



# **St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School**

## **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION**

**September 2020**

# St Mary's Grammar School

## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

### INTRODUCTION

St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School strives to educate all its pupils within an environment where the Catholic traditions of learning, truth, justice, respect and community are promoted. Our central ethos positions the welfare of each pupil as paramount.

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 our pupils receive effective support, protection and justice.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

This policy does not exist in isolation. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management Policy and Acceptable Use Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

School policy and practice in this area shall take cognizance of the legislative and human rights context, which determines our procedures and responses.

The rights of the child which are enshrined in the:

- Children (NI) Order 1995
- European Convention on Human Rights (Human Rights Act 1998)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

provide a legislative framework and guidance for our policy and its practical operation.

The Education Order (NI) 1998 and Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Library (NI) Order 2003 set out obligations on schools including the promotion of self-discipline, the necessity of consulting with parents and pupils and the prevention of all forms of bullying.

A range of statutory and non-statutory guidance materials will guide policies and practice in this area.

Some of these are listed below:

- Pastoral Care in schools: promoting Positive Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools a Guide for Schools 2019
- Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016
- DE Circular 2006/06 – Child Protection: Recruitment of people to work with children and young people in educational settings
- DE Circular 2007/01 – Guidance on Internet Use Policy
- DE Circular 2011/22 – Advice on the safe use of the Internet and Digital Technologies
- DE Circular 2012/19 – Disclosure and Barring Arrangements – Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks
- DE Circular 2013/01 - Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools.
- DE Circular 2013/26 – Guidance on e-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy
- DE Circular 2014/27 – Managing Information on Persons who pose a risk to pupils
- DE Circular 2015/13 – Dealing with allegations of Abuse against a member of staff

- DE Circular 2015/22 – Relationship and sexuality education
- DE Circular 2016/05 – Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour
- DE Circular 2016/20 – Child Protection: Record Keeping in School
- DE Circular 2016/27 – Guidance on Online Safety
- DE Circular 2017/04 - Safeguarding and Child Protection, A Guide for Schools

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our care. In situations where child abuse is suspected, our paramount responsibility is to the child.

- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families but, where there is a conflict, the child's interest must always come first.
- In so far as legal requirements permit, the right is confidentiality for parents, careers, members of staff and students must be respected and information will only be shared in the interest of the student's welfare.

This will be achieved by:

- Continuing to develop awareness in all staff of the need for Child Protection (particular care should be taken with children with disabilities and SEN) and their responsibilities in identifying abuse.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of referral procedures within the school.
- Monitoring children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
- Ensuring that outside agencies are involved where appropriate.
- Ensuring that key concepts of Child Protection are integrated within the curriculum especially via PSHE.
- Creating an environment where children feel secure, have their viewpoints valued, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

The term 'abuse' covers **neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse, exploitation and emotional abuse. (Appendix 3)**

The policy is a statement of the school's commitment to ensuring that no abuse is suffered at school and that abuse suffered outside school, when detected, is dealt with appropriately.

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### **The School Safeguarding Team**

Mrs Fiona Crookes, Vice Principal, is the teacher designated to have specific responsibility for Child Protection.

Mrs Amanda Barr, Senior Teacher, assumes the responsibility when the designated teacher is absent or unavailable.

If both Mrs Crookes and Mrs Barr are absent the matter should then be referred to another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Mrs Siobhan Kelly, the Principal, is also a member of the Safeguarding Team

Mr Jim Sheerin is the member of the Board of Governors with responsibility for Child Protection.

Mr Sean Mahon is the chair of the Board of Governors

Members of staff, both teaching and ancillary, are aware of the designations.

The process of recruitment and appointment of staff must include a check of the possible criminal background of people who are likely to have substantial unsupervised access to children.

Information for parents/guardians of school procedures will be regularly published (normally in the summer post) (**Appendix 1**).

In the professional contact with pupils, as laid out in the Code of Conduct for Staff, (**Appendix 2**), teachers must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one to one basis with students and all staff should bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued (please refer to the School's **Safe Handling Policy**). Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the **Designated Teacher**.

