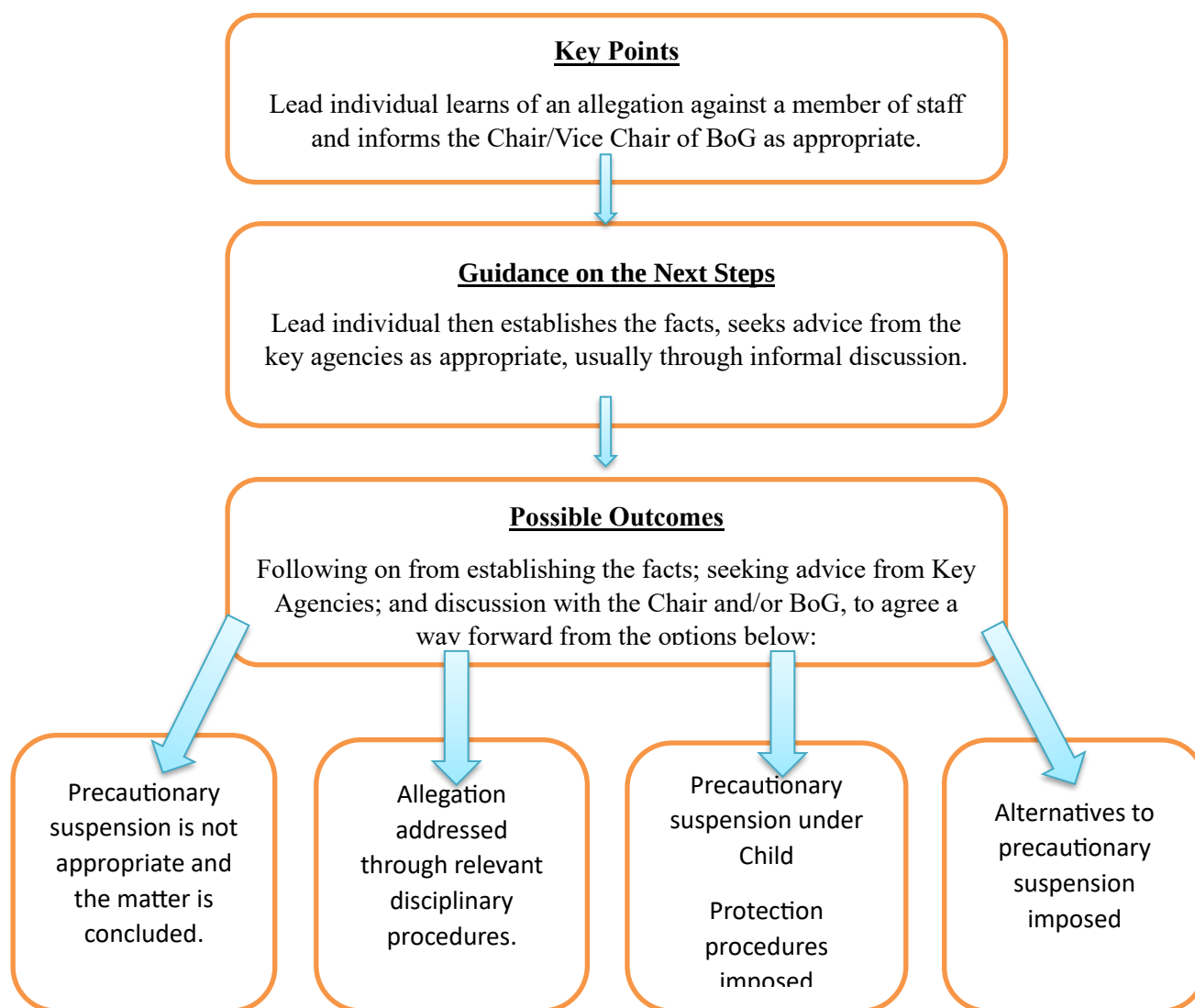
- Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need

to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

- There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.
- If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.
- Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.
- The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.

Appendix 5

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



Rationale

This procedure will apply when it is considered that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child/pupil or may have harmed a child/pupil.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child/pupil.
- Behaved towards a child/pupil in a way that indicates he/she will pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.
- Behaved in a way that creates a safeguarding concern.
- Abused their position of trust.
- Acted outside the Code of Conduct relating to Child Protection

Procedure

All allegations should be reported immediately, normally to the Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The Lead Individual to manage the handling of an allegation will normally be the Principal or Child Protection teacher. If the Principal is the subject of concern, the allegation should be reported immediately to the Chairperson (Chair) of the BoG.

The Lead Individual **WILL NOT** investigate the incident by interviewing either those directly involved or any witnesses. It is the role of Social Services/PSNI to conduct any investigations.

