



KNOCKEVIN SPECIAL SCHOOL

# CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY



*“State Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child”*

– Article 19, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Updated: August 2024

Amended January 2025

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR KNOCKEVIN SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

***“It is our aim to provide an inclusive, high quality education that enriches our pupils through learning, promotes their happiness and prepares them as individuals to lead fulfilling lives within society.”***

### **RATIONALE**

We in Knockevin School have a responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection 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 alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

All our staff have been subject to appropriate background checks. All new staff will be vetted via the Access NI procedures as stipulated by EA. Should the Board of Governors approve the use of volunteer assistance on any specific occasion; EA vetting procedures will be employed. The staff of our school have adopted a Code of Conduct (see Code of Conduct policy). All staff and volunteers will be expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct laid down in this policy.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers and non-teaching staff – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be to uphold the right of each child to protection and to ensure that the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration.

### **Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection**

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, “Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

#### **The following Principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy:**

- the child or young person’s welfare is paramount;
- the voice of the child or young person should be heard;

- parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together;
- partnership;
- prevention;
- responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- protection; and
- evidence based and informed decision making.

#### **Other Related Policies:**

Knockevin has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. The school operates clear procedural guidelines for staff dealing with suspected cases of abuse. A number of **school policies** inform our practice, including –

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints policy
- Data protection Policy
- Digital Safeguarding and E-Safety Policy
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care
- Records Management policy
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding / Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Privacy Notice
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras Guidance
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Guidance
- Whistleblowing Policy EA

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the School office.

The school curriculum also offers young people a range of possible strategies which may be used to recognise, prevent and avoid abuse. Age-appropriate education programmes are built into the school curriculum to make our pupils aware of risk factors, where support can be obtained and how they can seek assistance when they are at risk of harm or being harmed. Staff are supported by the Designated Teacher and the teacher responsible for PDMU/RSE in designing and delivering these programmes.

Please see **Appendix 1** for further resources and guidance and information on the preventative curriculum contained within this policy.

### **Policy Aims**

The aims of this policy are to:

- **Embed a culture in our school** which recognises the child's or young person's fundamental right to be safe and promote their general welfare;
- Ensure the promotion of a **child centred approach**, which is based on obtaining the views of children and young people and an understanding of their needs and rights;
- As far as possible, **prevent** harm occurring by increasing staff awareness of harm and its effects on children and young people and where appropriate equip, empower and or support them to keep themselves safe;
- Promote **early identification** of needs and/or risk to pupils;
- Promote **early intervention** to ensure families, children and young people can access and receive help and support at an early point to prevent their situations deteriorating;
- Establish clearly defined **processes of reporting**;
- Ensure **responses** to risks of harm are proportionate, timely, professional, legal and ethical;
- **Promote continuous learning and improvement** by identifying and applying learning and assessing the effectiveness of its application.

### **Roles and Responsibilities: -**

The Board of Governors have appointed a Designated Officer, the Vice Principal, to ensure that proper procedures are followed. They are supported by two Deputy designated Teachers. All members of staff know the names of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers and how to contact them.

### **School Safeguarding Team**

The Designated Teacher co-ordinates the school's safeguarding team, comprised of:

The Designated Teacher, Aaron Davis

The Deputy Designated Teachers Adam Smith and Elizabeth Brown

The Principal, Sara Liddell

The Chair of the Board of Governors, Rosemary Gorman

The Designated Governor for Child Protection, Maura Campbell

Input is also given from -

Health and Social Care staff

The ICT, RSE and other coordinators as required

### **Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher**

The Deputy Designated Teachers will assume the responsibilities of the Designated Teacher in the case of her absence. Responsibilities include:

- the induction and training of all school staff including support staff;
- being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff;

- responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns;
- maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs;
- making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate;
- liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection;
- keeping the School Principal informed;
- lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy;
- promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school; and
- compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

### **Principal**

- as secretary to the Board of Governors, assist in fulfilling its safeguarding and child protection duties;
- ensure the Board of Governors are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding including changes to legislation, policy, procedures, DE circulars, inclusion of child protection on the termly meeting agenda;
- to manage allegations / complaints against school staff;
- to establish and manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection;
- to appoint and manage deputy designated teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities;
- to ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection including awareness of safeguarding and child protection for new staff and volunteers;
- ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy or summary of the child protection policy at intake and at a minimum every 2 years; and
- to maintain the schools record of child abuse complaints.

