



## **Methodist College Belfast**

### **Child Protection Policy**

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## SECTION A: CODE OF PRACTICE

### I Introduction

- (i) In Methodist College both students and staff are valued and respected as individuals and they are encouraged to develop their unique talents and abilities to their full potential. We seek to create a safe, caring, positive and supportive environment in which pupils have the right to be heard and see staff and volunteers as approachable people who will listen to their concerns about issues inside and outside school and take them seriously.

The Governors and staff of the College recognise the contribution they can make to safeguarding children. They acknowledge that all staff and volunteers have a full and active part in protecting pupils from harm. Child abuse is completely unacceptable and may also be a criminal offence.

- (ii) In *The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995* it is clear that “the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration” in all decisions concerning a child: this overrides all other considerations. Article 3 of *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* states “*In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public, private social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration.*”
- (iii) This policy is also informed by the guidance and procedures set out by Department of Education *Pastoral Care in School: Child Protection (1999)*, *Co-Operating to Safeguard Children (2003)*, *Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005)*, ‘*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI 2016*’, ‘*Children who display harmful sexualised behaviours* ‘ (*DE Circular 2016/05*).

Copies of these publications and other relevant publications can be found at:

[http://www.belb.org.uk/teachers/child\\_protection.asp](http://www.belb.org.uk/teachers/child_protection.asp)

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/publications-and-guidance-child-protection-issues-schools>

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

- (iv) The policy applies to all Governors, staff and volunteers and it ensures all adults have clear guidance on the action to be taken where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected or disclosed. The issue of child abuse is not ignored by anyone who works in the College. If a member of staff or volunteer becomes aware of a pupil who may be suffering abuse, then that member of staff or volunteer follows the procedure detailed in Section B to ensure that the matter is addressed fully.

- (v) Everyone in the College has a responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. However, within the school there are key personnel who are delegated with specific responsibility for child protection. Their roles are listed later in this document.
- (vi) As part of the preventative curriculum, the College helps pupils to recognise unwelcome and unacceptable behaviour in others, to understand appropriate boundaries and to acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. It is made clear that pupils have the right to be treated properly by others and they are reminded of their responsibility to treat other people with respect.

## II Safeguarding Team

Chair of the Board of Governors	Mr M Humphreys
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mrs H McHugh
Principal	Mr S Naismith
Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs A Logan
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection	Mr A Craig, Mrs Kennedy, Mrs K Parkes

## III Definition of Abuse

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)

A child is a person under the age of eighteen 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 nineteenth year.

## IV Types of Abuse

Child abuse is covered under five categories in *Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection* (DENI 1999), *ACPC (2005)* and *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI 2016*.

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour. (ACPC, 2005)

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic

violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. (ACPC, 2005)

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. (ACPC, 2005)

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive. (ACPC, 2005)

Exploitation<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>§</sup>. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI 2016).

§ Child sexual exploitation 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 occur through the use of technology.

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.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in Methodist College. The *Anti-Bullying Policy* is set out in a separate document. Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to deal appropriately with the bully. The situation is monitored until staff are sure the problem has stopped.

## V **Pupils who display harmful sexualised behaviour**

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<sup>1</sup> Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals are required to 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.

(i) 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. The College supports its pupils 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 notice behaviours that give cause for concern.

(ii) It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours – these can be defined as ‘healthy’, ‘problematic’ or ‘harmful’.

**Healthy Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:**

- \* Mutual
- \* Consensual
- \* Exploratory and age appropriate
- \* Not intended to cause harm
- \* Fun / humorous
- \* Without power differentials

(iii) Healthy sexual behaviour has generally no need for intervention, however, there may be instances when interventions are applied, for example, it is not appropriate when displayed in school or during school activities. This may therefore be an opportune time for teachers to positively reinforce appropriate behaviour.

