

**St. Patrick's Grammar School**  
**Downpatrick**



**Safeguarding and**  
**Child Protection**  
**Policy**  
**September 2020**

## 1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 St. Patrick's Grammar School is committed to the care of its students (and the students from other schools within the Lecale Area Learning Community who study within it: De La Salle High School, Down High School and St. Mary's High School) and to doing what is reasonable in all circumstances in order to safeguard and promote students' safety and welfare, in school, at EOTAS sites and in school-related activities outside the usual classroom environment. For the purpose of this policy 'students' also refers to former students who may return to the school for revision classes or to sit examinations and to students from partner primaries who, from time to time, use facilities here.

We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where students are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that students receive effective support, protection and justice. All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.

The school's Facilities Management, *Interserve*, responsible for the cleaning, portage, maintenance and security, and the catering company, *Autograph*, support the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy of St. Patrick's Grammar School.

- 1.2 The school recognises that the problem of child abuse is a community and social issue and responsibility, and that the school's role in safeguarding and child protection has to be seen as one part of a wider partnership between home, school and community, in preventing child abuse. The school also recognises that child protection procedures apply to all children and young people under 18 years of age. The school is conscious of children who have special needs that may put them in a particularly vulnerable position. All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'child' has the same meaning as in the Children (NI) Order 1005, i.e. a person under the age of 18. In the case of a student with special educational needs the term child could be interpreted as including any person who has not attained the age of 19 and is a registered child at the school, or one of the partner schools within Lecale Area Learning Community. A person who attains age 19 during a school year shall be deemed not to have attained that age. This policy also applies to former students who may return to the school for revision classes or to sit examinations.
- 1.3 The school works closely with parents who have responsibility for their children and the primary responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. As part of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents/carers, the school helps parents/carers to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the young people in its care. The school will share relevant policies with parents and encourage parents to read these. Parents must keep the school informed of: their child's medical conditions or educational needs; court orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child; change in the child's circumstances (address or contact details, name change or change of parental responsibility); their child's absence from school, by contacting the school if their child is absent and sending in a note on the child's return.
- 1.3 The welfare of the child - the paramount consideration of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 - is the principal statute which underpins the school's

Safeguarding/Child Protection policy. Other legislation which has a bearing on the policy includes:

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child; The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003; Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007; The Safeguarding Board (NI) Act 2011; The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016; The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016; Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI (August 2017); Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013 – 2020 and subsequent action plans.

1.4 The policy follows the recommendations of the documents listed here: DENI circulars 1999/9 and 1999/10. DE Circular 2003/13; DE Circulars 2006 6-10, and 25, 2007/01, 2008/03 and 10, 2010/01 and 07, 2011/22, 2012/19; 2013/01; 2015/13; 2016/05; 2016/20 2017/04 and updated 2019/08 (Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools); DE letter (2 February 2009) *Child Protection Legislation Changes to Age of Consent and Guidance* (September 2012) for schools on changes to pre-employment checking and safer recruitment practices. DENI publications, *Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools (2014)*; *Protecting Life in Schools – Helping Support Against Suicide by Supporting Pupils’ Emotional Health and Wellbeing (2016)* and *Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools (April 2017 and updated September 2019)*. DHSSPS document *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)*. *The Safeguarding Board for NI (SBNI) Procedures Manual (November 2017)*. EA document, *Practice Guidance on Actions to be Taken when a Child / Young Person is Subject to a Threat to Life (March 2020)*.

1.5 **Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

## 2.0 Child abuse: Categories and Definitions:

The term child abuse includes physical abuse, neglect (including emotional neglect), continued ill-treatment and sexual abuse. ‘Child abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the Internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.’ (NSPCC 2014 *How safe are our children?*)

2.1 Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

2.2 Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. 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. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. Bullying, including cyber-bullying and harassment via social media, constitutes emotional abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

2.3 Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or for that of others. It may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, including touching. It may include non-conduct activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via e-technology. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by males, females and other children.

2.4 Neglect is the failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, hygiene, supervision, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

2.5 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 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.

2.6 Other forms of abuse include:

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse. This involves coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour, including taking advantage of the individual's capacity to give informed consent.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse in which a child/young person is exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person. Fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor.

'Sexting', the sending of sexually explicit text or images, may also constitute sexual abuse.

Grooming – actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending a child or young person in order to abuse them – is often associated with CSE, but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. It may occur face to face or online.

Forced Marriage is one conducted without the consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls.

Threat to life of a young person or child by a paramilitary group or organisation.

2.7 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.

2.8 A young person whose own behaviours, such as alcohol consumption or consumption of illegal drugs, whilst placing them at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse as defined for the purposes of these Procedures. If the young person has achieved sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up his own mind, then the decision to initiate child protection action, or disciplinary procedures, in such cases is a matter for professional judgment and each case should be considered individually. The criminal aspects of the case will be dealt with by the police.

Some possible signs of abuse are included in Appendix 1a of this policy. Further guidance on signs and symptoms of child abuse are to be found in Appendix 2 of the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### **3.0 The role of the Curriculum regarding Safeguarding/Child Protection:**

3.1 The school provides within its curriculum, elements which support students in considering their physical and emotional well-being, developing resilience and in learning to manage their general interests and personal relationships, including their use of social networking sites and mobile technology. With regard to helping to prevent child abuse the school contributes by:

- (a) having an ongoing programme of Personal, Social and Health Education, which includes appropriate coverage of self-protection and resilience building skills/strategies using resources like: *The School Health Alcohol Reduction* programme; the *Mood Matters* programme; the *Love Matters* programme and promoting involvement in activities to promote student safety for example involvement in anti-bullying week and promoting appropriate use of social media.
- (b) enabling young people to develop realistic and responsible attitudes towards the responsibilities of adult life.

### **4.0 Responsibility of Teachers and other Staff:**

4.1 Staff who come into contact with children and young people have a duty to help protect them from abuse or the risk of abuse, although the primary responsibility for the protection of children from abuse rests with parents and Social Services. Staff should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations including the reporting of

offences; section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence and this includes crimes against children and young people.

- 4.2 When staff see signs which cause them concern, they may have the opportunity to talk to the child with tact and sympathy to seek clarification. Where a classroom assistant or some other member of non-teaching staff sees such signs, he/she should immediately bring them to the attention of the class teacher or Designated Teacher, who may then seek clarification.

Staff should not inquire too deeply or carry out an examination. Staff should not ask the child leading questions as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas in the child's mind. Staff should say, 'Tell me what has happened, rather than, 'Did they do X to you?'. Staff should listen actively to the child, to enable them to record a detailed account as soon as possible afterwards. Staff MUST NOT ask the child to write an account of their disclosure. If the child's verbal responses do not dispel suspicion, or if it is impossible to talk to the child, then staff must make their concerns known to the Designated Teacher as soon as possible, or in her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher must be informed.

In the case of a teacher who has concerns about a student that they teach from another school within the Lecale Area Learning Community, they should report the concern to the Designated Teacher within their own school, who will bring it to the attention of the Designated Teacher in the appropriate school. The procedure, Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record, Refer, should, as in all such cases, be employed here – see Appendix 2.

If a substitute teacher has concerns about a child in the school, he/she must also report these concerns to the Designated Teacher. Teachers must complete the Safeguarding/Child Protection Record of Concern Form (Appendix 2c) as soon as possible and within 24 hours after informing the Designated Teacher of a concern and give the completed form to her; both the teacher concerned and DT will sign and date the concern to confirm the information is accurate. Visiting or substitute teachers/coaches/volunteers will be advised of school procedures regarding safeguarding/child protection (see Appendices 2b and 2c).

If a child or young person displays harmful sexualized behaviour, staff should also bring this to the attention of the designated teacher – see Appendix 1b for a definition of harmful sexualized behavior and an assessment checklist to evaluate individual incidents. Also, although such cases may be uncommon in this area, staff must also report to the Designated Teacher any concerns they may have of a young person being subject to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or Forced Marriage.

- 4.3 On occasion a young person may express suicidal thoughts or intentions to adults they trust. Any such expression should be taken seriously and acted upon. They may express suicidal ideation to their peers; it is important that students are encouraged to pass this information to a trusted adult who can take the necessary steps to ensure that the young person is kept safe.

A pupil at risk – immediate reaction: The immediate reaction by a member of staff to the alert that a student is in distress, is crucial to the protection of the young person. It is therefore important that staff consider in advance how they would react in such a situation. In every situation the two essential elements are: 1. To respond with empathy and in a non-judgmental way to the young person in need and 2. To follow usual child protection and safeguarding procedures, noted above, and to make appropriate referrals

to ensure the young person's safety, because self-harm and expressions of suicidal thoughts are safeguarding issues.

The young person in distress should be supervised closely and delivered to the care of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, her deputy, or appropriate alternative. Sometimes it is more helpful for the teacher to whom the young person expressed their distress to be the one who stays with them, while the Designated Teacher makes arrangements to safeguard the child. See appendix 2D for advice on how to respond to a distressed student and safeguarding this student.

- 4.4 Where a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect abuse or risk of abuse, then they should act in accordance with the procedures outlined in Appendices 3 or 4, or in the case of an emergency situation, Appendix 14.
- 4.5 Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, staff will ensure our own child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place. When our pupils attend off-site activities, we will check that effective child protection and safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- 4.6 The issue of safeguarding systems should be a regular agenda item at meetings between the school management and *Interserve/Autograph* and also at meetings of the Board of Governors.

## **5.0 Procedures for Reporting Suspected Abuse:**

- 5.1 Where a member of staff, including a member of Interserve staff, suspects a case of child abuse, or where an allegation has been made by a student or a third party, he/she must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher, or in his absence the Designated Teacher must be informed.
- 5.2 The Designated Teacher will consult with the principal and together they will agree the subsequent action and who will undertake it. This will normally be the Designated Teacher.
- 5.3 In order to ensure the protection of the child and the member of staff, it is essential, that where concern is expressed about suspected child abuse, a detailed written record is kept by the Designated Teacher.
- 5.4 The Designated Teacher may seek advice from a Designated Officer for child protection/safeguarding at the Education Authority and/or local Social Services.
- 5.5 When the decision to refer is made, the Designated Teacher should contact Social Services Gateway (0300 1000 300 or out of hours 028 9056 5444) by telephone and then forward, by email or post, the standard referral form – UNOCINI – see Appendix 6. This form should be copied to the Designated Officer for child protection in the Education Authority.
- 5.6 The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher will take the lead from Social Services with regard to the time frame used for informing parents or those with

parental responsibility. (See Appendix 13 – Parental Responsibility).

- 5.7 The Designated Teacher should make a record of all the discussions held and actions taken within **24 hours** of a referral.
- 5.8 If an acknowledgement of the referral is not received from social services within **5 working days**, then the Designated Teacher should follow this up.
- 5.9 After referral, schools and EA staff will co-operate with the child protection investigation. This can involve providing factual information about the pupil for the purposes of the multi-agency assessment of risk and the Child Protection Plan. School staff may be invited to contribute to a Child Protection Case Conference, if appropriate.
- 5.10 In the event of suspected cases of child abuse in the school involving a member of staff, the concerned person should immediately express their concern to the Designated Teacher, to the Principal or to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. See Appendix 4.
- 5.11 Teachers and other staff may receive information on suspected child abuse from a variety of sources, sometimes anonymously. Where such secondary evidence is obtained, those providing the information should be advised that they also have a responsibility to contact the appropriate Social Services Office. Appendices 2, 3 and 4 contain detailed guidance and information on reporting instances of suspected abuse.

## **6.0 Confidentiality:**

- 6.1 There is great sensitivity surrounding this issue, and teachers and staff should not treat the disclosure of confidential information lightly. Information is only shared with staff who require access to it, in order to work in a safe and informed way with the young person and the family. All staff should understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and the consequences of any breach.
- 6.2 Child abuse is a criminal offence, and therefore cases of suspected abuse must be investigated by the statutory authorities. Given the necessity of ensuring the immediate protection of the child, and the fact that a crime may have been committed, confidentiality must be subordinate to the need to protect the interests of the child.

## **7.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team:**

### **7.01 The Role of the Designated Teacher – Mrs R Savage (Vice Principal):**

- Responsible for taking the lead in the development of the school's safeguarding/child protection policy and ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy or summary of this every two years;

- Responsible for making the referrals to Social Services via Gateway or UNOCINI, and/or PSNI Care Team;
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans;
- Responsible for notifying an EA Designated Officer when the need arises;
- Responsible for discussing child protection concerns of all staff and keeping all records – see Appendix 5;
- Responsible for promoting a child protection ethos within the school and acting as a source of support and expertise to the school community;
- Maintaining a current awareness of early interventions and supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs;
- Ensures the safeguarding team has identified key safeguarding lessons from the curriculum to be delivered at each key stage;
- Responsible for the induction and training of all teaching and non-teaching staff within the school on matters of safeguarding and child protection and for ensuring her and the DDT's attendance at training and training updates as specified by the Department of Education;
- Responsible for liaising with designated teachers from partner schools, if and when the need arises;
- Responsible for forwarding school's Child Protection records on a student to his/her new schools in the event of student leaving;
- Responsible for liaising with staff members from *Interserve* and *Autograph* with responsibility for child protection;
- Responsible for keeping the school principal informed;
- Responsible for ensuring that the Chair of the Board of Governors, Dr Aidan Hamill, is informed of matters relating to safeguarding and child protection and for liaising with the designated member of the Board of Governors, for safeguarding and child protection, Mrs Simone Prenter;
- Responsible for notifying the Chair of the Board of Governors, if a complaint is received against the Principal;
- Responsible for preparing reports on safeguarding and child protection matters for meetings of the BoG and for producing an annual written report to governors regarding child protection issues (details of child protection training, statistics in relation to child protection concerns – e.g. the number of referrals to social services, the number of children on the child protection register, the number of complaints against staff, any safeguarding /child protection initiatives delivered as part of the

school's preventative curriculum, policy reviews undertaken). All reports are anonymized in keeping with the principle of confidentiality.