### **Board of Governors**

- a designated governor for child protection is appointed (Maura Campbell);
- a designated and deputy designated teacher are appointed in their schools;
- they have a full understanding of the roles of the designated and deputy designated teachers for child protection;
- safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training;
- the school has a child protection policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- the school has an anti-bullying policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;
- there is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school;
- all school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19;

- they receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff; and
- the school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

### **Chair of Board of Governors**

The chair of the board of governors:

- has a pivotal role in creating and maintaining a safeguarding ethos;
- receives training from CPSS and HR;
- assumes lead responsibility in the event of a CP complaint or concern about the principal; and
- ensures compliance with legislation, Child Protection record keeping and policies.

### **Designated Governor for Child Protection**

Advises the board of governors on: -

- the role of the designated teachers;
- the content of child protection policies;
- the content of a code of conduct for adults within the school;
- the content of the termly updates and full annual designated teachers report; and
- recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

### **Other members of school staff**

- members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the designated teacher for child protection or to the deputy designated teacher if he/she is not available **without delay**;
- staff should complete a record of concern (**Appendix 6**) if there are safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse;
- **staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions.

### **Parents**

**The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.**

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school:

- if the child has a medical condition or educational need;

- if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child;
- if there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility;
- if there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school;
- if their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: [www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection)

**It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.**

### **Child Protection Definitions**

Knockevin has adopted the following definitions from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016'. These definitions are included in staff Child Protection training.

#### **Definition of Harm:**

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 opportunity 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. Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse

**Signs and symptoms of abuse** - Please see **Appendix 1** for further information and the link to signs and symptoms from the SBNI Regional Core Policies and Procedures guidance.

<https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/1248/signs-and-symptoms-of-child-abuse-and-neglect.pdf>.

### **Specific types of Abuse**

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in Knockevin are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 2**.

### **Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English and sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 3**.



## **Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns**

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. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

Where a member of staff is concerned about the welfare of a young person they should speak directly to the Designated Teacher **without delay**. All concerns, no matter how trivial, must be reported. The Class Teacher should be kept informed, if appropriate.

### **How a Parent Can Raise a Concern:**

In Knockevin we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.

If a parent has a concern they can talk to the Class Teacher/Head of Department, the designated or deputy designated teacher for child protection, or the principal.

If they are still concerned they may talk to the board of governors. If after this a parent still has concerns they can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman.

At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Details of who to contact in the Early Years Centre in Dundrum are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 8a**. Details of who to contact in the Downpatrick site are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 8b**.

### **Where School has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff:**

In Knockevin 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 will complete a Note of Concern (see **Appendix 6**) and act promptly. **They will not investigate** - this is a matter for Social Services - but will discuss these concerns with the designated teacher or with the deputy designated teacher if he/she is not available. The procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against someone other than a member of staff as outlined in **Appendix 4** will be followed.

The designated teacher will consult with the principal or other relevant staff always taking care to avoid due delay. If the principal is not available the designated teacher will consult with the designated governor; Maura Campbell. If required, advice may be sought from an Education Authority Child Protection Officer. The designated teacher may also seek clarification from the child or young person, their parent/carer.

If a child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent.

If a child protection referral is required the designated teacher will seek consent from the parent/carer and/or the child {if they are competent to give this} unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.

The designated teacher will phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form. Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

Key contacts include –

The EA's Child Protection Support Service 02895 985590

The Gateway Team for the South Eastern Trust 0300 100 0300.

The emergency social work service 02895 049999.

The PSNI central referral unit 02890 259299.

#### **Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff or a Volunteer**

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the designated teacher if the principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal, then one of the deputy designated teachers should be informed and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the board of governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff as outlined in **Appendix 5** will be followed.

#### **Consent**

Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child/young person, should, where practicable, be discussed with the parent and consent sought for a referral to children's social services in the local HSC Trust, unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child/young person at further risk through delay or undermine any criminal investigative process (for example in circumstances where there are concerns or suspicions that a crime has taken place); or there is concern raised about the parent's actions or reactions. The communication/language needs of the parents/carers should be established for example in relation to disability/ethnicity and the parent's/carer's capacity to understand should be ascertained. These should be addressed through the provision of appropriate communication methods, including, where necessary, translators, signers, intermediaries or advocacy services.

