

ACADEMY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

February 2017
(Revised and Updated)



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Aims:

- To ensure that the welfare of each child is paramount.
- To ensure that vulnerable pupils are protected and that suspected cases of abuse are appropriately dealt with.
- To provide clear guidelines to staff on referral procedures.
- To meet the demands of The Children N.I. Order 1995.

Legislation and Government Initiatives

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
“Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.”
“When adults or organisations make decisions which affect children, they must always think about what would be best for the child”
- The Children (N.I.) Order 1995
“The welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration”
- DENI Circular 1997/4
“As well as their statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils' learning, schools have a pastoral responsibility towards their pupils and should recognise that the children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm”
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education & Libraries Order 2003 – Education & Protection of Pupils
- Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures (April 2005)
- DENI Circulars 1999/9, 1999/10, 2006/6-9 and 25, 2007/01, 2008/03 and 10, 2010/01 and 07, 2011/22, 2012/19 and 2013/01, 2015/13, 2016/20, 2016/27
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) order 2007
- The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008
- Safeguarding Board Act NI 2011
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012
- Multi-agency Practice Guidelines Female Genital Mutilation DFP 2014
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children (DHSSPS 2016)

1. Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

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

We in Academy Primary School have a primary responsibility to do what is reasonable in all circumstances to safeguard and promote the welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where all pupils are respected and valued. We seek to protect our pupils by helping them learn about the risk of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

We are alert to the signs of possible abuse and neglect and follow procedures to ensure pupils receive effective support and protection.

We will carry out this duty through our:-

- Pastoral Care Policy which values individuals for their unique talents and abilities and aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which all our young people can learn and develop their full potential;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct towards pupils;
- Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy;
- Use of Images Policy;
- Intimate Care Policy;
- Mobile Phone Policy.
- Relationships and Sexuality Policy

(These documents are available from the Principal on request).

2. Safeguarding

'Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection' (*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016*)

Physical Safety

The school aims to provide a safe environment for the children. It has a secured perimeter fence, a CCTV monitoring system, a secured access/entry system to all areas (including mobile buildings) and a computerised visitor registration system. The gate from the playground to the car park is secured with a combination lock. Children are supervised during break and lunch times and running is not allowed at break time when the whole school are in the playgrounds at the same time in order to reduce the frequency of minor accidents/incidents.

Online Safety

Parental permission is sought for use of the internet in school. The school provides filtered internet access to pupils and staff on the C2k network. Children are taught how to stay safe online through class lessons eg CEOP activities, talks during Internet Safety Day and activities on the dangers of cyber bullying, during Anti-Bullying week in November. The PSNI set up a stall in school, during the parental interviews in March, to provide parents with up to date advice and recommendations on the safe use of the internet at home. Children do not have access to mobile phones during the school day (see Mobile Phone Policy).

Health and Safety

E.A. Central Contracts ensure that the site is secure and its contents are fit for purpose. Fire alarms are tested weekly. Fire equipment, PE equipment, drinking water, electrical appliances etc. are checked annually and the findings reported and logged. Fire drills are carried out termly. The Building Supervisor monitors cold and hot water temperatures in order to comply with E.A. recommendations with regard to Legionella. The School Kitchen is regularly inspected and graded by Food Hygiene (Environmental Health Service).

Risk Assessments

The school has a risk assessment policy containing individual risk assessments as recommended by the Education Authority. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure the on-going safety of the children all around the school premises, both indoor and outdoor. Risk assessments are also carried out for any occasion that the children are off school premises in the care of a teacher. This includes educational trips, sporting events, swimming lessons and residential trips.

Responsibilities

The Governors and Mr S. Moore (Principal) have overall responsibility for the cleaning, maintenance and security of Academy Primary and Nursery School. The day to day management is the responsibility of the Building Supervisor, Mr D McAuley. An annual Health and Safety inspection is carried out by the Building Supervisor and the Designated Governor for Health and Safety, Mr Roy Edwards.

It is the responsibility of **parents** to ensure that the school is provided with up to date contact and medical details.

The Safeguarding Team comprises:-

- Miss D. Clarke (Pastoral Care Team / Designated Teacher for Child Protection)
- Mrs G. Johnston-Wood (Pastoral Care Team / Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection)
- Mrs J. Cockroft (Pastoral Care Team / Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection)
- Mr Geoffrey Perrin (Chairman of B.O.G.)
- Rev James Hyndman (Designated Governor for Child Protection)
- Mrs Katie Sparham-Brown (School counsellor, Familyworks)

2.1 Vetting Procedures

All staff appointed to positions in the School and tutors/volunteers in Regulated Activity are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance

3. Child Protection

The purpose of the following procedures on 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 what constitutes child abuse and the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected or reported.