Any member of staff who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or young person should complete a 'Note of Concern'. (**Appendix 5**)

All members of staff, both teaching and ancillary, are made aware of the types and symptoms of possible abuse (**Appendix 3**). They are encouraged to be vigilant and to alert the **Designated Teacher** of any suspicion of abuse. Where signs of abuse indicate the mere possibility of abuse and there is no allegation, or even firm suspicion, then the situation will be monitored carefully but discretely either to allay or confirm initial concerns. **Allegations of child abuse must always be given the highest priority.**

Where abuse is suspected by a teacher he/she will refer to the **Designated Teacher**, but may first seek clarification from the child. Questioning should be for clarification purposes only and at no time should leading questions be asked. Notes of any allegations must be taken for future referral. The child will be assured that information offered will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know but **no undertaking of confidentiality can be given by any teacher.**

Where abuse is suspected by non-teaching staff it is to be reported to the **Designated Teacher**.

In all cases where abuse is suspected, or where an allegation has been made, the **Designated Teacher** will inform the Principal and will refer the case(s) to, or consult with, social services. Where physical or sexual abuse is suspected or alleged, the case(s) will be referred to the Police. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will also be notified. The guidance and procedures set out in Circular 2015/13 will be followed in these instances.

Where the Principal is suspected or alleged to have abused a child, the **Designated Teacher** will report the matter immediately to social services, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and, if appropriate, to the Police.

Where the **Designated Teacher** is suspected or alleged to have abused a child the member of staff who first becomes aware of a possible offence will approach the **Deputy Designated Teacher** who, in turn, will inform the **Principal** immediately.

In every case where a serious complaint is made against a member of staff, the Principal, or Chairperson of the Board of Governors, as appropriate, will inform the complainant, if necessary on a regular basis, of the investigations which have been, or are being, made and their outcome.

The above reporting and referral procedures will also be employed in cases of **peer sexual abuse**.

Complying with these procedures ensures that a staff member will receive full support and will not be legally or financially liable.

The consequences of not reporting suspicions of a student being abused could be far more serious than making a report which proves to be unfounded.

In all cases where there is reasonable suspicion that a member of staff has been involved in a case of abusing a pupil, that member of staff will be suspended with pay from duty pending a full investigation. (If deemed proportionate or alternative safeguarding measures will be put in place pending a full investigation and, if deemed necessary, legal prosecution).

All members of staff have been made aware of the procedures outlined above (**Appendix 4**).

An aspect of Child Protection is creating a culture of non-tolerance of bullying which is **never** acceptable in any of its manifestations and the School has a number of infra-structural measures to prevent it and a procedure for dealing with any instances of it.

- The school provides a structured counselling support service affording every pupil the opportunity to approach any support teacher at any time. Family Works Counselling counsellors work in the school.
- All teachers are encouraged to be vigilant to detect instances of bullying and to be alert for pupils displaying symptoms of being a victim of bullying.
- Any approach by those with parental authority concerning knowledge or suspicion of bullying is taken seriously and investigated.
- Peers raising concerns for a fellow pupil re bullying have their concerns fully explored.
- Each class in Years 8-12 have a P.S.E period each week. A substantial portion of the programme followed is directly or indirectly focused on bullying issues.
- The programme of study followed by each class in Years 13-14 non-examination RS classes has a significant component devoted to bullying issues and conflict resolution.
- Outside agencies are invited to the school for appropriate student learning opportunities.

The school's **Anti-Bullying Policy** clarifies our approach to preventing and dealing with instances of bullying.

## **DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE**

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse, there are a number of things that should be done to support the child:

- stay calm and be available to listen
- listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying
- question normally without pressurising
- do not interrogate or put words into the child's mouth
- complete a 'Note of Concern' (Appendix 5)
- do not make promises other than assuring the child of school support
- reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform us
- inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on
- follow our school procedures
- immediately inform the **Designated Teacher**
- seek the advice of the **Designated Teacher** if the child is too distressed to continue in school

- know and accept your limitations and realise that the **Designated Teacher** is in place to provide appropriate support for the pupil and for you.

### **MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING**

It is essential that accurate records be kept where there are concerns about the welfare of a child. These records should then be kept in secure, confidential files, which are separate from the child's school records.

Staff must keep the **Designated Teacher** informed of:

- poor attendance & punctuality
- concerns about appearance and dress
- changed or unusual behaviour from normal
- concerns about health and emotional well being
- deterioration in educational progress
- discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child
- concerns about home conditions or situations
- concerns about pupil on pupil abuse (including serious bullying).

When there is suspicion of significant harm to a child and a referral is made as much information as possible should be given about the nature of the suspicions, the child and the family. Use of previous records (if available) may prove to be particularly useful in this respect.