Effective protection for children/young people may, on occasions, require the sharing of information without prior parental/carer consent in advance of that information being shared.

Where staff decide not to seek parental consent before making a referral to children's social services in the local Health and Social Care Trust or the police, the reason for this decision must be clearly noted in the child/young person's records and included within the verbal and written/UNOCINI referral.

When a referral is deemed to be necessary in the interests of the child/young person, and the parents/carers have been consulted and do not consent, the following action should be taken:

- the reason for proceeding without parental consent must be recorded;
- the withholding of permission by the parent/carer must be included in the verbal and written referral to children's social services;
- the parent/carer should be contacted to inform them that, after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

Staff making a referral may ask for their anonymity to be protected as far as possible because of a genuine threat to self/family. In such instances this anonymity should be protected with an explanation to the staff member that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information may become the subject of court processes.

### **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. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will consider what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

### **Record Keeping and Retention/Disposal of Child Protection/Safeguarding concerns**

In accordance with DE guidance (Ref Circular 2020/07 - Child Protection - Record Keeping in Schools), we have clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in Knockevin are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records, these records are stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years. In April 2023, Knockevin introduced the use of CPOMS. This is a secure cloud based storage system. All advanced access users (safeguarding team) have been trained and use 2 factor authentication to ensure confidentiality and security.

Child Protection notes or records are factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

### **Safe Recruitment Procedures**

Access NI checks are a key preventative measure and we ensure that all staff are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate. If visitors/volunteers are not vetted, supervision is in place. A risk assessment of volunteers/individuals not on payroll is in place. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Knockevin are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance. Substitute teachers are employed via the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher register.

### **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 members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors

**(Knockevin School's Code of Conduct is available on request)**

### **The Preventative Curriculum**

We in Knockevin School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours (2017/04). Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Keeping Safe messages are actively promoted through the curriculum and other activities e.g. online safety, RSE/PDMU. Outside agencies are involved in delivering these messages and pupils have the opportunity to engage with programmes offered by Childline, NSPCC, NEXUS and the PSNI.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through assemblies, events and class lessons and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor

and relevant information in each classroom, which displays photographs of key people in school.

### **Training**

Child protection training will be updated as required within school on an annual basis. The course will be based on the Department of Education Regional Child Protection training pack and will focus on the following areas:-

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse
- What the relevant child protection procedures are, including Knockevin's own internal arrangements
- How to talk to young people about whom there are concerns in an appropriate way
- How to record the information they have acquired (immediately)
- Who is the Designated Teacher/Who is the Deputy Designated Teacher
- The role of the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher
- Who to consult for advice and when to make a referral
- The role of the EA Designated Officers
- The role and responsibilities of investigative agencies
- The format of a child protection conference and the contributions they are expected to make

Staff also receive regular training on digital safeguarding and anti-bullying and embed up to date information and safety messages throughout the curriculum.

### **Advice on Physical Contact with Young People**

Integral to a clear understanding of standards of behaviour expected of Knockevin staff is a clear understanding of the acceptable boundaries of physical contact with young people.

Many of Knockevin pupils need physical support to aid movement and/or physical prompts to facilitate learning. Without this 'hands on' support they would be unable to attend Knockevin School. Young children and pupils with profound difficulties need high levels of physical assistance during intimate care procedures such as toileting/washing/dressing. All

staff are required to preserve pupil dignity and respect the pupils right to privacy and to follow advice contained in our Intimate Care Policy and pupil Intimate Care Plans.

In the case of supporting pupils in relation to challenging behaviours, it is important that all staff follow school guidelines (i.e. individual behaviour plan) using the positive approaches to behaviour management as recommended by the 'TEAM TEACH' philosophy. Teachers and classroom assistants are trained and updated in using the 'TEAM TEACH' approach. We have four TEAM TEACH trainers on our staff. Staff trained in these strategies are competent in the use of strategies to support a child with the minimum risk of injury. See Knockevin Behaviour Support Policy for further detail.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The Principal and teacher responsible for RSE/PDMU have attended training organised by Women's Aid. All staff are trained annually on domestic violence and how it can affect children. All staff know that in the case of domestic violence, referrals are always made to social services and the PSNI. Parents are also informed of this via the parent child protection summary issued annually.