The Principal, Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teachers, Designated Governor and Chairperson of the Board of Governors undergo initial and subsequent refresher training (every two years) in Safeguarding and Child Protection. This is delivered by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools. All other staff, teaching and non-teaching, receive induction training and then refresher training at least every two years within school from the Designated Teacher.

The overriding concern of all these adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child. 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.

4. Definition of Harm/Child Abuse

The Children Act does not define the word “abuse.” Below is the definition from the *'Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (April 2005)'*:-

'Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at significant risk of harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards the child.'

The DENI publication *'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)'* states:-

'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 at more 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 happen outside of the family environment.'

'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)' also defines five categories of abuse:-

➤ **Neglect**

'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.'

➤ **Physical Abuse**

'Physical abuse is deliberately 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**

'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**

'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.

➤ **Exploitation**

'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, engaging 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.'

Domestic Violence and Abuse

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

(Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy - March 2016)

Incidents of Domestic Violence will be reported to Social Services/PSNI as per the school's referral procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

'*Multi-agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (DFP 2014)*' states:-

'FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.'

The school will follow the procedures outlined in the above guidelines if FGM or proposed FGM is disclosed or suspected.

5. Possible Indicators of Abuse/Neglect

The following illustrations outline common indicators of abuse and neglect. These signs **are not a checklist**; indeed many of them could have other explanations.

5.1 Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent.
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots.
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions.
- Untreated injuries.

Behavioural Indicators

- Self destructive tendencies.
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
- Persistent runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home.
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Clothing inappropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body

5.2 Neglect

Physical Indicators

- Constant hunger
- Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Emaciation/distended stomach
- Constant tiredness

Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Lack of social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self-esteem

5.3 Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators

- 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

Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Reluctance for parent liaison
- Fear of new situations
- Persistent runaway
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

5.4 Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

- 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
- Venereal diseases
- Unexplained pregnancies

Behavioural Indicators

- 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 to siblings

6. Disclosure of Abuse

What should teachers and support staff do if a case of abuse is disclosed or alleged?

A child may quite innocently disclose details of abuse that occurs within the family or a child may confide in a member of staff as the one adult he/she can trust.

It is important that the teacher is sympathetic and supportive. He/she should always believe what the child is saying – research has shown that children rarely fabricate allegations of sexual abuse.

- The teacher should remain calm and reassuring-children who have been abused often have low self-esteem and may withdraw if they detect signs of doubt etc.
DO NOT DISPLAY SIGNS OF SHOCK OR DISBELIEF
- The teacher should listen carefully. He/she should never ask leading questions, attempt to cross-examine the child, impose the adult's own assumption or press for evidence. e.g. Do not say "What did he do next?" This can later be interpreted as putting ideas into a child's mind. Instead say, "Tell me what happened."

It is not the responsibility of teachers or any member of staff to carry out investigations into suspected or reported abuse. They simply seek discreet clarification or listen to disclosures by the child and pass on any concerns.

6.1 Steps to be taken by The Teacher

1. Do not promise to keep secret what the child has said.
2. Do not discuss concerns with the parent(s) or with anyone who is not involved in the care of the child. **Confidentiality** is important - if the allegations prove to be untrue, reporting them to someone who is not concerned with the care of the child may be deemed defamatory.
3. Report immediately to the Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher. If neither of these teachers nor the Principal are on the premises, contact numbers are available in the School Office and in the After School Club's register.
4. Prepare a detailed report (Appendix 1) including:
 - a. Information revealed by the child - Make rough notes as soon as possible after the disclosure-
DO NOT DESTROY THESE ORIGINAL NOTES
 - b. Record the date, time, place, words used by the child (Do not translate these into "proper words"), any injuries or bruises noticed (diagram if appropriate), any unusual non-verbal behaviour.
DO NOT RECORD ASSUMPTIONS OR INTERPRETATIONS
 - c. Note down when and to whom the suspicions were reported.
 - d. Keep a copy of the report and pass a copy to the Designated Teacher

6.2 Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in school has concerns, a record should be made (see Appendix 1). It is a good idea to draw up a checklist of details to note and questions you should ask yourself in making such a record.

1. Name of child.
2. Age.
3. Any special factors.
4. Parent's name(s).
5. Home address and phone number.
6. Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? If so record details.
7. What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents.
8. Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
9. Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
10. Have the parents been contacted? If so, what was said?
11. Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details of the alleged abuser.
12. Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

Records must be retained confidentially and forwarded to any school the child may attend in the future.