A copy of any referral to Social Services must be kept on the confidential school File. A note must be made of the Duty Social Worker and the time at which the call is made. Parents should be informed of any school referrals.

Reports may be needed for Child Protection Case conferences or the criminal/civil courts. Consequently, records and reports should be:

- factual (no opinions)
- non-judgemental (no assumptions)
- clear
- accurate
- relevant.

### **THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The Principal, Mrs Siobhan Kelly, as the Secretary to the BOG, will assist the BOG to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from DE are shared promptly, and termly inclusion of child protection activities on the BOG meeting agenda. In addition, Mrs Kelly takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal's role in child safeguarding is of central importance and, while day-to-day matters may be delegated to the Designated Teacher, the Principal still retains responsibility. The Principal should decisively and promptly when notified by the Designated Teacher about a case of child abuse. The Principal and the Designated Teacher will together decide, taking advice as necessary, if the information should be referred to Social Services. The final decision must be made by the Principal.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to:

- Ensure that all relevant DENI guidance in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding is implemented within the school.

- Enable the Board of Governors to fulfil their Child Protection duties by keeping them informed of any changes to guidance procedure on legislation relating to Child Protection and ensuring the inclusion of Child Protection activities on the Agenda.
- Ensure that the school has a named Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher and that all staff know who these teachers are.
- Manage Child Protection concerns relating to staff.
- Ensure that parents and students receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedures at least every two years.
- Maintain and secure the school record of Child Abuse Complaints and make it available annually to the Board of Governors.
- Ensure that the school has a written policy for Child Protection.
- Regularly meet with the Designated Teacher.
- Make time available for in-service training on Child Protection matters.

## **THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

- To ensure that all staff know the **Designated Teacher** is responsible (and in his/her absence the **Deputy Designated Teacher**) for Child Protection issues.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- To refer promptly all cases of suspected child abuse to the Gateway Team, Social Services or the PSNI Central Referral Unit. A UNOCINI referral form will be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team and a copy sent to the Education Authority's Designated Officer. If a parent arrives to collect the child before the social worker has arrived then it must be remembered that we have no right to prevent the removal of the child. However, if there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, the Police should be called.
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- To organise regular training to all staff on Child Protection within the School.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- To ensure that all staff know about and have access to protection guidelines.
- To co-ordinate action where child abuse is suspected.
- To attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on his/her behalf.
- Maintain records of case conferences and other sensitive information in a secure confidential file and to disseminate information about the child only on a "need to know basis".
- To pass on records and inform the key worker when a child who is on the Child Protection register leaves the school. The custodian of the register must also be informed.
- To raise staff awareness and confidence on child protection procedures and to ensure new staff are aware of these procedures.
- To keep up to date with current practice by participating in training opportunities wherever possible.
- Keep the school Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's Child Protection Policy.

- To ensure consistency with the ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools 2019.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.



## Appendix 1

Re: Safeguarding and Child Protection

September 20

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

All staff in a St. Mary's, both teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to ensure the protection and welfare of our pupils. This is a duty we take very seriously. Our most recent Pastoral Inspection in November 2017 complimented our pastoral structures for their effectiveness and accessibility to pupils and parents.

One important aspect of this Pastoral provision is our procedures for dealing with a Child Protection issue. Overleaf is a flowchart outlining how you or your son might approach the school with any concern in this area. As a staff we are committed to dealing with all approaches promptly and sensitively.

Please note that Mrs Fiona Crookes (Pastoral Vice-Principal) is our **Designated Teacher for Child Protection** and that Mrs Amanda Barr (Senior Teacher) is our **Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection**. Mr Jim Sheerin is our governor with responsibility for Child Protection.

It is important that these structures for referral are in place although it is our common wish that they need never be called upon. At all times, we recognise that the pupils in our charge have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and we will continue to work in partnership with home to promote this safeguard system.