- The Deputy Designated Teacher is Ms K McLoughlin (Head of Pastoral Care). Her role demands that she works cooperatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities. In the absence of the designated person, she carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils and will assume all of the functions above.

## **7.02 The Role of the Board of Governors:**

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

- The Chairperson ensures that there is a Designated Teacher for child protection and safeguarding and that there is a designated member of the Board of Governors with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Both the Chair and the named governor undertake full CPSS training and the named governor takes the lead in child protection and governance arrangements, connects with DT and advises the governors on: the role of the designated teachers; the content of child safeguarding and protection policies; the content of a code of conduct for adults within the school; the content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teacher's Report; recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.
- Ensures that there is a child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures that are consistent with requirements of the Department of Education, reviewed annually and made available to parents;
- Ensures procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the principal, in which case the Chair assumes lead responsibility;
- Ensures child protection records are kept and for signing and dating the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries;
- Ensures compliance with legislation and policy and recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate vetting in line with DE circular 2012/19;
- Ensures a training strategy that results in the Board of Governors, all staff, including the principal, receiving child protection and safeguarding training, with refresher training as appropriate;
- Ensures arrangements are in place for all temporary staff and volunteers to be made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and safeguarding;
- Ensures that Child Protection is a standing agenda item at meetings of BoG.

## **7.03 The Role of the Principal: Mr Joe McCann**

The Principal, as the secretary to the Board of Governors, will assist the Board of Governors to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties.

The Principal:

- Keeps the governors informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from the Department of Education is shared promptly;
- Ensures termly inclusion of Child Protection activities at meetings of the Board of Governors;
- Ensures that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff and that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme;
- Ensures the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher posts and allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the Designated Teacher and Deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings;
- Ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in line with procedures;
- Ensures that pupils' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum;
- Takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff;
- Attends training and updates training as directed by Department of Education;
- Ensures that parents and pupils receives a copy or summary of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

#### **7.04 Meetings of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team**

The Chair of the BoG, the Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection, the Principal, the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher form the Safeguarding Team. This ensures effective coordination and cooperation between the key individuals responsible for safeguarding throughout the school and ensures support for the DT/DDT. The team may co-opt other members as required to address specific issues, for example the SENCO, Head of Year etc. The team reviews child protection and safeguarding practices annually.

Information will be shared with relevant members of the Board of Governors at meetings of the Board of Governors or when necessary.

#### **8.0 Child Protection Records Management:**

8.1 Staff who receive information about children, about whom there are concerns, and their families, must share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. The DT should record who information is shared with, when, and the reasons for this. All staff should understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and the consequences of any breach. Subject to the provisions of data protection legislation, the disclosure of confidential information is allowed when necessary to protect or safeguard a child. Conducting a Data Protection Impact Assessment may assist when assessing the risks before any sharing takes place.

8.2 Records of all child protection information, showing dates, events and action taken, are kept under secure conditions, in a locked cabinet by the DT and Principal, in the Principal's office. The keys to the cabinet are not removed from the premises and are stored securely in a key safe. The cabinet is accessible only to the Principal and the DT and DDT as necessary. The cabinet is not accessible to anyone else, including administration staff, the ETI or members of the Board of Governors. However, the ETI will seek assurance that child protection records are held securely and in a confidential manner. The DT ensures each Note of Concern and UNOCINI documents are stored in the young person's Child Protection File and he supplements it with all other records created and acquired as the management of the concern progresses. This will include chronology of events, any notes initially recorded, records of discussions, telephone calls, correspondence with other agencies, referral forms, formal plans, risk assessments/ management plans/individual safety and support plans, school reports to interagency meetings, minutes of any related interagency meetings. Any significant change or event which impacts on the child's welfare must also be included in this file and noted on chronology, even if it seems to be contradictory. As a guideline the following may be relevant: change of circumstance; issues for the child; family issues; professional involvement. The child's Educational Record is kept with those of other students, but is marked with a yellow sticker, to indicate the presence of a separate confidential file. The Principal's Secretary and School Secretary are aware of this. Records can be stored electronically on the school's C2k system in one of the 10 private folders which can only be accessed by the principal, DT and DDT.

8.3 The Principal keeps, under secure conditions, in the same cabinet as noted above, a 'hard-backed book' in which will be recorded, complaints made against staff or concerns raised regarding staff. This book will be available for inspection by ETI; they will check that the book is completed and signed off annually by the Chair of the Board of Governors. The Chair will sign and date the book even if there have been no entries. Where a complaint has been found to be without foundation, the entry is struck through with an explanation entered. However, given the number of recent historical allegations, unless the member of staff is completely exonerated, the record should be retained indefinitely. When the member of staff retires, leaves or changes post, advice should be sought from the employing authority and/or the Information Commissioner's Office. The record on the young person's file should be noted with the outcome of the investigation and should stand until the child D.O.B. + 30 years.

- 8.4 Child Protection Records are not removed from the school premises except when taken to a case planning meeting, in respect of the child, or on foot of a court order. If information needs to be taken out of the school, it is transported securely and a record is kept of when it was removed, by whom, for what purpose, and when it was returned.
- 8.5 Under current regulations, Boards of Governors are required to make arrangements to transfer a formal record of a student's academic achievements, other skills and abilities and progress within 15 school days of a student transferring schools. Although the requirement does not include the transfer of child protection records, where there have been or are current concerns, the school should consider what information should be shared with the new school. Any information deemed appropriate, will be transferred by the school's DT to the DT of the receiving school, in the most secure and appropriate manner, to minimize the risk of any data breach. When a child on whom the school holds safeguarding or child protection information leaves the school and the school are unaware of the new school, they must notify the Education Welfare Service. Social Services must also be informed immediately if the child has a Child Protection Plan or is a Looked After Child. The school must retain the child's child protection records and forward the relevant information to the receiving school, when the child has been traced.
- 8.6 When a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school, the DT will inform the receiving school immediately, that his/her name is on the Register, discuss concerns with the DT in the new school and pass on contact details for the social worker. The school will then destroy all child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences, and should inform the child's Case Co-ordinator in Social Services. The remaining child protection record should be copied to the new school. Advice on these matters can be sought from the CPSSS.
- 8.7 When a pupil leaves the school or child protection concerns cease to be current or ongoing, and records cease to be of active use, other than for reference purposes, the young person's individual Child Protection file should be closed. The DT should consult the School's Disposal of Records Schedule, review the file and mark the front cover of the file indicating the date on which the file can be destroyed. See Appendix 7.

## **9.0 Worries and Complaints Procedures:**

- 9.1 Students: The school operates a 2 stage complaints procedure for use by all students. Stage 1 is informal. Stage 2 is formal and the complaint should be in writing. See Appendix 9.
- 9.2 Parents: As part of overall pastoral care provision, parents are encouraged and expected to contact the school if they have any worries about any aspect of their child's experiences or education. This is especially important where parents have a concern

about their child's safety. Parents receive details, at least every two years, of the procedure they should follow to raise a concern/make a complaint. See Appendix 8.

- 9.3 Appendices 8, 8A and 9 outline how students and parents can process their complaints and worries. Appendix 8a is on display on notice boards throughout the school. Each year the designated teacher will inform parents that this notice has been placed on display and that if a concern is reported to the school then the relevant authorities must be informed.
- 9.4 The Designated Teacher will also inform parents/guardians that it is their responsibility to inform the school if there is any change as to who has responsibility for a child attending this school. Such information will be recorded in the Student's Record on Sims.Net.

## **10.0 Staff Training:**

- 10.1 The school recognises the need for appropriate in-service training for those implementing Child Protection procedures, by arranging access to multi-agency training for the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher, Principal and Board of Governors. The Principal, DT and DDT will attend training as direct by DE Guidance. The DT and DDT will cascade training to the whole school, at a minimum every two years. Child Protection Training for School Governors has three strands: initial Child Protection Awareness Training as part of the induction programme for all new governors; Child Protection Training from the CPSS for the Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection in order that they can assist the full Board of Governors with their child protection governance (this should be completed every term of office/every four years); training on recruitment, selection and vetting which incorporates child protection legislation and DE guidance for all governors who will be sitting on interview or teacher appointment panels.
- 10.2 The school includes coverage of safeguarding/child protection procedures in the induction programme for all new teachers and ancillary staff.
- 10.3 The school will consult with Education Authority who have the statutory duty to provide such training and guidance.
- 10.4 The Designated Teacher will arrange in-school refresher training on safeguarding/child protection for all members of staff, including *Interserve* and *Autograph* staff, at the beginning of each school year.

## **11.0 Liability for Staff:**

- 11.1 Any teacher or other member of staff who complies with procedures in making a report of suspected child abuse is acting within the course of his/her employment and in such circumstances, where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the support of the school and will not be legally or financially liable.

## **12.0 Allegations Against School Staff:**

12.1 Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures detailed in DE Circular 2015/13 are followed.

The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed and in all decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration. From the outset, a Lead Individual, the Principal or designated senior member of staff, will be identified to manage the handling of the allegation. The accusation will be investigated immediately and may result, after consultation with the Board of Governors, in precautionary suspension. All allegations of a child abuse nature must be recorded in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints Book. The Principal and Board of Governors have a duty of care to the staff of the school and will aim to ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

12.2 Where an accusation has been made against a member of *Interserve* and *Autograph* staff, the Designated Teacher will liaise with the designated person in *Interserve* and *Autograph* for Child Protection and, in consultation with the school, decisions will be made regarding precautionary suspension.

12.3 Appendix 10 sets out a precautionary Code of Conduct for staff to follow in order to minimize the risk of false accusation. The central aim of this is to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people which is the responsibility of all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. In meeting this staff should work towards a culture of mutual trust and respect in school through which the best interests of the young people entrusted to their care is paramount. Naturally implicit in this is the assumption that the conduct of school staff towards their pupils must be above reproach.

### **13.0 Appointment of Staff**

All newly appointed staff, including voluntary staff, will sign a declaration with regards to disclosure of criminal background of persons with access to children. This declaration is accompanied by a vetting procedure as per Department of Education 1990/28 which is carried out with PSNI Criminal Records Office. DE Guidance September 2012 is adhered to; DE Circular 2013/01 (updated September 2015) sets out vetting requirements for schools and these are followed. In brief, the following groups must have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) from AccessNI before taking up post:

- All new paid teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Examination invigilators;
- Private contracted transport providers – named drivers.

Substitute teachers will be employed only if they are on the NI Substitute Teachers' Register.

Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an EDC. Those who work under supervision are not required to have an EDC, and the school will determine whether the level of supervision meets the statutory standard set out in DE Circular 2012/19. The school ensures that volunteers e.g. coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc. have the necessary clearances in place.

All staff will be informed of the staff Code of Conduct (see Appendix 10).

#### **14.0 Abuse of Trust:**

The relationship between a member of staff and a student is one of trust. The staff member is in a position of power and influence over the student by virtue of his/her work. It is vital for all staff, in such positions of trust, to understand the power they have over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. Appendix 11 sets out in more detail, guidelines and procedures for preventing Abuse of Trust.

#### **15.0 Restraining Students - Safe Handling:**

15.1 On rare occasions, teaching or support staff may have to, in carrying out their responsibilities, use reasonable force to restrain or control a student. Reasonable force can be used to prevent a student from committing an offence, causing personal injury to or damage to the property of any person (including the student himself).

15.2 Guidelines on use of reasonable force:

- Before intervening physically, other strategies should have been used;
- The student should be told to stop his/her behaviour and what is going to happen if he/she does not;
- Staff member should continue to talk to the student throughout and make it clear that physical contact will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
- Staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or that they are acting to punish the student;
- Depending on the size of the student, it might not be prudent for a member of staff to intervene (except in an emergency) without the help of a colleague;
- Examples of reasonable force might involve staff physically interposing between students, blocking a student's path, holding, pushing, pulling, leading a student by the arm, placing a hand in the centre of back.
- Holding a student round the neck or by the collar, slapping, punching or using any implement, throwing any object at the student, or twisting or forcing limbs can **NEVER** be justified.

#### **16.0 Visitors to St. Patrick's:**

All visitors to St Patrick's Grammar School, are required to report to Reception. Visitors passing beyond the Reception area will have their details recorded at Reception and identity badges will be issued. Visitors should, if appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school and where possible, be escorted by a member of staff. Access to pupils will be restricted to the purpose of their visit.

