

# St Joseph's Primary School



## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

**Policy Drafted:** April 2017

**Reviewed:** June 2022

**Ratified by Governors:** June 2022

**To be reviewed:** June 2023

Reviewed by:

- Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Michelle Connolly 9th June 2022

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Ethos**

We in St Joseph's Primary School have a responsibility for the pastoral care, welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be aware of the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed.

The purpose of the following procedures on Safeguarding and Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action that is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected.

The over-riding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child. The welfare of each child is of paramount consideration.

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection" (DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

The following core principles form the basis of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously
- Safer children make more successful learners
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and need to take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other consideration
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first

## **Child Protection Statement**

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

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

### **Policy Principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

### **Policy aims**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners

## **Terminology**

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

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

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**DT** refers to the designated teacher for child protection

**DDT** refers to the deputy designated teacher for child protection

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

## **Other Relevant Policies**

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

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Policy for Promoting and Sustaining Good Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Attendance Policy
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT and Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Intimate Care Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact the School Principal or visit the school website at [www.stjosephsschool.org](http://www.stjosephsschool.org)

## **School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| • Designated Teacher:  | Mrs Michelle Connolly |
| • Deputy Designated Teacher:                                 | Miss C Mc Guinness    |
| • Principal:   | Miss C Mc Guinness    |
| • Designated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection: | Ms Mary-Ellen Lynn    |
| • Chair of the Board of Governors:                           | Mr Eamonn Broderick   |

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher:

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with regular updates
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- has a working knowledge of SBNI procedures
- makes staff aware of SBNI latest policies on safeguarding
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate

- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually liaises with the nominated governor and Principal (where the role is not carried out by the Principal) as appropriate
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means.
- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements for parents
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway Team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate
- Liaise with the Education Authority's (EA) Designated Officers for Child Protection (CPSS)
- Keep the school Principal informed
- Provide a written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding safeguarding and child protection

### **The Deputy Designated Teacher**

Is/are trained to the same level as the DT and, in the absence of the DT, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DT, the deputy will assume all of the functions above. Best practice now sees the DT and DDT acting as a team.

### **The Principal**

The Principal must ensure that: -

- DENI 2017/04 "**Safeguarding and Child Protection – A guide for Schools**" **guidance** is implemented within the school
- Attend training on Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection
- A designated teacher and deputy designated teacher is appointed
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training
- All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- Safeguarding and Child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates and annual report are provided
- The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy/summary of this policy at least once every 2 years
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the Board of Governors on a need to know basis
- Safeguarding team meet regularly, on a termly basis

## **The Designated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

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

- The role of the Designated Teachers
- The content of safeguarding and child protection policies
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school
- Attend safeguarding and child protection meetings
- The content of the termly updates and full annual Designated Teacher's Report to the Board of Governors
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

## **The Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chair of the Board of Governors should:

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

## **Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DT, or, if necessary directly to police or children's social care

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse. They should remember the 5 R's:

## **Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer**

Staff must:

- Refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection/Principal
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- Act promptly
- Make a considered written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (Appendices – forms available from either the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher/Principal)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children.
- *Not* give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- *Not* investigate
- *Not* ask leading questions

In addition, the Class Teacher and/or member of staff should:

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

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/Guardians should play their part in safeguarding by:

- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school
- Letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school
- Raising concerns, they have in relation to their child with the school

## **The Board of Governors**

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

- Having a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually
- Having a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- Attendance at relevant training by governors and that up-to-date training records are maintained
- The vetting of all staff and volunteers

## **Abuse of position of trust**

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence.

## **Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

### **Children missing education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DT will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### **Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's whistleblowing policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Principal. Complaints about the principal should be reported to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

### **Allegations against staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, our set procedures must be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *DE Circular 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a member of Staff*. Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

### **Staff training**

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and governors will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DT. All staff, including the DT, principal (unless the principal is the DT) and governors will receive training that is regularly updated. All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, e-bulletins, website access and staff meetings throughout the year.

### **Safer recruitment**

Our school complies with the requirements of *Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools (DE 2017)* and the SBNI by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history. The school's Staff Recruitment policy and procedures set out the process in full.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All relevant staff (involved in early years' settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information to the school.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

### **Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests AccessNI with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school's day.