Pupils follow the Helping Hands programme in Foundation / KS1 classes, with it delivered at an appropriate level for their needs.

### **Operation Encompass**

We 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.

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 safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It 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 the online Operation Encompass training, so they able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

### **Contact Facilities**

Knockevin Special School recognises the importance of family contact arranged through the professional bodies involved in each individual case. Knockevin Special School considers its facilities as a 'safe space' for each of its pupils. To protect the ethos of an impartial safe space, school facilities will not be available to use to accommodate contact time.

### **Reports for Child Protection Conferences**

Reports will be written on the Knockevin pro-forma for reporting (**Appendix 7**).

These reports will focus on the young person's educational progress and achievements, attendance, behaviour, participation, relationships with other children and adults within the school. If relevant, reports may also include what is known about the child's relations with his or her family and the family structure.

Reports will be objective and based on knowledge and evidence available to school staff.

### **Information about children on the Child Protection Register**

Knockevin School will closely monitor the welfare of pupils whose names are on the Child Protection Register in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan. The plan sets out the role of the child's parents and various agencies in protecting the child. This may include alerting the child's Case Coordinator from Social Services, or the Child Protection Officer, when a pupil in the Child Protection Register is absent for more than a few days, or on a regular basis, or to any signs which suggest deterioration in the pupil's home circumstances.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that the Child Protection Register is kept up to date. The Class Teacher/Classroom Assistant or other professional working with the young person on a daily basis will be informed accordingly by the Designated Teacher as appropriate. They will also be informed of any plans or strategies to be implemented to help monitor or support young people on the register.

### **Partnerships**

Knockevin aims to work in partnership with parents and professionals. We strongly believe in a positive, open and communicative climate. Parents are given information on raising complaints and concerns – see **Appendix 8a and Appendix 8b**. Occasionally incidents and circumstances beyond school may have far reaching implications. For this reason, we ask parents, therapy, medical and social services staff to share all significant information with the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Should a parent have a serious concern about their child after school, they can seek advice from Out of Hours - Social Services or their Doctor.

Through collaboration the school can effectively respond as a supportive community where the needs of pupils can be met. If regulations or procedures change, parents and staff will be issued with an amended C.P. Policy.

### **Safeguarding of Pupils, Parents and Visitors**

In order to safeguard everyone, it is a requirement that all visitors, including parents, report and sign in at the school office. Signs are posted in the main building and at the entrance to all mobiles, to this effect. An A4 size copy of our guidance for visitors is displayed in school.

### **Independent Travel**

Some older students in consultation and in co-operation with parents may participate in a travel training programme. In the event of travelling alone in a taxi or with a staff member,

they must sit in the rear seat of the vehicle. Parents must always be informed of travel arrangements.

### **Pupil use of Mobile Phones**

By arrangement, school leavers involved in travel training and work placements are at times permitted to carry mobile phones. It is preferred that at any other time they are not brought into school. In the event of a student bringing one to school, it must be given to the teacher who will store it safely until departure time.

We are committed to ensuring the rights of all our children and young people are protected. We therefore encourage the use of mobile technology and realise how much our young people rely on using mobile phones for social networking and communicating with others. While we encourage them to continue to use them for this purpose, we also encourage parents to periodically monitor how they are used, the content of the messages and images sent and received.

### **Using the Internet**

Our pupils have a right to be safe (Article 19, UN CRC) and we aim to educate them about internet safety at an appropriate level throughout their time in school. We have worked in partnership with the PSNI, Childline, Love for Life and NEXUS to achieve this.

We encourage parents to attend our school's internet safety training and to educate themselves about how best to protect children accessing the internet at home. We encourage them to monitor their child's use of the internet and social networking sites such as 'Twitter', 'Facebook' and others. Many of the packages that come with a computer provide an option to 'block unwanted materials', many of which have an 'adult content' which is designated by the filtering system as being dangerous and unsuitable for children. We recommend to parents this facility is activated at all times. We also remind them to check and monitor how their son or daughter is using the camera/webcam often built into a laptop or PC - especially when communicating 'live' on-line. If parents are unsure as to the level of protection your PC or laptop has, we advise them to ask their Service Provider for advice.