Visitors on business with Interserve, will gain access through the entrance designated by *Interserve* and will be accompanied by a member of *Interserve*, who will be responsible for the issue of identification badges. In the event of there being no response from the *Interserve* office, visitors will go to Reception, where they will remain while Reception staff contact *Interserve* who will then accompany the visitor. If delivering goods or carrying out building maintenance or repair tasks, their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

## **17.0 Students on Work Experience:**

Health and Social Care Programmes will require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate for pupils on long term placement and may be required for pupils on work experience and shadowing placements. Schools should apply through their AccessNI Registered body in advance.

Students coming into the school on work experience do not require AccessNI clearance if they are fully supervised by school staff. The normal child protection induction processes should apply.

## **18.0 Use of CCTV:**

There are CCTV cameras placed throughout the school. Recorded CCTV will be kept for no more than sixty days. CCTV recording can only be viewed by the Principal, the Vice-Principal and Assistant Principals. Heads of School, Heads of Year and Form Teachers may view CCTV recorded footage, accompanied by one of the aforementioned. The school's use of CCTV recordings will work in tandem with Interserve's Policy on Safeguarding Children.

## **19.0 Links with Social Services:**

- 19.1 Role of Social Services Departments. Social Services have a statutory duty to investigate any case where they receive information suggesting that a young person may be in need of care, protection or control, unless satisfied that such enquiries are unnecessary. They also have a lead role in coordinating the work of all the agencies and professionals concerned with the child's family.
- 19.2 The Case Conference: When there is a suspicion that a child has been abused, Social Services will convene a multi-disciplinary Case Conference. If requested, the school may send a written report to the Social Services Officer, or have someone attend the Conference itself. Minutes of Case Conferences are forwarded to the principal who files them with the other items in the student's file (see 8.2). The Designated Teacher will keep a copy in a student's Child Protection File, in the locked cabinet in the principal's office. Teachers will be informed by the Designated Teacher on a need to know basis. If the student transfers to another school, the school's records regarding child protection are forwarded to that school and other related materials e.g. minutes of case conferences, will be destroyed. Minutes should be destroyed when the child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register.
- 19.3 Coordination of Action by Education and Social Services: Social Services will inform the school in writing about any child whose name has been included on the Child Protection Register, including whether the child is in the care of the Board and what information has been made known to the parents about allegations or suspicions of abuse. The school will be aware of such children in respect of their attendance record, development, and any cause for further concern. A social worker will liaise with teachers about the child's progress.

19.4 When a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register the school will be informed in writing by Social Services.

19.5 The steps in the Child Protection Process are set out in Appendix 12.

**20.0 Conclusion:**

20.1 The Anti-Bullying Policy, Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, E-Safety Policy, the Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy and The Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust (Appendix 11) are part of the school's provision for child protection.

20.2 This policy will be reviewed annually by Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors of St. Patrick's Grammar School (Appendix 15).

## SOME POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

### **Indicators of abuse – what you might see**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Teacher

Remember, it is your responsibility to report your concerns. It is not your responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- look unkempt and uncared for;
- change their eating habits;
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- appear fearful;
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- self-harm;
- frequently miss school or arrive late;
- show signs of not wanting to go home;
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn;
- challenge authority;
- become disinterested in their school work;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol;
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the Designated Teacher to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

**WHAT IS HARMFUL SEXUALISED BEHAVIOUR AND HOW SHOULD STAFF RESPOND? (Taken from DE Circular 2016/05)**

**What is harmful sexualised behaviour?**

1. Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to notice behaviours that give cause for concern.
  
2. It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours – these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'harmful'.

**Healthy Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:**

- ❖ Mutual
  - ❖ Consensual
  - ❖ Exploratory and age appropriate
  - ❖ Not intended to cause harm
  - ❖ Fun / humorous
  - ❖ Without power differentials
- 
3. Healthy sexual behaviour has generally no need for intervention however there may be instances when interventions are applied, for example, it is not appropriate when displayed in school or during school activities. This may therefore be an opportune time for teachers to positively reinforce appropriate behaviour, drawing on the recently issued guidance issued by the Department on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) – see the school's RSE policy.

**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
- 
4. 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 CPSSS may be required. The CPSSS 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.
5. Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and schools should refer to their own child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSSS – see the paragraph on 'Advice and Support', below.
6. Early therapeutic intervention has a high success rate and few children and young people will continue to engage in harmful sexualised behaviour.

### **Assessment Checklist**

7. An Assessment Checklist can be used to evaluate individual incidents, or a series of incidents, retrospectively and are a guide for decision making about level of concern/ intervention. There are 8 factors, drawn from the AIM Project (Assessment, Intervention, Moving On) guidelines, which should be considered. Where only limited information is available, the checklist should provide a prompt for the information that needs to be gathered.

#### Assessment Factors:

- ❖ The type of sexual behaviour
- ❖ The context of the behaviour
- ❖ The young person's response when challenged about their behaviour
- ❖ The reaction/response of others
- ❖ The relationship between the children / young people / targeted adult
- ❖ The persistence and frequency of the behaviour
- ❖ Any other behavioural problems; and
- ❖ Background information known

### **General Principles**

8. Whether a child is responsible for harmful sexualised behaviour, is a victim of sexual abuse, or both, it is important to apply principles that remain child centred. Harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children must be recognised as damaging to both the victim and the child who engages in the abusive behaviour. A child who engages in abuse of this kind may be suffering, or be at risk of, significant harm and may also be in need of protection. Some children who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour are likely to have

significant emotional and behavioural difficulties and may have experienced some form of abuse themselves in the past.

9. Nonetheless, in the balance of what is in the child's best interests, the needs of the victim must be given priority; and nothing should be done which causes the victim further harm. The needs of children and young people who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour towards others should be considered separately from the needs of their victims.
10. Schools should be conscious of the fact that it is not appropriate to refer to children or young people displaying harmful sexualised behaviour using such terms as 'sexually aggressive', 'sexually precocious' or 'child perpetrators'.
11. It must also be borne in mind that harmful sexualised behaviour is primarily a child protection concern and should **not** be addressed through the school discipline procedures.

## WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT COMPLAINS OF ABUSE

### 1. CLASS TEACHER

#### 1 RECEIVE:

- listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief;
- accept what is said;
- take notes.

#### 2 REASSURE:

- reassure the student, but only so far as is honest and reliable - don't make promises you may not be able to keep, like, "I'll stay with you" or "Everything will be all right now";
- don't promise confidentiality - you have a duty to refer;
- do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it - you could say: "You're not to blame"; "You're not alone. We have experience of dealing with this."

#### 3 REACT:

- react to the student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't 'interrogate' for full details;
- do not ask 'leading' questions, for example, "What did he/she do next?" (this assumes he/she did something!). Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court;
- do ask open questions, like, "Anything else to tell me?". "Yes?", "And?";
- do not criticise the perpetrator: the pupil may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible;
- do not ask the student to repeat it all for another member of staff or to write a account or summary;
- explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.

#### 4 RECORD:

- make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible, as accurately as possible;
- do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court;
- record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behavior, and the words used by the student. If the child uses sexual "pet" words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into "proper" words;
- draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising;
- record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

#### 5 REFER:

- follow school guidelines and report immediately to Designated Teacher.

#### 6 RELAX:

- try to get some support for yourself if you need it.

## **Visiting Staff Safeguarding/Child Protection information leaflet**

### **WELCOME to St. Patrick's Grammar School**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. While working in our school we expect you to take care of our pupils and follow our procedures.

---

### **Key facts about child abuse**

---

Abuse and neglect can happen to any child, boy or girl, of any race, culture, ethnicity or sexuality. Disabled children and children with SEN are particularly vulnerable.

Many children are unable to disclose what is happening to them and rely on us to interpret their behaviour and spot signs of abuse.

A pupil may:

- have a bruise, burn or injury that seems suspicious
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- be unnaturally passive or withdrawn
- be unpredictable and challenging
- seem anxious, fearful or distressed
- provide an unlikely explanation for their injury or their behaviour.

If you are concerned for a child's health, welfare or safety, in any way, you must speak to the Designated Teacher, Mrs R Savage or, in her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher, Ms K McLoughlin, or a senior member of staff before you leave the school site.

Do not question the student or try to secure evidence. Your responsibility is to report your concern, not to investigate.

If a student tells you something that suggests they are at risk of harm, allow them to tell you as much as they wish and let them know that you must pass the information on to the Designated Teacher.

If you become concerned about a student's immediate safety, notify the nearest member of staff and tell them why you are concerned.

You should complete a welfare concern form (attached) and hand it to the Designated Teacher or a senior member of staff before you leave the school site. Ask a senior member of staff if you would like help to complete the form. If you have any questions or wish to see our safeguarding/child protection policy, please contact the Designated Teacher.

PROFORMA

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: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2D

### **Responding to a distressed student:**

When a child or young person is emotionally distressed it can sometimes feel overwhelming to think about what to say or do. Being there to listen and talk can make a difference. As a teacher it is important to:

**Listen.** It can be very difficult for a young person to disclose distress so it is essential that he/she is given time and attention.

**Take it seriously.** Disclosures of distress should never be minimised. The young person should be taken seriously but the adult should not express alarm. The young person needs to feel safe and have confidence in adults.

**Accept the possibility of suicidal thoughts.** These feelings are real and should not be dismissed.

**Don't promise confidentiality.** Ensure that the young person knows that the information will be handled sensitively but that it must be shared with others to safeguard them.

**Show a caring attitude.** It is acceptable to express care for the young person and a commitment to their wellbeing.

**Be open.** If suicidal intent is suspected it is important to ask the young person whether they are thinking of harming themselves and if they have made any plans. This gives the young person permission to be completely honest and, therefore, be able to seek help.

**Supervise closely.** Keep the child/young person with you until you can deliver them to the care of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative). Sometimes it is more helpful for the teacher to whom the young person expressed their distress to be the one who stays with them while the Designated Teacher makes arrangements to safeguard the child.

### **Safeguarding the student**

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative) should safeguard the young person by doing the following:

**Continue to supervise closely.** The student should not be left unsupervised at this stage.

**Contact parents/guardians/carers.** Parents/guardians/carers should be advised of the content of the disclosure, the school's concern and asked to take the child or young person to the GP or Out of Hours Service requesting an 'emergency mental state assessment' and potential referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

**Safely hand over the young person into the care of parents/guardians/ carers.** Parents should be advised to supervise very closely.<sup>28</sup>

**If the above is not possible...** If the school cannot safely deliver the child into the care of parents/guardians/carers, or have concerns that appropriate support will not be sought/provided, it is possible for school staff to seek appropriate medical advice acting in *loco parentis*. This would be the exception rather than the rule however.

**Follow-up.** The Designated Teacher (or other member of staff) should remain in sensitive contact with parents/guardians/carers and plan to support the young person upon return to school. In planning to support the young person the school may wish to seek medical/psychiatric advice in this regard.

**Support for staff and/or peers.** It is important that individuals who are involved in this type of situation should be carefully supported within the school.

**Explain to the pupil what will happen next.** Make it clear that someone will stay with them and that you are making every effort to find appropriate help. Explain where they are going, who is going with them and what you are hoping to achieve for them. Please note that the above advice has been developed in partnership with the DHSSPS, PHA and school communities.

### **Safeguarding Action Checklist**

The Designated Teacher/Safeguarding Team may find the following checklist useful in helping to ensure that everything possible has been done to help the student.

#### **If there is a disclosure or strong suspicion of suicidal intent, ensure that:**

1. The student is listened to and supported in the immediate term (e.g. is with a trusted member of staff).
2. Designated pastoral care teacher is informed.
3. Parents/guardians/carers are informed. How was this done – note below:
4. Parent/guardian/carer comes to the school and the student leaves in their care. The parent/guardian/carer is advised to monitor the young person closely.