**Problematic Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:**

- \* Not age appropriate
- \* One-off incident of low key touching over clothes
- \* Result of peer pressure
- \* Spontaneous rather than planned
- \* Lacking in other balancing factors e.g. no intent to cause harm, level of understanding, acceptance of responsibility
- \* Targeting other children, to irritate and make feel uncomfortable. Often the children are not scared and can feel free to tell someone
- \* Concerning to parents / carers, supportive
- \* Sometimes involving substances which disinhibit behaviours

(iv) 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. However, if the behaviour is

considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the Education Authority CPSSS may be required. The CPSSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

**Harmful Sexualised Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:**

- \* Lacks the consent of the victim
  - \* When the perpetrator uses threats or violence (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce or intimidate the victim
  - \* Uses age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
  - \* Involves inappropriate touching
  - \* Involves sexual behaviour between children – it 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
  - \* Involves a younger child abusing an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example, if the older child is disabled
- (v) Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and the College will seek the support that is available from the CPSSS – see Appendix 7: Assessment Checklist, advice and support for dealing with sexualised behaviour.

**VI Role of the Board of Governors and the Designated Governor for Child Protection**

- (i) The Board of Governors recognises the responsibility placed on it by *The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003* and the information in the *School Governors Handbook Child Protection 2007*.
- (ii) The Board of Governors reviews annually the Child Protection structures and procedures in the College and The Child Protection Policy using the guidance outlined in the documents listed in Appendix 1.
- (iii) The Board of Governors tasks the Principal with designating a member of staff to have specific responsibility for Child Protection and he/she also appoints 2 Deputies. In this document the teachers are referred to as the Designated Teacher and the Deputy Designated Teacher(s).
- (iv) The Board of Governors ensures that the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Designated Governor for Child Protection receive appropriate and up-to-date Child Protection training commissioned or provided by the Education Authority (Belfast), with refresher training at least once every three years. It also ensures that the Designated Teacher and the Deputies receive regular training to update their knowledge in this area and that child protection training is given to all staff and volunteers annually.
- (v) At least one Governor sitting on interview and appointment panels has received Strand 3: Recruitment and Selection Training (BELB).

- (vi) The Board of Governors tasks the Principal with ensuring parents/guardians have access to a copy of the Child Protection Policy and complaints procedure.
- (vii) Each year parents are advised of the name of the Designated Governor for Child Protection so that they may consult him/her on a Child Protection matter if desired. If such a matter is raised, he/she informs the Principal (unless the Principal is implicated, in which case he/she advises the Chair of the Board or Governors) and they follow the procedure detailed in Section B of this document.
- (viii) In the event of a Child Protection complaint being made against the Principal, the Chair of the Board of Governors assumes the lead for managing the allegations.
- (ix) The Designated Governor for Child Protection inducts the members of the Board of Governors in Child Protection. A roll of attendees is kept. New members of the Board are given a copy of *School Governors Handbook Child Protection* (CPPS, DENI 2007) and given awareness training.

## VII Role of the Principal

- (i) The Principal designates a member of staff to have specific responsibility for Child Protection and he/she also appoints two Deputies.
- (ii) The Principal ensures all staff and volunteers are vetted.
- (iii) The Principal notifies the Chair of the Board of Governors of child protection referrals to Social Services and/or the PSNI.
- (iv) The Principal gives reports to the Board of Governors regarding any child protection matters as they arise and, also, termly updates. In addition, a full annual Child Protection report is given to the Board of Governors.
- (v) The Principal takes the lead when a complaint is made against a member of staff or volunteer. If the Designated Teacher is the subject of the complaint the Principal takes over his/her role.
- (vi) The Principal ensures that all parents, pupils, staff and volunteers know who the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers are and how they can be contacted. If a parent prefers to contact another member of staff, that member of staff must follow the relevant procedures.
- (vii) The Principal ensures that parents/guardians are issued with a copy of the Child Protection Policy and complaints procedure every two years (this may be in the form of access to an electronic copy).