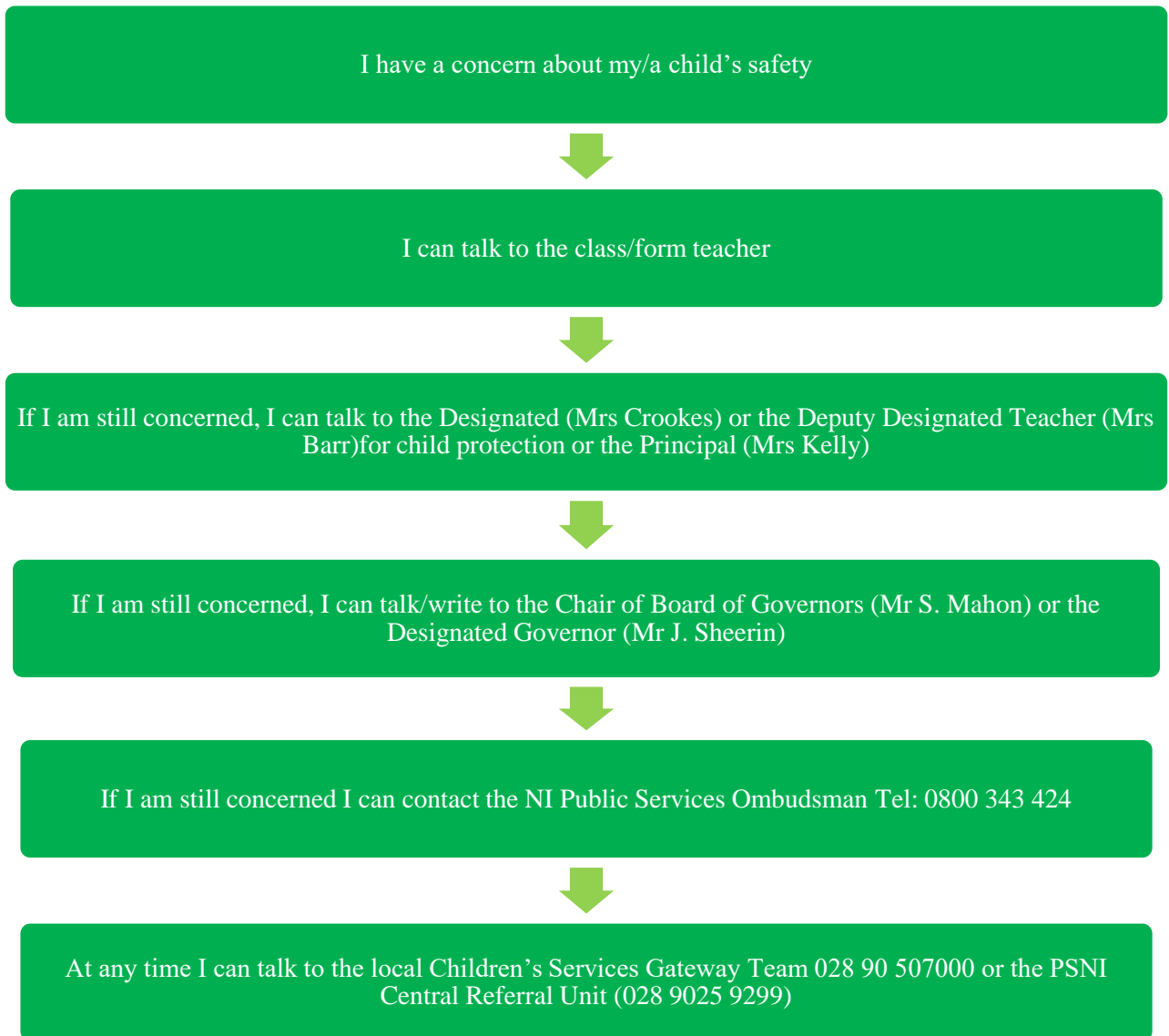
Yours faithfully

Siobhan Kelly  
Principal

## Appendix 1 (continued)

### St Mary's Grammar School CHILD PROTECTION

#### Alerting St Mary's to a potential child protection concern within the school



## Appendix 2

# A Code of Conduct for Staff of St. Mary's Grammar School Belfast

## Introduction

The protection and promotion of the welfare of children and young people is a responsibility for all members of staff in St. Mary's, 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 students entrusted to our care is paramount.

All actions concerning our students 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 our students in their charge must be above any reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences our students gain from positive interaction with staff. 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. Private Meetings with Pupils

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room or obscuring windows.
- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.
- Staff should never arrange meeting with individual pupils off school premises unless they have been prior authority to do so by the Principal.