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

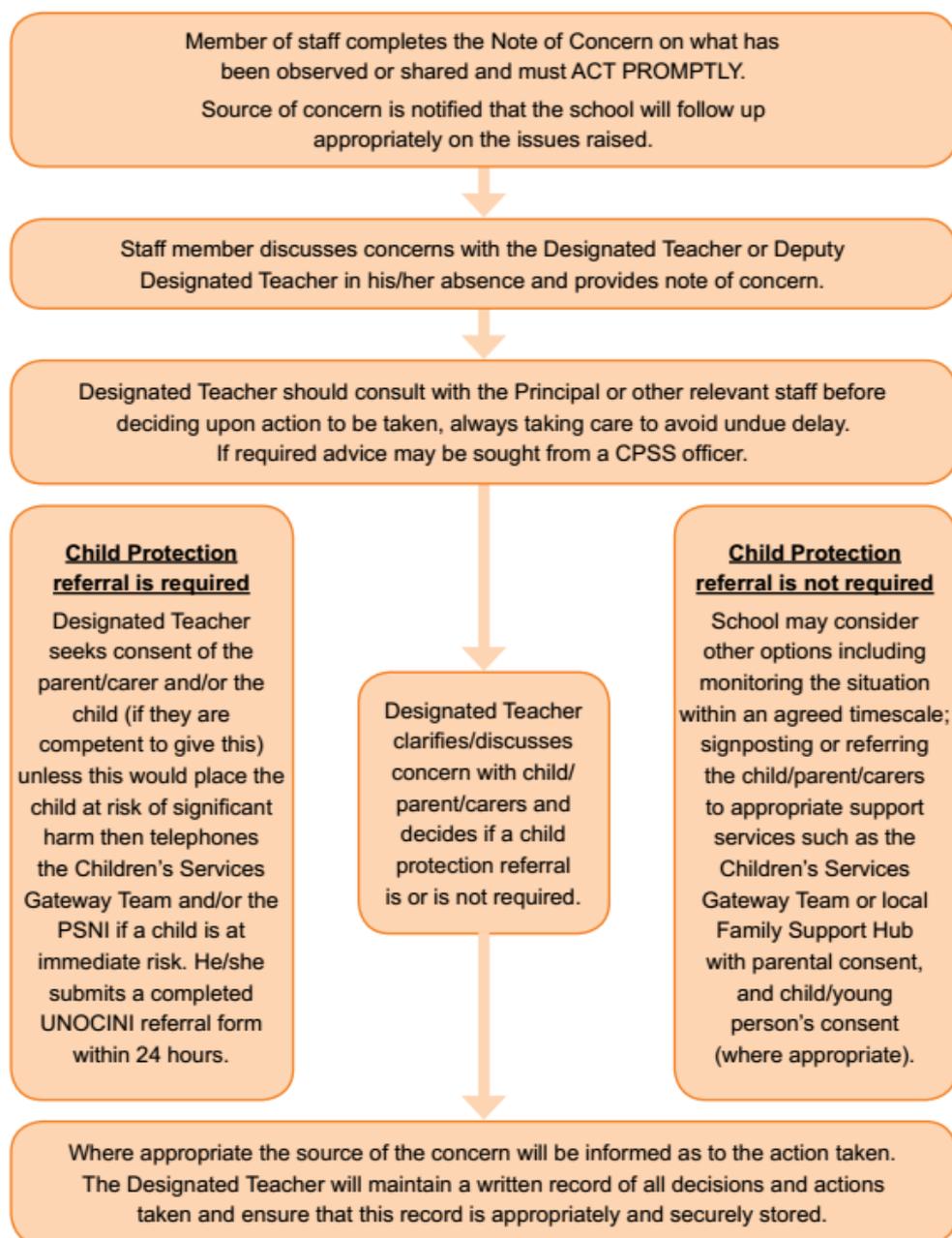
Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Parent/guardian/carer advised to take student to the GP and ask for a mental state assessment and appropriate action. (Concerns around negligence regarding a child's mental health needs should be followed up through the normal safeguarding procedures.)
6. School sends a follow-up letter to parents, detailing concerns, actions taken and advice given.

7. The Designated Teacher (or appropriate alternative) follows up with parent/guardian/carer within a short time frame. This should be as soon as possible but must be on the same day the incident has occurred.
8. Longer term support is sought for the young person as appropriate.
9. Teachers' support needs are identified and action taken if appropriate.

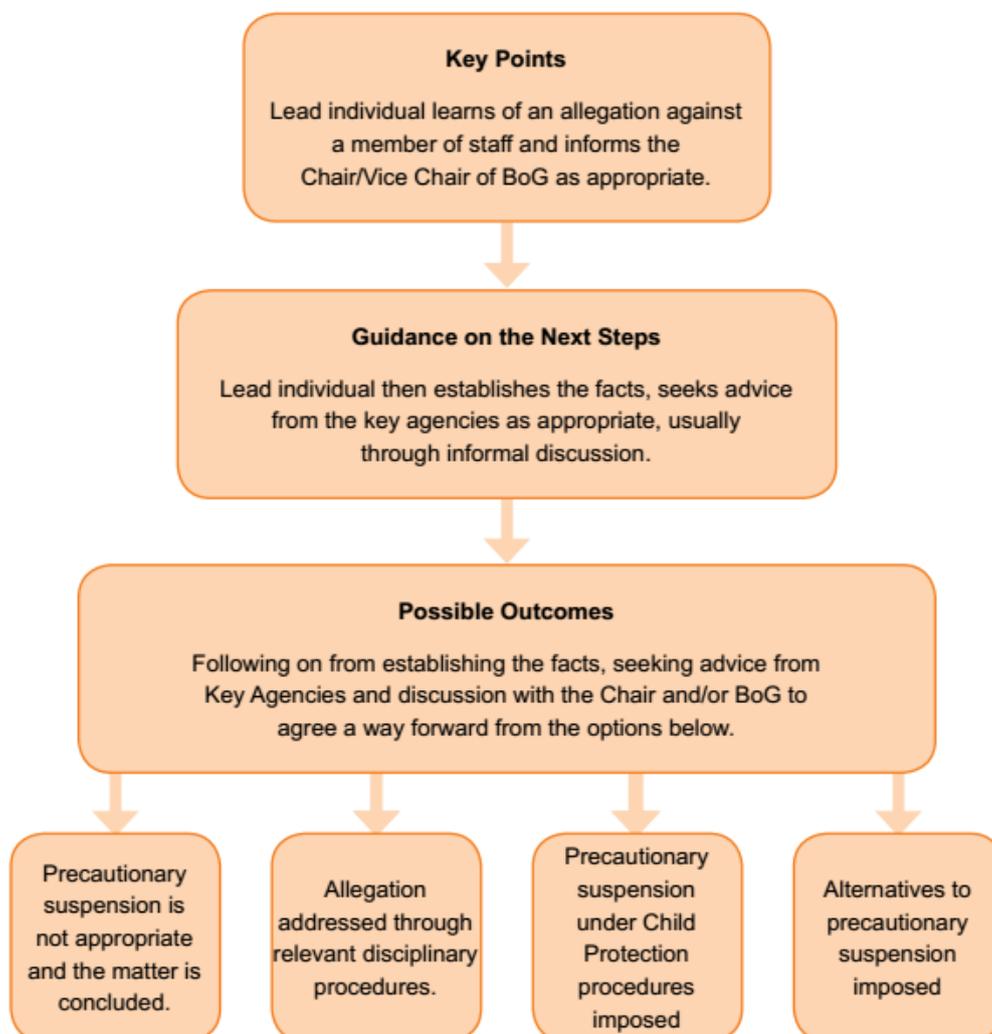
**Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff<sup>7,8</sup>**



7 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.

8 DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools.

### Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff<sup>9,10</sup>



9 DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools.

10 As noted previously a *Lead Individual* to manage the handling of an allegation should be identified from the outset, normally the Principal or a designated senior member of staff.

**ST PATRICK'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**REPORT ON SUSPECTED CASE OF CHILD ABUSE**

(For completion by Designated Teacher)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Form Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of Report (outlining incident and date): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please use reverse side for  
further details if necessary

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Report forwarded to Principal on \_\_\_\_\_

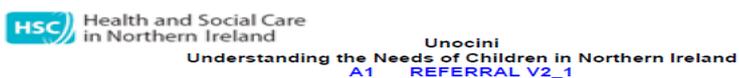
\*UNOCINI forwarded to Social Services on \_\_\_\_\_

(\* if applicable)

Follow up phone call to Social Services Gateway by emailing/posting completed UNOCINI to  
 South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust  
 Stewartstown Road Health Centre  
 212 Stewartstown Road  
 Dunmurry  
 Belfast  
 BT17 OFG

Copy of UNOCINI to be sent to Designated Officer for Child Protection at SEELB

E-Copy of UNOCINI also available to Principal and Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher.



Section 1: Child or Young Person's Details		
Surname:		ID No.
Forename:		
Known As:		HCN:
Address:		Previous Address:
Postcode:		Previous Postcode:
Telephone No:		Locality:
Mobile No:		Gender:
Date of Birth:		GP Tel No:
GP Name:		GP Email Address:
GP Address:		
GP Postcode:		
School Name:		School Tel No:
School Address:		School Postcode:
Does the Child have a Disability? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If Yes, What Disability: (& source of diagnosis)	Other Special Needs:
Nationality:		Ethnic Origin:
Religion:		Country of Origin:
Language Spoken:		Communication Support: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/>	Signer <input type="checkbox"/>	Document Translator <input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2a: Referrer's Details	
<b>Name of Referrer:</b>	<b>Designation:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Date of Referral:</b> Click here to enter a date.
<b>Postcode:</b>	<b>Contact Details:</b>
Section 2b: Reason for Referral	
Section 2c: Immediate Actions	
<b>Are Immediate /Actions necessary to safeguard the child(ren) or young person(s)?</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Section 3a: Primary Carers &amp; Other Household Members (Incl. non-family members)</b>				
	<b>Member 1</b>	<b>Member 2</b>	<b>Member 3</b>	<b>Member 4</b>
<b>Last Name:</b>				
<b>Alternative Last Name:</b>				
<b>First Name:</b>				
<b>Telephone No:</b>				
<b>Mobile No:</b>				
<b>Date of Birth:</b>				
<b>Relationship to Child/ YP:</b>				
<b>Language Spoken:</b>				
<b>Nationality:</b>				
<b>Communication Support:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details
<b>Section 3b: Significant Others (Incl. family members who are not members of the child(ren) or young person(s) household)</b>				
	<b>Other 1</b>	<b>Other 2</b>	<b>Other 3</b>	<b>Other 4</b>
<b>Last Name:</b>				
<b>Alternative Last Name:</b>				
<b>First Name:</b>				
<b>Address:</b>				
<b>Postcode:</b>				
<b>Mobile No:</b>				
<b>Date of Birth:</b>				
<b>Relationship to Child/ YP:</b>				
<b>Language Spoken:</b>				
<b>Nationality:</b>				
<b>Communication Support:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Signer <input type="checkbox"/> Doc. Trans Details

Section 4a: Summary of Referrer's Previous Involvement	
Section 4b: Referral Consent	
Child(ren) / Young Person(s)	
Is the Child(ren) / Young Person(s) subject to this referral aware the referral is being made?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the Child(ren) / Young Person(s) consent to the Referral?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If NO, please explain	
Parent/ Carer	
Is the Parents/ Carers aware that Referral has been made?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they consent to the Referral?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If NO, please explain	

Section 5: Additional Information: Agencies Currently Working with Child or Young Person
<b>Agency and Contact Details</b>
Name: Role: Tel No: Email:
Name: Role: Tel No: Email:
Name: Role: Tel No: Email:
Name: Role: Tel No: Email:

### Retention Periods for Child Protection Records

7.6 It is recommended that, in general, child protection records should be retained by the school for the following periods:

Record	Retention Period
Pupil Child Protection Case Files	DOB + 30 years
The school's confidential Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely*
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register	Maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's file while he/she continues to attend. On transfer, the school should inform the new school and destroy all social services records. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years.
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register	On transfer to a new school, the school should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years.
<b>Complaint against a member of staff</b> Staff members file <sup>6</sup> Child's Child Protection File Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely* unless totally exonerated (see para. 3.16) D.O.B + 30 years Indefinitely*
<b>Complaint to be pursued under the school's disciplinary procedures</b>	
Staff members file Child's Child Protection File Record of Child Abuse Complaints	5 years D.O.B + 30 years Indefinitely*

\* as a general guide 'indefinitely' should be a minimum of 40 years.

<sup>6</sup> The Department of Education Disposal Schedule recommends that a staff file is retained for 7 years after leaving employment. In the case of child protection concerns the file should be retained for the time periods specified in the school Child Protection Records Retention and Destruction Policy.

## **CHILD PROTECTION: STUDENT WORRIES AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

This leaflet is for your use. Read it and keep it safely. It explains what you can do if you feel worried about something and what you may do if you wish to complain about how you are, or have been, treated. If you misplace it and think there is something you need to complain about, you can get another one from your Year Head or from Reception. If you don't understand anything in this leaflet get a member of staff, or a friend or an older friend to explain it to you.

There are two things to remember:

- (a) you may wish just to talk to someone or;
- (b) you may wish to make a complaint.

### **What Do I Do If I Just Want To Talk To Someone?**

Remember you have close friends who may be able to help, or an older boy or girl to whom you may feel you can turn. Your Form Teacher, Year Teacher, Head of School, Head of Pastoral Care, or School Counsellor is always ready to help, or any other member of staff you know and to whom you feel you can comfortably talk.

There may be times when you feel you can't talk with a member of staff - this is perfectly alright and natural. Talk, telephone or write to any of the following:

- your parents;
- the school counsellor;
- Child Line;
- Children's Legal Centre.

Addresses and telephone numbers are given at the end of this leaflet.

### **What Happens If I Want To Make A Complaint About Something?**

Sometimes you may feel that you would like to complain about something that is worrying you. This might be about how you are being treated. The first thing you should do is speak to any member of staff you trust (eg. Your Form Teacher or Year Teacher or Head of School or Head of Pastoral Care); you can take a friend with you if you wish - another pupil, an older pupil or a member of staff.

It is particularly important for you to realise that if you should be concerned over something, you can have your Form Teacher or Year Teacher or Head of School or Head of Pastoral Care or a friend with you when you are talking with the Vice Principal or the Principal. If the matter can't be easily settled to your satisfaction then you can make a formal complaint. You will need to do this by writing to your Year Teacher or Head of School, Head of Pastoral Care or the Vice-Principal or Principal saying that you wish to make a formal complaint

**IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO BE TREATED PROPERLY AND IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO COMPLAIN IF YOU THINK YOU ARE NOT BEING TREATED FAIRLY.**

### **Useful Helplines:**

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	24 hours call free – 0800 800500
Childline UK	0800-1111 - free
Children's Centre, Downe Hospital	028 44838215
Children's Law Centre Philip House	124 – 137 York Street Belfast 02890 245704
Children's Law Centre – Chalky Advice Line for Children and Young People	– 0808 8085678
Free	

**CARE IN SCHOOL**  
**DO YOU NEED TO TALK?**

Do you have something important to talk to staff about?