## VIII Role of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- (i) The Designated Teacher for Child Protection trains all new staff and volunteers, updates the training of current staff and volunteers annually and is available to

discuss child protection concerns with them. He/she maintains a record of attendance at training.

- (ii) He/she takes the lead responsibility for developing the College's Child Protection Policy and promoting an ethos of safeguarding in the school.
- (iii) He/she keeps the Principal informed of child protection issues, liaises with EA(Belfast) Designated Officers for Child Protection and makes referrals to social services and /or PSNI as appropriate.
- (iv) He/she maintains records in accordance with DENI guidance on child protection issues and produces written reports for the Board of Governors.
- (v) When the Designated Teacher is not available, one of the Deputy Designated Teachers will have responsibility for child protection.
- (vi) The Designated Teachers follow the procedures in Section B.

## **Section B: Procedure for Receiving, Recording and Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse**

### **I. Introduction**

In all cases of abuse or suspected abuse, the member of staff or volunteer immediately informs the Designated Teacher of his or her concerns. The informing teacher follows the procedures detailed later in this section on recording and reporting. It is then the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to pursue the matter in accordance with College policy.

#### **Note:**

Neither the informing staff nor the Designated Teacher for Child Protection investigates. This is a matter for Social Services and/or the PSNI. There is the possibility of legal proceedings in such cases and, therefore, staff remain impartial and professional throughout. Members of staff seek advice from the Principal or the Designated Teacher if they have any concerns about the correct procedure.

### **II Abuse or Suspected Abuse is Disclosed to a Member of Staff or Volunteer by a Pupil**

- (i) If a pupil makes a disclosure of abuse, the member of staff or volunteer follows the procedure set down in *The Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers* for interviews in which a pupil asks to speak in private. They explain that he or she wishes to help but cannot assure the pupil of total confidentiality as it may be necessary to seek advice and pass on information. It is explained that any information is treated as sensitively as possible and only those who need to know are informed, in the best interests of the pupil.
- (ii) Staff or volunteers listen to the pupil, accept what he/she is saying without judgement,

or displaying shock or disbelief, do not ask leading questions and do not suggest a reason for what has happened or criticise the perpetrator. Staff and volunteers do not investigate the issue. If it is felt that some questions are needed in order to clarify the matter, open questions are used to establish the facts. Unless revealed, they do not ask who, what etc. A pupil is not pressed for information the child does not want to give. Closed questions and questioning beyond what the pupil volunteers without prompting can jeopardise a subsequent court case. This is the role of partner agencies.

- (iii) Staff and volunteers reassure the pupil that he/she has done the right thing in talking about the matter. They do not make promises, e.g. everything will be all right. They explain what they will do next, i.e. talk to the Designated Teacher.
- (iv) They make sure that the pupil is safe. If there is any concern about the immediate welfare of the pupil, the member of staff or volunteer ensures that the pupil is in the care of a responsible person. This may, for example, involve taking him or her to the Sanatorium if in a distressed state.
- (v) Immediately after disclosure by a pupil the member of staff or volunteer makes a written note of the details given by the child. The notes are factual and accurate and any reference to the abuse or to the abuser is recorded as far as possible in the actual words used by the pupil. The member of staff or volunteer does not express opinions but notes the demeanour and physical state of the child and notes when and where the disclosure took place.
- (vi) The member of staff or volunteer reports the matter within the same working day to the Designated Teacher (or, in his absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher) and notes when and where this took place. He or she hands over a written report of the disclosure, signed and dated. The Designated Teacher keeps them securely in Child Protection cabinet so no copies are required by the informing staff. The Designated Teacher, in consultation with the Principal, decides on the next step.

### III Abuse or Suspected Abuse Disclosed to a Member of Staff or Volunteer by a Third Party

- (i) On becoming aware of information about the possible abuse of a pupil the member of staff or volunteer does not express opinions, but makes a written note of when and where the disclosure took place, and records as far as possible the disclosure in the actual words used by the third party. Staff or volunteers do not ask for a written account.
- (ii) The member of staff or volunteer reports the matter immediately to the Designated Teacher (or, in his absence to the Deputy) and hands over a written account of the disclosure, signed and dated.