Parents are also advised that mobile phones, hand held games consoles such as the Nintendo DSi, and MP3 players such as iPods can have built-in cameras and can be used to upload images to the internet.

We recommend the following sites for further information.

[http://www.psni.police.uk/090210\\_safer\\_internet\\_day](http://www.psni.police.uk/090210_safer_internet_day)

<http://www.microsoft.com/ireland/onlinesafety>

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/your\\_kids/safety\\_internet.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/your_kids/safety_internet.shtml)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/help/web/staysafe>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7638492.stm>

<https://ceop.police.uk/>

Please refer to our digital safeguarding policy for full details.



### **Issuing Policy**

This policy will be issued to Governors yearly or as modifications or updates are made for their approval. It will also be issued annually to parents, voluntary helpers, support workers, drivers and other professionals who work in partnership with Knockevin Staff to ensure that the needs of all children and young people enrolled in the school are protected effectively at all times.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the safeguarding team and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the schools' staff induction and training programme and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the designated teacher for child protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team. 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.

**Date Policy Reviewed: August 2024**

### **REFERENCES INCLUDE**

- U.N Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Child (N.I) Order 1995
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Safeguarding Board Act NI 2011
- Children's Services Cooperation Act (NI) 2015
- Pastoral Care in Schools (DENI 1999)
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children (DHSSPS 2016)
- Area Child Protection Committees' – Regional Policy and Procedures (2005)
- Guidance and procedural documents that have been produced by Dept of Education (DE) and the Dept of Health and Personal Social Services (DHSS & P.S)
- DE Circulars and Letters
- D.E. [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

**Appendix 1**

**Child Protection Resources and Guidance**

Department of Health 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland', March 2016

'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' can be found at:  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

The Education Authority Safeguarding site provides useful information on all aspects of safeguarding and child protection:

<http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/>

Further information on safeguarding and child protection can be found on the Department's website at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/support-and-development/child-protection-and-safeguarding>

SBNI (Safeguarding Board for NI) website at:

<http://www.safeguardingni.org/resources>

### **Signs and Symptoms of abuse:**

<https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/1248/signs-and-symptoms-of-child-abuse-and-neglect.pdf>.

## SIGNS and SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

<p><u>NEGLECT - PHYSICAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONSTANT HUNGER</li> <li>• EXPOSED TO DANGER;</li> <li>• LACK OF SUPERVISION</li> <li>• INADEQUATE/INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING</li> <li>• POOR PERSONAL HYGIENE</li> <li>• UNTREATED MEDICAL PROBLEMS</li> <li>• EMACIATION</li> </ul>	<p><u>NEGLECT - BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TIREDNESS, LISTLESSNESS,</li> <li>• LACK OF CONCENTRATION</li> <li>• LACK OF PEER RELATIONSHIPS</li> <li>• LOW SELF ESTEEM</li> <li>• DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES</li> <li>• COMPULSIVE STEALING/BEGGING</li> <li>• FREQUENT LATENESS/ NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL</li> <li>• CHRONIC RUNNING AWAY</li> <li>• SCAVENGING FOR FOOD OR CLOTHES</li> </ul>
<p><u>PHYSICAL ABUSE - PHYSICAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCRATCHES</li> <li>• BITE MARKS OR WELTS</li> <li>• BRUISES IN PLACES DIFFICULT TO SEE/MARK e.g. BEHIND EARS, GROIN</li> <li>• BURNS, ESPECIALLY CIGARETTE BURNS</li> <li>• UNTREATED INJURIES</li> </ul>	<p><u>PHYSICAL ABUSE - BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SELF MUTILATION TENDENCIES</li> <li>• CHRONIC RUNAWAY</li> <li>• BULLYING</li> <li>• AGGRESSIVE OR WITHDRAWN – CHANGE OF BEHAVIOUR</li> <li>• ADMISSION OF PUNISHMENT WHICH SEEMS EXCESSIVE</li> <li>• FEAR OF RETURNING HOME/ PARENTS BEING CONTACTED</li> <li>• FEARFUL WATCHFULNESS</li> <li>• IMPROBABLE EXCUSES GIVEN TO EXPLAIN INJURIES</li> <li>• REFUSAL TO DISCUSS INJURIES</li> </ul>