### **Site security**

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The principal will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

### **Extended school and off-site arrangements**

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on behalf of our school we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

### **Staff/pupil online relationships**

The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity in a VLE Policy for Staff and Pupils and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

## **Child protection procedures**

### **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

*Safeguarding and Child protection in Schools (DE 2017)* refers to five types of abuse. These are set out at Appendix 1 along with indicators of abuse.

### **Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures.

### **Taking action**

**Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.** Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DT, definitely by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a **Safeguarding & Child Protection Welfare Concern Form (Appendix 2)**
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

### **If you are concerned about a pupil’s welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil’s behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be concerning, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the **Safeguarding & Child Protection Welfare Concern Form (Appendix 2)** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DT.

### **If a pupil discloses to you**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe,

or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the safeguarding lead in the school - DT.** The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the pupils, staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the pupil’s mother think about it
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the pupil what will happen next
- report verbally to the DT even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- complete the Safeguarding & Child Protection Welfare Concern Form and hand it to the DT as soon as possible
- seek support if they feel distressed.

### **Notifying parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DT will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

### **Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DT, principal or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a ‘need-to-know’ basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Safeguarding & Child Protection Welfare Concern Forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file.

The DT will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DT may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

### **Referral to children's social care**

The DT will make a referral to children's social services if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social services if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

### **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated teacher, their deputy, the principal and the chair of governors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

## Peer on peer abuse

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- **harmful sexualised behaviour/sexual abuse** such as inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault
- **sexting**, including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content
- **teenage relationship abuse** - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- **prejudiced behaviour** - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.

At our school, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer on peer abuse.

- An open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Assemblies are used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- RE and PDMU are used to reinforce the message through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease in school.
- We will ensure that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

All allegations of peer on peer abuse should be passed to the DT immediately. They will then be investigated and dealt with as follows.

- **Information gathering** – children, staff and witnesses will be spoken with as soon as possible to gather relevant information quickly to understand the situation and assess whether there was intent to cause harm.
- **Decide on action** – if it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DT will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police.
- **Inform parents** - as with other concerns of abuse, the school will normally seek to discuss concerns about a pupil with parents. Our focus is the safety and

wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

### **Supporting those involved**

The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. Support could include counselling, mentoring, the support of family and friends and/or support with improving peer relationships.

Support may also be required for the pupil that harmed. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. Once those needs have been met, the consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

### **Sexting**

There is no accepted definition of 'sexting' but most professionals agree that it refers to the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs of a person under 18 years of age, via mobiles or over the internet. The [UKCCIS advice document](#) refers to this as 'youth produced sexual imagery'.

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery will be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

- The incident will be referred to the DT immediately and the DT will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff. If appropriate, there will be subsequent interviews with the young people involved.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately in accordance with this policy.

In some instances, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the police. Once a report is made to the police, the report must be recorded and the police will investigate. This may include seizure of devices and interviews with the young people involved.

### **Sexual exploitation of children**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PDMU and RSE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child

may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DT.

### **Honour-Based Violence**

'Honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBV are abuse.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return.

### **Looked after children (LAC)**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the Trust looking after the child. The DT has details of the child's social worker.

## **Procedures for Making Complaints in Relation to Child Abuse**

### **How a Parent Can Report Concerns:**

If a parent is concerned about their child or another child's safety or well-being they should follow the steps outlined in **Appendix 3**

**Appendix 4** outlines the procedures for reporting an incident of child abuse.

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

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

### **Complaints Against Members of Staff**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. Any complaints will be recorded in the "Complaints Against Staff" book located in the school safe.

**Appendix 5** outlines the procedures to follow when a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff.

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 immediately.

### **Complaints Against the Principal**

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection must be informed immediately. The complaint will be recorded in the "Complaints Against Staff" book located in the school safe. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

**Appendix 5** outlines the procedures to follow when a complaint has been made against the Principal.

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

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

whose names are on the Child Protection Register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected, schools, have a legal duty to refer to the statutory agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

### **Record Keeping**

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked cupboard. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by members of the safeguarding team.