### IV Abuse or Suspected Abuse by a Member of Staff or Volunteer

It is a serious matter if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer. The Principal (or, in his absence, the Senior Vice-Principal) is informed immediately, unless the complaint is against the Principal, in which case the Chairman of the Board is informed.

The Principal (or the Chairman of the Board of Governors if the complaint is against the Principal) ensures that any such complaint is thoroughly clarified by means of the normal Child Protection procedures and the Chairman of the Board of Governors is informed immediately. Preliminary steps are carried out with an open mind. However, the prime consideration is the protection of the pupils in the school and the Principal and/or Chairman of the Board of Governors take all necessary steps to ensure this. Where the matter is referred to Social Services and/or the PSNI, the member of staff or volunteer can be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils or staff may be suspended from duties as a precautionary measure pending further investigation. (See Disciplinary Policy and Procedures)

- V Action to be taken by the Designated Teacher following an incident of suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- (i) As soon as the Designated Teacher becomes aware of a possible case of child abuse, he/she asks for the notes made by the staff or volunteer reporting it. If the report is verbal, he/she asks the staff concerned to write down the information.
  - (ii) The Designated Teacher meets with the Principal (or the Senior Vice-Principal if the Principal is not available) as a matter of urgency. They consider the situation and plan a course of action, ensuring that a written record of all decisions is made at each step of the process. The Designated Teacher may consult with the EA (Belfast) Child Protection Support Service's Designated Officer for Child Protection.
  - (iii) Suspected or alleged abuse is referred to Social Services by the Designated Teacher, using the regional UNOCINI form, within twenty four hours of the initial referral to Social Services. Where physical or sexual abuse is suspected or alleged, the case is referred to the PSNI. In some cases, the Principal makes the referral personally but in either situation, the Chairman of the Board of Governors is informed of the matter and of subsequent developments. The Designated Teacher informs BELB's Designated Officer for Child Protection of the referral.
  - (iv) Unless there are concerns that the parent/guardian may be the possible abuser, the parent/guardian is informed as soon as possible of the course of action to be taken, by the Designated Teacher or the Principal, normally before the referral. However, the referral is not delayed if the parent/guardian cannot be contacted. If the parent/guardian does not agree with the referral, the latter proceeds as the protection of the child is paramount. In some circumstances it may not be in the child's interests to inform the parent/guardian immediately. In such a situation, at the time of referral, the Designated Teacher clarifies with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the pupil are told that a referral has been made. The Chairman of the Board of Governors is contacted and informed of the reasons for the decision.
  - (v) The Principal and the Designated Teacher meet as often as necessary to review the situation and to ensure that all possible steps are taken to safeguard the welfare of the pupil, recording all decisions made. The Designated Teacher or the Principal keeps those people who need to know informed of developments, subject to the requirement that the welfare of the child is paramount and legal constraints.

- (vi) A written account of all proceedings connected to the case, timed and dated, is made by the Designated Teacher and kept in the Child Protection cabinet. If a member of staff or volunteer is implicated in the proceedings, then an extra copy of the documentation is placed in that individual's personal file.

## VI Supporting Pupils in the College

- (i) The Designated Teacher works with external agencies to ensure that appropriate support is provided for a pupil who has suffered abuse.
- (ii) Staff help all pupils to develop skills in self protection and develop confidence through:
- The content of the curriculum, particularly the Personal Development Programme
  - The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued
  - The College's Positive Behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting pupils in the school. The school ensures that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards themselves and others
  - Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychologists, police and the school nurse.