<p><u>SEXUAL ABUSE -PHYSICAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SORENESS, BLEEDING IN GENITAL OR ANAL AREA</li> <li>• ITCHING IN GENITAL AREA</li> <li>• STAINED OR BLOODY UNDERWEAR</li> <li>• STOMACH PAINS OR HEADACHES</li> <li>• PAIN ON URINATION</li> <li>• DIFFICULTY IN WALKING OR SITTING</li> <li>• BRUISES ON INNER THIGHS OR BUTTOCKS</li> <li>• ANOREXIC/BULIMIC</li> <li>• PREGNANCY/ABORTION</li> </ul>	<p><u>SEXUAL ABUSE BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHRONIC DEPRESSION</li> <li>• SELF MUTILATION</li> <li>• INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE, SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE FOR AGE GROUP</li> <li>• SEXUALISED PLAY WITH EXPLICIT ACTS</li> <li>• MAKING SEXUAL ADVANCES TO ADULTS OR OTHER CHILDREN</li> <li>• OBSESSIVE WASHING</li> <li>• LOW SELF ESTEEM</li> <li>• AFRAID OF THE DARK</li> <li>• WARINESS OF BEING APPROACHED BY ANYONE</li> <li>• SUBSTANCE/DRUG ABUSE</li> <li>• UNEXPLAINED LARGE SUMS OF MONEY/GIFTS</li> <li>• RUNNING AWAY</li> </ul>
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<p><u>EMOTIONAL ABUSE - PHYSICAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SUDDEN SPEECH DISORDERS</li> <li>• WETTING AND SOILING</li> <li>• SIGNS OF MUTILATION</li> <li>• FREQUENT VOMITING</li> </ul>	<p><u>EMOTIONAL ABUSE - BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROCKING, THUMB SUCKING, HAIR TWISTING</li> <li>• CHRONIC RUNNING AWAY</li> <li>• POOR PEER RELATIONSHIPS</li> <li>• OVER-REACTION TO MISTAKES</li> <li>• INAPPROPRIATE EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO STRESSFUL SITUATIONS</li> <li>• SELF MUTILATION</li> <li>• EXTREMES OF PASSIVITY OR AGGRESSION</li> <li>• SUBSTANCE/DRUG ABUSE</li> </ul>
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<p><u>CHILD EXPLOITATION - BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS:</u> (but are not limited to:)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACQUISITION OF MONEY, CLOTHES, MOBILE PHONE ETC WITHOUT PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION</li> <li>• LEAVING HOME / CARE WITHOUT PERMISSIONS</li> <li>• PERSISTENTLY GOING MISSING OR LATENESS</li> <li>• RECEIVING A LOT OF CALLS PRIOR TO LEAVING HOME</li> <li>• TRUANTING FROM SCHOOL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INAPPROPRIATE SEXUALISED BEHAVIOUR FOR AGE</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SIGNIFICANTLY OLDER BOYFRIEND/ GIRLFRIEND</li> <li>• NEW PEER GROUPS</li> <li>• WITHDRAWN</li> <li>• ANXIOUS</li> <li>• DEPRESSED</li> <li>• AGGRESSIVE</li> </ul>	<p><u>CHILD EXPLOITATION - PHYSICAL SIGNS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BRUISING</li> <li>• BITE MARKS</li> <li>• SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS</li> <li>• CHANGE IN PERSONAL HYGIENE</li> <li>• SELF HARM/SUICIDE THOUGHTS</li> <li>• BED WETTING</li> <li>• CHANGES IN EATING HABITS/EATING DISORDERS PRESENTING</li> </ul>
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### Specific Types of Abuse

**Grooming** of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

If the staff in Knockevin become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017)

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity **in return for something** they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

**Domestic and Sexual violence and abuse** can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children.

Domestic violence and abuse 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, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.' Sexual Violence and Abuse is defined as '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).' (Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016).

If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy.

**Forced Marriage** A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and if in SCHOOL NAME we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

### **Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour**

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. As a school we support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. We will also take guidance from DE

Circular 2016/05 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

### **What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?**

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim
- Harmful sexualised behaviour can include: Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the schools positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and in our school we will refer to our child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

### **E safety/Internet abuse**

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

- **Content risks:** the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.
- **Contact risks:** the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.
- **Conduct risks:** the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in perpetrator exchange.



