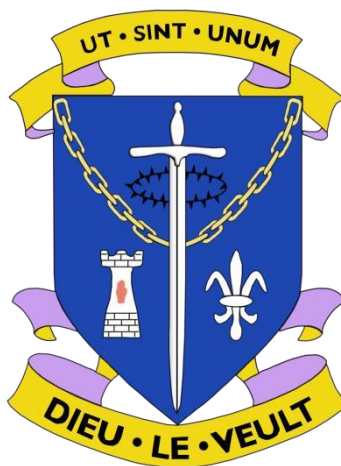


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# St Louis Grammar School

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



*Date of Policy: Dec 2019*

*Last Reviewed: May 2023*

*Reviewed by: Miss C.King*

***Ratified by Board of Governors:***

*Date of Review: May 2025*

## **1. Child Protection Ethos**

St Louis Grammar School is a Catholic community within which both staff and students work in the pursuit of all aspects of spiritual, educational and personal excellence. St Louis Grammar School, a coeducational establishment, based on the philosophy of St Louis, seeks to establish a friendly, supportive and caring ethos where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. St Louis Grammar school is committed to the protection of all its pupils.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

## **2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' (UK Agreement in 1991) and enshrined in the Children (NI) Order 1995 (effective from November 1996). The Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). In particular the principle we support is that every child or young person has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care given by those looking after them to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection activity and underpin the guidance which we follow:

- It is a child's right to always feel safe, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- The pupil's welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a pupil is disabled or has special needs these must also be taken into consideration.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting pupils and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is a conflict, the pupil's interests must always come first.
- Pupils have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. Where a pupil has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this. In the case of foreign nationals an interpreter may be brought in.
- Parents / carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family. This may take place with an interpreter.
- Actions taken to protect the pupil (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the pupil unnecessary distress or further harm.

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- Intervention should not deal with the pupil in isolation; the pupil's needs should be considered in the context of the family and should take account of their gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race, and any special needs.

### 3. 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:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force
- Safe handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits / Trips
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- ICT and E Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Intimate Care Policy
- Drugs Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Bring your own device Policy

THESE POLICIES ARE AVAILABLE TO PARENTS AND ANY PARENT REQUIRING A COPY SHOULD CONTACT THE SCHOOL

**Principal or visit the school website at <http://www.stlouis.org.uk/>**

### 4. SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Designated Teacher                       | <b>Miss C King (Head of Pastoral Care)</b> |
|  | (028)41762747 Ex 239                       |
| • Deputy Designated Teachers               | <b>Mr E McGlue (Vice Principal)</b>        |
|  | (028)41762747 Ex 249                       |
|  | <b>Mr T Brown (Head of Middle School)</b>  |
|  | (028)41762747 Ex 235                       |
|  | <b>Mrs B Cunningham</b>                    |
| • Principal                                | Mr K. Martin                               |
| • Designated Governor for Child Protection | Mr D. Curran                               |
| • Chair of the Board of Governors          | Mr B. Cunningham                           |

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 THE DESIGNATED TEACHER AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHERS

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. They must also appoint a Deputy Designated Teacher who, as a member of the Safeguarding Team, will actively support the Designated Teacher in carrying out the following duties:

The designated teacher and deputy designated teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities, and role
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training) including support staff
- Be available to discuss safeguarding or Child Protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for record keeping of all Child Protection concerns
- Maintain a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg Family Support Hubs
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate
- Liaise with the Education Authority's {EA} Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Keep the School Principal informed
- Provide written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Promote a message of safeguarding and a child protection ethos in the school

### 5.2 The Principal

As secretary to the Board of Governors, assist in fulfilling its safeguarding and child protection duties. Ensure the Board of Governors are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding including changes to legislation, policy, procedures, DE circulars, inclusion of Child Protection on the termly meeting agenda.

- To manage allegations/ complaints against school staff
- To establish and manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection
- To appoint and manage Designated teachers/ Deputy designated teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- To ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection including awareness of safeguarding and child protection for new staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy of summary of the Child Protection Policy at intake and at a minimum every two years.
- To maintain the school's record of Child Abuse complaints.

### 5.3 THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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

- having a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually
- having a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- attendance at relevant training by governors and that up-to-date training records are maintained
- the vetting of all staff and volunteers

### 5.4 THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The Designated Governor should avail of child protection awareness training delivered by CPSS and will take the lead in child protection issues in order to advise the Governors on:

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

## 5.5 THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Chair of the Board of Governors should:

- Ensure that they have received appropriate Education Authority training
- 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 Child Protection Support Service {CPSS} and the 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

## 5.6 OTHER MEMBERS OF SCHOOL STAFF

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

They should remember the 5 Rs: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer

All members of staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (Appendix 1 Note of Concern)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- Not give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- Not investigate
- Not ask leading questions

In addition, the Class Teacher should:

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts.