## VII Information to Pupils and Parents

- (i) At the beginning of the academic year, each Head of Form speaks to the pupils in his or her Form and introduces and explains the role of each member of the Form Team as it directly affects the pupils. He or she also explains that while a specific teacher may have responsibility for a particular aspect of work in the Form, there may be occasions when a pupil may prefer to speak to a teacher not connected with that Form about a problem, and that they may seek help from any member of staff if they are experiencing personal difficulties. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Head of Pastoral Care and Deputy Heads of Pastoral Care explain their role. Posters outlining the Pastoral and Form Teams and how help can be accessed outside school, e.g. Childline and NSPCC are displayed in prominent positions around the College.
- (ii) Each academic year, parents receive information about the members of the Pastoral and Form Teams and they receive guidance detailing the most suitable person to contact in particular instances, including a Child Protection matter. Parents are advised each year that a formal procedure exists and will be followed if a Child Protection matter arises. A summary of the Child Protection Policy is issued every year. The full policy is available on the College website and on request from Reception.

## VIII Conduct of Staff and Volunteers

- (i) Staff and volunteers have a duty of care to pupils and a responsibility to pass on information and concerns about a pupil's welfare, no matter how small, to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Staff and volunteers make no assumptions that someone else is aware of a concern.

- (ii) It is important that members of staff and volunteers are totally professional in their dealings with pupils at all times, including non-classroom situations: for example, on school trips, taking extra-curricular activities and when coaching school games. Guidance for staff and volunteers is provided in a separate document entitled *A Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers*. Each member of staff and volunteer receives a copy of this document.

## IX Recruitment and Vetting Procedures of Staff and Volunteers

- (i) Pre-employment enhanced disclosure checks are carried out on all staff employed in the College, through Access NI until November 2010 and with the Independent Safeguarding Authority from then onwards. References are taken up on all new staff.
- (ii) The College uses volunteers from time to time in its work. If it is envisaged that the volunteer could be in contact with pupils with no member of staff present, then that person is required to have an enhanced disclosure check carried out through Access NI.
- (iii) New members of staff and volunteers receive appropriate induction Child Protection training, a copy of the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct for Staff. All staff and volunteers receive refresher training every year.
- (iv) The Director of Services takes all reasonable steps to ensure that any outside contractors satisfy the requirements of the College in this area.

## X Management of Records

Child Protection information is kept securely in the locked Child Protection cabinet located in the Principal's office. The cabinet contains details of all the cases which have involved pupils in the College. It may be accessed by the Designated Governors for Child Protection, the Principal and the Designated Teacher. The guidance laid down on the retention of records is followed.

## XI Related policies:

Anti-bullying policy  
RSE policy  
Positive behaviour policy  
Code of conduct for staff and volunteers  
e-safety & Acceptable Use policy

## XII Policy Review

The Designated Teacher conducts a formal review of the Child Protection Policy annually. This is done in consultation with the Chairman of the Board, the Designated Governor and the Principal. To inform this review, the Designated Teacher seeks the views of a selection of pupils, parents and staff. The revised policy is discussed with the Senior Leadership Team before being presented to the Education Committee and the Board of Governors for consideration.

The views of parents and pupils are welcomed at any time and are normally directed to the Designated Teacher.

Chairman of Board of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO CHILD PROTECTION**

DENI circulars and other documents which are relevant to Child Protection are kept in the Child Protection cabinet. Copies of these circulars may be obtained from the DENI website [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

The Children (NI) Order 1995 Overarching legislation setting out professional practice in relation to children and young people

DENI circular 1990/28 Disclosure of Criminal Background of Persons with Access to Children

DENI circular 1999/9 Pastoral Care: Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force to restrain or Control Pupils

DENI circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care Guidance in Schools: Child Protection.

