**CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING ETHOS**

In St. Colm’s we have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

**SAFEGUARDING**

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It includes issues such as:

* Pupil’s health and safety
* Bullying
* Racist abuse
* Harassment and discrimination
* Use of physical intervention
* Meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions
* Providing first aid
* Drug and substance misuse
* Educational visits
* Intimate care
* Internet safety
* School security
* School / local specific issues
* Pupils’ sexuality

**CHILD PROTECTION**

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm.

**PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, Circular 20/7/04 Child and the Area Child Protection Committees’ Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

(Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures)

Our responsibility in Child Protection issues is reflected in the following principles:

* We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
* The child’s welfare must always be paramount and this overrides all other considerations.
* Children have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously taking account of their age and understanding. They should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives.
* The process of protecting the child from harm should be carried out with the parent/carers involvement whenever possible and they should be encouraged to exercise their responsibilities. Where there is conflict the child’s interests are paramount.
* Information exchange between the child, the parents/carers and all the professional disciplines involved is of the utmost importance.
* A commitment to supporting parents/carers to prevent harm or further harm and alerting them to the dangers for children is the core of good child protection work.
* Actions taken to protect a child (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing a child unnecessary distress or adding to any damage already suffered.
* At all times the emphasis must be on a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.
* Intervention should not deal with the child in isolation. The child must be seen in a family setting. The criminal dimension of any action cannot be ignored.
* When making decisions and carrying out investigations and assessments professionals should be guided by the child’s best interests. Decisions should take into account both the wishes of the child, having due regard to age and understanding and the wishes of the parents/carers. It must be recognised however that there may be circumstances which dictate that these have to be over-ridden.
* Where it is necessary to protect a child from further abuse/harm, alternatives which do not involve moving the child and which minimise disruption of a family should be explored.
* Each agency must have an understanding of each other’s professional values and accept other’s role, powers and responsibilities.
* Actions taken by agencies must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child’s gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race.

**THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

This Safeguarding Team is a vehicle for ensuring effective co-ordination and co-operation between the key individuals responsible for safeguarding throughout the school.

Our team is:

Chair of Governors: P. McShane

Designated Governor for Child Protection: P. Cassidy

Deputy Designated Governor: P. McShane

Principal: R McKenna

Designated teacher for Child Protection: Ca. Devlin

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: R. McKenna

This has been ratified by the Board of Governors : May 2018

The responsibilities of the team should include:

* The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school.
* Support for the Designated Teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
* Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training – including refresher training – in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.

The Safeguarding Team meet annually.

**ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT) AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER (DDT)**

**The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher must:**

* Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role
* Provide training to all school staff including support staff
* Be able to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
* Act as a point of contact for staff and parents
* Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection Unit where appropriate
* Be responsible for record keeping of all child protection concerns
* Make referrals to Social Services or PSNI Public Protection Units
* Liaise with NEELB/CCMS Designated Officers for Child Protection
* Keep the school Principal informed
* Lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school’s Child Protection Policy
* Ensure parents receive Child Protection information every two years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made to social services and the role of the school regarding this
* Promote a Child Protection ethos in the school
* Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
* Maintain all records pertaining to Child Protection in a secure location (accessed only by the Designated Teacher and the School Principal as appropriate)
* Support and undertake the duties of the designate teacher for Child Protection as required

Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

**The Principal**

The Principal must ensure that:

* The Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools document (DENI, 2017) is implemented
* He / She attends training on Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection
* A designated teacher and deputy designated teacher are appointed
* All staff receive child protection training
* All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
* The Chair of the Board of Governors is kept informed
* Child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided
* The school’s child protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy/summary of this policy at least once every 2 years
* Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.
* He/She undertakes the specific management responsibilities of Risk Assessment / Safeguarding in a digital world, managing allegations against staff.