### 2. Physical Contact with Pupils

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils 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 not feel inhibited from providing this.
- However, it is essential that any contact should be appropriate. Ensure that any physical contact, or indeed anything said or implied, cannot be misconstrued as a threat or a sexual overture.
- Physical contact, abusive language or threatening behaviour must not be a part of an overall personal system of discipline.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or

property from harm. **DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).**

- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil 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.
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report (Note of Concern) of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Designated Teacher.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils 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 pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment.

### **3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- 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.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the **Designated Teacher** before using it.

### **4. Relationships and Attitudes**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity 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 is dealing with adolescent boys. The teacher should use appropriate professional language at all times.

### **5. Communication with Students/ E. Safety and Internet Use**

Teachers should ensure that they do not give students their personal mobile numbers nor should they send personal emails to individual students.

Photographs or videos of students should only be taken for purposes authorised by the school.

### **6. Setting an Example**

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

## **7. 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. Staff should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

## **8. Conduct outside Work**

Staff should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school.

## **9. Confidentiality**

Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to the safeguarding team, in particular the DT.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from the DT. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team.

Staff need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or to the Designated Teacher or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

## **Conclusion**

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

In all circumstances, professional judgement of staff will be exercised and for the vast majority of staff this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If staff have any doubts about points in this document, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult the Designated Teacher.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with our students and their manner and approach to individual children, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children or of their parents/guardians.

## Appendix 3

### What is safeguarding?

The definition of safeguarding used in the Education & Libraries Order 2003 can be summarised as:

- protecting children and learners from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's and learners' health or development
- ensuring that children and learners are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children and learners to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

### TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND THEIR SYMPTOMS

Child abuse can be categorised as follows

- **Physical Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Exploitation**
- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Grave Concern/at risk** - this is not a distinct category and is dealt with separately.

These different types of abuse require different approaches. A child suffering from physical abuse may be in immediate and serious danger. Action should, therefore, be taken immediately. With other forms of abuse there is a need to ensure that adequate information is gathered. There is also a need to make sure that grounds for suspicion have been adequately investigated and recorded. The need to collate information must be balanced against the need for urgent action. If there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, then a decision to monitor the situation should only be taken after consultation.

Each of the categories will now be explored in more detail.

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

#### Typical signs of Physical Abuse are:

- bruises and abrasions - especially about the face, head, genitals or other parts of the body where they would not be expected to occur given the age of the child. Some types of bruising are particularly characteristic of non-accidental injury especially when the child's explanation does not match the nature of injury or when it appears frequently
- slap marks — these may be visible on cheeks or buttocks
- twin bruises on either side of the mouth or cheeks - can be caused by pinching or grabbing, sometimes to make a child eat or to stop a child from speaking
- bruising on both sides of the ear — this is often caused by grabbing a child who is attempting to run away. It is very painful to be held by the ear as well as humiliating and this is a common injury

- grip marks on arms or trunk - gripping bruises on arm or trunk can be associated with shaking a child. Shaking can cause one of the most serious injuries to a child (a brain haemorrhage as the brain hits the inside of the skull). X-rays and other tests are required to fully diagnose the effects of shaking. Grip marks can also be indicative of sexual abuse
- black eyes – are mostly commonly caused by an object such as a fist coming into contact with the eye socket. However, a heavy bang on the nose can cause bruising to spread around the eye but a doctor will be able to tell if this has occurred
- damage to the mouth – e.g. bruised/cut lips or torn skin where the upper lip joins the mouth
- bite marks
- fractures
- poisoning or other misuse of drugs – e.g. overuse of sedatives
- lack of treatment of illness
- repeated visits to hospital or a delay in reporting major injury
- burns and/or scalds – a round, red burn on tender, non-protruding parts like the mouth, inside arms and on the genitals will almost certainly have been deliberately inflicted. Any burns that appear to be cigarette burns should be cause for concern. Some types of scalds known as ‘dipping scalds’ are always cause for concern. Skin splashes are caused when a child accidentally knocks over a hot cup of tea. In contrast a child who has been deliberately ‘dipped’ in a hot bath will not have splash marks.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Typical signs of Sexual Abuse are:**

- a detailed sexual knowledge inappropriate to the age of the child
- behaviour that is excessively affectionate or sexual towards other children or adults
- attempts to inform by making a disclosure about the sexual abuse often begin by the initial sharing of limited information with an adult. It is also very characteristic of such children that they have an excessive pre-occupation with secrecy and try to bind the adults to secrecy or confidentiality
- a fear of medical examinations
- a fear of being alone - this applies to friends/family/neighbours/baby-suffers, etc.
- a sudden loss of appetite, compulsive eating, anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa
- excessive masturbation
- promiscuity
- sexual approaches or assaults - on other children or adults
- urinary tract infections (UTI) and/or sexually transmitted disease (STD) are all cause for immediate concern if found in children
- bruising to the buttocks, lower abdomen, thighs and genital/rectal areas. Bruises may be confined to grip marks where a child has been held so that sexual abuse can take place
- discomfort or pain particularly in the genital or anal areas
- the drawing of pornographic or sexually explicit images.

