



## **Child Protection Policy (Full Version)**

**Designated Teacher for Child Protection:** Mrs S Beggs

**Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection:** Mrs L Francis

**Governor with responsibility for Child Protection:** Mrs M Gibson

Sept 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

The governors and staff of Carrickmannon Primary School fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by Department of Education 'Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools (2017/04) and the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

The central thrust of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is that *"the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration"* in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – *"the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration"*. The 'paramountcy of the child' principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue 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.

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
3. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

## **THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT CARRICKMANNON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chair of Governors: Mr Tom Weir

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Mrs Mary Gibson

Principal: Mrs Sharon Lennon

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Sara Beggs

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Louise Francis

## **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995. This policy also applies to vulnerable adults who are registered in the school to the end of their 19<sup>th</sup> year.)

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.’ (ACPC, 2005)

## **Types of 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.” (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016)

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

**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.” (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016)

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

**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 e.g. rape or non-penetrative acts such as kissing, masturbation, 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.” (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

**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.” (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016)

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness

- Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing / begging
- Frequent injuries / A&E Attendance
- Faltering growth or obesity
- Poor school attendance
- Dental decay, dental pain or abscesses not treated
- Developmental delay
- Delay in seeking medical advice for illness

**Exploitation / Child Sexual 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.” (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016)

It may manifest itself in many forms :

- Child labour
- Slavery
- Servitude
- Engaging in criminal activity
- Begging
- Benefit or other financial fraud
- 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.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** – “involved procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.

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.”  
(Multi-agency practice guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation DFP, 2014)

Indicators that FGM is imminent:

- Being a girl ages five to eight within a community where FGM is practised
- Prolonged return to country of origin for summer break – giving sufficient healing time before return to school
- Female elder visiting from a country of origin
- Child may tell other children about it
- A girl may disclose that she is to have a ‘special procedure’ or attend a special occasion to ‘become a woman’

- Parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period

#### **Domestic Violence and Abuse –**

1. Threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal and sexual)
2. Financial or emotional inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability but 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)

#### **Sexual Violence and Abuse –**

1. 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.)
2. Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent. (Stopping domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Northern Ireland, A seven year strategy. March 2016)

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. Children suffering from abuse **may** turn to.....

**Self harm and suicide** – “It is most helpful to consider self-harm as a continuum ranging from behaviour which has a strong suicidal intent (some kinds of overdose) to behaviour which is intended to help the person stay alive. (John Coleman, 2004)

Why do young people self-harm?

- To release tension caused by anxiety, grief or anger
- As a means of communication to tell themselves and others that they need help
- To feel as though they have control over something in their lives
- To make 'real' the emotional pain they are unable to express

## **Bullying**

**The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.**

Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered bullying. Bullying usually has three key elements:

- It is repeated behaviour that happens over a period of time
- It involves an imbalance of power
- It is intentionally hurtful behaviour

Our anti- bullying policy is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening. Parents of both parties will be personally contacted when bullying has been identified.

Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect them. This will usually include ensuring that another child or a group of small children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Designated Teacher or the class teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of privileges in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures.



## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

**The designated teacher for child protection** is Mrs Sara Beggs.

In her absence **the deputy designated teacher for child protection** Mrs Louise Francis will assume responsibility for child protection. On the rare occasion that neither designated teacher nor deputy designated teacher is in the school Mrs Lennon will assume responsibility for child protection.

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.**

**He/she should not investigate** – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the notes to the designated teacher.

The designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The designated teacher in consultation with the Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.** Unless there are concerns that a parent/guardian may be the possible abuser, the parents/guardians will be informed immediately.

The designated teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS), Designated Officer for Child Protection at the Education Authority, or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse of a child, the designated teacher will inform:

- Social Services - using the regional UNOCINI template (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland)\*
- Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection

\* The UNOCINI referral will be made within 24 hours of the initial telephone referral to social services.

**(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL \_ CHILD PROTECTION')**

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 signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the designated teacher.

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

## How to respond to a child who makes a disclosure

### 1. Receive

- Stay calm
- Listen to what the child is saying without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what the child is saying
- Be discreet

### 2. Reassure

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to you, **do not make promises that you cannot keep** (eg everything will be alright now, I'll stay with you)
- Do not promise confidentiality. Staff have a duty to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection. Explain that you will need to talk to Mrs. Lennon who will know what to do next.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it.