**The Designated Governor for Child Protection**

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

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

**The Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chair of the Board of Governors should:

* Ensure that he/ she has received appropriate Education Authority training
* Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
* Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
* Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools {CPSSS} and the Governor Support and Human Resource departments.
* Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
* Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal
* Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity

**The Board of Governors**

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

* having a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually
* having a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
* attendance at relevant training by governors and that up-to-date training records are maintained
* the vetting of all staff and volunteers.
* Under Articles 17 and 18 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, the Board of Governors is committed to the safeguarding and promotion of all pupils under school provision and to decide on preventative measures to protect pupils from abuse. These measures are detailed in this policy and in the Anti bullying policy.

**Members of School Staff**

The member of staff must:

* refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal
* listen to what is being saidwithout displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
* act promptly
* make a concise written record of a child’s disclosure using the actual words of the child
* avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
* **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
* **Not** investigate
* **Not** ask leading questions

**In addition, the Class Teacher should:**

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

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

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

**Parents**

Parents should play their part in safeguarding by:

* telephoning the school on the morning of their child’s absence, or sending in a note on the child’s return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child’s situation;
* informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
* letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
* familiarising themselves with the School’s Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
* reporting to the office when they visit the school
* raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

**Vetting of Volunteers**

Parents and other volunteers may from time to time be involved in supervising pupils. This will normally be in the company of a teacher. Where it is likely that a parent or volunteer will be left alone with pupils, a Criminal Record check will be sought by the school through the Education Authority’s Access NI.

**Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings**

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the ‘need to know ’principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

**Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

**Record Keeping**

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by the DT and DDT*.* In accordance with DE policy on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored until the child is 30 years old. Files are not removed from the school premises, except when required at a case planning order or by demand of a court order. A record will be kept of when information is removed by whom, for what purpose, and when it is returned. Full details are available in the Records Management and Disposal policy.

**Code Of Conduct For all Staff (Appendix 1)**

The protection and promotion of the welfare of children and young people is a responsibility for all members of staff, 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 children and young people entrusted to their care is paramount.

Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

The school’s code of conduct is an integral part of staff training and is available on request.

**Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

We recognise that young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or leaning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse. Staff and DT/DDT are aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues. Staff are aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Where physical contact is a necessary part of caring/teaching some pupils with special educational needs, an Intimate Care Policy is completed and parental permission sought. Children with limited fluency in English work closely with our SEN co-ordinator. Parents receive a Safeguarding Policy created by the EA’s Inclusion and Diversity Service where necessary and seek advice from them to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have.

**Staff Training**

St. Colm’s is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. All staff will receive child protection awareness training and biannual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools. Depending on roles of responsibility specific staff may receive further training.

###### When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school’s Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and receive copies of these policies.

**Monitoring and Reviewing**

This policy is reviewed annually in line with DENI circulars and relevant letters of information and ratified by the Board of Governors.

**Associated Policies:**

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

* Child Protection: Record Management and Disposal
* Positive Behaviour
* Anti-Bullying
* Use of Reasonable Force
* Special Educational Needs and Inclusion
* Educational Visits
* First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
* Health and Safety Policy
* Relationships and Sexuality Education
* E Safety and Acceptable Use of the Internet
* Intimate Care
* Whistleblowing
* Attendance policy
* Pastoral Care
* Educational Visits

These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact the School.

**WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order.

Child Abuse occurs when ‘a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger’.

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm. Harm means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development and the question of whether harm is significant is determined in accordance with Article 50(3) of the Children’s Order. (Safeguarding and Child Protection 2017/04.)