Are you worried about something that is happening to you or to someone you know?

Do you need help or do you know how to get help?

**REMEMBER:** the school staff are here to listen and to help. They will try to do what they can.

If you are worried about telling things in confidence, tell a member of staff whom you feel you can trust. If they are concerned about your safety, they may need to share this concern with others, but you will always be informed first.

If you are still unsure about talking to a member of staff, you can telephone:  
Childline, on 0800 1111

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0800 800500

These calls are free and they do not show up on your telephone bill.

There are people who will help you work out what to do next.

Other numbers to consider:

NSPCC Belfast 02890 351135

Northern Ireland Childline Belfast 0870 3362945

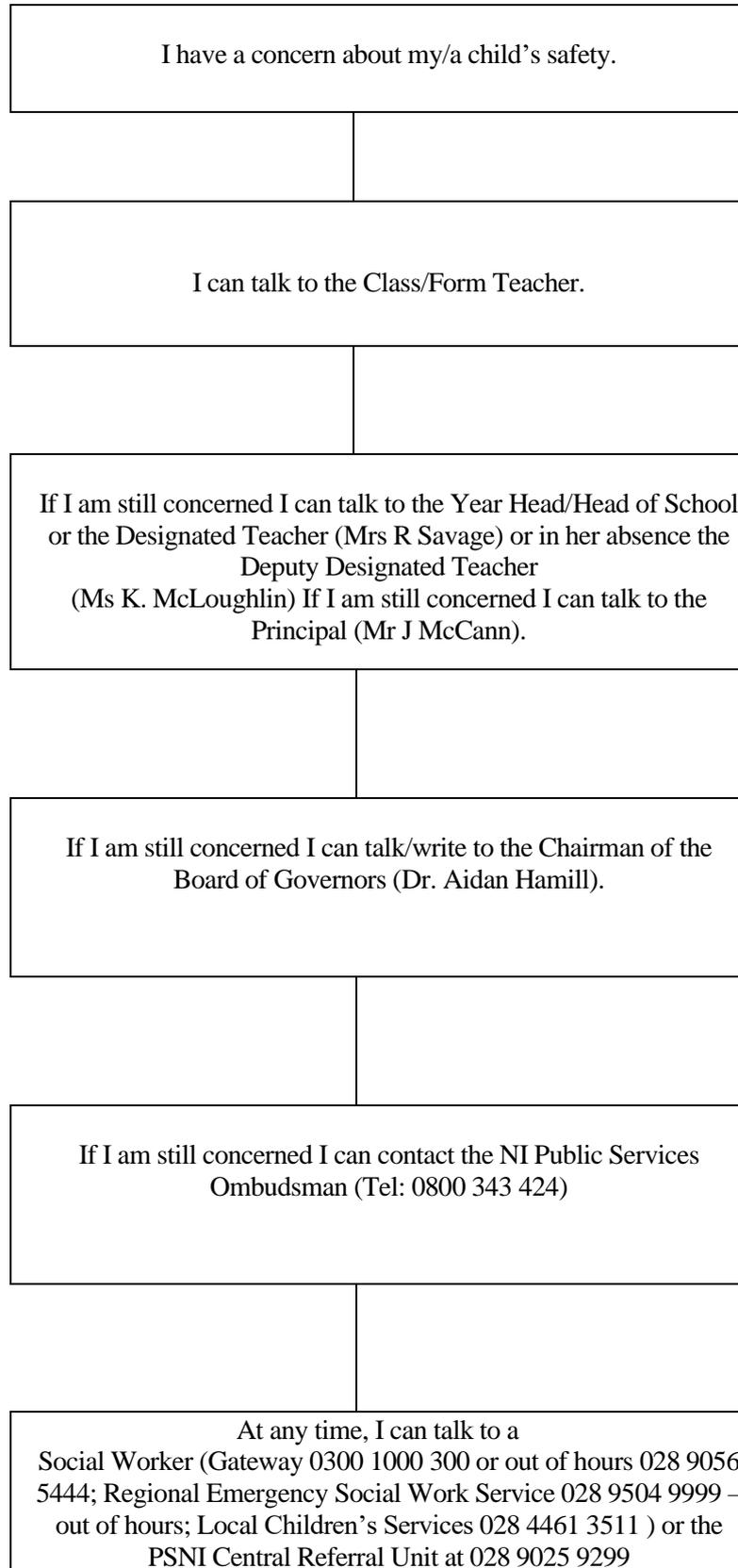
Police Service of Northern Ireland Care Unit Newtownards 02890 650222 ask for  
Public Protection Unit

Relate Teen Northern Ireland 028 90 323 454

The Samaritans (Whatever you are going through, we will go through it with you).  
0845 790 90 90 or 028 9066 4422

Lifeline 0808 808 8000

**CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE**  
**FOR PARENTS MAKING A COMPLAINT/RAISING A CONCERN**



**St. Patrick's Grammar School**  
**Downpatrick**



**Parental Complaints  
Procedure**

**Reviewed  
March 2018**

## THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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## THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### St. Patrick's Grammar School Downpatrick

#### 1. SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**The Board of Governors together with the Principal set the direction and tone of the school in all that they do and are committed to working with parents in the best interests of their children's education. The purpose of the Complaints Procedure is to effectively address complaints raised by parents/guardians.**

- 1.1 The procedure covers all matters relating to the actions of staff employed in the school and the application of school procedures, where they affect individual pupils. However, school staff, and the Board of Governors recognise the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest possible stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.
- 1.2 **Where it becomes evident at an early stage that a matter should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms, this Complaints Procedure will be set aside in favour of the agreed procedure such as Safeguarding, Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions, Discipline, Bullying and Harassment or the Unsatisfactory Teaching Procedure.**
- 1.3 The school will not investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the school to be of a serious nature. Anonymous complaints may be investigated where they relate to alleged Child Protection matters or alleged financial impropriety. This will be at the discretion of the school. The Board of Governors will be informed by the Principal at each board meeting of such complaints.
- 1.4 Pupils or parents may complain to the NI Public Services Ombudsman (Tel: 0800 343 424) if they feel the school has treated them unfairly.

#### 2. AIMS

- 2.1 In operating this Complaints Procedure we aim to:
  - encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
  - allow swift handling of a complaint within established time-limits for action;
  - keep people informed of progress;
  - ensure a full and fair investigation;
  - have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved;
  - respect confidentiality;
  - fully address all aspects of a complaint and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary; and
  - in the interest of continuous improvement, provide relevant information to the school's Senior Management Team and Board of Governors.
- 2.2 This Procedure is designed to be:
  - easily accessible and publicised;
  - simple to understand and use;
  - impartial; and
  - non-adversarial.

A copy of this Procedure is available on the school's website or is available from the school on request.



### **3. WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THIS PROCEDURE**

#### **3.1 Your rights as a person making a complaint**

In dealing with your complaint we will ensure that you receive:

- fair treatment;
- courtesy;
- sensitivity;
- a timely response;
- accurate advice;
- respect for your privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate parties about your complaint; and
- reasons for our decisions.

Where the complaint is upheld we will acknowledge this and address the complaint you have raised. If, after investigation, it is judged there are no grounds for your complaint, you will be advised accordingly.

#### **3.2 Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint**

In making your complaint we would expect that you:

- raise issues in a timely manner;
- treat our staff with respect and courtesy;
- provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues you raise; and
- use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels.

#### **3.3 Rights of parties involved during the investigation**

The process is non-adversarial and does not provide a role for any other statutory or non-statutory body.

##### **Complainant**

Where a meeting is arranged the complainant may be accompanied by another person where it is accepted, by the Board of Governors and the Principal, that this will assist the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

##### **Staff**

Staff may seek the advice and support from their professional body or Trade Union and may also be accompanied by another person to meetings where it is accepted, by the Board of Governors and the Principal, that this will assist the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

A member of staff who is the subject of a complaint will be provided with full details of any allegations made against him/her before being required to respond to the matters raised. In many occasions this may be best achieved by providing the member of staff with a copy of the letter. However, the views of the complainant will be sought before doing so.

##### **Legal Representation**

Legal representation, or representation by a person, or persons acting in a professional capacity **is not** permitted within this Procedure.

This Procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

#### **3.4 Where the complainant is a Governor**

Where the complainant is a member of the Board of Governors, s/he will play no part in the management, or appeal, of the complaint as set out in this Procedure.

## 4. MAKING A COMPLAINT

### 4.1 Complaint about a Teacher (other than the Principal)

#### 4.1.1 Informal Stage

##### ***Step 1 - Speaking with Teacher***

In the first instance, a complaint should normally be raised verbally with the teacher concerned, so that s/he may have an opportunity to address the issue(s). **Please observe the school's existing protocols for arranging and conducting such meetings and follow the school's policy with respect to access to members of staff.**

It is recognised that at times such meetings may be facilitated by a member of senior leadership to help resolve or clarify issues.

A note of the meeting and agreed outcomes will be made available for the Principal.

This approach will not prevent you from choosing to enter the formal process at a later stage, if you believe that to be an appropriate course of action.

##### ***Step 2 - Speaking with the Principal***

If your complaint remains unresolved following Step 1, you should arrange a meeting with the Principal to discuss the issue(s). In some circumstances the Principal may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately, and s/he may require some time to investigate and respond. If further time is required you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which the Principal will respond.

#### 4.1.2 Formal Stage

##### ***Step 3 - Writing to the Principal***

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes proposed at Steps 1 and 2, or indeed it might be more appropriate to initiate the procedures at Step 3. You should write to the Principal, and state the grounds for your complaint, as concisely as possible, addressing specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

- provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
- state that your complaint is being investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 20 working days from the date on which your letter was received). The investigation may require you to meet the Principal and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Principal may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

##### ***Step 4 - Writing to Chairperson of the Board of Governors***

If you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner following the completion of Steps 1, 2 and 3, you should write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, including, if applicable, copies of the original correspondence relating to Step 3. The Chairperson will be responsible for referring your complaint to a Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, which will investigate and respond to your complaint. The Complaints Sub-Committee will have a minimum of three voting members. At the same time an Appeals Sub-Committee will be set up by the Chair. This sub-committee will play no part in the investigation or decision making regarding the complaint

Your written complaint should be as concise as possible and address specifically the issue(s)

that are of concern to you. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

- provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
- state that your complaint is being fully investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 25 working days from the date on which your written complaint was received).

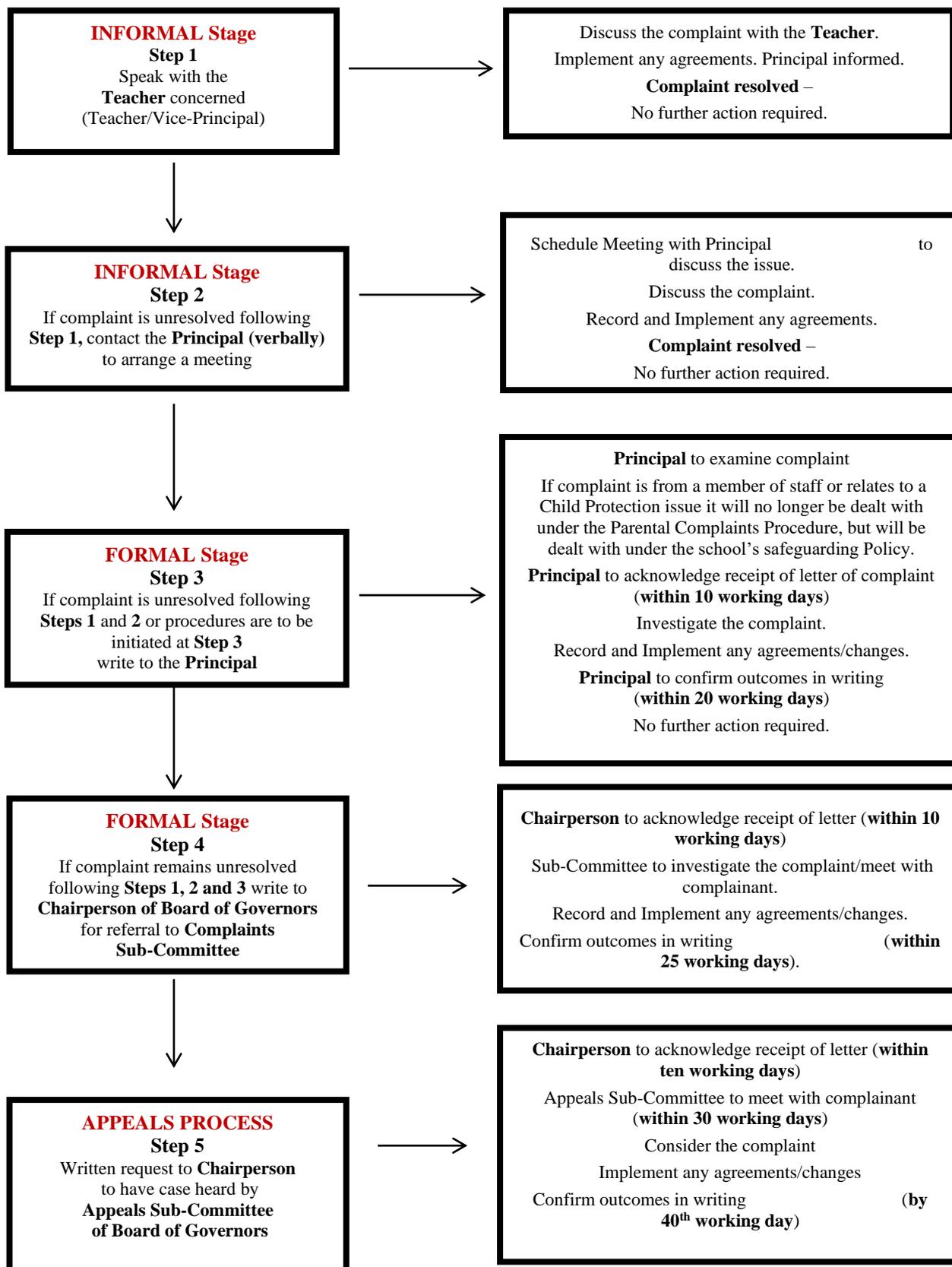
The investigation may require you to meet the Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

#### ***Step 5 - Appeals Process***

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, you may appeal the decision to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. This procedure is outlined in **Annex 1 on Page 15**.