The Designated/Deputy Designated teacher will immediately follow the school's child protection procedures.

**All concerns need to be passed on to the Safeguarding Team, Notes of Concern Template, Appendix 1**

## 5.7 PARENTS

**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.**

Parents should play their part in safeguarding by:

- Informing 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.
- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, replying by text message to Group Call, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation.
- informing the school whenever parents are absent from home and another adult has responsibility for the pupil.
- letting the school know if there are any changes in family circumstances.
- familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.
- **It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.**

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## **6. 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.

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm. '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.

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.

It is imperative that any disclosure by a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk, is reported immediately by a member of the school's Safeguarding Team 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.

### **6.1 TYPES OF ABUSE**

**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.

**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.

**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 opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**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.

**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.



## 6.2 Specific Types of Abuse

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in St Louis GS are aware of and have therefore included in our policy.

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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.

Potential indicators of CSE:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation.
- Truancy/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.

While these indicators can be useful in identifying potential risk, their presence does not necessarily mean CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence mean it is not.

## 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.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

We recognise the impact on children of an abusive family setting and we will report such incidents to the appropriate statutory agency.

## FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

FGM is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM a report should be made to the PSNI without delay. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, a referral should be made to the relevant HSCT Gateway Services.

## CHILDREN WHO DISPLAY HARMFUL SEXUALISED BEHAVIOUR

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between normal childhood and adolescent sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate abusive or aggressive behaviour. Professional judgement may be required. However, any cause for concern should be reported to the Designated Teacher who will seek advice.

Problematic Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Not age appropriate
- One off incident of low key touching over clothes
- Result of peer pressure
- Spontaneous rather than planned
- Lacking in other balancing factors e.g. no intent to cause harm, level of understanding, acceptance of responsibility
- Targeting other children, to irritate and make feel uncomfortable. Often the children are not scared and can feel free to tell someone
- Concerning to parents / carers, supportive
- Sometimes involving substances which disinhibit behaviours

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the Education Authority CPSS may be required. The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Lacks the consent of the victim
- When the perpetrator uses threats or violence (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce or intimidate the victim
- Uses age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
- Involves inappropriate touching
- Involves sexual behaviour between children – it 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.
- Involves a younger child abusing an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and school must seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

## ABUSIVE IMAGES OF CHILDREN

The production of abusive images of children can involve contact sexual abuse of children and/or the manipulation of innocent images, including video, film or photographic data. Such images are often distributed for sexual gratification and sometimes for financial gain. Modern technology has become a key mechanism for distributing abusive images of children and/or young people. Where abusive images or images intended for sexual gratification are identified as that of a child or young person, this must be referred to the Gateway Service in the relevant HSCT and/or the PSNI.

## E-SAFETY/INTERNET ABUSE

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

Four categories have been identified

- Content risks: 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.

Please refer to e safety policy and safer internet use policy

## SEXTING

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.

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 relationship) and in these cases the school should contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. Advice should be sought from CPSS.

## 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.

Warning signs within the school environment:

- Absence and persistent absence.
- Request for extended leave of absence/failure to return from visits to country of origin.
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins.
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.
- Poor exam results.
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home.
- Not allowed to attend extracurricular activities.
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger.
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education.

## FABRICATED OR INDUCED ILLNESS (FII)

Harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Fabricated or induced illness by parents or carers can cause significant harm to children.

**However, 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.**

## THE CONCEPTS OF HARM AND SIGNIFICANT HARM

The Children Order defines 'harm' as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. The Order states that 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse, forms of ill-treatment which are physical and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; 'health' means physical and / or mental health; and 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

There is no absolute definition of 'significant harm', as this will be assessed on a case by case basis. Article 50(3) of the Children Order states that "where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child".

Where we suspect harm a referral will be made to the local Gateway Team

Symptoms which young people may display and which are indicators only include:

- Nervousness
- Low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nightmares / flashbacks
- Physiological – stress / nerves
- Stomach pain
- Bed wetting
- Immature / needy behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Aggression
- Internalising distress or withdrawal
- Truancy
- Alcohol and drugs
- Bullying

These symptoms can lead to a child/ young person being misdiagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive.