IMPORTANT - Details should be factual (not opinions) – written in bullet form, including exact times, dates and actual words spoken by the child.

6.3 Summary of what to do when you have a concern

RECEIVE

- Listen to what a child says but do not ask leading questions except to show that you have understood.
- Do not promise that information will be kept secret.

REASSURE

- Ensure that the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and their interests come first.

RESPOND

- Only to ensure that the child is safe and secure.
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

RECORD (Appendix 1)

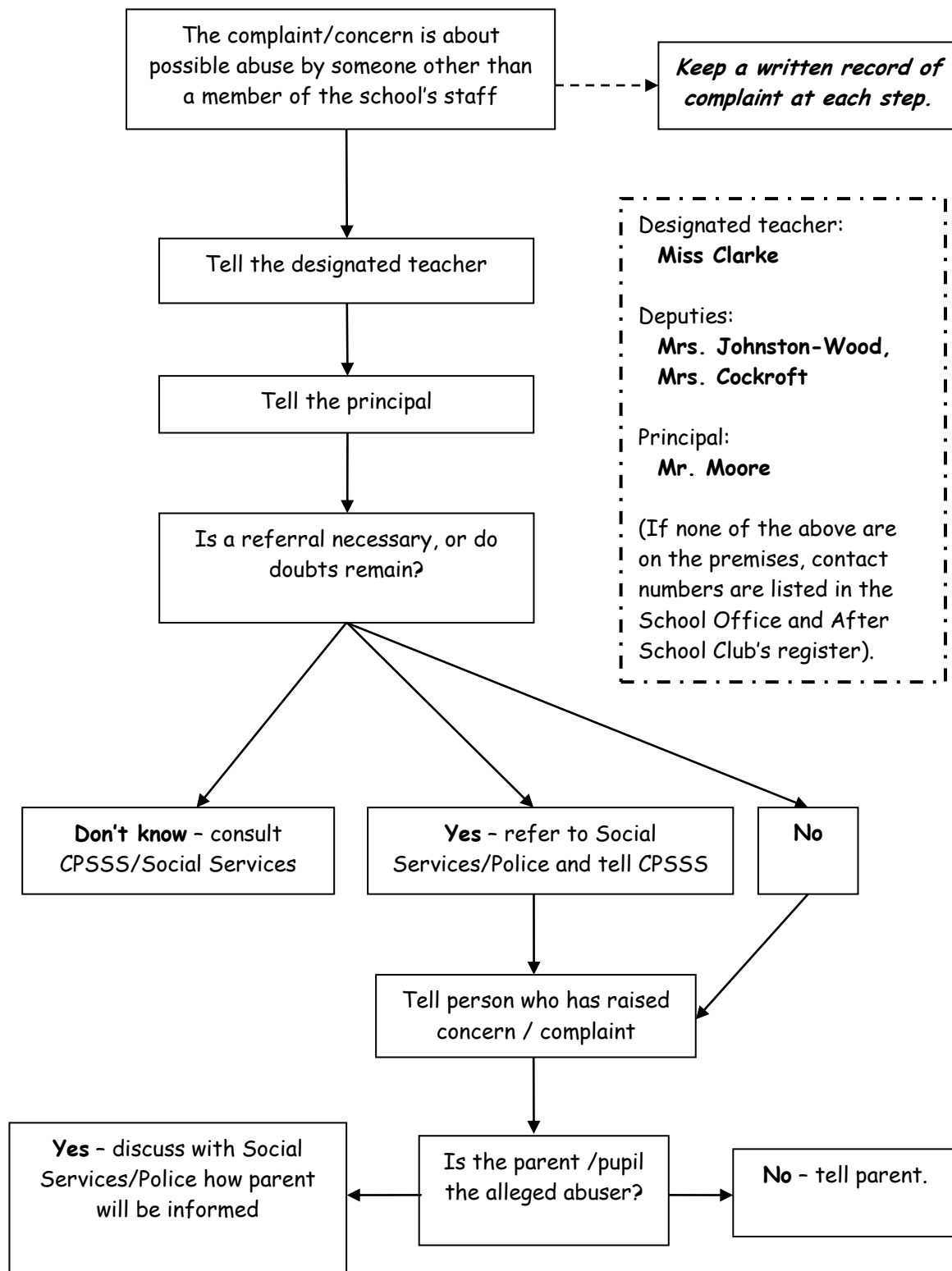
- Make a note of what you have seen or heard and the date and time.
- Record words used by the child and any noticeable behaviour or marks.
- Record statements and observable things - not your interpretations.