DENI circular 1999/17 Parental Responsibility: Guidance for Schools

DENI circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils: Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

DENI Report Cabin Hill Statutory Inquiry Report (Jan 2005)

DENI circular 2006/6 Child Protection –Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings

DENI circular 2006/7 Child Protection–Employment of Substitute Teachers

DENI circular 2006/08 Child Protection–Training requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels

DENI circular 2006/09 Child Protection – Criminal Background Checks of Staff in Schools

DENI circular 2006/25 Child Protection – Vetting of School Governors

DENI circular 2007/01 Guidance on Internet and Digital Technologies

DENI circular 2008/03 Pre-Employment checking of Persons to Work in Schools – New Arrangements

DENI circular 2012/19 Changes to pre-employment vetting checks for volunteers working in schools

Child Protection: Legislation changes to the age of consent (DENI May 2009) (re Sexual Offences Order (2008))

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Co-Operating to Safeguard

Children (2003)

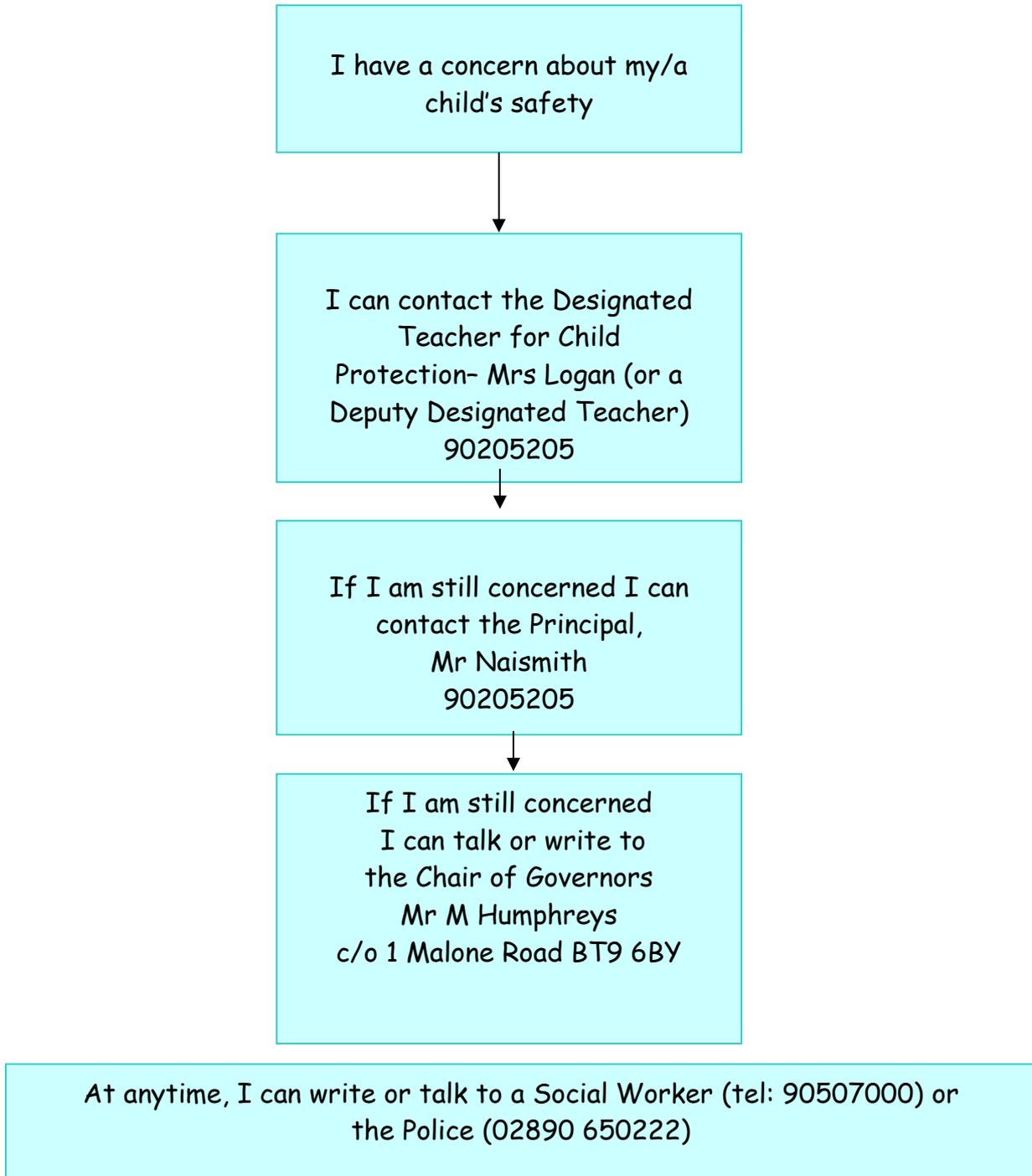
The Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005)