If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information to Social Services

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

## 6.3 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE - POSSIBLE INDICATORS

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

| Physical Indicators  | Behavioural Indicators  |
|--|---|
| <p>Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing – grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday</p> | <p>Self-destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; come to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories</p> |

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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

## NEGLECT

| Physical Indicators | Behavioural Indicators |
|---------------------|------------------------|
|---------------------|------------------------|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy;   | Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating;  |
| untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns. | begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos. |

## SEXUAL ABUSE

| <b>Physical Indicators</b>  | <b>Behavioural Indicators</b>   |
|---|---|
| <p>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.</p> | <p>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.</p> |

## 6.4 DEALING WITH CHILDREN WITH INCREASED VULNERABILITIES

### Children with disabilities

Children and young people with disabilities (ie any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and individuals and organisations working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues. Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children should receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early, to allow preventative action to be taken.

## CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and young people may have been abused.

## YOUNG PEOPLE IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Staff should be aware of and adhere to additional guidance for young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation.

## CHILDREN OF PARENTS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action taken to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children's social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, consideration should be given to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

## CHILDREN WITH LIMITED FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

Designated teachers should work with their SEN co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer pupils, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. All schools should try to create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

## GENDER IDENTITY ISSUES AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

### **Children / Young People's Behaviours**

#### **PEER ABUSE**

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all professionals should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

#### **SELF-HARM**

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate, and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a

progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however this is not always the case. Appropriate advice should be sought from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

#### **SUICIDAL IDEATION**

It is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.



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

| <b>Do:</b>  | <b>Do not:</b>   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listen to what the child says</li> <li>❖ Assure the child they are not at fault</li> <li>❖ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret</li> <li>❖ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words</li> <li>❖ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Ask leading questions.</li> <li>❖ Put words into the child's mouth.</li> <li>❖ Ignore the child's behaviour.</li> <li>❖ Remove any clothing.</li> <li>❖ Panic</li> <li>❖ Promise to keep secrets</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Stay calm</li> <li>❖ Listen</li> <li>❖ Accept</li> <li>❖ Reassure</li> <li>❖ Explain what you are going to do</li> <li>❖ Record accurately</li> <li>❖ Seek support for yourself</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Ask leading questions</li> <li>❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily</li> <li>❖ Delay</li> <li>❖ Start to investigate</li> <li>❖ <b>Do Nothing</b></li> </ul>                                     |

## 7. PROCEDURES FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS IN RELATION TO CHILD ABUSE

### 7.1 HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have with regard to Child Protection and Safeguarding will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to any member of the school's safeguarding team: the Principal, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may write to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2**.

### 7.2 WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS CONCERNS OR HAS BEEN GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL STAFF INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate as this is the responsibility of Social Services and/or PSNI. Staff should report these concerns immediately to the Designated/Deputy Teacher by completing note of concern in Appendix 1. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

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 have an effect on 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 encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?".
- 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 to pass on to the Designated Teacher, using the template 'Note of Concern' from Appendix 1: 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 nor 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. It is therefore essential that accurate contemporaneous records are maintained.
- Staff should **not** ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. They may discuss with The EA CPSS Designated Officer. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher may consult with members of the school's safeguarding team, the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Education Authority's Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the

Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team and a copy will be kept in the school's child protection file.

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

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 3**.

### **7.3 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff**

Principals and Boards of Governors have a duty of care for the welfare of pupils and any allegation needs to be effectively evaluated and managed. However, as employers, they also have a duty of care to their staff and should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

All allegations should be reported immediately, normally to the Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. A Lead Individual should be identified to manage the handling of the allegation from the outset. This would normally be the Principal or a designated senior member of staff. If the Principal is the subject of concern the allegation should be reported immediately to the Chair of the Board of Governors, Deputy Chairperson, Designated Governor for Child Protection and the person about to be the Lead Individual.

In the interests of all involved the issue should be dealt with as a priority and unnecessary delays should be avoided. Every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity must be made. Allegations should not be shared with other staff or children.

All allegations of a child abuse nature must be recorded in the hard backed and bound Record of Child Abuse Complaints which must be retained securely. A record of this should be placed on the relevant pupil's Child Protection File.

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

Child protection procedures as outlined in **Appendix 4** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

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

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback

will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

## 9. 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. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

## 10. RECORD KEEPING

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 and are only accessible by members of the safeguarding team.

## 11. VETTING PROCEDURES

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the School are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance. Visitors who are not vetted will not be permitted to work with students without a member of staff present.

## 12. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF PAID OR UNPAID

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. The Staff Code of Conduct is available on request.

## 13. STAFF TRAINING

St Louis Grammar School 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 roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service. There may be occasions where external support is sought for these training sessions and additional training sessions / INSET provided where new information has to be given to staff. When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies.

