

Safeguarding & Child Protection: A Guide for Parents and Guardians

St Louis Grammar School

At St Louis Grammar School, the safety, happiness, and well-being of your child are our top priorities. We believe that a school should be a friendly, supportive, and caring environment where every young person is valued and protected.

This parent-friendly summary explains how we work together to keep your child safe. You can view our full Child Protection Policy on the school website or request a copy from the school office.

1. Our Core Principles

Our approach to safeguarding is based on a simple but vital rule: **the welfare of your child is paramount**. We promise to:

- **Listen:** Ensure your child's voice is heard.
- **Support:** Work as partners with you to help support your family.
- **Protect:** Take prompt, appropriate, and measured action whenever a concern is raised.

2. Meet the Safeguarding Team

If you or your child ever have a concern about safety or well-being, we have a specialized team of trained staff ready to help:

- **Designated Teacher for Child Protection:** Ms. Caroline King
- **Deputy Designated Teachers:** Mr. Eamonn McGlue, Mr. Tim Brown, and Ms. Brenda Cunningham
- **Principal:** Mr. Kevin Martin
- **Designated Governor for Child Protection:** Mr. Daniel Curran
- **Chair of the Board of Governors:** Mr. Brendan Cunningham



3. How We Keep Students Safe in School

Safeguarding is woven into everything we do. Here are some of the ways we protect our pupils daily:

- **Strict Vetting:** All staff, volunteers, and external program leaders are thoroughly vetted (via AccessNI checks) before they work with our students.
- **Annual Staff Training:** Every single member of teaching and support staff receives child protection training every year.
- **Secure Campus:** All visitors must sign in at the main office and wear a visitor's badge. Students are never permitted to leave the school premises during the day without explicit parental permission.
- **A Safe Curriculum:** Through our Pastoral, Personal Development, and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programs, we teach students how to stay safe, manage their emotions, look after their mental health, and recognize healthy relationships.
- **Online Safety & Theme Weeks:** We actively educate students on digital safety and participate in national initiatives like Anti-Bullying Week, Road Safety Week, and Safer Internet Week.
- **Operation Encompass:** We partner with the police to support children who experience domestic abuse at home. If the police attend a domestic incident involving one of our pupils, they notify our safeguarding team the next morning so we can provide immediate, confidential emotional support at school.

4. What to Do If You Have a Concern

If you have a concern about your child's safety within the school:

Parents are always encouraged to raise concerns. If you have a worry, you can follow these steps:

1. Talk directly to your child's **Class Teacher or Year Head**.
2. Speak to a member of our safeguarding team (**Ms. King or the Deputy Designated Teachers**) or the **Principal**.
3. If you still feel the matter is unresolved, you can contact the **Chair of the Board of Governors**.

(Note: You can also contact the local Children's Services Gateway Team or the PSNI directly at any time.)

If a student shares a concern with a staff member:

If a child talks to a member of staff about potential harm or abuse, the staff member must act promptly.

- Staff **cannot** promise total confidentiality to a child when abuse is suspected; they are legally required to report it to the school's Designated Teacher to protect the child.
- Staff will not investigate or ask leading questions—investigations are strictly handled by professional agencies like Social Services.
- If a formal referral to Social Services is required, the school will always try to seek your consent first, unless doing so would put the child at greater risk of harm.

5. How You Can Help Us

Safeguarding is a partnership. You can help keep your child safe by keeping the school informed about:

- Any medical conditions or educational needs.
- Any changes to your contact details, address, or parental responsibility arrangements.
- Any Court Orders relating to the safety or well-being of your child.
- Changes to who is permitted to collect your child from school.
- **Absences:** Please call the school on the morning of any absence, or reply promptly to our Group Call text message, so we know your child is safe.

Useful Numbers

Single Contact for Children's Services Referral'

Dromalane House,
Dromalane Road,
Newry, Co Down, BT35 8AP
02837564700

Out of Hours Emergency: 08001979995

(after 5:00 pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)

NSPCC: 08088005000

Childline: 08001111

REMEMBER if you have ANY issues regarding child protection or have concerns regarding the safety or well being of any child in our school DO NOT hesitate to contact any member of the Safeguarding Team, Ms Caroline King (DT), Mr Kevin Martin (Principal) Mr Eamonn McGlue (DDT), Mrs Brenda Cunningham (DDT) or Mr Tim Brown (DDT) immediately.

***THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF THE
CHILDREN IN OUR CARE IS OF
PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE***