

New-Bridge Integrated College

Pastoral Care Child Protection Policy



Ratified by BoG:

Date for Review:

(Updated Sept 2019)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To state clearly New-Bridge Integrated College's commitment to the welfare and safe guarding of all of the pupils in our school in compliance with the Law.
- To identify by name the members of the College Safeguarding Team and to state their roles.
- To define 'Child Abuse' in the context of this policy; physical and behavioural indicators of abuse and some specific types of abuse.
- To document procedures which will be applied by New-Bridge Integrated College when dealing with any suspected cases of child abuse.
- To ensure the whole school community of pupils, staff and parents are aware of how they should identify and respond to possible abuse.
- To identify general and specific means by which an abused pupil may feel confident to seek advice and help relevant to their situation.

Statement of Commitment and responsibility

We in New-Bridge Integrated College have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. New-Bridge Integrated College aims to provide our pupils with relevant information, skills and attitudes to help them learn about the risks of possible abuse, recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All staff on the payroll of New-Bridge Integrated College, and any unsupervised volunteers, are appropriately vetted in compliance with Access NI; all substitute teachers are employed from the NI Substitute Teachers Register.

All staff employed by New-Bridge Integrated College, and any volunteers, are expected to adhere to the 'Staff Code of Conduct' which includes advice on the Use of Social Media by staff.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

Definitions (taken from Circular 2016/20: Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools):

Who is 'a child'?

For the purposes of this guidance, the term 'child' has the same meaning as in the Children (NI) Order 1005, i.e. a person under the age of 18. In the case of a pupil with special educational needs the term 'child' should be interpreted as including any person who has not attained the age of 19 and is a registered pupil at the school. A person who attains age 19 during a school year shall be deemed not to have attained that age.

What is child protection?

'Child protection' refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer harm. A **child in need of protection** is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act

of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm as defined in Article 50 of the Children (NI) Order 1995.

What is significant harm?

The Children Order defines '**harm**' as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. The Order states that 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are physical and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; 'health' means physical and / or mental health; and 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

There is no absolute definition of '**significant harm**', as this will be assessed on a case by case basis. Article 50(3) of the Children Order states that "where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child".

The Law

The United Kingdom agreed to be bound by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. It lists a number of statements, setting out the rights which all children and young people up to the age of 18 should have, no matter where they live or whatever their circumstances. In the context of this policy, the most important of these are in three Articles:-

Article 19 provides that children have the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.

Article 12 further provides that a child who is capable of forming his/her own views should be assured the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, these views being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Article 3 provides that when organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which came into effect on 4 November 1996, provides that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration, and it is this essential principle which underpins the policy which follows.

Summary of Advice

- a child for the purpose of this policy is any child or young person under the age of 18
- it is a child's right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously, and to be consulted according to his/her age and understanding about the proposed action
- all schools and colleges have a pastoral responsibility towards the children and young people in their charge and should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved
- in all matters relating to child protection procedures or policies the best interests of the child must be the paramount consideration
- every school should designate a teacher and a second teacher to have specific responsibility for child protection matters
- all staff, teaching and non-teaching, should be alert to the signs of possible abuse, and should know the procedures to be followed
- where child abuse is suspected, it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the appropriate reporting and recording procedures are followed as quickly as possible
- any preliminary enquiries should be made carefully and sensitively; it is not the responsibility of education staff to undertake investigations or to make extensive enquiries
- where an allegation is made against a member of staff and the case is referred to one of the investigating agencies, the Principal should inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors immediately and the member of staff in question should either be removed from direct contact with children or be suspended as a precautionary measure pending further investigation
- child protection arrangements should be accessible within the school and understood by children so that they know what to do and to whom to go
- child protection arrangements should seek to maintain the necessary balance between protecting children and respecting the rights of parents, families/carers and members of staff

New-Bridge Integrated College Safeguarding Team 2020/21



Here at New-Bridge the care, welfare and safety of each individual student is extremely important. In addition to our Pastoral Care Systems, the Safeguarding Team are here to support you in any situation where you may feel at risk.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection:	Mrs H.Harbinson (Vice Principal)
Deputy Designated Teacher for CP	Mrs M Wright
Safeguarding Team	Mrs A Cumiskey (SENCO)
Safeguarding Team	Mrs D Manson
Principal:	Mrs A Anderson
Designated Governor for Child Protection:	Mr C O'Hare
Board of Governors - Chairperson:	Mrs N Connolly

Other useful contacts:

School Counsellor:

Counsellor can be accessed via:

- Form Tutor
- Year Co-ordinator
- Mrs Harbinson
- Self-referral

EWO (Education Welfare Officer):

Mr K McCaughey

Receive Reassure Respond Record Refer

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers

The Principal

The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors

Members of the College Staff

All members of staff must:

- Listen calmly.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure child but do not make promises of confidentiality.
- Do not interrogate the child or ask leading questions.
- Explain, as best you can, what will happen next.
- Make a concise written record of a child's disclosure taking care to use the actual words of the child.
- Act promptly.
- Informed the Designated teacher IMMEDIATELY, or in his absence the Deputy Designated teacher or the Principal.
- Avail of whole school and other relevant training regarding the safeguarding of children.

In addition, teachers, in particular Form Tutors and Year Co-ordinators, should keep the Designated Teacher informed of any concerns about pupils such as poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in academic progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home

conditions including disclosures about domestic violence, and any other concerns which they feel may be relevant.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child Abuse can be categorised into the following types: -

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.

5. **Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person 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.

**All the above definitions are from Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016)*

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland

Appendix B contains additional information about some Specific Types of Abuse to be aware of.

New-Bridge Integrated College Preventative Personal Development Programme

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours.

At New-Bridge we work hard to ensure our pupils are aware of “keeping safe messages” and we have a proactive promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils within and across the broader school community. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional, and health issues, developing the confidence, resiliencies and coping skills of our pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing certain difficulties.

At New-Bridge we are strongly committed to developing positive relationships and a caring ethos across the whole school. Our Personal Development curriculum (PD) and the wellbeing of our pupils has a high priority in our School Development Plan and “keeping safe messages” are embedded throughout the school. Our Pastoral Team delivering the PD programme are highly skilled in both pastoral care and personal development and there are effective links across the wider curriculum.

Protecting Children – A Duty to Care

Child Abuse means ill treatment or neglect leading to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm. The following illustrations outline common indicators of abuse and neglect and are not exhaustive. These signs are not a checklist; indeed, many of them could have other explanations.

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent.• Human bite marks, welts or bald spots.• Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions.• Untreated injuries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-destructive tendencies.• Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.• Chronic runaway.• Aggressive or withdrawn.• Fear of returning home.• Reluctant to have physical contact.• Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body.

Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constant hunger.• Poor state of clothing and / or personal hygiene.• Untreated medical problems.• Emaciation / distended stomach.• Constant tiredness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tiredness, listlessness.• Lack of social relationships.• Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging.• Frequently absent or late.• Low self-esteem.

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden speech disorder.• Signs of mutilation.• Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness).• Wetting and / or soiling.• Attention seeking behaviour.• Poor peer relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking).• Reluctance for parent liaison.• Fear of new situations.• Chronic runaway.• Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat. • Torn, stained or bloody underclothes. • Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches. • Difficulty in walking or sitting. • Frequent urinary or yeast infections. • Vulnerable diseases. • Unexplained pregnancies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be chronically depressed / suicidal. • Inappropriately seductive or precocious. • Sexually explicit language. • Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence. • Recurring nightmares / fear of the dark. • Outbursts of anger / hysteria. • Overly protective of siblings.

Grooming / Child Sexual Exploitation

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in mood – agitated / stressed • Appearing distraught / dishevelled or under the influence of substances • Physical symptoms e.g. bruising, bite marks • Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less attention) • Self-harm and other expressions of despair • Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of Money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation • Truancing/leaving school without permission • Persistently going missing or returning late • Receiving lots of texts / phone calls prior to leaving • Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age • Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis • New peer groups • Significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend • Increasing secretiveness around behaviours • Low self esteem

N.B. IF IN DOUBT SPEAK TO SOMEONE NOW.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or Disclosed) Child Abuse

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Ms K Murphy (Head of Senior School) and the Deputy Designated Teacher is Mr A Tate (Head of Junior School). Together they will assume responsibility for all Child Protection matters.

In the event that neither are available, please seek advice from Mrs A Cumiskey (SENCO), Mrs H Harbinson (VP) or Mrs A Anderson (Principal).

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

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly.

The 5 Rs provide a solid framework for action:

Receive

Reassure

Respond

Record

Refer

The member of staff should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her and make full notes ('Note of Concern' Template is included in **Appendix A** for use by staff).

The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

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

The Principal/Designated Teacher will seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA Child Protection Services before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to the Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal or Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply unless the complaint is about the Designated Teacher. Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from

duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure, pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure the necessary action is taken.

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

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

Figure 1
 Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the College Staff.

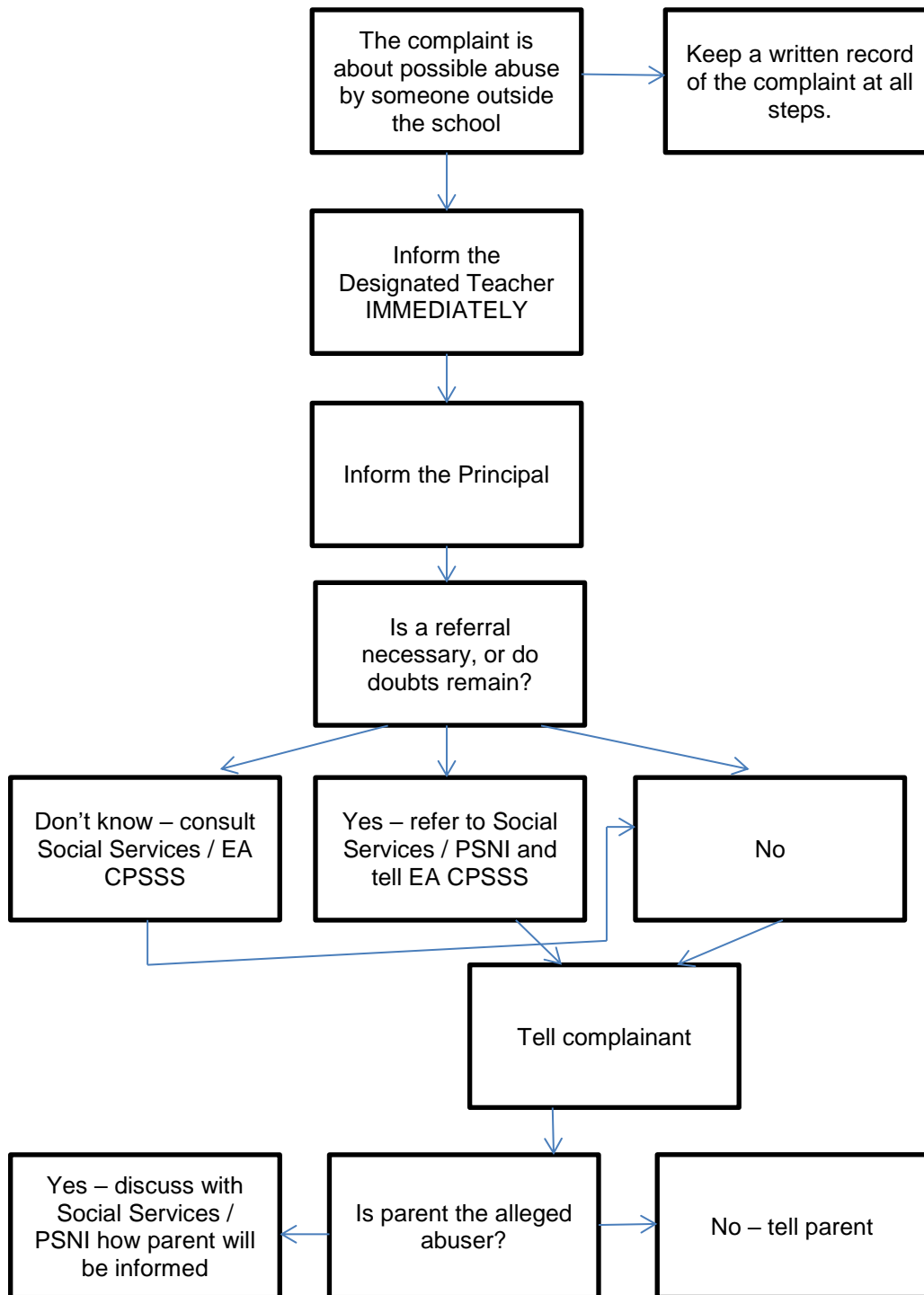
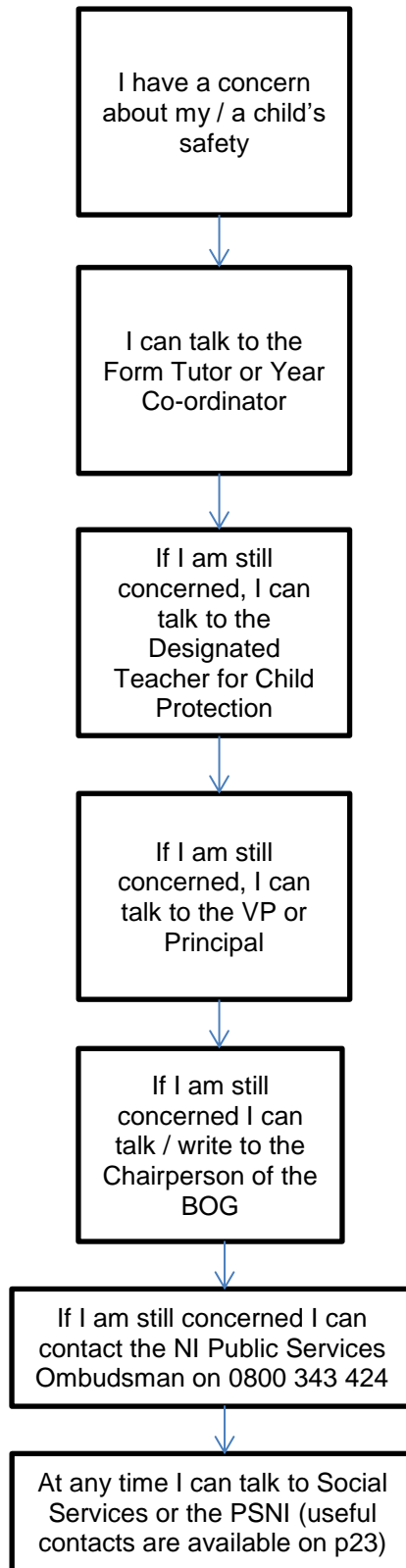


Figure 2
How a parent can make a complaint



Complaints Against School Staff

Where a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the school – procedures to be followed:-

A complaint or allegation may be made, in the context of child protection, about the conduct or activities of a member of the school towards a child or children. If the complaint has not been made directly to the Principal and she is not the subject of the complaint, it should be referred directly to her by the person to whom it was made.

Having satisfied herself that a complaint has indeed been made, the Principal should immediately:-

- inform the Designated teacher (if she is not the subject of the complaint), who will initiate the record of the complaint
- consult with the Designated office of the EA CPSSS to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action and
- consult the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

The Principal, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, will decide that

- a) the allegation is apparently without substance, and no further action is necessary;
or
- b) an immediate referral to the Social Services or the PSNI is warranted; or
- c) the allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedure

Where it is decided that no further action is necessary, it is the Principal's responsibility to:-

- advise the member of staff concerned that a complaint has been made and the nature of it; and also of the fact that it is considered to be without substance and no further action is being taken
- advise the designated officer in the EA CPSSS of the decision taken
- advise the complainant, in writing, of the action taken on foot of the complaint and its outcome, including information on other means of pursuing their complaint if they remain dissatisfied

The Principal should place a brief record of the complaint on the file of the pupil concerned with copies of any correspondence on the complaint.

Where it is decided that a formal referral of the complaint is necessary it is the Principal's responsibility to notify immediately:-

- the Social Services or, especially where physical or sexual abuse is suspected or alleged, the PSNI
- the designated officer of the EA CPSSS
- the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Precautionary Suspension should not be automatic, and, depending on the circumstances of the case, some preliminary investigation by the Social Services and/or PSNI may be necessary before a decision should properly be taken to suspend, even as a precautionary measure.

In all cases where the Principal has decided that a formal referral is warranted, the member of staff should be immediately removed from direct contact with children

and should undertake non-contact duties; depending on the nature and severity of the allegation and the potential risk to children, it may be necessary for the member of staff to be suspended immediately.

In any case where the Principal considers that a child or children may be at risk, or the PSNI or Social Services advise that the member of staff's continued presence in the school would impede their investigation, the member of staff concerned should be suspended as a precautionary measure.

Once a decision has been taken to make a formal referral and that the member of staff will be suspended, he/she should be advised, in writing, of the nature of the allegation and the reason for precautionary suspension, and should also be advised to seek professional advice before making any form of response.

The person making the complaint should also be informed immediately, in writing, of the decision to make a formal referral and of the suspension of the member of staff concerned.

Where a formal referral is made it is important that the Principal should ensure that a detailed written record of the complaint including dates and times is maintained. This should include –

- when, by whom and to whom the complaint was made
- what supplementary evidence, if any, was offered, from whom, and its nature
- details of any physical injury noted
- from whom advice was sought, and its nature
- the decision taken and how, when, by whom and to whom it was conveyed and the reason for it
- by whom, to whom and when the referral was made
- a copy of any correspondence on the complaint

This record should be signed and dated by the Principal, countersigned by the Designated teacher and retained in the school, on the files of both the child and the member of staff concerned.

Complaints to be pursued under the school's disciplinary procedures

In considering such cases, the Principal should take into account:-

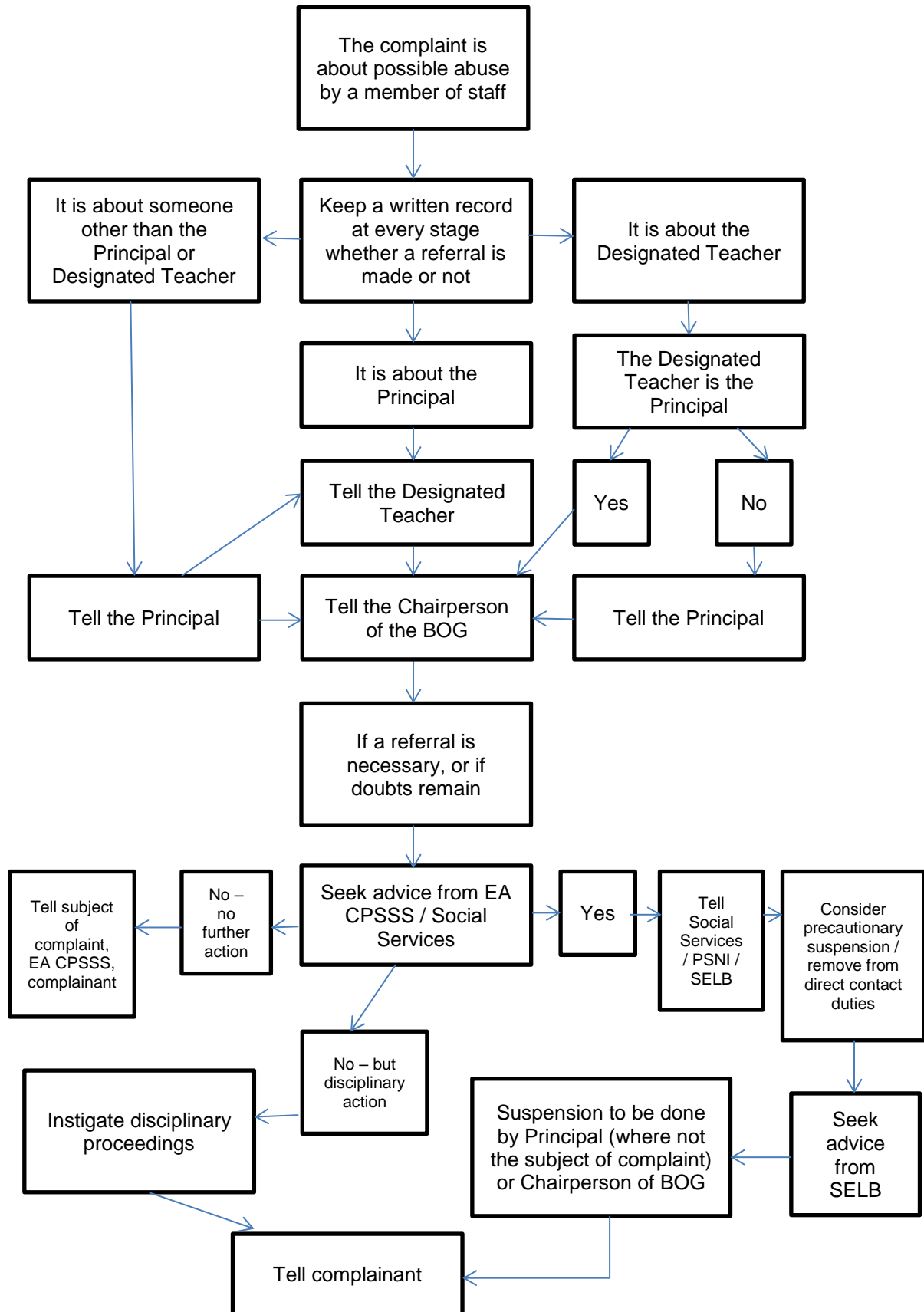
- whether the behaviour complained of goes beyond the actions and conduct which could reasonably be expected of a teacher in encouraging reluctant pupils to learn
- whether the behaviour complained of exceeds what should properly be pursued as a disciplinary matter and does, in fact, constitute abuse, in which case the appropriate child protection procedures should be instituted

Where the Principal takes the view that the behaviour complained of should be pursued as a disciplinary matter, the disciplinary procedures agreed in the Teachers' Negotiating Machinery should be followed.

The Principal should ensure that details of the complaint and the disciplinary sanction, including dates and details of all spoken communications and copies of all correspondence, are maintained on the file of both the member of staff and of the child or children concerned, for a period of five years.

Where a member of staff receives a complaint concerning possible child abuse by the Principal, all aspects of the above procedures for complaints against a member of staff should be followed, save that the role set out above for the Principal should be exercised by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The employing authority should be immediately consulted in any such case.

Figure 3
 Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the College staff.



Pastoral Care: Child Protection Summary

All members of staff whether teaching or non-teaching, have a responsibility towards the children in our charge, and should take reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety preserved.

Previously staff have been instructed orally to report any concern regarding the welfare of a pupil. This is with particular regard for any concern that may be raised over suspected abuse, physical or sexual.

If there is such a concern the following procedures should be followed:

1. If in any doubt report the concern.
2. This report should be made immediately so that any necessary preventive action may be taken.
3. With matters of this nature the report should be made directly to Ms K Murphy who is the College's designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection.

In her absence the referral should be made to the Deputy Designate Mr A Tate, or, in the absence of both, Mrs A Cumiskey, Mrs H Harbinson or Mrs A Anderson, all of whom may assume the responsibility of the designated teacher.

4. Where abuse is suspected there will be an immediate referral to either the local Health and Social Services Trust, or to the Police. These agencies will advise if there is an offence.
5. Following this referral, the College's EWO should be notified.

It is better to pass on immediately to Ms Murphy / Mr Tate or the available member of the Safeguarding Team, any concerns regarding these matters rather than undertake any enquiry. That being stated, any preliminary enquiries it is felt necessary to undertake should be carried out carefully and sensitively: it is not the responsibility of any member of the College staff to undertake the investigations or to make extensive enquiries of other family members or carers.