### 3. Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as it is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection
- Do ask open questions (Can you tell me what happened? Anything else you wish to tell me? )
- Do not ask closed questions (i.e. those that will evoke a yes/no response, eg Did \_\_\_\_\_ do this to you?). Such questions invalidate evidence where a subsequent court action is necessary.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love that person
- Do explain what you will do next (talk with the designated teacher who will know how to get help)

### 4. Record

- Make notes as soon as possible after hearing what the child has said and write them up
- Do not destroy these original notes
- Record the date, time, place, people present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour. Record the words the child used as much as possible, – if the child uses 'pet' words record those rather than translating them into 'proper' words. Any injuries or marks noticed can be depicted on a diagram showing position and extent
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations and assumptions.
- Sign the record and hand it to the designated teacher

*(All written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately, are securely maintained, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location. )*

5. Refer

- **Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the designated teacher immediately.** She will liaise with the Principal in the decision making process regarding referral to statutory services.

## **Supporting Vulnerable Children**

The staff of Carrickmannon Primary School recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn.

Carrickmannon Primary School will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) through supporting such pupils in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

Support for all pupils in the school in developing skills in self protection and developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

- The content of the curriculum, particularly Personal Development.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse.

## **Complaint against a staff member**

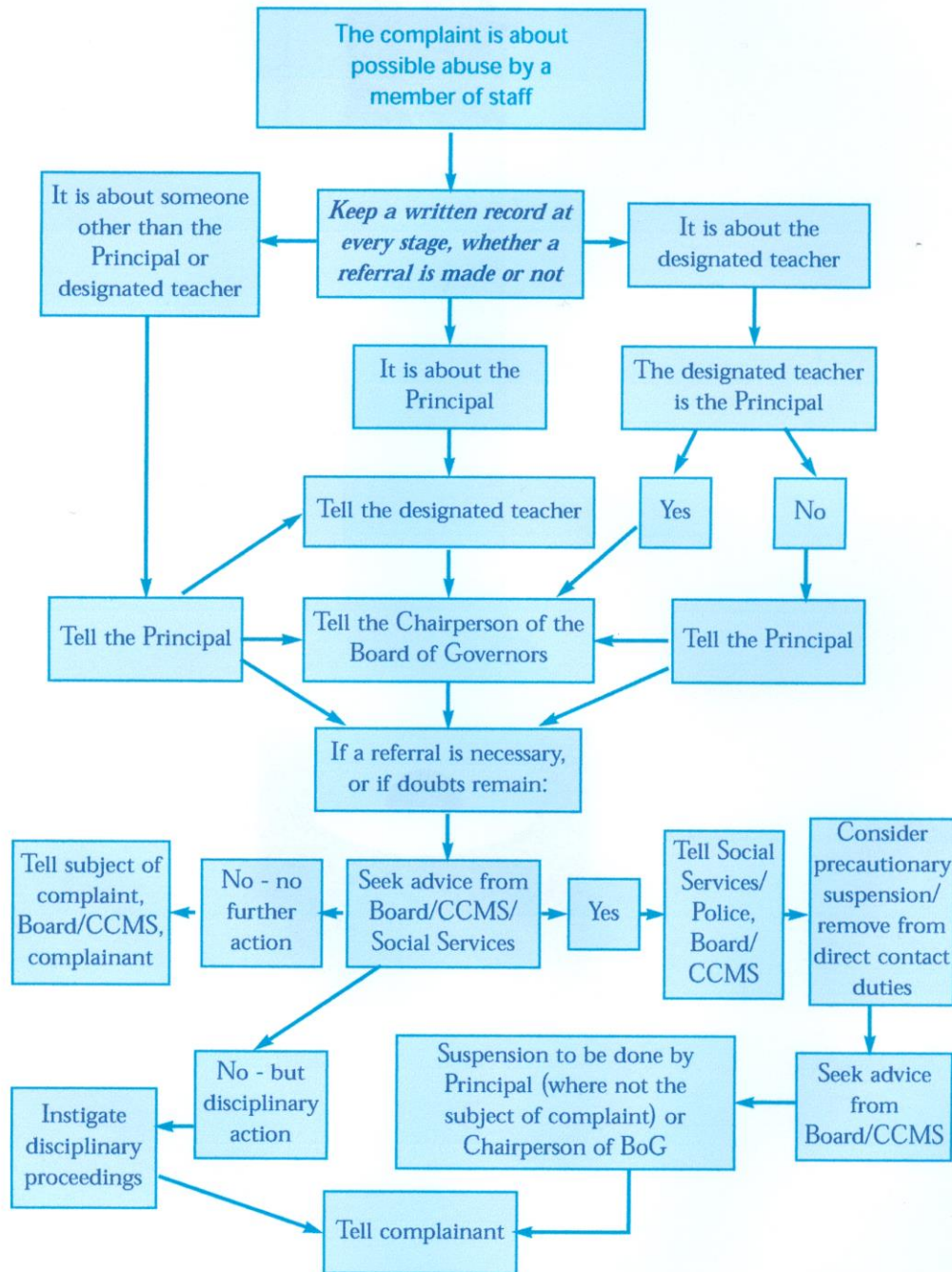
If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher or the Principal). Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse 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 take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