Where possible the Lead Individual will establish the following:

- The general nature of the allegation.
- That the allegation is of a child abuse nature.
- When and where the incident is alleged to have occurred?
- Who was involved?
- Whether any other persons were present?
- If the records of the educational establishment are likely to be able to support or contradict the allegation.
- Any history of similar allegations being made about the member of staff or by the person making the allegation.

The Lead Individual will seek advice with key agencies in the first instance from CPSSS and/or DE and may involve the Chair of Governors, the Designated/Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher, Social Services, PSNI. The outcome of the discussion with key agencies will be used to inform what action, if any, is appropriate and/or necessary.

In this discussion the agencies involved should share all relevant information pertaining to the allegation. Where the police are investigating, the employer should ask them to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer disciplinary process, if appropriate.

Outcomes:

Following discussion with the key agencies there are four possible outcomes:

1. Precautionary suspension under child protection is not appropriate and the matter is concluded

The Lead Individual will advise the BoG, the Chair and the Principal if appropriate, and the Principal will advise the member of staff that an allegation has been made, the nature of it, and that no further action will be taken. The member of staff will also be advised of available counselling/welfare services such as Inspire (0800 389 5362 (UK)

2. Allegation to be addressed through the use of the appropriate Disciplinary Procedures

3. Alternatives to precautionary suspension to be imposed.

In response to an allegation, other options will be considered before suspending a member of staff. An individual will be suspended only if there is no reasonable alternative, e.g. moving the member of staff to other duties that do not involve direct contact with a specific child or children identified as being at risk; moving the member of staff to other duties that do not involve direct contact with

children; or providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children. If the BoG, the Chair or the Principal decides not to proceed with the precautionary suspension, documented evidence of the reason will be retained.

A referral to Social Services/PSNI for investigation, will be made and the decision to be taken by the BoG, Chair or Principal to implement alternatives to precautionary suspension taken.

The Lead Individual will advise the member of staff that an allegation has been made, the nature of it, and the action to be taken as well as available counselling/welfare services such as Carecall.

Any further action under the Disciplinary Procedures will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the external investigation. Following notification of the outcome of the external investigation, consideration will be given to action under the relevant Disciplinary Procedures and to precautionary suspension.

4. Precautionary suspension under child protection to be imposed.

The BoG, the Chair or the Principal may impose a precautionary suspension on a member of staff following full consideration of an individual case. The allegations and reasons and justification for any suspension will be recorded in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints Register and the individual notified of the reasons. The precautionary suspension will be reviewed monthly and can only be ended by the Board of Governors.

A precautionary suspension is most likely to be considered in any case where:

- A child/pupil is at risk of significant harm.
- The allegation is so serious that, if proven, there may be grounds for dismissal.
- It is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded e.g. there is a possibility of the member of staff named in the allegation exercising an influence over the child/pupil and other witnesses or tampering with potential evidence.

A referral to Social Services/PSNI for investigation, will be made and the decision to be taken by the BoG, Chair or Principal to place the member of staff on precautionary suspension taken.

The Lead Individual will advise the member of staff that an allegation has been made under child protection complaints, the nature of it and reason for precautionary suspension, and what is likely to happen next in so far as it is possible to say. The individual should be reassured the precautionary suspension is a neutral act intended to protect all concerned, advised of the availability of confidential and independent Staff Care Services, such as Inspire (formerly Carecall), and informed who their appointed contact person in the college will be during the period of suspension. He/she will also be advised of his/her right to be accompanied or represented at any future meetings. Written confirmation of the precautionary suspension should be issued within one working day, including the details as discussed above.

Arrangements will be made for the member of staff or his/her representative to be contacted regularly (4-6 weekly or more often as decisions are taken), with information on progress and developments on the case. These arrangements do not preclude the member of staff, or his/her representative, contacting those conducting the investigation at any time.

The college has a duty of care to staff and will ensure it provides effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the member of staff with a named contact in the school if they are

suspended. The individual will be advised to contact their trade union regularly if they are a member and wish to do so.

Any further action under the Disciplinary Procedures will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the external investigation. Following notification of the outcome of the external investigation, the status of the precautionary suspension will be reviewed and consideration given to action under the relevant Disciplinary Procedures.

In cases where it is decided on the conclusion of the investigation that a member of staff who has been suspended can return to work, the Principal, in consultation with the member of staff and those who supported him/her during suspension, will consider how best to facilitate that. Depending on the circumstances of the member of staff, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The Principal will also consider how the member of staff's contact with the child/pupil who made the allegation can be best managed if they are still attending the school.

Support will be needed for the child/pupil involved in the allegations, any siblings and their parents, others at the educational establishment, both staff and children, according to the circumstances of the alleged abuse.