- **Commercial risks:** the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

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

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

**Sexting** is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

#### **Sexting between individuals in a relationship**

Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. We may also seek advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of a sexual image.

#### **Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress**

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is **not forwarded to anyone else**. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individuals consent.

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures of the school will be followed.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

- **Children with a disability**

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and those working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues.

Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

- **Children with limited fluency in English**

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

Designated Teachers should work with their SEN co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer pupils, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. All schools should try to create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

- **Pre-school provision**

Many of the issues in the preceding paragraphs will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedures in consultation with the child's parent[s]/carer[s]

- **Looked After Children**

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then make arrangements for the child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily. It is important that the views of children, young people and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the looked child are taken into account when decisions are made.

A member of school staff will attend LAC meetings and will provide a written report. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

- **Children / young people who go missing**

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and young people may have been abused.

School staff will work in partnership with those who look after the child or young person who goes missing and, if appropriate, will complete a risk assessment. Current school policies will apply e.g. attendance, safeguarding, relationships and sexuality education.

- **Young people in supported accommodation**

Staff will work in partnership with those agencies involved with young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation and will provide pastoral support as necessary.

- **Young people who are homeless**

If we become aware that a young person in our school is homeless we will share this information with Social Services whose role is to carry out a comprehensive needs and risk assessment. We will contribute to the assessment and attend multi-disciplinary meetings.

- **Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children and young people**

**Separated children** and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver. **Unaccompanied children** and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.

**Child Trafficking** is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation.

If we become aware of a child or young person who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking we in School Name will immediately follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures

- **Children of parents with additional support needs**

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action school staff take to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances

encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children's social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist us in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will give consideration to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

- **Gender identity issues and sexual orientation**

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

- **Work experience, school trips and educational visits**

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE guidance on educational visits, school trips and work experience to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

## **Children/young people's behaviours**

- **Peer Abuse**

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all school staff should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and, where necessary, should contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

- **Self-Harm**

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in

death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however, this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

- **Suicidal Ideation**

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child or young person who presents as being suicidal as it is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

## Appendix 4

### Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.

Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.



Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.

with child/ parent/carers and



Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required, advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.