Pupils or parents may complain to the ombudsman if they feel the school has treated them unfairly.

**Making a complaint about a Teacher (other than the Principal) (with timescales for responses)**



## 4.2 Complaint about a member of the School's Support Staff

### 4.2.1 Informal stage

#### ***Step 1 - Raising verbally with the Principal***

A complaint concerning a member of the school's support staff should be raised verbally with the Principal. A meeting should be arranged with the Principal to discuss the issue(s). In some circumstances, the Principal may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately and s/he may require some time to investigate and respond. If further time is required, you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which the Principal will respond.

### 4.2.2 Formal Stage

#### ***Step 2 - Writing to the Principal***

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes proposed at Step 1 or it might be more appropriate to initiate the procedures formally. You should write to the Principal, and state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible addressing specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

- provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
- state that your complaint is being investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 20 working days from the date on which your letter was received). The investigation may require you to meet the Principal and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Principal may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

#### ***Step 3 - Writing to Chairperson of the Board of Governors***

If you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner following the completion of Steps 1, and 2 you should write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, including, if applicable, copies of the original correspondence relating to Step 2. The Chairperson will be responsible for referring your complaint to a Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, which will investigate and respond to your complaint. The Complaints Sub-Committee will have a minimum of three voting members.

Your written complaint should be as concise as possible and address specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

- provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
- state that your complaint is being fully investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 25 working days from the date on which your written complaint was received).

The investigation may require you to meet the Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

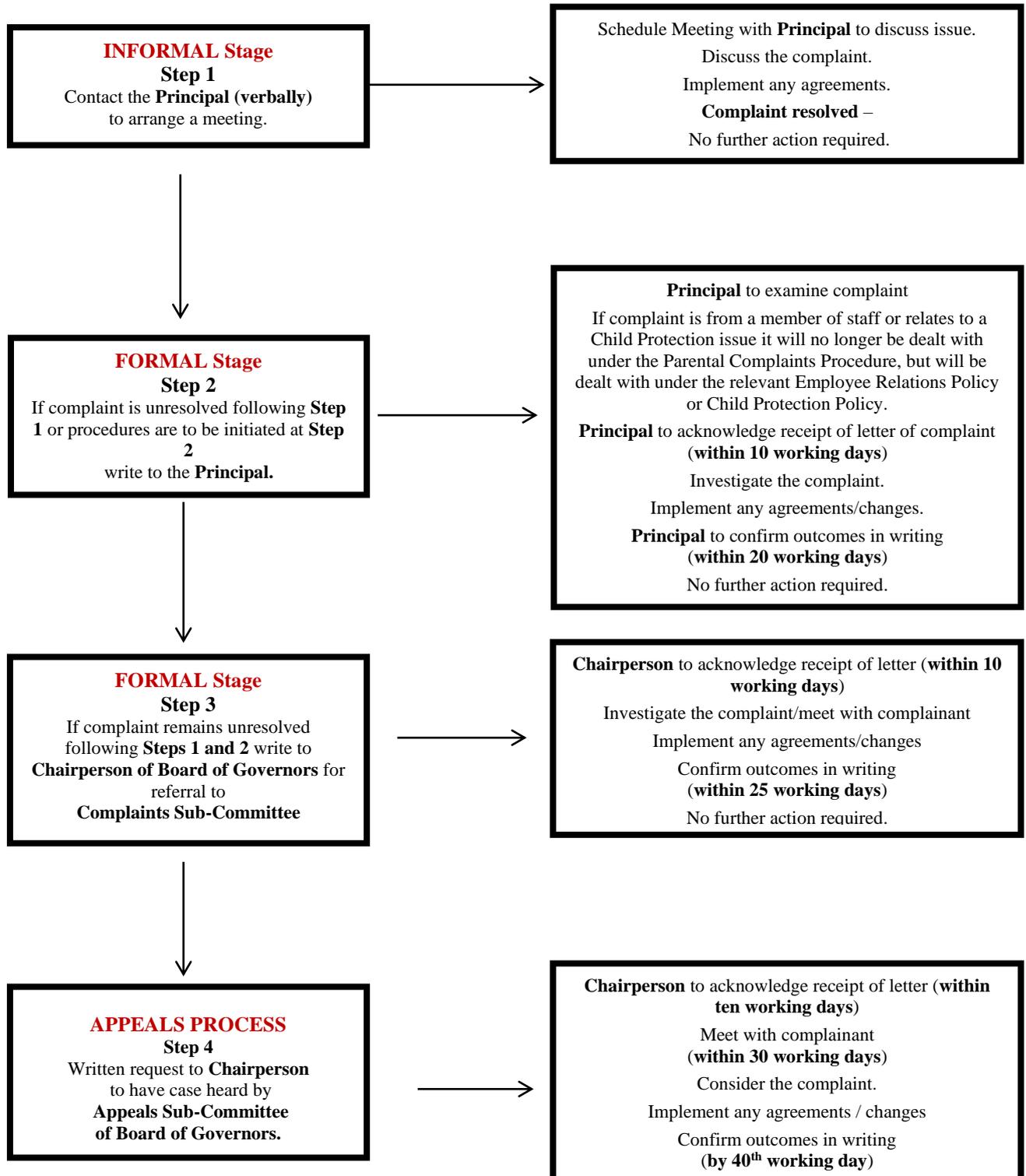
#### ***Step 4 - Appeals Process***

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, you may appeal the decision to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. This procedure is outlined in **Annex 1 on Page 15**.

Pupils or parents may complain to the ombudsman if they feel the school has treated them

unfairly.

**Making a complaint about a member of the school's support staff (with timescales for responses)**



### **4.3 Making a complaint about a member of Interserve staff**

**St. Patrick's Grammar School is operated under a Public, Private Partnership arrangement. Interserve Plc. Provide facilities management services to the school and employ a number of personnel onsite for support services to the school.**

#### **4.3.1 Informal stage**

##### ***Step 1 - Raising verbally with the Principal***

A complaint concerning a member of Interserve support staff should be raised verbally with the Principal. A meeting should be arranged with the Principal to discuss the issue(s). In some circumstances, the Principal may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately and s/he may require some time to investigate and respond. If further time is required, you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which the Principal will respond.

The Principal will raise the matter with The Facilities Manager onsite who will investigate the matter within the company's grievance and complaints procedures and report back to the Principal within an agreed timescale.

#### **4.3.2 Formal Stage**

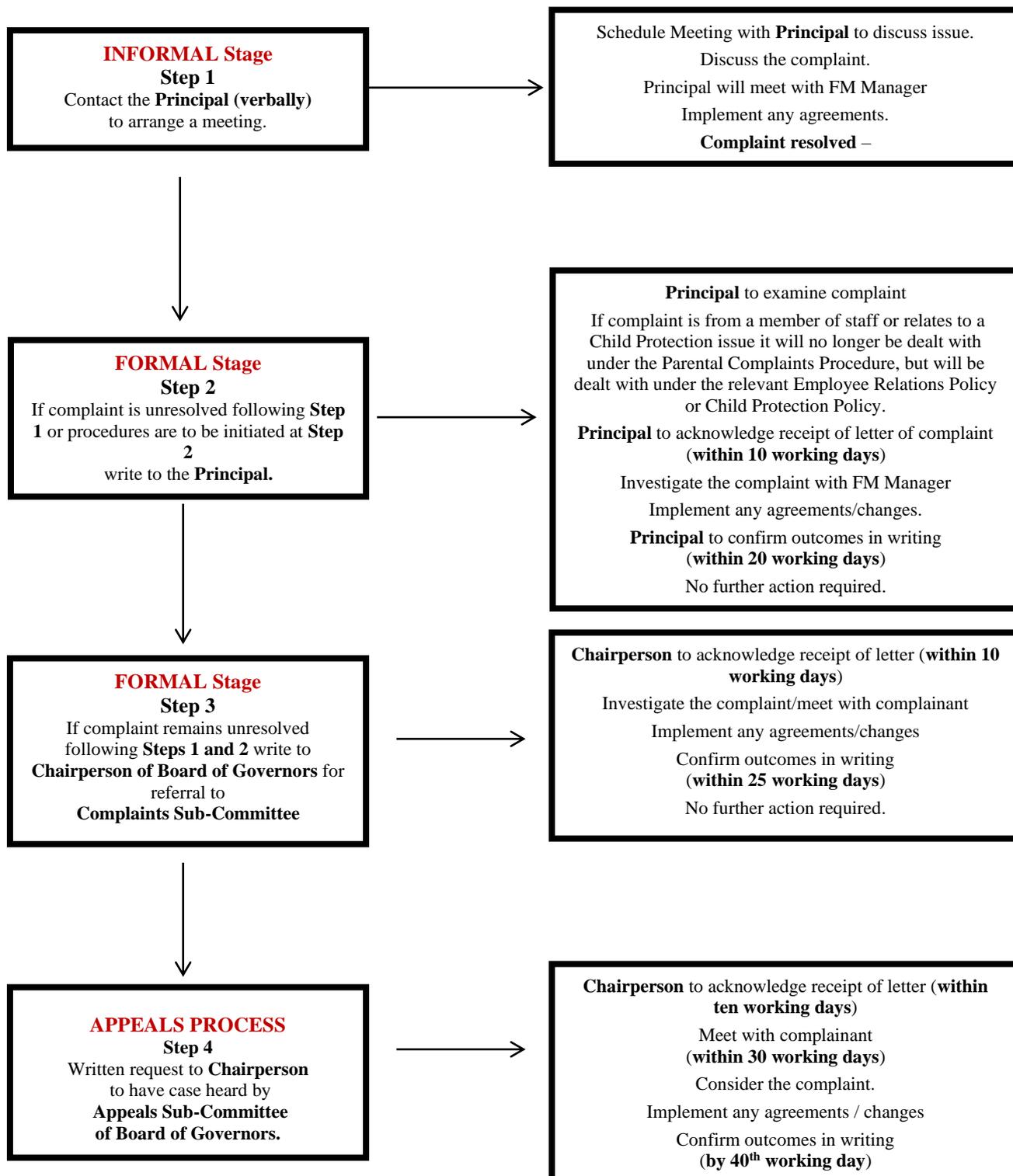
##### ***Step 2 - Writing to the Principal***

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes proposed at Step 1 or it might be more appropriate to initiate the procedures formally. You should write to the Principal and state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible addressing specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received and advise that the formal complaint has been passed directly to the Facilities Manager who will continue the process under Interserve's complaints procedures. Interserve will respond directly to you with copies of all correspondence copied to the Principal.

The Trustees representative and Principal will be kept fully informed by Interserve of progress.