Pastoral Care in Schools:  
CHILD PROTECTION

Figure 2

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



## **ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER .**

The designated teacher:

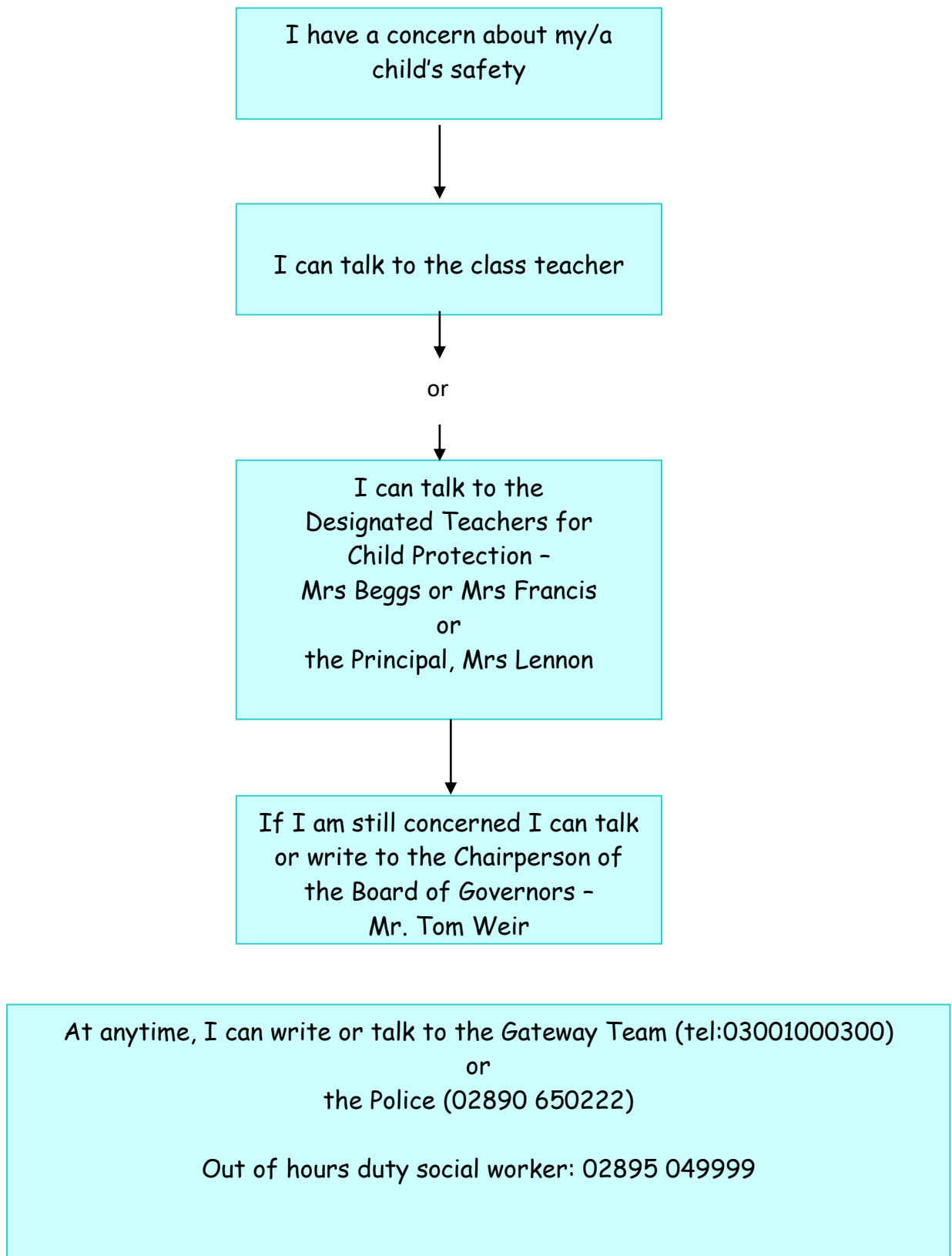
- To provide training to all school staff including support staff
- To be available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- To take responsibility for managing and keeping of all child protection concerns
- To make referrals to Social services or PSNI Public Protection Units where appropriate
- To develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- To liaise with EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- To take lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school's child protection policy.
- To ensure parents receive a copy of the child protection policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the school on this.
- To promote a child protection ethos in the school.
- To give written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.
- To maintain all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by The Safeguarding Team as appropriate)

Deputy designated teacher:

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

## HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:



## **CARRICKMANNON PRIMARY SCHOOL'S VETTING PROCEDURES**

The selection and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in close proximity with children, in either a paid or unpaid capacity in our school.