#### **Child Protection referral is required**

Designated Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

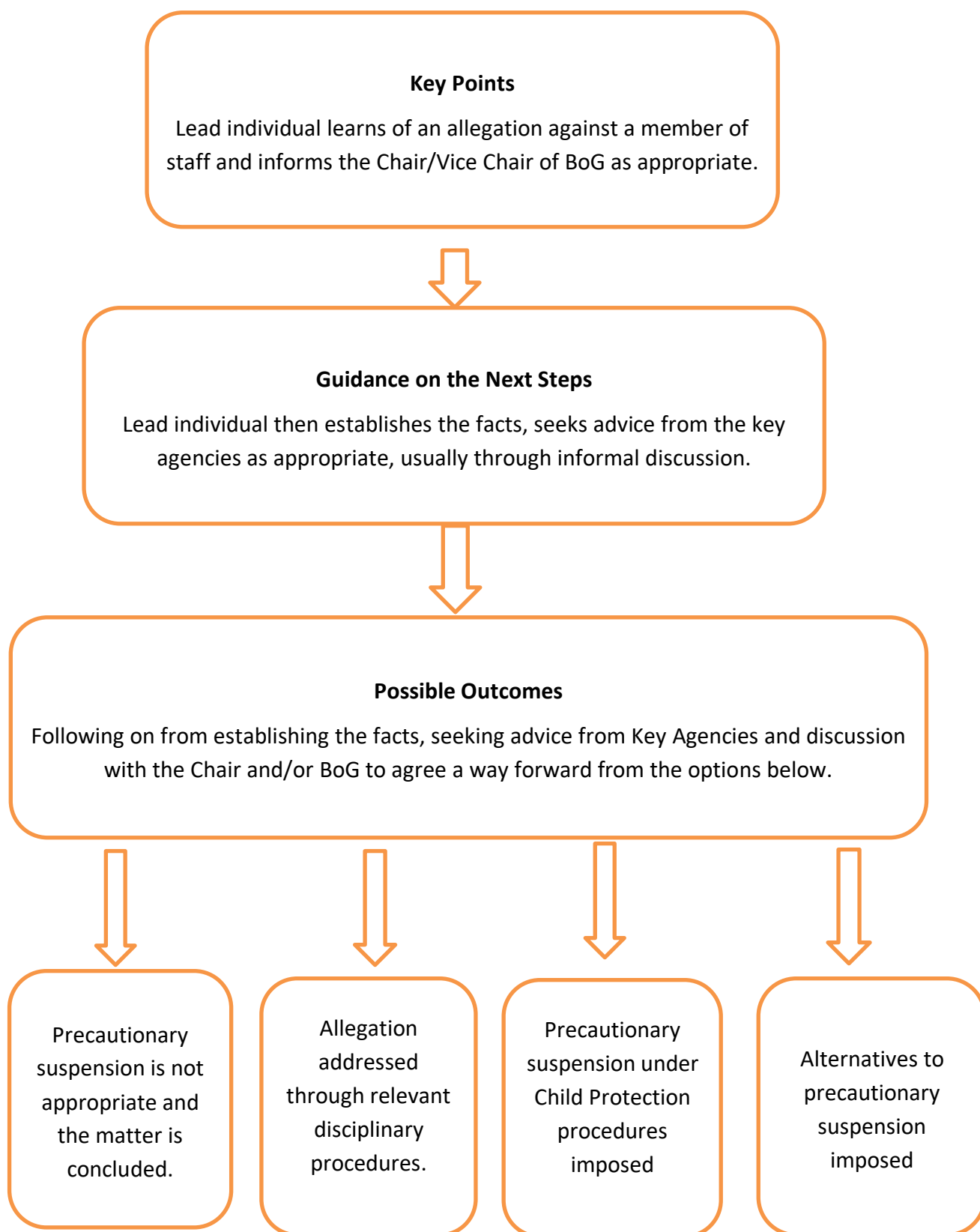
#### **Child Protection referral is not required**

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children's Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person's consent (where appropriate).



Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

## Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff



# KNOCKEVIN SCHOOL

## **CHILD PROTECTION NOTE OF CONCERN**

**Confidential child protection record– please pass to Designated Teacher**

(N.B. It is imperative that only factual and neutral information is recorded).

Pupil Name:	
Class:	
Date, time of incident/disclosure	

Circumstances of incident/disclosure - place, activity, who dealt with it, circumstances:

Nature and description of concern –observations, description of physical/behavioural indicators, child/young person’s statements:



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

Action taken at the time:

Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:

Any further action taken:

Referral to Designated Teacher in school who, when (date and time), how:

If not passed to Designated Teacher please state reason:

Name of staff member making the report: .....

Signed by School Staff Member.....Date.....

**Part 2 to be completed by the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher**

Advice sought/conversation with – Board Officer for CP, CCMS Diocesan Officer Social Services, Police CPSA Unit, date, time, place, advice.

Advice sought/conversation with other(s)

Decision not to refer and why. Other action plus type of feedback to all those involved – how, when

Decision to refer and why. Other action plus type of feedback to all those involved – how, when

Written note places on pupil's Child protection file :   Y   /   N

If 'No' state reason:

Signed by Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**KNOCKEVIN SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT**

**PUPIL NAME .....**

**TEACHER .....**

**DAYS CHILD HAS ATTENDED .....**

**PUPIL’S PRESENTATION; UNIFORMS, PERSONAL HYGIENE ETC.**

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.....

**PUPIL’S ATTAINMENT IN CLASS – IEP TARGETS, HOMEWORK COMPLETION (IF APPLICABLE)**

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**PUPIL’S BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL**

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**PARENT COMMUNICATION**

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.....

**Any other comments**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Reporting a Child Protection Concern in school— Information for Parents 2021/22

I have a concern about my/a child's safety



I can talk to my/ the class/form teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher (Mr A Davis/ Mrs E Brown/Mr A Smith) for child protection or the Principal



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors, Mrs Rosemary Gorman



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman  
Tel: 0800 343 424



At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team or the PSN Central Referral Unit at 028 9025 9299

**Reporting a Child Protection Concern in school—  
Information for Parents 2021/22**

