**LOANENDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

****

**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

**Updated January 2017**

**Updated September 2017**

**Updated January 2018**

**Updated January 2019**

**To be reviewed January 2020**

**LOANENDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

**Designated Teacher: (DT)**

**Mrs Watson**

**Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT)**

**Mr Hyde**

Child Protection Policy

The aim of this policy in Loanends Primary School is to ensure that the welfare of all pupils who attend the school is given paramount consideration. We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which all our pupils can learn and develop to their full potential. This duty rests with all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, and implicit in it is the assumption that the conduct of the school staff towards their pupils must be above reproach.

Principle of Paramountcy

“The fundamental principle in child care law and practice is that the welfare of the child (0-18 years) must always be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her.”

The welfare of the child underlies every decision made. By welfare we mean the mental and physical health of the child or their P.I.L.E.S.S.S. Development (physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, social, spiritual, sexual).

The policy that follows has been developed in consultation with the Education Authority Child Protection Team and with the whole school staff.

Current documents underpinning this Policy are as follows:

1. All relevant and current legislation in relation to child protection;
2. The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;
3. The ACPC Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures;
4. DENI Pastoral Care in Schools Child Protection, Circular 99/10. *(Updated Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, May 2017).*
5. UNCRC*.*

We will endeavour to review this policy yearly and update as appropriate. It is available to:

* all staff (permanent, temporary, supply or otherwise);
* advisors/inspectors;
* Board of Governors;
* Parents (distribution of new policy, summary document annually and full policy on request).

In Loanends, every member of staff, whether teaching or non-teaching, knows that they have a duty to be aware of Child Protection issues and to follow the child protection procedures laid down, if they have concerns. Where evidence or disclosure from a child raises concerns of abuse, the school will act quickly to follow Child Protection procedures.

The Designated Teacher (DT) whose responsibility it is to oversee the implementation of this Policy within the school is Mrs V Watson. In the case of absence of the Designated Teacher, Mr S Hyde will assume responsibility as Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT). Mrs J Leitch is the Designated Governor for Child Protection.

The Principal has overall responsibility for implementation of this Policy and must be included at all stages.

Definitions and Symptoms of Abuse

There are four main categories of abuse, as defined in “Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Chapter 2: “physical injury, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse”. The list of symptoms detailed below is not exhaustive or comprehensive but consists of frequently observed symptoms. It is important to remember that most abuse involves more than one main type, for example, sexual and emotional abuse may be recognised together. These symptoms, for example cuts and grazes, may also be accidental and not a sign of abuse. (See Appendix 2 of Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures).

Physical Injury

This is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child.

*Symptoms:*

* Bruises
* Broken bones
* Cuts and grazes
* Behaviour changes/bed wetting/withdrawal/regression
* Frequent unexplained injuries
* Finger marks
* Cigarette burns
* Afraid of physical contact
* Violent behaviour during role play
* Unwillingness to change clothes
* Aggressive language and use of threats
* Cowering
* Bruising in unusual areas
* Changing explanation or no explanation of injuries
* Not wanting to go home with parent or carer

Sexual Abuse

This includes actual or risk of sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature. It also includes forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or the production of pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

*Symptoms:*

* Inappropriate behaviour/language
* Withdrawn
* Change of behaviour
* Role play
* Rejecting physical contact or demanding attention
* Physical evidence – marks, bruising
* Pain going to the toilet, strong urine
* Rocking
* Relationships with other adults or children, for example, being forward
* Knowledge
* Stained underwear
* Bruising/marks in genital area
* Drawing – inappropriate knowledge
* Running away
* Truancy

Emotional Abuse

This includes actual or risk of severe adverse effect on the emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. It is important to remember that all abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

*Symptoms:*

* Crying
* Rocking
* Withdrawn
* Not wanting to socialise
* Cringing
* Picking up points through conversation with children
* Bad behaviour
* Aggression
* Behavioural changes
* Bribery by parent
* Self-infliction
* Lack of confidence
* Attention seeking
* Isolation from peers – unable to communicate
* Afraid of authoritative figures
* Clingy
* Treating others as you have been treated
* Delay in language development and play skills

Neglect

This includes actual or risk of persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation. It also includes extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including failure to thrive.

*Symptoms:*

* Dirty
* Lack of appropriate clothing
* Cold – complaining of
* Hunger – complaining of, gorging food
* Body sores
* Urine smells
* Unkempt hair
* No parental interest
* Not wanting to communicate
* Behaviour problems
* Attention seeking, developmental delay
* Lack of respect
* Often in trouble – police
* Bullying, lack of confidence, low self –esteem, jealousy
* Use of bad language
* Always out at all hours
* Stealing

**Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a child or young person is exploited, coerced and / or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person.

When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity or, where we have concerns about a 16/17-year-old in a sexual relationship the Designated Teacher has a duty to share this information with Social Services**.**

**Domestic Violence**

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

* Psychological
* Physical
* Sexual
* Financial
* Emotional

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

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

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

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

**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.

Confidentiality

The rapport and positive professional relationship between teachers and children is a key factor in developing children’s full potential and while teachers would not wish to damage such relationships, it will be explained to any child about whom there is concern, that it may be necessary to tell the Designated Teacher and perhaps other agencies who will help. No promise of confidentiality can be given.

As outlined above in Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Suspected and Disclosed Abuse, detailed records will be kept of all concerns and actions relating to suspicions of abuse.

Personal information about children and families held by professionals is subject to a duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the consent of the individual. However, the law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child and failure to share information in these circumstances may leave a professional open to criticism. (ACPC Short Guide to Regional Policy and Procedures, P26).

It must therefore be remembered that the protection of the child will take precedence over confidentiality.

DENI has issued the following points as part of a guide for teachers with confidentiality concerns about child protection.

* Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality, which should be clearly understood by all staff.
* Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
* If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept a secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child’s own sake. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
* Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information *only within appropriate professional contexts*. Child Protection records should be kept securely locked.

Duty of the School

Loanends Primary School recognises its legal duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and responding to abuse.

The Governing Body will ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under inter-agency procedures.

Cooperating to Safeguard – a shared responsibility

“The primary responsibility for safeguarding children rests with their parents, who should ensure that children are safe from danger in the home and free from risk from others. Some parents cannot always ensure this degree of safety and it may be necessary for statutory agencies to intervene to ensure that the child is adequately protected. Safeguarding children depends upon effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies and professionals. Constructive relationships between individual workers and agencies need to be supported by senior management in each agency.”

The staff of *all* agencies should:

* Be alert to potential indicators of abuse, neglect or failure to thrive;
* Be alert to the risk which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
* Share, and help to analyse information so that informed assessments can be made of each child’s needs and circumstances;
* Contribute to whatever actions are required to safeguard the individual child and promote his welfare and
* Work in cooperation with parents, unless this is inconsistent with safeguarding the child.

Child Protection issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate, especially through personal, social and health education.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him/herself. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, spitting, theft or damage to belongings), verbal (e.g. threats or name-calling, including sectarian, homophobic or racist name-calling) or indirect (e.g. spreading rumours, or excluding someone from social groups).

We feel that it is vital that we should act – and be seen to act – promptly and firmly to combat any form of bullying. It is each teacher’s duty to ensure that, whenever or wherever bullying occurs in school, it is brought immediately to the notice of the class teacher and the Principal. Parents and pupils are made aware of and encouraged to draw their concerns about bullying to the attention of the Teaching staff and Principal.

All allegations of bullying will be fully investigated. In more extreme circumstances Child Protection procedures may need to be introduced. Procedures are explained in the school’s Anti- Bullying Policy.

Children with Special Educational Needs

These children may be especially vulnerable to abuse. We will take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse. Indications of abuse of these children will be reported exactly as for other children. The Designated Teacher will work with the SENCo-and other specialist teachers to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have.

Duty of Staff

In Loanends Primary School all staff (teaching, non-teaching and volunteers) seek to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards pupils as part of their responsibility for pastoral care. We recognise our *duty to care* for the children which means making reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which we can reasonably foresee. Conduct of the staff towards pupils must be above reproach and the staff have discussed and agreed a suitable Code of Conduct. See Appendix 1.

*The five guidelines for touching children:*

1. Respond to the child’s needs physical, emotional or educational.
2. Age and stage appropriate.
3. Consent
4. Visibility/accountability
5. Breasts, buttocks and groin should be avoided unless in a physical crisis.

Staff hope that parents and pupils feel free to talk about any concerns and see school as a safe place. Pupils’ worries and fears will be taken seriously if they seek help from a member of staff. However, staff cannot guarantee confidentiality if concerns are such that referral must be made to the appropriate agencies in order to safeguard the child’s welfare.

Staff who observe injuries, which appear to be non-accidental, or who are told anything significant by a pupil, must make a written note as soon as possible and report their concerns to the DT. Any written records should be made using factual and neutral language. Record:

* the nature of the information
* who gave it
* days, dates, times of observations or circumstances
* where concern relates to indicators, a description of these
* with disclosure or clarification chats, children’s statements.

If staff have significant concerns about any pupil which may indicate physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, they must discuss these with the DT who may contact the agencies responsible for investigation and child protection. *School staff do not carry out investigations themselves, nor do they decide whether children have been abused.* This is a matter for specialist agencies.

Information provided by a parent who has contacted a member of staff concerning abusive behaviour in their family or another pupil’s family, should be treated in the same manner. If a member of staff is unsure about the reliability of a parent’s account of an injury or feels intimidated by his/her challenging behaviour, then they should pass this information on to the DT.

*Talking to a child*

This should be done in a sensitive manner. The child should feel able to share their concerns. They should not be pressurized. The way in which a child is spoken to can have an effect on evidence. The extent of questioning, therefore, should be kept to a minimum. Don’t ask leading questions or questions which could impose the adult’s own assumptions. Listen, don’t interrupt or try to interpret what the child is trying to say.

Make notes on the discussion as soon as possible and pass these on to the DT. Notes may be needed in subsequent court proceedings.

Where any member of staff follows the procedures in the policy *he/she is acting within the course of his/her employment and 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.*

To help assess whether or not a child is at risk of abuse we will consider the possibility of *significant* harm or possible *significant* harm. For example, bullying is harm but when it becomes *significant* harm it becomes a Child Protection issue.

Duty of Parents

The Child Protection Policy will be made available to parents on request. A summary document will be sent out in September and it is parents’ responsibility to familiarise themselves with the procedures. These procedures are also highlighted at the Annual Information Sessions.

Parents are expected to help their children to behave in non-violent and non-abusive ways towards both the staff and other pupils. Parents will be informed if it is necessary to use minimal force to prevent a pupil from injury or to prevent a pupil from harming others.

Parents should always inform the school of any accidental bruising or other injuries that might otherwise be misinterpreted. Parents will be asked to update school information regularly, to disclose relevant advice on non-molestation (or other) orders and to inform the school about anything which could cause distress and change to the child, for example a bereavement, family disruption or social problem and so enable the school to be sensitive and supportive to the child’s needs.

If parents have any complaints about staff behaviour, they should be made to the Principal in the first instance. All those involved, both pupils and staff, are entitled to a fair hearing. The Principal will report back verbally to all parties involved within a fortnight, if possible. If parents are not satisfied with the school’s response, the Principal will advise whom they should contact.

Maintaining Records

*No referral/referred but not placed on the Child Protection Register*

Regarding the above to be kept indefinitely.

A confidential copy of the records sent to any subsequent school. (EA will be contacted before doing this and EA will be spoken to before asking a previous school for any such information).

*Referred and child’s name placed on Child Protection Register*

Record the fact and any associated information from Social Services etc. on the child’s file.

*Child’s name on the Child Protection Register*

Inform the receiving school child’s name is on the register.

Destroy all Social Services records e.g. minutes of case conferences.

Keep your own records on the child’s file.

Inform Case Coordinator of child moving school and action taken regarding records.

*Child’s name is removed from the Child Protection Register*

Social Services to inform the School.

All Social Services records to be destroyed.

School records *remain.*

Protocol to be Followed Regarding Record Keeping and the Disposal of Records

**Transfer of Child Protection Records**

Under the Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) (Transitional) Regulations (NI) 2007, Boards of Governors are required to make arrangements to transfer a formal record of a pupil’s academic achievements, other skills and abilities and progress within 15 school days of a pupil transferring schools. The requirement does not include the transfer of child protection records.

**However, where there have been, or are current, concerns about a pupil the school should consider what information should be shared with the new school.**

**It is good practice for the Designated Teacher to discuss concerns directly with the DT from the receiving school in advance of sending the Child Protection Record.**

**STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN A CHILD ON WHOM THE SCHOOL HOLDS SAFEGUARDING OR CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION LEAVES THE SCHOOL**

**STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN A CHILD WHOSE NAME IS ON THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER IS CHANGING SCHOOL**

**Closure of Child Protection Records**

When a pupil leaves the school or child protection concerns cease to be current or ongoing, and records cease to be of active use other than for reference purposes, the child’s individual Child Protection File should be closed. The DT should consult the School’s Disposal of Records Schedule, review the file and mark the front cover of the file indicating the date on which the file can be destroyed, for example, 30 years from the pupil’s date of birth. Closing a file simply means that no further papers can be added. If new concerns arise a new file can be opened and cross-referenced with the previous record.

When a pupil leaves the school or child protection concerns cease to be current or ongoing, and records cease to be of active use other than for reference purposes, the child’s individual Child Protection File should be closed. The DT should consult the School’s Disposal of Records Schedule, review the file and mark the front cover of the file indicating the date on which the file can be destroyed, for example, 30 years from the pupil’s date of birth. Closing a file simply means that no further papers can be added. If new concerns arise a new file can be opened and cross-referenced with the previous record.

See Circular 2016/20 (**See Appendix 1**)

**Closure, Retention and Disposal of CP Records Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Record | Name | DOB | Date of Closure | End of Retention Period | DisposalHow and by whom |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Record of Child Abuse Complaints Against a Member of Staff

**Staff Relations**

Relationships between children and all staff are developed on trust and mutual respect. While their integrity is both professional and personal, it is essential that the potential for misunderstanding is acknowledged. Staff must ensure that their words and actions cannot be misconstrued as abuse in any form and so will ensure that all physical and verbal contact with children is irreproachable, particularly in a one-to-one situation. A record of such complaints will be kept and signed at the end of the year by the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

All staff in contact with children will have have undergone a criminal record check upon appointment. Whether in a professional or voluntary capacity, only those who have been cleared through Access NI will be permitted to work with pupils.

In the event of a complaint being made against a member of staff, the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Governors will clarify the situation and if the concern persists, will ask the Education Authority’s Designated Officer to carry out an investigation in line with DENI advice. The following steps will be taken:

* the alleged abuser will be informed of the allegations and progress of the investigation
* investigation as per any other suspected abuser
* regard to be shown in priority to
	+ welfare of child
	+ efficient functioning of school
	+ rights of individual accused to be considered innocent until proven guilty.
* Where appropriate the member of staff will be suspended pending investigation (in law suspension is considered a neutral act).

*When?*

Action against a member of staff regarding an allegation of abuse:

* Formal Referral made
* School disciplinary procedures enacted.

*Where?*

The Principal retains record confidentially (on teacher’s file for 5 years in the case of a verbal or written warning).

*What?*

The date and brief details of the complaint.

By whom and against whom it was made.

If complaint formally referred, to whom it was referred and the date.

If dealt with under the school’s disciplinary procedures – brief note of the outcome (a record will be kept on the staff file and on a file about child).

Signed by both Principal and DT.

*Who?*

Made available to the Board of Governors annually.

Seen by the Education and Training Inspectorate at every inspection.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors or amended upon advice from training for the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers.

CHILD ABUSE RECORD

For Principal or Designated Teacher

|  |
| --- |
| ADVICE SOUGHT(From whom/when?) |
|  |
| DECISION REACHED |
|  |
| REFERRAL(How? When? To whom?) | REASON FOR NOT REFERRING THE MATTER |
|  |  |
| **DATE PERSON WHO MADE COMPLAINT/GAVE INFORMATION INFORMED OF DECISION** |
|  |

# **DATE:**

**SIGNED:**

**OUTCOMES** (e.g. Child Protection Register)

COMPLAINT AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

|  |
| --- |
| DATE OF COMPLAINT |
|  |
| NATURE OF COMPLAINT |
|  |
| COMPLAINT MADE BY: |
|  |
| COMPLAINT MADE AGAINST: |
|  |
| REFERRAL**(How? When? To whom?)** | **ANY SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES IMPLEMENTED** |
|  |  |
| **DATE PERSON WHO MADE COMPLAINT/GAVE INFORMATION INFORMED OF DECISION:** |
|  |

**Contacts**

**Child Protection Support Service**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EA OFFICES** | **CONTACT NUMBER** |
| Belfast | 028 9056 4289 |
| Antrim | 028 9448 2223 |
| Dundonald | 028 9056 6216 |
| Armagh | 028 3834 1975 |
| Omagh | 028 8241 1461 |

**Duty Social Worker Gateway Team (Health & Social Care Trusts)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gateway Teams** | **CONTACT NUMBER** |
| Belfast | 028 9050 7000 |
| Northern | 0300 1234 333 |
| South Eastern | 0300 1000 300 |
| Southern | 028 3741 5285 |
| Western | 028 8283 5156 |
| Out of Hours for All Areas | 028 9504 9999 |

**PSNI**

The **Central Referral Unit (CRU)** based in Antrim Road PSNI Station is part of the Public Protection Unit and is the central referral point for child sexual and physical abuse allegations.

The office is open Monday to Friday 8 am to 9 pm and weekends and public holidays 9 am to 5 pm.

Telephone: 028 9025 9299

**PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE IN LOANENDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Child makes a disclosure to teacher or teacher has concerns about child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time. Teacher does not investigate. **MUST ACT PROMPTLY.**

**\*Designated Teacher:**

**Mrs V Watson**

Teacher refers matter to designated teacher, discusses with designated teacher, and makes full notes.

If there is any doubt about whether to take further action, advice is available from:

* EA Designated Officer;
* Social Services;

For other sources of advice see Appendix 2.

When seeking advice you do not have to give any names. You are making an enquiry.

Designated Teacher meets with Principal (in case of Principal’s absence the senior teacher) to plan course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

Principal/Designated Teacher makes referral to:

* Social Services and Care Unit. Copies of pro-forma to:
* EA Designated Officer. Indicate that it is a Child Protection issue in an envelope marked **‘CONFIDENTIAL’**

Other Action:

* Record Advice given;
* Monitor
* Review

When the Designated Teacher is unavailable, please refer to Mr S Hyde who is the Deputy Designated Teacher

Ref: ACPC regional Child Protection Procedures Chapter 3, 3.98



|  |
| --- |
| Child Protection Incident Report |
| **Name of Child :** |
| **Year Group** |  | **DOB** |
| Details of Incident/Disclosure\* |
|  |
| **Name of person completing the report:** |
| **Position :** | **Date:** |
| **Signature:** | **\* Record actual words used by the child/young person** |



|  |
| --- |
| Pastoral Concern Log |
| **Name of Child :** |
| **Year Group** |  | **Class Teacher(s) :** |
| Pastoral Concern |
|  |
| **Date :** | **Reported by :** | **Position :** |
| Action Taken |
|  |
| **Signed :** | **Date :** |
| **Position :**  | Designated Teacher 🞎 | Deputy Designated Teacher 🞎 | Principal 🞎 |

**Child Protection - Parental Advice**

**Summary Document**

Society has a duty to protect children from physical, sexual or emotional abuse and from neglect.

Most children are not abused, but for those who are it is often the concern shown by teachers or other people in the education system, which leads to their protection from further abuse.

This fact is recognised by the Department of Education which requires all those working in education to co-operate with social services and other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All teachers and others working in education are expected, as part of their terms and conditions of service, to report any concerns they might have about a child to the designated teacher in school or the designated board officer in the education and library board. Mrs. Watson acts as the Designated Teacher in Loanends and Mr Hyde is the Deputy. Concerns may also be expressed to the Principal.

If a teacher or anyone working in school

* is told by a pupil that someone is harming or abusing him
* notices any unusual marks or bruising on a pupil
* is aware of inappropriate sexual behaviour or language from a pupil
* observes signs of possible neglect of a pupil (eg often tired, hungry, not washed, not properly dressed for the weather)
* observes signs of possible emotional damage to a pupil

he/she must tell the Designated Teacher who is responsible for making a referral to Social Services.

Designated teachers, education welfare officers, educational psychologists and youth workers have all had training in Child Protection and they can ask for advice or guidance from the Designated Board Officer at any time. Both teaching and non- teaching staff as well as volunteers have all undergone the appropriate criminal records check, prior to taking up employment. Mrs Leitch is the Designated Governor for Child Protection.

While training and guidance can help to minimise the possibility of mistaken referral no one has a choice about what to do when it comes to protecting children - if anyone working with children is concerned or suspicious or is told something worrying by a child he/she must pass on his/her concerns to Social Services as soon as possible.

**Duty of Parents:**

Parents are expected to help their children to behave in non-violent and non-abusive ways towards both the staff and other pupils. Parents will be informed if it is necessary to use minimal force to prevent a pupil from injury or to prevent a pupil from harming others.

Parents should always inform the school of any accidental bruising or other injuries that might otherwise be misinterpreted. Parents will be asked to update school information regularly, to disclose relevant advice on non-molestation (or other) orders and to inform the school about anything which could cause distress and change to the child, for example a bereavement, family disruption or social problem and so enable the school to be sensitive and supportive to the child’s needs.

Any parent who may have a concern about the safety of their (or another) child should report their concern directly to the Designated Officer. If she is not available the parent should report their concern to the Principal.

If parents have any complaints about staff behaviour, they should be made to the Principal in the first instance. All those involved, both pupils and staff, are entitled to a fair hearing. The Principal will report back verbally to all parties involved within a fortnight, if possible. If parents are not satisfied with the school’s response, the Principal will advise whom they should contact.

Cooperating to Safeguard – a shared responsibility

“The primary responsibility for safeguarding children rests with their parents, who should ensure that children are safe from danger in the home and free from risk from others. Some parents cannot always ensure this degree of safety and it may be necessary for statutory agencies to intervene to ensure that the child is adequately protected. Safeguarding children depends upon effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies and professionals. Constructive relationships between individual workers and agencies need to be supported by senior management in each agency.”

The staff of *all* agencies should:

* Be alert to potential indicators of abuse, neglect or failure to thrive
* Be alert to the risk which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children
* Share, and help to analyse information so that informed assessments can be made of each child’s needs and circumstances
* Contribute to whatever actions are required to safeguard the individual child and promote his welfare
* Work in cooperation with parents, unless this is inconsistent with safeguarding the child.

Child Protection issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate, especially through personal, social and health education.

Confidentiality:

The rapport and positive professional relationship between teachers and children is a key factor in developing children’s full potential and while teachers would not wish to damage such relationships, it will be explained to any child about whom there is concern, that it may be necessary to tell the Designated Teacher and perhaps other agencies who will help. No promise of confidentiality can be given.