**Making a complaint about a member of Interserve support staff (with timescales for responses)**



#### 4.4 Complaint about the Principal

**Where a complaint relates to the Principal the matter will be dealt with formally by the Board of Governors.**

##### 4.4.1 Formal Stage

###### ***Step 1 - Writing to Chairperson of the Board of Governors***

Where a complaint relates to the Principal you should write to the Chair of the Board of Governors, stating the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible. The Chairperson will be responsible for referring your complaint to a Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, which will investigate and respond to your complaint. The Complaints Sub-Committee will have a minimum of three voting members. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

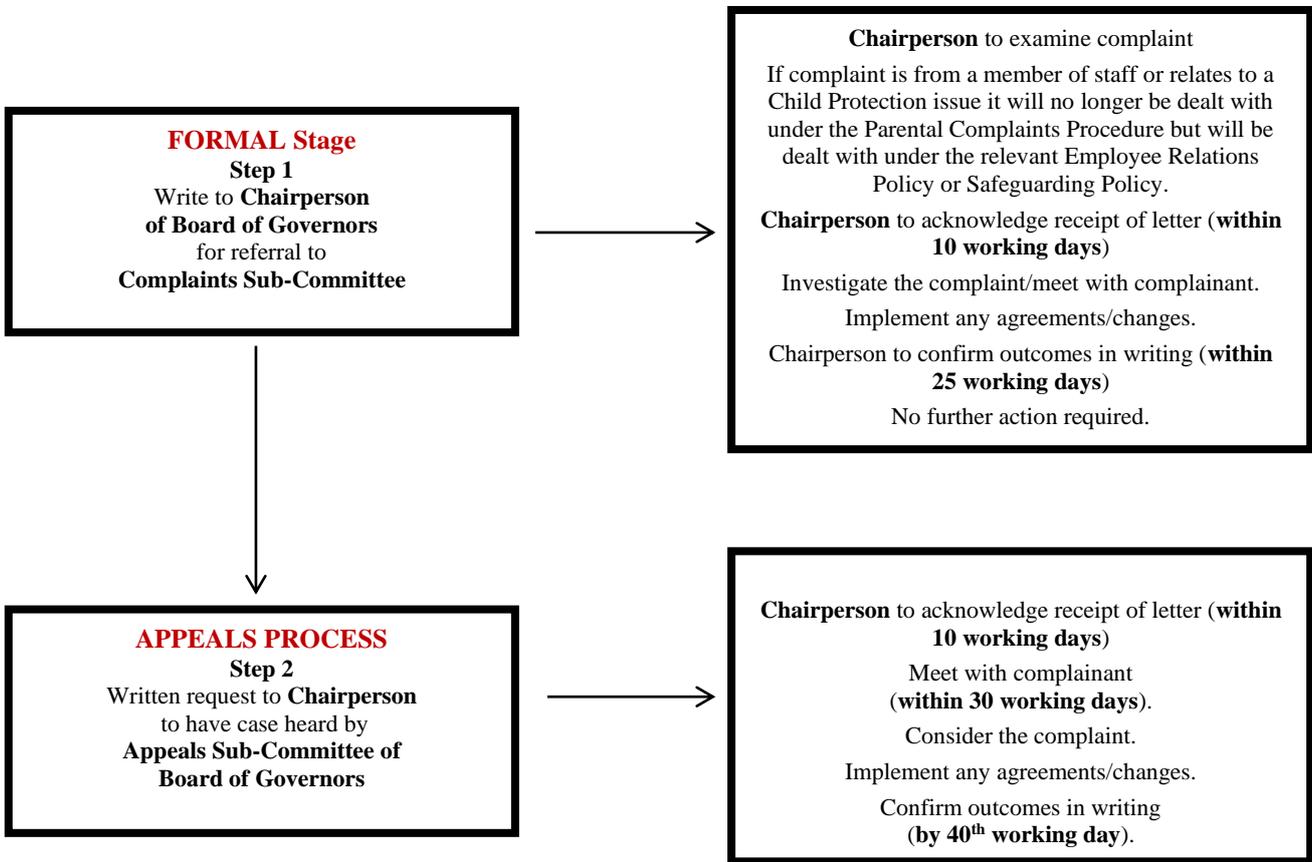
- provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
- state that your complaint is being fully investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 25 working days from the date on which your written complaint was received).

###### ***Step 2 - Appeals Process***

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, you may appeal the decision to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. This procedure is outlined in **Annex 1 on page 15**.

Pupils or parents may complain to the ombudsman if they feel the school has treated them unfairly.

**Making a complaint about the Principal (with timescales for responses)**



## **Making a complaint about a teacher in another school operating with St. Patrick's through collaboration. (with timescales for responses)**

4.5

All local schools operating a collaborative educational provision do so through The Lecale Learning Community. As such, each school works under the arrangements of a Service Level Agreement which is reviewed annually. The Education Order 2006 makes it clear that the school in which the student is registered ( the home school), is responsible for his /her education and as such, complaints should be raised with the 'home' school.

[ The Home School is the school in which the student is registered. The Host school is the school which is providing a particular course for the student through a collaboration agreement.]

### **4.5.1 Informal stage**

#### ***Step 1 - Raising verbally with the Vice-Principal***

The school's Vice-Principal acts as the liaison between the collaborating schools. He/ she will raise the complaint / concern with the designated liaison teacher in the 'Host' school. He/ she will schedule a meeting to discuss the issue with the parent and arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint with the host school. In some circumstances, the Principal may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately and s/he may require some time to investigate and respond. If further time is required, you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which the Vice- Principal will respond. This may involve facilitating a meeting with the teacher in the host school which will be organised by the liaison teacher within this school.

### **4.5.2 Formal Stage**

#### ***Step 2 - Writing to the Principal***

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes proposed at Step 1 or it might be more appropriate to initiate the procedures formally. You should write to the Principal and state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible addressing specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received and advise that the formal complaint has been passed directly to the Principal of the host school who will continue the process under that school's complaints procedures. This school will respond directly to the Principal of the home school with copies of all correspondence. The Principal will arrange a meeting to discuss the matter directly with you.

#### ***Step 3 - Writing to Chairperson of the Board of Governors***

If you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner following the completion of Steps 1, and 2 you should write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, including, if applicable, copies of the original correspondence relating to Step 2. The Chairperson will be responsible for referring your complaint to a Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, which will investigate and respond to your complaint. The Complaints Sub-Committee will have a minimum of three voting members.

Your written complaint should be as concise as possible and address specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

- provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or

- state that your complaint is being fully investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 25 working days from the date on which your written complaint was received).

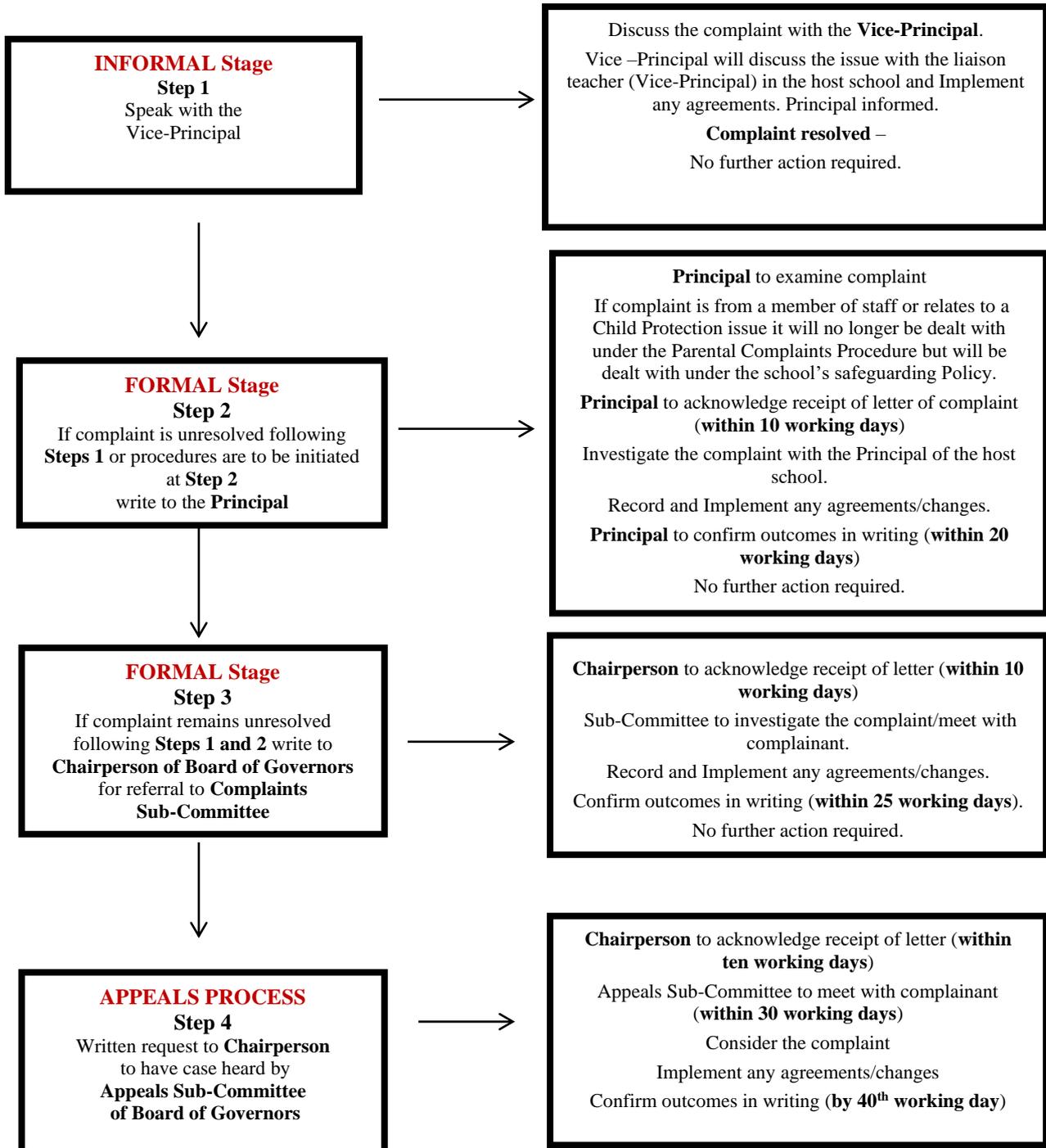
The investigation may require you to meet the Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

***Step 4 - Appeals Process***

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, you may appeal the decision to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. This procedure is outlined in **Annex 1 on Page 15**.

Pupils or parents may complain to the ombudsman if they feel the school has treated them unfairly.

**Making a complaint about a Teacher (in a collaborating school) (with timescales for responses)**



## 5. RECORD KEEPING

The Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Governors will maintain a record of all correspondence, conversations and meetings, concerning your complaint. These records will be held confidentially in the school and will be kept apart from pupil records. All such records will be destroyed **three years after the date of the last correspondence on the issue.**

## 6. FRIVOLOUS OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Where the Board of Governors considers the actions of a parent/group of parents to constitute a frivolous or vexatious complaint, it will seek advice from the relevant employing authority in order to protect staff from further such actions. The collaborating school may enact their own policies dealing with such issues.

## **ANNEX I**

### **APPEALS PROCESS – APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, you may write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors within ten working days of receiving written feedback from the Complaints Sub-Committee, appealing their decision. Your written request should be as concise as possible and set out specifically the grounds for your appeal.

The Chairperson will be responsible for establishing an Appeals Sub-Committee comprising of at least three members of the Board of Governors who were not involved in the original investigation. You will be invited to a meeting of the Appeals Sub-Committee where your appeal will be heard.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within ten working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received and provide you with the date and time of the meeting with the Appeals Sub-Committee at which you will have an opportunity to explain the grounds for your appeal. This meeting will normally take place within 30 working days of your appeal request having been received.

Within ten working days of this meeting, you should expect a final written response. This will indicate the Governors' findings, their recommendations and the reasons supporting their decisions.

The decision of the Appeals Sub-Committee is final. At the end of the process the Chairperson will inform you, in writing, that the Complaints Procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is considered closed.

Pupils or parents may complain to the ombudsman if they feel the school has treated them unfairly.

## **SUGGESTED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF BASED ON PASTORAL CARE IN SCHOOLS - CHILD PROTECTION DENI**

**Note DE Guidance issued September 2019 Annex C - Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools - of Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools, provides very comprehensive, definite and useful advice for staff and volunteers**

### **Introduction**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. Staff must set an example to students in their use of language, behaviour and attitudes.

Staff must follow all school policies and comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### **Code of Conduct**

#### **1. Duty of Care**

Staff are obliged to bring any concerns they have about the wellbeing of a student to the immediate attention of the Designated Teacher and to adhere to procedures detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

#### **2. Private Meetings with Students**

Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual students. It is recognized that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place in a room with visual access, or with the door open.

#### **3. Physical Contact with Students**

- (a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their students.
- (b) It is unrealistic and unnecessary however to suggest that staff would touch students only in emergencies. In particular a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, other people or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999:9 on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 3 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).
- (c) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- (d) Schools should, in particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas like a photographic darkroom, draw up their own guidelines for these circumstances.
- (e) Staff who have to administer first-aid to a student should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.

- (f) Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the student, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- (g) Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to principal.
- (h) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising students in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to students in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment. Students on Work Experience are visited by a member of staff (depending on proximity of placement) who will follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

#### 4. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- (a) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- (b) When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.
- (c) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

#### 5. Relationships and Attitudes

- (a) Staff should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.
- (b) Staff should not conduct private tutoring on school premises.

#### 6. 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.

#### 7. E-Safety and Internet Use

- (a) Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the school's E-safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times, both inside and outside of work. School staff should ensure that: no reference should be made in social media to students, parents / carers or school staff; they do not engage in online discussion on personal matters relating to members of the school community; personal opinions should not be attributed to the school; security settings on personal social media profiles are regularly checked to minimise risk of loss of personal information.
- (b) Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations/friendships with current pupils and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. Contact with students should be made via school-based email accounts when necessary. If staff are contacted by students by an inappropriate route, this must be reported immediately to the principal.
- (c) Staff should not use mobile phones while in class; mobile phones should not be switched on in class.

#### 8. Confidentiality

- (a) Staff and volunteers have access to confidential information about students including highly sensitive and private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. If in doubt, seek guidance from a senior member of staff.
- (b) In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously.
- (c) All staff should understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and the consequences of any breach.
- (d) Any media or legal enquiries should be passed on to senior leadership.