REPORT

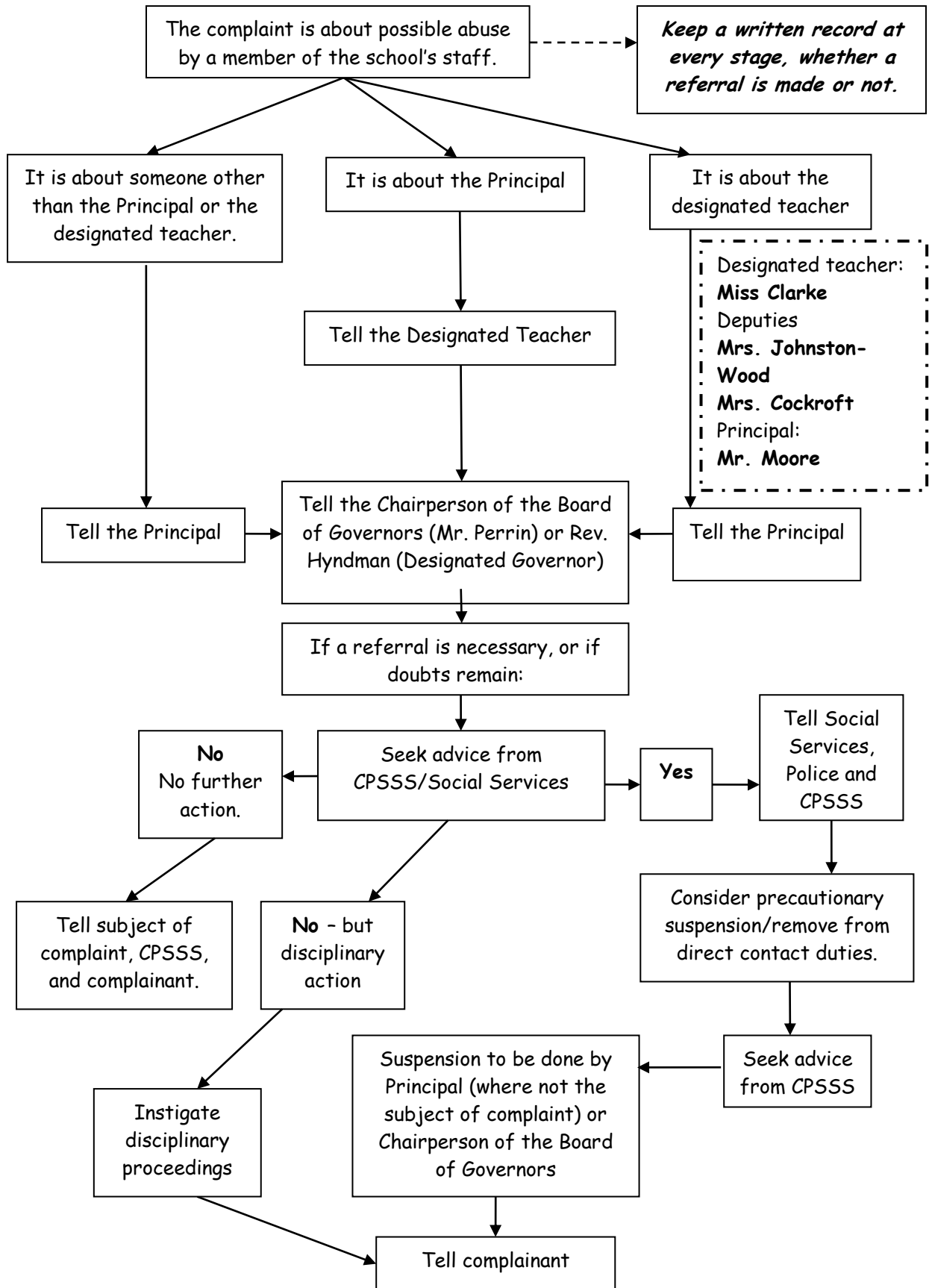
- Report to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher as soon as you have any concern for a child.

7. Academy Primary School Procedures

Procedure where there are concerns or the school has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff.



Procedure when a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff.



7.1 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". The welfare of the child is paramount so members of staff have a responsibility to share relevant information with other professionals and the investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to Social Services or PSNI. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a "need to know" basis.

7.2 Record Keeping

All Child Protection records /information are kept in a file labelled with the child's name. These files are stored in a locked filing cabinet and only the Principal, Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers have access to this filing cabinet. When a child transfers to another school, a copy of notes generated by Academy Primary School is forwarded to the Designated Teacher in the child's new school. Documentation from Social Services is shredded. Child Protection records are kept by the school until a former pupil reaches 30 years of age.