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI 2016 (DHSSPSNI)

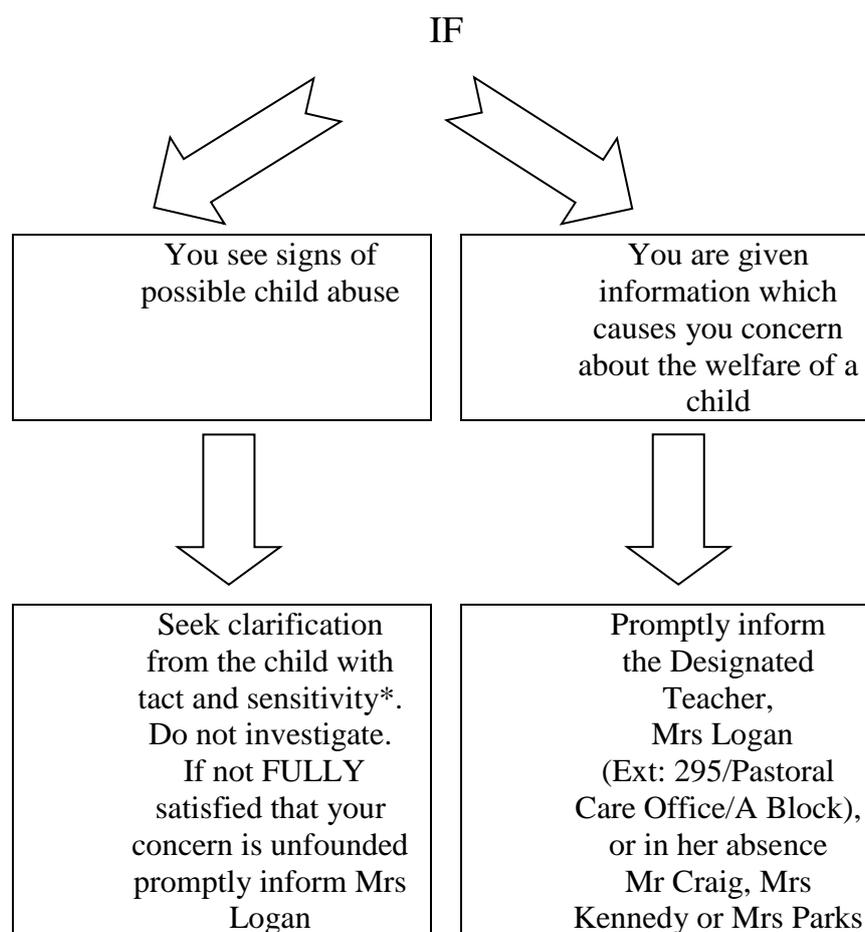
DENI circular 2016/05                      Children who display harmful sexualised behaviours

## Appendix 2: How a parent/guardian can raise a safe guarding/ child protection concern

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



### Appendix 3: Summary of Child Protection Guidelines for Staff



Mrs Logan will inform Mr Naismith.