### **Vetting Procedures**

All staff, paid or unpaid, who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

### **Code of Conduct for all Staff Paid or Unpaid**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. All staff receive the school’s code of conduct is available on request.

### **Staff Training**

St. Joseph’s Primary School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal, Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teachers, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service for School.

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

## **Operation Encompass**

Saint Joseph's Primary school are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

## **The Preventative Curriculum**

Throughout the school year, child protection issues are addressed through class and whole school assemblies and there is a permanent safeguarding and child protection notice board in the main corridor which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in staff room.

Other initiatives which address safeguarding and child protection and safety issues:

- ✓ Anti-Bullying Week
- ✓ E-safety/Internet Safety
- ✓ Anti-smoking awareness
- ✓ Healthy eating and lifestyle awareness
- ✓ PDMU
- ✓ Love for Life events
- ✓ PSNI initiatives
- ✓ Fire safety talks

- ✓ Road Safety
- ✓ Cycling Proficiency Scheme
- ✓ Evacuation drills
- ✓ Awareness events for parents (e.g. E safety)
- ✓ Safety in the Sun

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Safeguarding Team in St Joseph's Primary School will update this policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Types of Abuse

#### Five types of abuse

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

**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.

**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.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers.

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

**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.

### **Indicators of abuse**

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

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other’s safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn

- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DT to decide how to proceed.

## Appendix 2



### St Joseph's PS Safeguarding and Child Protection Welfare Concern Form



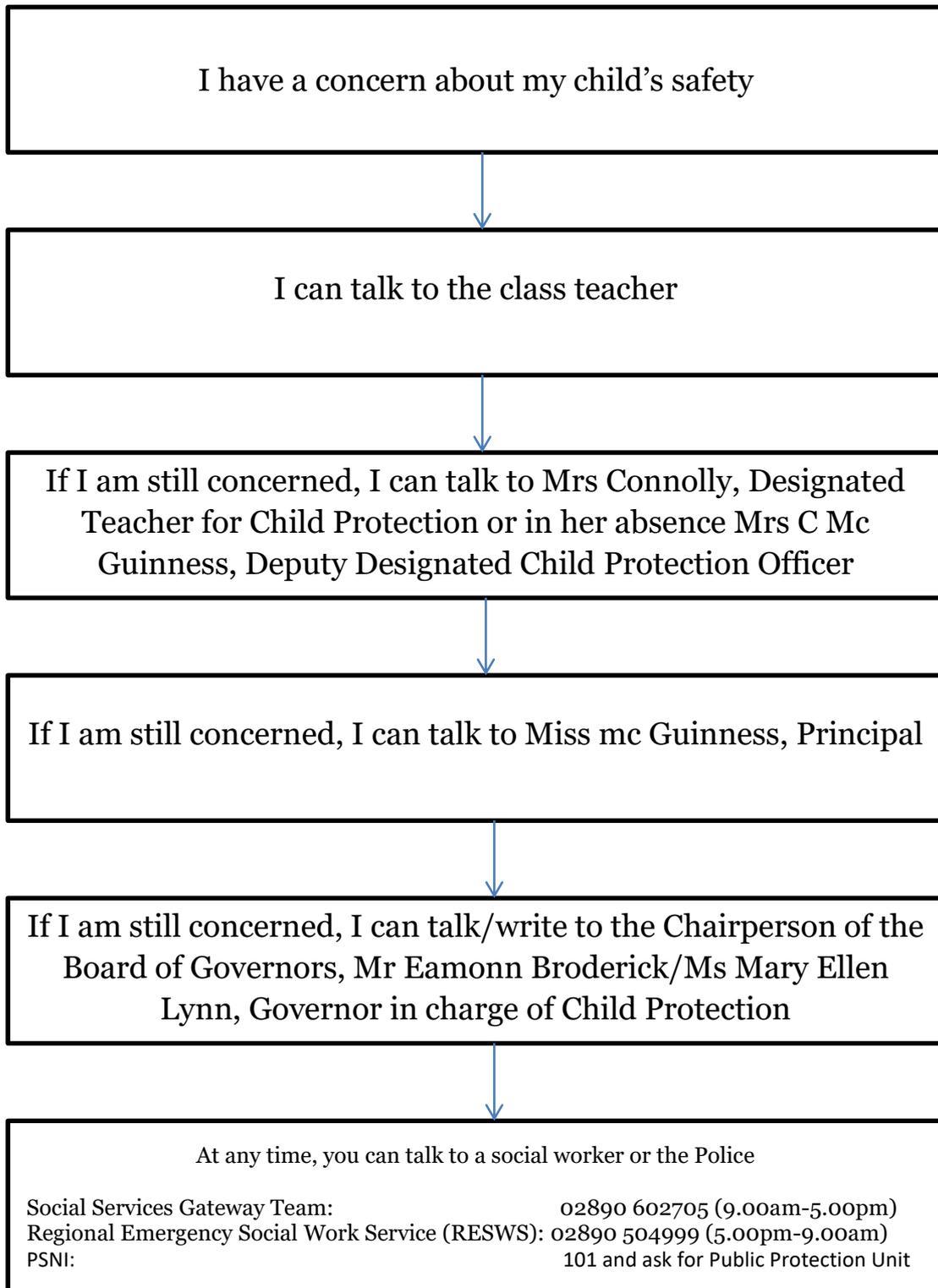
Use this form to record any concern about a pupil's welfare and give it to the designated senior person for child protection – Mrs Connolly (DT), Ms Mc Guinness (DDT), Ms Mc Guinness Principal.