The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

(ACPC2005)

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| **1. Neglect**  **Physical Indicators**  **Behavioural Indicators** | Neglect is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.  Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.  Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals;  reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem;  persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos. |
| **2. Physical Abuse**  **Physical Indicators**  **Behavioural Indicators** | Is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.  Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing – grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday  Self-destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children;  behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; come to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories |
| **3. Sexual Abuse**  **Physical**  **Indicators**  **Behavioural Indicators** | Occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.  Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual’s incapacity to give informed consent. Stopping Domestic and Sexual/Violence and Abuse in NI,16, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools ‘17.  Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.  What the child tells you; withdrawn; chronic depression;  excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; self-devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children’s art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material. |
| **Child Sexual Exploitation** | Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and / or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. |
| **4. Emotional Abuse**  **Physical Indicators**  **Behavioural Indicators**  **Domestic Violence and Abuse** | Is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently 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. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child’s peers. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.  Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self-mutilation;  signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).  Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.    It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is defined as threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member. (Stopping Domestic and Sexual/Violence and Abuse in NI,16, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools ‘17.) |
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Symptoms which young people may display and which are only indicators include:

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

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

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

**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

**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.**

**Associated Issues**

In training, staff are alerted to the following issues:

* Safety / internet Abuse
* Sexting
* Self-Harm
* Forced Marriage
* Female Genital Mutation
* Gender Identity / Sexual Orientation
* Harmful Sexualised Behaviour (**Appendix 4**)

**How a Parent can make a Complaint**

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child’s development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or any member of the school’s safeguarding team: the Principal, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. (**Appendix 1**)

(Gateway Team Tel: 0800 7837745, PSNI Public Protection Unit Tel: 101, Ask for PPU in the E District) or the PSNI Central referral Unit 028 902 59299

Should a parent feel that after the above steps have been completed and there is no resolution, they can contact the Police Ombudsman. Tel: 0800 343 424 **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE**

**The designated teacher for Child Protection (DT) is Ca Devlin. In her absence the deputy designated teacher for Child Protection (DDT)**

**R McKenna will assume responsibility for Child Protection.** On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDT is in the school P Glass, the Vice Principal will assume responsibility for Child Protection.

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate as this is the responsibility of Social Services and/or PSNI. Staff should report these concerns immediately to the Designated/Deputy Teacher and full notes (signed and dated) should be made. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The DT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

Contact with or referral to social services will not automatically trigger a child protection investigation in every case; in certain circumstances, however, an approach to social services may properly result in a decision that an investigation is necessary, whether or not the teacher intended a formal referral. Any allegation by a child that he or she is suffering or has suffered abuse should be treated seriously and should immediately trigger the reporting procedures.

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

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

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. He/she will also notify the EA’s Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team with a copy sent to the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection and a copy will be kept in the school’s child protection file.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the DT is the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher or the Principal).

Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately. Child protection procedures as outlined in Appendix will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

This procedure in **Appendix 2**

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has any concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held ‘in confidence’. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

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

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

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made about the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. He/She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

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

This procedure is shown in **Appendix 3**.

**DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DO:** | **DO NOT:** |
| * Stay calm * Receive and accept the opportunity * Listen to what the child says * Reassure the child that they have done the right thing * Assure the child they are not at fault * Respond with what you are going to do * Remember not to promise the child confidentiality, you have to report this * Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words, no opinions * Record accurately what the child says * Seek support for yourself | * Delay * Start to investigate * ASK LEADING QUESTIONS * Promise to keep secrets * Make the child repeat the story * Panic * Ignore the child’s behaviour * Remove any clothing e.g. to check bruises * DO NOTHING |

**REMEMBER**

* By reporting a concern about a child or a member of staff you are **NOT** making a judgement.
* Be reassured, it is **NOT** your job to investigate your concerns. In the best interests of our pupils it **IS** your **responsibility** to report your concerns.

**SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF / SCHOOL MAKING REFERRALS TO SOCIAL SERVICES / POLICE**

Any teacher or other member of staff who follows the procedures in this guidance, and those of the Education and Library Board, C.C.M.S. or the Area Child Protection Committee, in making a report of suspected child abuse by any person (whether or not connected with the school), is acting within the course of his/her employment, and in such circumstances, where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the full support of his/her employing authorities and will not be legally or financially liable should any consequential action be brought against him/her.

**CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING ETHOS: The Preventative Curriculum**

We in St. Colm’s aim to create a positive ethos within the school which inhibits the misuse of power, but rather promotes individual empowerment and values, such as openness, honesty, tolerance, respect and caring for oneself and others. We aim to create an ethos where each pupil feels safe both within and outside the classroom. We aim to provide pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection where children are encouraged to talk and are listened to. The plasma foyer screen permanently displays photos of DT and DDT. Head of Year display boards contain sources of support. A flow diagram of what to do if a pupil has concerns is displayed in all classrooms.

* Pupils are aware that Ca. Devlin and the Principal are designated teachers. This is recorded in Student Planner and displayed on H.O.Y. notice boards. Parents and pupils are advised regularly of our Child Protection Policy and Procedures, our designated teachers and the procedures for making complaints about suspected child abuse on an annual basis.
* Designated teachers’ names are contained in School prospectus.
* Two members of the Board of Governors have specific responsibility for child protection.
* Staff have been advised of their responsibilities regarding Child Protection:

a) being vigilant

b) being aware of the DENI Code of Conduct for staff (2017/04)

* Pupils are aware of our school counsellor and how to make contact with her.
* Substitute teachers are provided with an outline of child protection procedures and are vetted through Access NI.
* Physical incidents are recorded in the school incident book in the school office.
* All staff – teaching, auxiliary and ancillary receive regular Child Protection training on a bi-annual basis, with interim training for new staff where appropriate.
* Our positive behaviour policy is aimed at supporting vulnerable children within our school.
* SMT where necessary liaise with support agencies, such as Social Services, EWO, Educational Psychologist and the PSNI.

The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (NI) 2007 specifies the minimum content for each area of learning of the curriculum at each key stage. Teachers have considerable flexibility to select from within those areas of learning the aspects they consider appropriate to the ability and interests of their pupils.

Through our Pastoral Care Policy we try to create a culture in which children feel confident and secure talking to staff about issues which concern them and where staff will listen to them. Our Cara system for Year 8 contributes to this.

The Key Concepts of Personal Safety are incorporated into the Pastoral Programme and into the Personal Development strand of LLW. Where appropriate, this awareness is reinforced by carefully selected external providers who are then evaluated by pupils and staff, as listed in the Learning Outside the Classroom document The Relationships and Sexuality policy and audit identifies where areas of leaning that reinforce positive relationships.

Our Pastoral Programme Personal Development Programme gives specific attention to pupils emotional wellbeing, health & safety, healthy relationships and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. We aim to develop the confidence and resiliences and coping skills of pupils.

We seek to protect our pupils by helping them to learn about risks of possible abuse, to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. This also extends to e-safety education delivered through our pastoral system and ICT classes.

Parents opinions are sought and our open door policy of home – school contact is promoted.

**PUPIL SAFETY / CHILD PROTECTION MEASURES**

The internal arrangements and procedures operating on a day to day basis for the safety and welfare of our pupils are

**Supervision**

**Morning**

8.15 – 8.50 Principal and Vice Principal

8.50 – 9.00 Additional staff on rota supervision

**Morning Break**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 10.00 – 10.15 | SMT and staff on duty supervise designated areas and accompany pupils into assembly on Monday. |

**Lunchtime**

* Key Stage 3 pupils may go home only if they have written permission. These pupils carry ‘Home for Lunch Card’.
* Access to Technology, Careers and Science areas is closed until 12.35
* SMT on duty assists with supervision in canteen.
* All other supervisors in designated areas. (See Supervision Policy)

**After-school**

* Pupils who normally go home on buses may not go down town after school unless they have written permission from parent which is given to H.O.Y.
* SMT and staff on duty will supervise until the last bus has gone.
* Only those under supervision may remain behind in the school after 3.10 and must remain in the school until 4.15.
* Should a pupil miss their bus, they must return into school and report this to the school office.