**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.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

**Typical signs of Neglect are:**

- Underweight - a child may be frequently hungry or pre-occupied with food or in the habit of stealing food or with the intention of procuring food. There is particular cause for concern where a persistently underweight child gains weight when away from home, for example, when in hospital or on a school trip. Some children also lose weight or fail to gain weight during school holidays when school lunches are not available and this is a cause for concern
- Inadequately clad - a distinction needs to be made between situations where children are inadequately clad, dirty or smelly because they come from homes where neatness and cleanliness are unimportant and those where the lack of care is preventing the child from thriving.

**Physical Neglect** is a difficult category because it involves the making of a judgement about the seriousness of the degree of neglect. Much parenting falls short of the ideal but it may be appropriate to invoke child protection procedure in the case of neglect where the child's development is being adversely affected.

**Grave Concern/At risk:** This is not a separate category of child abuse as such but covers a number of situations where a child may be at risk. Children whose situations do not currently fit the above categories but where social and medical assessments indicate that they are at significant risk of abuse. Grave concern may be felt where a child shows symptoms of stress and distress (see below) and any of the following circumstances apply:

- there is a known child abuser in the family
- another child in the family is known to have been abused
- the parents are involved with pornographic material to an unusual degree
- there is an adult in the family with a history of violent behaviour
- the child is exposed to potential risk or exploitation via the Internet e.g. pornographic material or chat



## **The Symptoms of Stress and Distress:**

When a child is suffering from any one or more of the previous four 'categories of abuse', or if the child is 'at risk', he will nearly always suffer from and possibly display signs of stress and distress as listed below:

- a lack of concentration and a fall-off in school performance
- aggressive or hostile behaviour
- moodiness, depression, irritability, listlessness, fearfulness, tiredness, temper tantrums, short concentration span, withdrawn or crying at minor occurrences
- difficulties in relationships with peers
- regression to more immature forms of behaviour, e.g. thumb sucking;
- self-harming or suicidal behaviour
- low self esteem
- wariness, insecurity, running away or truancy - children who persistently run away from home may be escaping from sexual physical abuse
- disturbed sleep
- general personality changes such as unacceptable behaviour or severe attention seeking behaviour
- social isolation: the child plays alone and withdraws into a private world
- indifference to separation from family
- a sudden change in school performance.

## **Parental Signs of Child Abuse**

Particular forms of parental behaviour that could raise or reinforce concerns are:

- offering implausible explanations of injuries
- showing unwillingness to seek appropriate medical treatment for injuries
- keeping an injured child away from school until injuries have healed without adequate reason
- displaying a high level of expressed hostility to the child
- displaying a general dislike of child-like behaviour
- labelling inappropriately a child's behaviour as bad
- leaving children unsupervised when they are too young to be left unattended.

## **Specific Types of Abuse**

**Grooming** of a young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation, but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

Adults may misuse online settings e.g. chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms of digital communications, to try and establish contact with young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared.

Those working or volunteering with children or young people should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming, and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** is a form of 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 include physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.<sup>13</sup>

Any child (i.e. a person under the age of 18) can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited. Young males can be victims of CSE.

## Identifying CSE

CSE can be very difficult to identify and a young person may not see themselves as a victim. However, it is our statutory responsibility to protect all children and young people from abuse, irrespective of whether or not they view themselves as a victim of abuse. **Staff need to be able to identify vulnerability in the midst of challenging behaviour and frequent resistance to, or even apparent disregard for, professional support.**

Research repeatedly shows that young people rarely report abuse through CSE. Most concerns are identified by professionals, friends or family or by proactive investigation by authorities. **We should be alert to the likelihood of CSE and protect young people accordingly.**

## Potential Indicators of CSE

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation.
- Truancy/leaving school without permission.
- Persistently going missing or returning late.
- Receiving lots of texts/ phone calls prior to leaving.
- Change in mood - agitated/stressed.
- Appearing distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.
- Physical symptoms e.g. bruising; bite marks.
- Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis.
- New peer groups.
- Significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours.
- Low self-esteem.
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less).
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair.
- Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse.