## 14. The Preventative Curriculum

St Louis is committed to the protection of all its students. We acknowledge the importance of our pastoral role in the welfare of all young people and through our mission statement and ethos every student is treated as an individual and every effort is made to ensure that each student achieves their full potential. Through our Pastoral Programme and Counselling Service we offer a supportive environment to all our students.

The Pastoral Development Programme ensures students are aware of personal safety, the importance of enhancing self-esteem and encouraging social skills. The RSE programme in St Louis provides opportunities for our students to acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships, growth and development and

sexuality through processes which enable them to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework. We aim to encourage the students to make responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they lead their lives based on our catholic ethos

We ensure that members of the public who are invited to be involved in educational activities in school, as helpers/leaders on educational visits or residential visits are subject to vetting procedures in keeping with current arrangements for the care and protection of children and all young people.

All external staff involved in any Programmes in school are fully vetted through the Access NI process in accordance with relevant legislation and Department Guidance.

We will ensure that we will provide effective management of all our staff through our regular training programmes and efficient supervision procedures.

## **15.SAFEGUARDING INITIATIVES IN ST. LOUIS**

Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues:

- Staff lead by example in promoting respect for each other and forming positive relationships with pupils
- Through our Pastoral Programme, Circle Time Programme, Mentoring Programme and
- Counselling Service we offer a supportive environment to all pupils.
- The Personal Development Programme allows pupils to explore key issues within their personal development including Self Concepts, Self Esteem, Health and Well-being, Relationships and Personal Safety.
- Faith development is an integral part of all RE Programmes of Study and the daily life of the school.
- The school uses a range of external agencies for support and guidance including Education Welfare Officer, Pupil Personal Development Service, Educational Psychologists, Behaviour Support Team, Pupil Personal Development Services, Newry Adolescent Partnership, CAMHS, SAM, CAPS, Just Ask, Kinnego Outreach Centre, SHIP, School Counsellors, PSNI and Family Support Hub.
- A member of the Safe Guarding team will attend Case Conferences, LAC Reviews and Family Support Meetings where possible.
- The Staff Code of Conduct is shared with all adults working in school.
- All staff, teaching and non-teaching and volunteers receive Child Protection Training annually.
- Child Protection issues are on agenda at every Board of Governors Meeting.
- A Safeguarding Team Poster and photos are displayed in every classroom.
- The Safeguarding Team photos are displayed on a notice board in school.
- Pupils are regularly reminded of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers through Assemblies, student planner and PD lessons.
- All visitors must report to main office, sign in and out of the school and wear a Visitor Badge while on the premises.
- If a pupil leaves school during the school day, a parent or guardian must give permission to their child's Year Head to sign out of school – no pupil is permitted to leave school unless a parent/guardian collects him/ her or they make alternative arrangements agreed by the school.
- Lunchtime supervision is provided by non-teaching members of staff who have received full Child Protection training.
- All new staff and volunteers are fully vetted prior to commencement of employment in school
- Collaboration Students: If a student from a visiting school makes a disclosure to any member of staff in St Louis, the staff member will immediately inform the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher. The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in St. Louis will then immediately contact the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in the student's parent school.
- Collaboration Students are introduced to the Designated Teacher during their Induction programme and the Safeguarding Team photos are displayed in all collaboration classrooms. They also receive an induction booklet with pictures and locations of the safeguarding team within it.
- Parents receive a reminder of the safeguarding team at every parent teacher meeting.
- The school uses a variety of external agencies to enhance the delivery of the pastoral programme which complements Child protection, these include Online safety – PSNI, Love is for life, Mood matters, Women's Aid.
- Students who are involved in mentorship roles or leadership roles receive Child Protection guidance as part of their induction Programmes including CARA, Bus Monitors, Prefects and Subject Monitors.

- Key events promoting student safety are included as part of the school calendar which include Anti-Bullying Week, Road Safety Week and Safer Internet Week.
- The Principal records any complaints against staff in a hard backed book which is stored in a locked cabinet. These will be maintained in accordance with Pastoral Care in Schools; Child Protection DENI 1999 page 27 Point 53 and will be available only to the Safeguarding Team.