The college will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The allegation will not be shared with other staff and children. In advising parents and/or the person who made the allegation regarding the outcome, assurance will be provided that the matter has been dealt with under the relevant procedures but details of the outcome of HR procedures, such as Disciplinary Procedures, will be dealt with in confidence and will not be shared.

Pupils who are found to have made malicious or unfounded allegations may be considered to have breached school behaviour policies and the matter dealt with under the school's Discipline and Behaviour policy. In the event of a malicious or unfounded allegation being made by a person from outside the school, consideration will be given to reporting that person to the PSNI, if appropriate.

Record Keeping

Where an allegation is made about a member of staff, and is pursued either as a referral to Social Services or under the relevant disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record must also be entered by the Designated Child Protection Teacher or Principal on the Record of Child Abuse Complaints. Unless the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record will be retained indefinitely. A copy will be held on the child's file which is maintained for this purpose and kept in a secure place and not circulated.

The summary should include:

- A unique entry number.
- The date and brief details of the nature of the allegation.
- By whom and against whom it was made.
- If the allegation was referred to Social Services, to whom it was referred.
- The date of referral.
- If the allegation was dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.
- A copy should be provided to the person concerned.

The Record of Child Abuse Complaints will be made available to the BoGs annually.

NOTE OF CONCERN

Child Protection Record – to be handed to Designated Teacher

Please ensure that the back of this document is signed

Name of Pupil:
Class:
Date & time of incident/disclosure:
Circumstances of Incident/Disclosure:
Nature & description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:
Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:
Any <i>further</i> action taken:
Written report passed to designated teacher: Yes: <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="checkbox"/> No: <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="checkbox"/>

If 'No' state reason:
Date & time of report to the designated teacher:
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's child protection file: Yes ☐ No ☐ If 'No' state reason:

Name of Staff Member Making the Report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Adult Safeguarding

For further information see: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document>

The decision as to whether the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' is met will demand the careful exercise of professional judgement applied on a case by case basis. This will take into account all the available evidence, concerns, the impact of harm, degree of risk and other matters relating to the individual and his or her circumstances. The seriousness and the degree of risk of harm are key to determining the most appropriate response and establishing whether the threshold for protective intervention has been met.

The main forms of abuse are:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical injury. This may include hitting, pushing, rough handling, exposure to heat or cold, force feeding, improper administration of medication, denial of treatment, misuse or illegal use of restraint and deprivation of liberty.

Sexual Violence and Abuse

Sexual abuse is any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted or takes place without consent or understanding⁶. Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non-penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, irrelevant of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

Psychological/emotional abuse is behaviour that is psychologically harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/non-verbal conduct. This may include threats, humiliation or ridicule, provoking fear of violence, shouting, yelling and swearing, blaming, Controlling, Intimidation and Coercion.

Financial Abuse

Financial abuse is actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It is the misappropriation or misuse of money, property, benefits, material goods or other asset transactions which the person did not or could not consent to, or which were invalidated by intimidation, coercion or deception. This may include exploitation, embezzlement, withholding pension or benefits or pressure exerted around wills, property or inheritance.

Institutional Abuse

Institutional abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult by a regime or individuals in settings which adults who may be at risk reside in or use. This can occur in any organisation, within and outside the HSC sector. Institutional abuse may occur when the routines, systems and regimes result in poor standards of care, poor practice and behaviours, inflexible regimes and rigid routines which violate

the dignity and human rights of the adults and place them at risk of harm. Institutional abuse may occur within a culture that denies, restricts or curtails privacy, dignity, choice and independence. It involves the collective failure of a service provider or an organisation to provide safe and appropriate services, and includes a failure to ensure that the necessary preventative and/or protective measures are in place.

Neglect occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, appropriate and adequate care and support which is required by another adult. It may be through a lack of knowledge or awareness, or through a failure to take reasonable action given the information and facts available to them at the time. It may include physical neglect to the extent that health or well-being is impaired, administering too much or too little medication, failure to provide access to appropriate health or social care, withholding the necessities of life, such as adequate nutrition, heating or clothing, or failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others particularly when the person lacks the capacity to assess risk.

Procedure Where the School Has Concerns, or Has Been Given Information, About the Abuse of a **Vulnerable Adult**

Member of staff completes the School's Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.

Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.



Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.



Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer



Vulnerable Adult Referral Is Required

Designated Teacher seeks consent of the Vulnerable Adult (if they are competent to give this) or parent/ carer unless this would place the vulnerable adult at risk of significant harm then telephones the Vulnerable Adult's Gateway Team 028 7161 1366 and/or the PSNI if the person is at immediate risk. He/ she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with the Vulnerable Adult and decides if a referral is or is not required.



Vulnerable Adult Referral Is Not Required

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the Vulnerable Adult to appropriate support services such as Adult Mental Health Services; Adult Disability Services or local Support Hubs with consent (where appropriate).

Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.