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

## Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows: -

**Domestic Violence and Abuse is** *'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'*

**Sexual Violence and Abuse is** *'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).'*

**Ref:** [www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy)

A substantial number of young people will experience some form of violence from their partner before they reach adulthood. There is a huge impact on children and young people of living in an abusive family setting. We will therefore report all concerns to the appropriate statutory agency;

### Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

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. We support our young people, through the Personal Development element of our curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships.

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through our Positive behaviour management policy in a child centred manner. There is a distinction between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. (DE Circular 2016/05 'Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour').

Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting.

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. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS will be sought by the DT. The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

**Harmful Sexualised Behaviour is** any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

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

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

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

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and the DT will seek the support that is available from the Child Protection Support Service (CPSS).

(Ref: DE Circular 2016/05 'Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour')

### **E-Safety/Internet Abuse**

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device.

Ref: 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' (January 2014) identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

- **Content risks:** the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.
- **Contact risks:** the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.
- **Conduct risks:** the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.
- **Commercial risks:** the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

In summary safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in our school or on school-organised activities and trips. The online safety policy in St. Mary's incorporates agreements on the acceptable use of (i) the internet and school-based digital technology and (ii) personal mobile technology.

### **Managing the Risks**

Twenty-first Century life presents dangers including violence, racism, radicalisation and exploitation. In St. Mary's we understand that young people need to be protected from these dangers, they also need to be educated about how to recognise and avoid the risks, in age appropriate manner. Pupils are encouraged to seek help and advice when they need it. The school follows guidance in DE Circular 2016/27 on the characteristics of good online safety.

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/education-safe-and-effective-practices](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/education-safe-and-effective-practices)

In St. Mary's the EA/C2k filtered internet service is used by all pupils and staff in school. The school operates filtering of any inappropriate online content. It is impossible to cover every scenario and our parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the protection and safeguarding of their children. St. Mary's will share information, advice and guidance on the appropriate and safe use of digital technology with parents and pupils. (See E Safety Policy for further details).

### **Cases of Inappropriate Use**

If we become aware of pupils or members of staff affected by internet abuse, either in school or outside school hours, e.g. trolling, sexting, cyber-bullying, online grooming etc. the school will follow the Anti Bullying Policy.

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

There are two aspects to Sexting:

1. **Sexting between individuals in a relationship** - Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance.
2. **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress** If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet this is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)) ...to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent -By contacting the police the DT will seek to help prevent further distribution of the image and contain the damage it can cause.

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures will be followed. The victim of abuse will be given appropriate support if appropriate they will be signposted to the school independent Counsellor

## Appendix 4

### Procedures to be followed for reporting suspected child abuse in St. Mary's.

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



Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher (Mrs Crookes) or Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Barr) in her absence and provides note of concern.



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

#### Child Protection referral is required

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



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



#### Child Protection referral is not required

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

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

## Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

### 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 the 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 BoG to agree a way forward from the options below.



Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.

Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed.

Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed.

## Appendix 5

**REF: DE Circular 2016/20**

**Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools**

**PROFORMA**

**ANNEX D**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**

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

<b>Name of Pupil:</b>
<b>Year Group:</b>
<b>Date, time of incident/disclosure:</b>
<b>Circumstances of incident/disclosure:</b>
<b>Nature and description of concern:</b>
<b>Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:</b>



<b>Action taken at the time:</b>			
<b>Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:</b>			
<b>Any further action taken:</b>			
<b>Written Report passed to Designated Teacher:</b> If 'No' state reason:	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
<b>Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:</b>			
<b>Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection File.</b> If 'No' state reason:	<input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>		

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

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

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

## Appendix 6

### Child Protection Complaint Book

Date of complaint	Details of complaint	Who made Complaint?	Against whom is the complaint?	Formally referred? To whom? Date of referral	School's Disciplinary Procedure invoked? If so, action taken?

<b>APPROVALS</b>	
<b>Principal:</b>	
<b>Chair of the Board of Governors:</b>	
<b>Date of Approval by Governors:</b>	
<b>Date of next annual review:</b>	