**16. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Safeguarding Team in St Louis Grammar School will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

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

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

Date Policy Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Designated Teacher)

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

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

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1**

ST LOUIS GRAMMAR SCHOOL, KILKEEL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**



**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED  
TEACHER**

|  |
|--|
| Name of Pupil:   |
| Year Group:  |
| Date, time of incident / disclosure:   |
| Circumstances of incident / disclosure:  |
| Nature and 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 further action taken:

Written report passed to Designated Teacher:  
If 'No' state reason:

Yes:  No:

Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:

Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file  
If 'No' state reason:

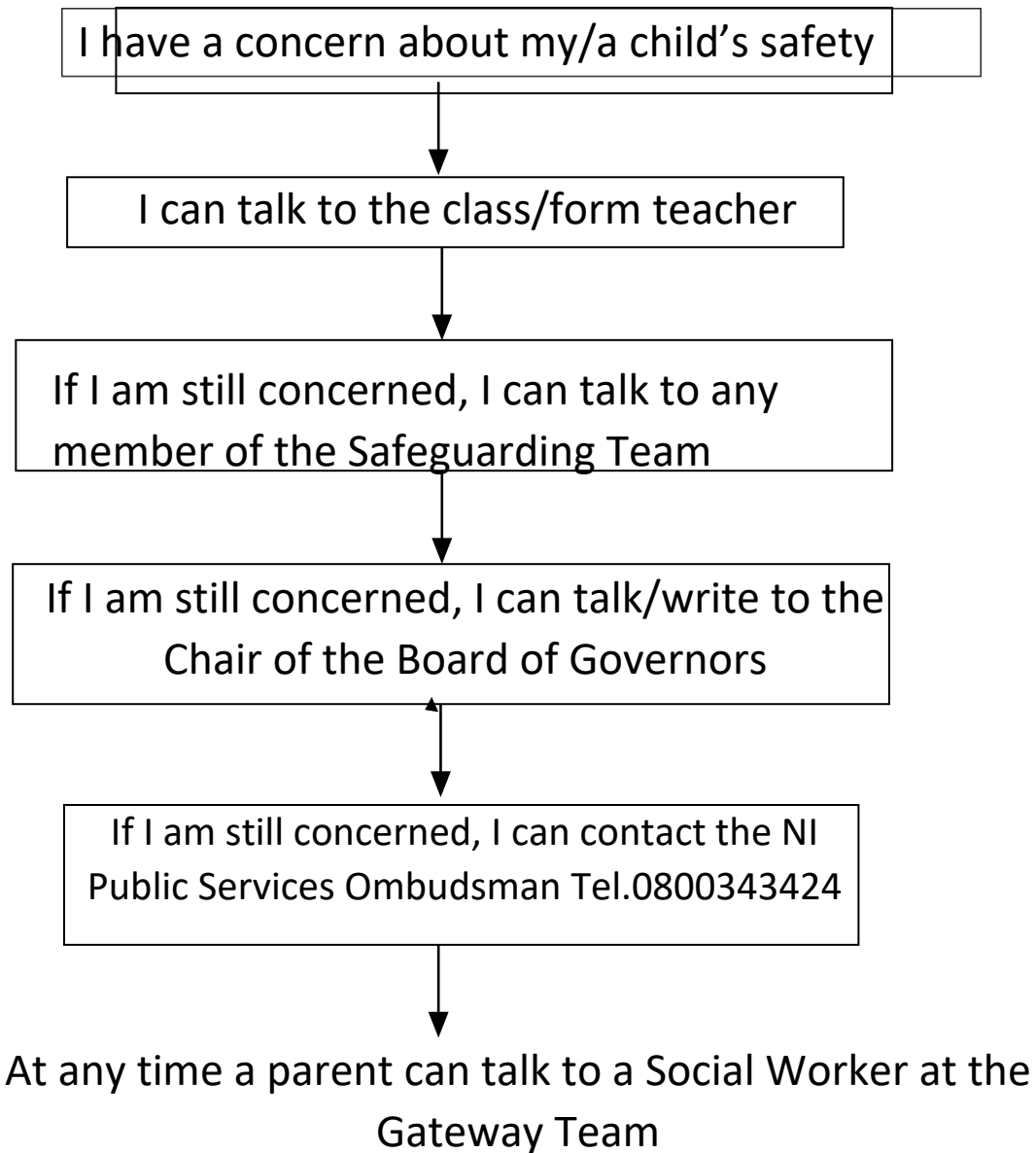
Name of staff member making the report: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT



**Tel: 0800 7837745** {Free Phone from a Landline}  
Or can contact the PSNI Central referral Unit at: (028)90259299

**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 Teacher or member of the Safeguarding Team and provides Note of Concern



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



**Child Protection referral is required**  
Designated 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'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.

## Dealing With Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff

### **Key Points**

Lead individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and inform the Chair/Vice Chair of the BoG as appropriate



### **Guidance on next steps**

Lead Individual then:  
Establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion



### **Possible Outcomes**

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from key agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or the BofG to agree a way forward from the options below



Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded

Allegation addressed through relevant Disciplinary Procedures

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection Procedures imposed

Alternatives to Precautionary Suspension imposed