7.3 Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

The Principal, Designated Teacher or class teachers may be invited to attend Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health and Social Care Trust. They will be asked to provide a written report and to make an oral contribution to the conference/meeting. Teaching staff are also required to express their views as to whether a child's name should be placed / removed from the Child Protection 'At Risk' Register. Feedback from conferences /meetings will be disseminated to relevant staff on a "need to know" basis.

7.4 Self-Harm and Suicide

The delivery of The Personal Development and Mutual Understanding aspect of the curriculum helps pupils build the resilience required to deal with the many challenges and disappointments they will face in today's world.

In addition the Pastoral Care Policy outlines a whole school approach to fostering good pupil-teacher relationships, good peer relationships and positive behaviour management which can help pupils increase their positive mental health and wellbeing thus making them less susceptible to anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide.

The presence of a number of risk factors, however, may increase the vulnerability of a young person to self-harm or suicidal tendencies.

Knowledge of risk factors and protective factors is not always enough to help identify pupils who may be at risk of self-harm or suicide. Teachers have a key role to play in being able to identify warning signs of potential suicidal thoughts or behaviours.

Warning Signs:-

- Ideas and themes of depression, death and suicide
- Writing about suicide
- Speaking about suicide
- Art work about suicide
- Threats and statements of intent
- Negative changes in mood and marked emotional instability
- Positive changes in mood and calmness
- Significant grief or stress
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Physical symptoms with emotional cause
- Preoccupation with a known suicide
- Life threatening risk taking behaviour
- Unexpected reduction in academic performance

Responding to a Pupil with Suicidal Tendencies

It is Important for staff to consider in advance how they would react as self-harm and expression of suicidal thoughts are safeguarding issues.

- Listen
- Need to respond with empathy and in a non-judgemental way
- Need to Follow CP and Safeguarding procedures and to make appropriate referrals
- Take the child seriously - accept the possibility of suicidal thoughts
- Don't promise confidentiality
- Show a caring attitude
- Be open (ask the young person if they are thinking of harming themselves)
- Supervise closely - **the pupil should not be left unsupervised**
- Inform the Designated Teacher.

The Designated Teacher will:-

- Ensure the pupil is not left unsupervised
- Contact parents/guardians and ask them to take the pupil to the GP or Out of Hours Service for '**an emergency mental state assessment**' and potential referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- Safely hand over the pupil into the care of the parents/guardians. Parents will be advised to supervise the child closely.
- If the school cannot safely deliver the pupil into the care of parents/guardians, or the school has concerns that appropriate support will not be sought/provided, school staff may seek appropriate medical advice acting in *loco parentis*.
- Remain in sensitive contact with parents/guardians
- Provide support for staff and/or peers.
- Complete a Safeguarding action checklist as outlined in the D.E. publication 'Protecting Life in Schools'.

CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix 1

Academy Primary and Nursery School
Child Protection Concern/Incident Report Form

Child's Name _____ **D.O.B.** _____ **Class** _____ **Date** _____

Parent's name(s) _____

Address and Tel. No. _____

Details should be factual, not opinions - record in bullet form. If possible, include exact times, dates and actual words spoken by the child.

Details of concern/incident/disclosure - day, date, time, place, who dealt with it and observations / circumstances.

Description of any physical/behavioural indicators (include drawing if appropriate)

Parties Involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:

Details of conversations with anyone involved or consulted: witnesses e.g. child, parents, other staff, designated teacher:

Action taken at the time including 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:

Details of any agencies presently working with this child e.g. social worker, EWO, psychologist, Behavioural Services.

Date and time of report to Designated Teacher:

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature _____ Designation _____

Received by _____ Designation _____ Date _____

Parental Responsibility

Who has it?

1. The birth mother or mother by adoption.
2. The birth father if:
 - Married to the birth mother at time of birth;
 - Subsequently marries birth mother;
 - Gets a "Parental Responsibility Agreement" through a solicitor;
 - Gets a "Parental Responsibility Order" Article 7, through the Court;
 - Registered as the child's father (after April 2002).
3. Anyone who has a Residence order during its lifetime e.g. Grandparents.
4. The State if a care Order is in force.

How do you lose it?

1. The birth mother if:
 - The child is adopted by someone else.
2. The birth father if:
 - The child is adopted by someone else;
 - Through the Court.
3. Anyone with a Residence Order if:
 - End of Order;
 - New Order replaces it;
 - Through the Court.
4. The State if:
 - New Order replaces it;
 - End of Order;
 - Through the Court.