**Attendance**

(Parents are made aware of our procedures in the Attendance policy and in Attendance section of the Student Planner)

* Parents should contact the school if child is not coming to school before 10.00 a.m.
* All un-notified absences may be queried by phone by the Principal or H.O.Y.
* Pupils wishing to leave early report to H.O.Y. who gives permission only if there is written parental consent. Phone calls will be approved by the H.O.Y.
* Latecomers sign in at office. This is tracked by Head Of Year
* Secretary confirms attendance from printed class list. Names of absentees are available to staff after class 1.
* Class teachers may compare attendance with email and advise/query and any discrepancy with the office who will advise the Principal / Vice Principal who will investigate.

**Safety**

* Safety advice is included in the Student’s Handbook.
* Fire drill will be held once per term.
* The Principal and the relevant H.O.Y. monitor all aspects of plant and practice.
* Parent or Guardian will be contacted to make arrangements for a pupil who is sick to be collected at school and taken home.
* Pupils conducting out of school activities are provided with reflective vests.
* All new pupils are provided with reflective arm bands for winter.

**Security**

* + All security cameras are operational 24 hours.
* All visitors must report to the office and sign in and wear a Lanyon.

**Photography and Images of Children**

At the beginning of each year Parents sign a consent form for school procedures regarding:

1. Photographs / recording

2. Mobile phone use

3. Internet access

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

APPENDICIES

FOR ALL STAFF

**Appendix 1**

**How a Parent can make a Complaint**

I have a concern about my/a child’s safety

I can talk to the class/form teacher

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the designated/deputy designated teacher for child protection Mrs Ca. Devlin or the Principal Mrs R. Mc Kenna

If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the

Chair of the Board of Governors.

At any time a parent can talk to a Social Worker at the Gateway Team

**Tel:** **0800 783 7745** {Free Phone from a Landline}

Or can contact the PSNI Public Protection Unit

**Tel**: **101** {Ask for PPU in ‘E’ District}

Or PSNI Central referral Unit 028 902 59299

Should a parent feel that after the above steps have been completed and there is no resolution, they can contact the Police Ombudsman.

Tel: 0800 343 424

**PASTORAL CARE IN SCHOOLS**

**SAFEGUARDING**

**Appendix 2**

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

(Circular 2015/13)

**Key Points**

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

**Guidance on next steps**

Lead Individual then:

Establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion

**Possible Outcomes**

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or the BoG to agree way forward from the options below

Allegation addressed through relevant Disciplinary Procedures

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection Procedures imposed

Alternatives to Precautionary Suspension imposed

Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded

**PASTORAL CARE IN SCHOOL**

**SAFEGUARDING**

**Appendix 3**

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

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

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

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

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

**Child Protection referral is not required**

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children’s Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person’s consent (where appropriate).

**Child Protection referral is required**

Designated teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children’s Services and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

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

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

* It is imperative that any disclosure by a child, or concern that indicated 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 PSNI Central Referral Unit and Duty Social Workers can be found in the Contacts Section.
* DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools.

**Appendix 4**

**Guidance on Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour  
Summary of DENI Circular Number 2016 / 05 April ‘16**Child Protection procedures require that issues of concern, including inappropriate sexual behaviour, should be notified to the designated teacher for Child Protection. The designated teacher in turn notifies the Principal and together they decide, taking advice as necessary, on the most appropriate course of action.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours – these can be defined as ‘healthy’, ‘problematic’ or ‘harmful’.

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

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

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the Education Authority 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.
* individual incidents, or a series of incidents, retrospectively and are a guide for decision making about level of concern/ intervention.

**Harmful sexualised behaviour**

* will always require intervention and schools should refer to their own child protection policy.
* seek the support that is available from the CPSSS

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**

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.

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.

It can be difficult to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate behaviours. Complicating factors can include the age of the child concerned or whether the child has special educational needs. Professional judgement is therefore likely to be required.