As outlined above in Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Suspected and Disclosed Abuse, detailed records will be kept of all concerns and actions relating to suspicions of abuse.

Personal information about children and families held by professionals is subject to a duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the consent of the individual. However, the law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child and failure to share information in these circumstances may leave a professional open to criticism. (ACPC Short Guide to Regional Policy and Procedures, P26).

It must therefore be remembered that the protection of the child will take precedence over confidentiality.

DENI has issued the following points as part of a guide for teachers with confidentiality concerns about child protection.

* Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality, which should be clearly understood by all staff.
* Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
* If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept a secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child’s own sake. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
* Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. Child Protection records should be kept securely locked.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors or amended upon advice from training for the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers.

**If a parent has a potential child protection concern**

**Appendix 1**

Staff Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in School

**Objective, Scope and Principles**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff and volunteers are expected to observe. School staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school.

This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees’ contract of employment.

1. Private Meetings with Pupils
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.
5. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials
6. Teachers should avoid using teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
7. 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. Parents will be advised, prior to sensitive issues being addressed in Health Education or PDMU.
8. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

3. Setting an Example

* 1. All staff and volunteers who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
	2. All staff and volunteers must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
	3. All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
	4. This Code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority.
	5. All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

4. Safeguarding Pupils/Students

1. All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school’s Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal).
3. The school’s DT is Mrs V Watson and the DDT is Mr S Hyde.
4. All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school’s Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents and other relevant school policies eg e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.
5. All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.
6. All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
7. All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

5. Relationships with Students

1. All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in Appendix 1 of this document.
2. Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

6. Pupil/Student Development

1. All staff and volunteers must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.
2. All staff and volunteers must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.

7. Honesty and Integrity

1. All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
2. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Principal with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

8. Conduct Outside of Work

1. All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
2. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.
3. Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual’s work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

9. E-Safety and Internet Use

1. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools’ E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.
2. Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
3. Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by ‘liking’ certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.
4. Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.
5. If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.
6. Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

10. Confidentiality

1. Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others’ advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.
2. Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student’s identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
3. There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.
4. 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 a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.
5. Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.
6. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

11. Dress and Appearance

1. All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.
2. Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
3. Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

12. Disciplinary Action

 Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

13. Compliance

 All staff and volunteers must complete the form overleaf 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

**Confirmation of Compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school’s code of conduct.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Position/Post Held:** |  |
| **Signed:** | **Date:** |

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.

**Appendix 2**

Closure, Retention and Disposal of Child Protection Records

Closure

When a pupil leaves the school or child protection concerns cease to be current or ongoing, and records cease to be of active use other than for reference purposes, the child’s individual Child Protection File should be closed. The DT should consult the School’s Disposal of Records Schedule, review the file and mark the front cover of the file indicating the date on which the file can be destroyed, for example, 30 years from the pupil’s date of birth. Closing a file simply means that no further papers can be added. If new concerns arise a new file can be opened and cross-referenced with the previous record.

**Retention of Child Protection Records**

In order to determine how long child protection records should be kept there are a number of guiding principles. The Data Protection Act 1998 requires that personal information should be:

* Adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose(s) for which they are held (third principle)
* Accurate and where necessary kept up to date (fourth principle)
* Not kept for longer than is necessary for its purpose(s) (fifth principle)

The school is the Data Controller and the school has responsibility to ensure that the Act is complied with.

Every school must have a Record Retention and Destruction Policy and a Disposal of Records Schedule. Some key questions to be considered in developing a policy for child protection records are set out at Annex E.

The potential for historical allegations to be made should also be considered in determining retention periods for child protection records.

**Retention Periods for Child Protection Records**

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

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

*\*Ref: Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DENI April 2017)*

**Appendix 3**

**Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Employee Name** | **Student Name** | **Relationship** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student outside of school, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

* I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable – this is a stipulation of such tutoring.
* I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school.
* No monies come through the school at any point, informally (eg via the child) or formally.
* No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed: Date:

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.**