<b>Pupil's Full Name:</b>	<b>Class:</b>
<b>Date of this record:</b>	<b>Class teacher:</b>
<b>Why are you concerned about this pupil?</b>	<b>Your name &amp; designation:</b>
	<b>Signature:</b>
	<b>Have you spoken to the pupil?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>What have you observed &amp; when?</b>	<b>What did they say? Use the pupil's own words</b>
<b>What have you heard and when?</b>	<b>Have you spoken to anyone else about your concern?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<b>Who?</b>
<b>What have you been told and when?</b>	<b>Is this the first time you have been concerned about this pupil?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Date and time you handed this form to the designated person.</b>	<b>Further details:</b>
<b>Are the parents/carers aware of your concern?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**Appendix 3**

**CHILD PROTECTION**

**HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT OR RAISE A CONCERN**



## Appendix 4

### PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S STAFF

*The Designated Teacher (DT) for Child Protection is Mrs Connolly  
Ms C Mc Guinness is the Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection*

**Designated teachers should be contacted for all child protection matters**

#### Procedures for Reporting an Incident of Child Abuse

- A member of staff has concerns about a child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time.
- Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff

**Member of staff does not investigate but listens carefully to child and records what the child has to say.**

**MEMBER OF STAFF MUST ACT PROMPTLY**

A written record of disclosure or concerns must be kept at all times. Any issues or concerns should be logged in the Class Record of Concern Book. If these issues of concern are persistent then the information must be recorded in the Child Protection Reporting Form (CPRF) and passed to the DT/DDT (**staff only**).

If a disclosure is made it must be recorded in the CPRF immediately and passed to the DT/DDT. Record the name of the child, date, time and place. It is very important to record the actual words used by the child. Any injuries or bruises noticed should also be recorded.

Member of Staff refers matter to DT/DDT. They will record disclosure or concerns in the child Protection Book which is located in the Child Protection Safe. The CPRF will also be kept in this book.

DT/DDT will meet with the Principal, to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

If there is any doubt whether to take further action, advice will be sought from:

- Social Services – Gateway Team 02890 602705 (9.00am-5.00pm) or
- Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS) 02890 5049999 – Out of Hours
- CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools) 02890 426972
- EA Designated Officer 02890 566434

When seeking advice names of those involved in the disclosure or concerns will not be given. It is only an enquiry.

Principal/DT/DDT makes referral to **Social Services Gateway Team** using the **UNOCINI** Initial Assessment Referral Form.

Copies of UNOCINI to:

- CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools)
- EA Designated Officer. Indicate that it is a Child Protection issue in an envelope marked

**'CONFIDENTIAL'**

If further action is needed .....

#### **Other Actions:**

- Record advice given
- Maintain regular contact with Social Services
- Monitor
- Review

**Appendix 5**

**PROCEDURE WHERE A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT T POSSIBLE ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S STAFF**