In order that all reasonable steps are taken to employ and engage suitable staff to work with the children in our care we follow the guidance on pre-employment checking and safe recruitment practices provided by the Department of Education and have adopted the new arrangements for vetting and checking of staff prior to appointment or use as volunteers within the school:

- DE Circular 2006/06. Child Protection : Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings
- DE Circular 2006/07. Child Protection: Employment of Substitute Teachers
- DE Circular 2006/08 Child Protection: Training Requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels
- DE Circular 2006/09 Child Protection: Criminal Background Checking of Staff in Schools – Programme to Extend Coverage
- DE Circular 2006/25 Child Protection: Vetting of School Governors
- DE Circular 2008/03 Pre-Employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools – New Arrangements

*Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk). Click on 'Circulars'*

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF**

The code of conduct is known to all staff and is set out in a separate policy.

## **THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school who they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for Personal and Social Development which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and the name(s) of the person(s) to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.



## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in a separate policy in accordance with guidelines from the Education Authority. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school undertaking school trips and visits.

## **THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

Our policy on the internet and digital technologies is set out in a separate document and is informed by Department of Education guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

## **INTIMATE CARE**

Our Intimate Care Policy is set out in a separate document

## **REVIEWING OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The child protection policy will be reviewed in the autumn term annually and will incorporate guidance that has been circulated in the interim by Department of Education.

All staff will receive refresher training annually or more frequently if new guidance is issued.

## **Appendix 1**

### **GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other support staff in Carrickmannon Primary School and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the school.

It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

#### **Who is a Volunteer?**

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, either:

- Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis, on more than two occasions or
- Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips, residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Formal arrangements as to selection and vetting should not be required for volunteers who are involved outside school hours and who do not have unsupervised contact with pupils. These would include fund raisers, people using school premises for meetings etc.

#### **The Role of Volunteers**

There are three main categories into which volunteers might be grouped and to which guidance will apply:

- During school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- Outside school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- During school hours but not usually involving direct contact with pupils

#### **Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers**

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance on their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

#### **Accepting Volunteers**

Where the previous procedures have been followed as appropriate and the school is satisfied that:

- the volunteer is a suitable person to have contact with the children and has the character, skills and experience to support the work of the school in a voluntary capacity;
- well defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the volunteer to undertake and he/she is competent to undertake them;

The school will then notify the individual that he/she has been accepted for voluntary duties in the school. Circular 2012/ 19 will be used to decide if it is necessary to carry out Access NI checks.

### **The Use of Volunteers**

These are the fundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

- the purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties;
- volunteers only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff and these arrangements should be such as to minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised, access to children;
- volunteers are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment;
- volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and receive appropriate training to enable them to perform these;
- volunteers are only allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers will not be placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom;
- volunteers are not afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception might be made where a child has a medical or other condition of which all those working with the pupil should be made aware, and where agreement of the parent has been sought.

### **Health and Safety Insurance**

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety Legislation. Carrickmannon Primary School therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees in terms of Carrickmannon Primary School's obligations under the legislation.

### **Duration**

Carrickmannon Primary School places a time limit on the period of the volunteer's service. This is done where the work earmarked for the volunteer is likely to be completed within a specific period. Where a volunteer's involvement is likely to be long term, the school advises the volunteer that he/she will be subject to a trial period,

during which the Principal monitors the volunteer's effectiveness in contributing to the life and work of the school.

### **Information and Training**

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and, where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

- the policy of the school and the management authority in relation to pastoral care and child protection, including its behaviour/discipline policy, rewards and sanctions, and the extent of the volunteer's authority within it.
- Carrickmannon Primary School's Health and Safety Policy

## Annex to Child Protection Policy COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

### Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak and the uncertainty of Education Restart

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following advice from government and local agencies.

### Reporting arrangements remain unchanged

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Teacher (DT) is: Mrs Sara Beggs

The Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) is: Mrs Louise Francis

The school's approach ensures the DT or a deputy is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible the DT or Deputy DT will be contactable and the Principal or Senior Teacher will become the first point of contact.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting gateway are:

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure

### Identifying vulnerability

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/new-vulnerable-children-guidance-published-schools-and-parents>

During Lockdown many families were assisted by the school or local community and this will continue for as long as required.

**Staff will be aware of increased risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DT about any concerns.

**Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

**Risk online**

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place
- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and guidance for safer working practice from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly.
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP.
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
  - Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - Net-aware - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
  - Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online

- UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.

### **Allegations or concerns about staff**

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

### **New staff or volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the Principal, DT or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DT or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

### **New children at the school**

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DT whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our Principal, DT or a deputy to the placing school's DT to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded

The DT will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors in September 2020.