**Conclusion:**

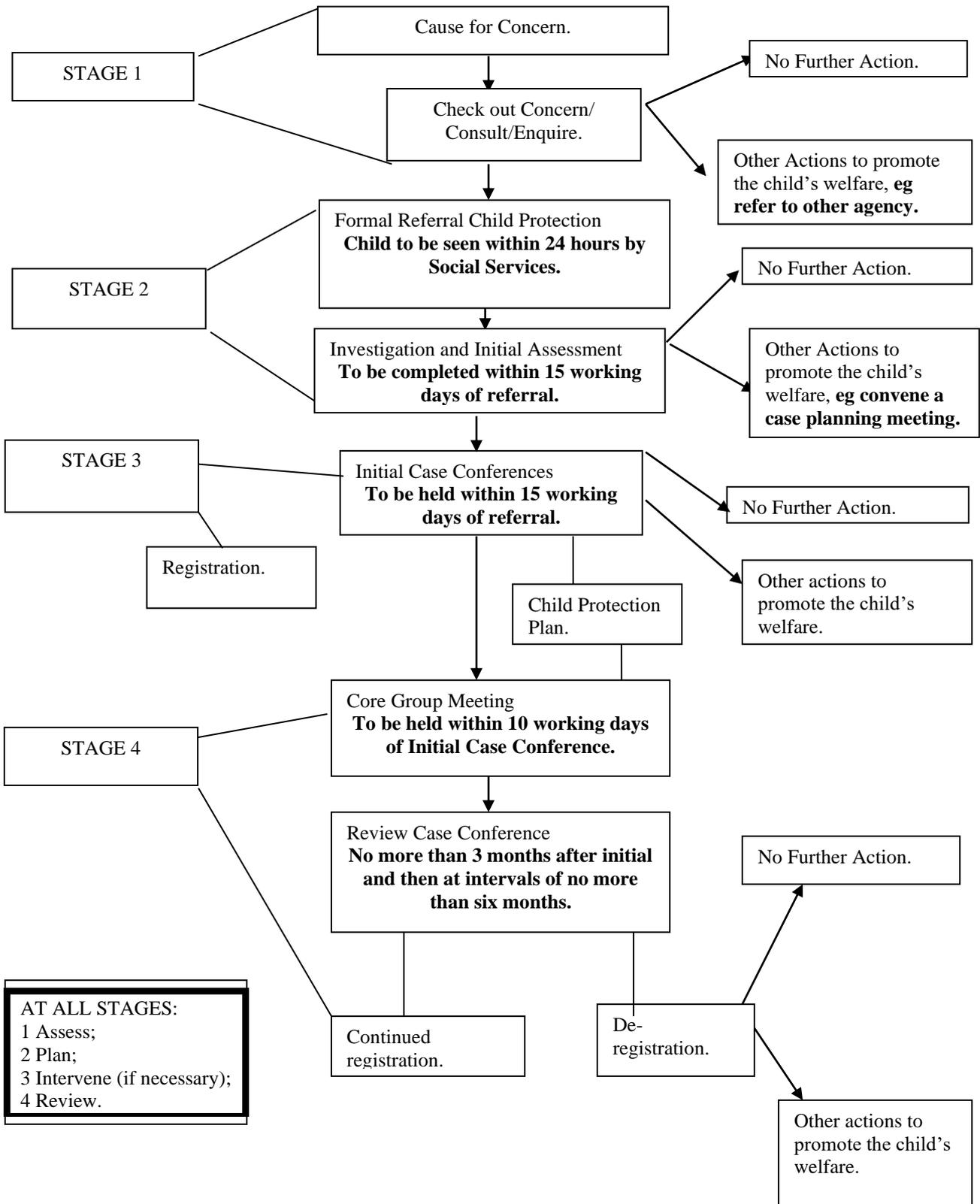
It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, teachers' professional judgment will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

### **GUIDANCE FOR PREVENTING ABUSE OF TRUST**

- 1 This guidance applies for those caring for young people or vulnerable adults in both paid and unpaid work, including volunteers. Young people means people over the age of consent but under 18 (even though young people of 16 and 17 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity) where a relationship of trust with an adult looking after them exists. While the government guidance and proposed legislation refers to people below the age of 18, the school's procedures refer to all students, irrespective of age.
- 2 A code on the abuse of trust is needed to protect both those in a position of trust and those for whom they care. It is important that those in a position of trust ensure they do not abuse their position or put themselves in a position where allegations of abuse, whether justified or unfounded, could be made.
- 3 In the context of this guidance, sexual activity means activity which would normally be recognised as sexual, in all the circumstances, without knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved.
- 4 A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. In the school context, all relationships with pupils are founded on trust.
- 5 The individual in the position of trust may have the power to confer advancement or failure. The relationship may be distorted by fear or favour. It is vital for all those in such positions of trust to understand the power this gives them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.
- 6 While such a relationship of trust exists, allowing a relationship to develop in a way that might lead to a sexual relationship is wrong. A sexual relationship itself will be intrinsically unequal within a relationship of trust and is therefore unacceptable. It is also inappropriate since the 'professional' relationship of trust would be altered.
- 7 This guidance should not be interpreted to mean that no genuine relationship can start between two people within a relationship of trust. But given the inequality at the heart of a relationship of trust, the relationship of trust should be ended before any sexual relationship develops.
- 8 All those in the school have a duty to raise concerns about behaviour by staff, managers, volunteers or others which may be harmful to those in their care, without prejudice to their own position.
- 9 Students should be told that sexual relationships with staff are not allowed, and that they should report to the designated teacher if they believe they have been subjected to inappropriate behaviour.
- 10 If abuse of trust is reported or suspected, the procedure as for child protection is followed: if a complaint is made it is good practice always to ensure that the particular relationship of trust is suspended until the matter is resolved.
- 11 Individuals should inform the principal or the Chairman of the Board of Governors if they are concerned that:
  - they are developing a relationship which could represent an abuse of trust;
  - that the other person is becoming attracted to them;
  - that a colleague is becoming attracted to someone in his/her care;
  - that their actions or words have been misunderstood.
- 12 A disciplinary procedure exists for all employees, and this will be invoked in the case of an abuse of trust. This is an area which is taken very seriously, with dismissal as a possible sanction.

## CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS



**PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY****Who Has it?**

- 1 The birth mother or mother by adoption.
- 2 The birth father if:
  - (a) married to birth mother at time of birth;
  - (b) subsequently marries the birth mother;
  - (c) gets a 'Parental Responsibility Agreement' through a Solicitor;
  - (d) gets a 'Parental Responsibility Order' Article 7, through the Court;
  - (e) Registered as the child's father (after April 2002).
- 3 Anyone who has a Residence Order during its lifetime, eg grandparents.
- 4 The State if a Care Order is in force.

**How do you lose it?**

- 1 The birth mother:
  - (a) if the child is adopted by someone else.
- 2 The birth father:
  - (a) if the child is adopted by someone else;
  - (b) through the Court.
- 3 Anyone with a Residence Order:
  - (a) end of the Order;
  - (b) new Order replaces it;
  - (c) through the Court.
- 4 The State:
  - (a) new Order replaces it;
  - (b) end of Order;
  - (c) through the Court.

### What to do in an Emergency

Emergency situations in the context of child abuse are uncommon in schools. The majority of concerns about pupils develop over a period of time, as staff become increasingly aware that a pupil's appearance and demeanour have changed, that explanations by children or parents are inconsistent with the type of injuries or behaviour seen and, on occasions, a pupil may also talk directly with a member of staff about what is happening to them.

In these situations, time is of the essence but you have the pupil safely at school and, providing you refer the matter to the Designated Teacher, who can then contact social services, you can rest assured that your concern has been registered and that an initial course of action has been agreed.

Emergency situations are those that require urgent action in order to maintain a pupil's safety and welfare. They include situations where a child is:

- physically injured and needs immediate medical care;
- self-harming or threatening immediate self-harm;
- out of control and unable to calm themselves;
- refusing to go home;
- expressing fear of a parent or someone in the home;
- disclosing sexual or physical abuse by someone in their home;
- verbally or physically abused by a parent or carer who has arrived at the school;
- misusing alcohol or drugs and is incapacitated in school;
- at risk of being abducted from the school premises;
- in imminent danger or will be if they go home;
- believed to have been trafficked, or is going to be abducted once they leave the school premises;
- being abused through prostitution and you believe she or he will engage in prostitution when they leave the premises.

Other emergency situations may arise when there is:

- a sudden deterioration/occurrence in a child with a protection plan
- a sudden deterioration/occurrence in a child being monitored.

### Emergency action

If medical assistance is needed, arrange it.

- Call for an ambulance if necessary.
- Tell medical staff you have reason to believe that the injury is non-accidental and why you think this. Tell the child what you are doing and why, depending on their age and level of understanding.
- As soon as help is arranged, contact the Designated Teacher to report your actions.
- Complete the record form (Appendix 2c).
- The Designated Teacher will contact children's social services. If they cannot send someone and the end of the school day is approaching, the Designated Teacher will call the police.
- Offer to stay with child if necessary until someone picks them up.

In other cases medical assistance will not be needed.

- Tell the child what you are going to do, depending on their age and level of understanding.
- Ensure the child's safety – a senior member of staff should stay with them. If there is any threat from an adult, on or outside the premises, call the police.
- Agree action with children's social care.

## **What could happen?**

### **Emergency protection orders**

An emergency protection order is an order from the court that allows social services to remove a child from a home and grants parental responsibility to social services. The court will only make these orders if it believes that a child is likely to suffer significant harm if he or she is not removed or if he or she does not stay in the place that they are currently being cared for (a foster placement, for example). An emergency protection order lasts up to eight days but it may be extended once, for no more than seven days.

### **Exclusion orders**

It is possible for social services to apply to the courts to have the abuser removed from the family home so that the child can remain at home, rather than being removed into the care of social services. An exclusion order can only be made if it is attached to an interim care order or an emergency protection order; such orders are rare.

### **Police protection**

Police protection allows the police to take a child away from a dangerous situation or to stop a child being moved from a safe place, such as a hospital. Police protection powers are only used in exceptional circumstances, where there is not enough time to seek an emergency protection order or for reasons relating to the immediate safety of a child. If there is a need to take a child into protection but there is no immediate danger, an emergency protection order should be used. Police protection cannot last longer than 72 hours and, if the concern about the child is not sorted out by this time, social services may decide to apply for an emergency protection order. The police are involved in a child protection investigation if a criminal offence has been committed or alleged.

### **Emergency contacts**

Gateway 0300 1000 300 or out of hours 028 9056 5444

Regional Emergency Social Work Service 028 9504 9999 outside office hours

Police Service of Northern Ireland Exchange 0845 600 8000;

Care Unit - Newtownards 028 9065 0222.

## **Appendix 15**

### **Addendum to St. Patrick's Grammar School's Child Protection Policy**

#### **Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

##### **1. CONTEXT**

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

##### **2. PROCEDURES**

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety:

- The school email address, Head of Pastoral Care and ICT support teachers' email addresses, have been made available to all parents. Parents have been informed that the DDT is available at all times on this number.
- Teachers provide online learning via the school website/ C2k platform with strict procedures in place to minimise risk.
- The website provides parents with a range of resources and links to additional online learning, support and guidance.
- We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.

- The School Counsellor (ICSS) remains available for phone consultation and parents are made aware of this via the website, Facebook and letters; students have been made aware via Pastoral Teams.
- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the EA CPSS, teachers may make phone calls to parents. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding team.
- If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff.

### **3. ONLINE SAFETY**

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing or platforms recommended by and available via C2K.

- Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleep wear during the session.
- Students cannot participate from a bedroom.
- The teacher arranges the session and password and shares this only with pupils.
- Pupils must agree not to share the password with anyone else.
- Parental consent will be sought before their child attends online sessions.
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school.
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

**If there is a breach to any of these procedures e.g. pupil gives the password to someone else who joins the group, the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.**

### **4. HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN**

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help

will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the safeguarding team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

## **5. IF SCHOOL IS OPEN DURING COVID-19 CLOSURES**

The school is open for vulnerable pupils and key workers children and the school adheres to the EA, DE and Department of Health guidance, regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

## **6. HOW A CHILD CAN RAISE A CONCERN**

We know that while many children will be enjoying their time at home and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our children and young people:

- Respond to emails via the c2k email addresses only.
- Respond to any concerning comments our young people post on social media.
- When contacting parents via phone we may ask to speak to the young person.
- All our students will be given the email addresses of the Head of Pastoral Care, Head of Year, Form Teacher, as one way to connect with school. Telephone numbers and websites of other agencies that offer support e.g. Childline, Lifeline, CEOP, Safer Schools App are also shared with students via their Pastoral Microsoft Teams.

## **7. USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: –**

- Gateway – 0300 1000 300 or out of hours 028 9056 5444
- Regional Emergency Social Work Service 028 9504 9999 – out of hours;
- Local Children’s Services 028 4461 3511
- PSNI Central Referral Unit at 028 9025 9299
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>

- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

## **8. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Safeguarding team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the period of Covid-19 school closure in line with Departmental guidance and advice.