The following phone numbers are provided for your information:

Education Authority CPSSS	028 9598 5590
Child Protection / Gateway Service	028 3741 5285
Banbridge Health and Social Services:	028 4066 2866
Newry Health and Social Services:	028 3026 7030
PSNI (Banbridge):	028 4066 2222
PSNI (Newry):	028 3026 5500

APPENDIX A



NOTE OF CONCERN
CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED
TEACHER

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

Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:
Any further action taken:
Written report passed to Designated Teacher: Yes / No If 'No' state reason:
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file Yes / No If 'No' state reason:

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Specific Types of Abuse

1. **Grooming**

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or 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 child's/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 (CSE), 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 children and 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.

Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those

holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given to any punitive approach or 'criminalising' young people who may, themselves, still be victims and/or acting under duress, control, threat, the fear of, or actual violence. In consultation with the PSNI and where necessary the PPS, HSC professionals must consider whether children used to groom others should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm.

2. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Any child 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 also be victims of CSE.

CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males.

While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, **the majority of CSE victims are living at home.**

3. Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:-

Domestic Violence and Abuse

'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

'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).'

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy can be found at:

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy

4. Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed and established school procedures.

In the UK, FGM has been a specific criminal offence since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Serious Crime Act 2015 further strengthened the law on FGM.

FGM is a complex issue with many men and women from practising communities considering it to be normal to protect their cultural identity. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of five and eight, putting children in this age bracket at highest risk.

5. Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with support needs, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

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

relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It must also be borne in mind that sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the schools' positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. More details on each type of behaviour can be found in 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 may be required.

The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

7. 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. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which 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.

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and should be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like.

The school's actions and governance of online safety must be reflected clearly in its safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

8. Managing the Risks

Twenty-first Century life presents dangers including violence, racism, radicalisation and exploitation. Whilst children and young people need to be protected from these dangers, they also need to be educated about how to recognise and avoid the risks and become 'Internet Wise'. Pupils need to know how to cope if they come across inappropriate material or situations online and should be encouraged to seek help and advice when they need it without fear of censure or criminalisation.

Schools also need to perform risk assessments on the technologies within their school to ensure that they are fully aware of and can mitigate the potential risks involved with their use.

DE Circular 2016/27 provides schools with information on the characteristics of good online safety practice and recommended actions for schools to consider in developing or reviewing their online safety procedures. The Department's website also provides further advice and links to relevant DE Circulars and sites providing advice for teachers, pupils and parents.
www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/education-safe-and-effective-practices

The EA/C2k has procured a filtered internet service for and on behalf of all pupils and staff in schools in Northern Ireland. This is provided as part of the core C2k service available to all schools. However, where a school decides to provide alternative internet access, then the responsibility for the filtering of any inappropriate online content rests with the school's Board of Governors (unless otherwise agreed in a written contract with the service provider).

It is appreciated that schools cannot cover every scenario and that parents have the primary responsibility for the protection and safeguarding of their children but the reality is that many parents are intimidated by the complexity of modern technology and feel inadequate in the face of the ready familiarity with which their children use them. It is recommended that schools, so far as is reasonably possible, engage with parents to share information, advice and guidance on the appropriate and safe use of digital technology.

Advice and links to appropriate training providers is available via the C2k Online Safety Frontier page.

9. Sexting

As adults we can question the wisdom of this but the reality is that children and young people consider this to be normal.

Clearly 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 you should contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record.

It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of sexual images. Advice should be sought from CPSS.

Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that you **do not forward it to anyone else**. Please remember that schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent - see Articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail. By contacting the police, you could help prevent further such incidents.

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 should be followed.

The UK Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk) may be able to assist in having the image blocked or removed to prevent further distribution. It is also vital to ensure that the victim of abuse gets the correct support. They are likely to be ashamed and embarrassed and worried about

parental reaction - some may wish to speak to the school independent Counsellor.