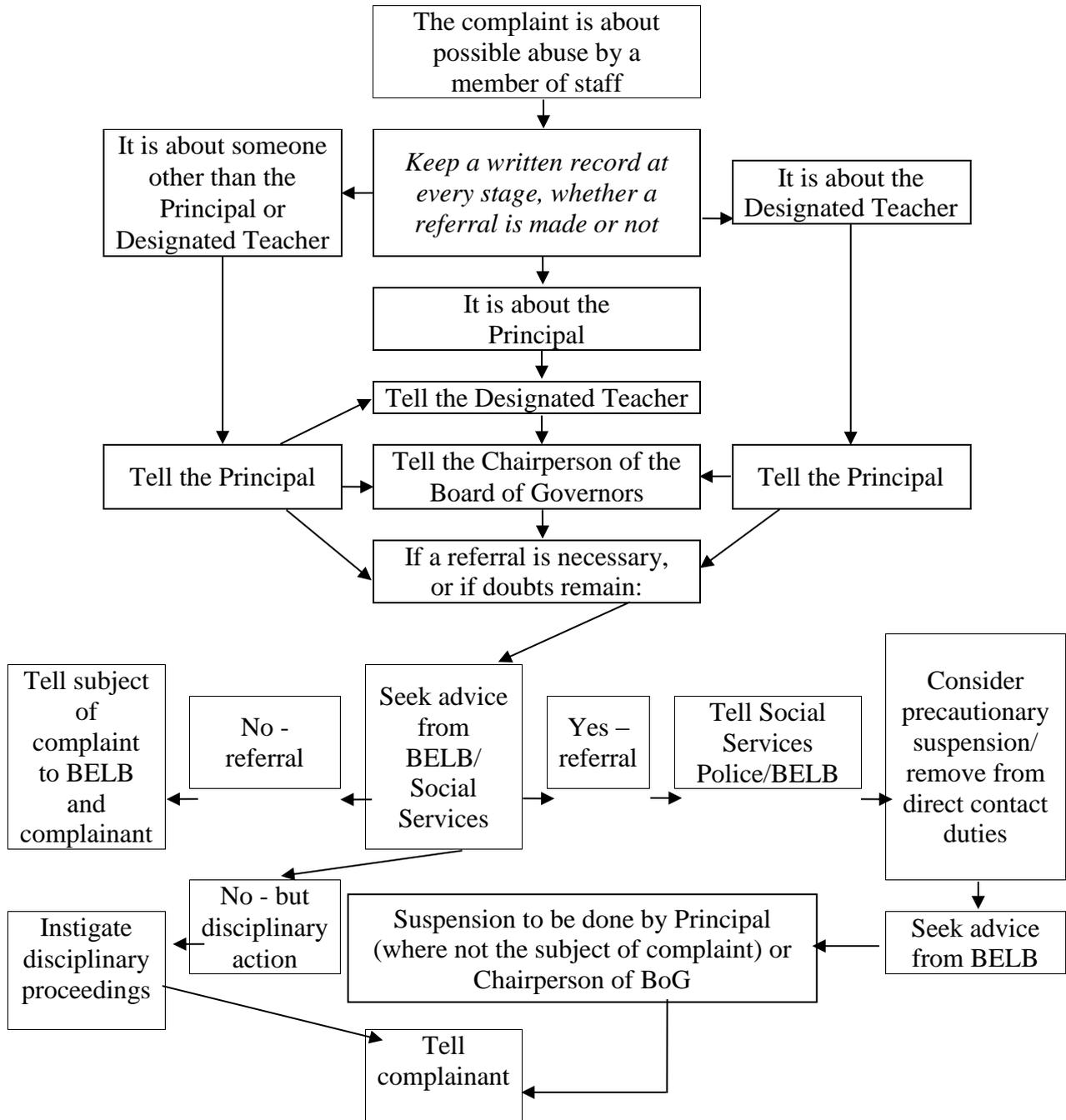
\*Whilst discreet preliminary clarification may be sought in order to confirm or allay concerns it is not the responsibility of teachers or the school to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child's family or other carers.

\*In seeking clarification please use the following guidelines:-

- Note down any comment(s) made by the child in his/her own words as far as possible
- Avoid asking the child leading questions
- Avoid asking questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events
- Do not guarantee confidentiality
- Reassure the child that only those who need to know will be informed
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing
- Do not make assumptions or judgments

The safety of the child is the first priority.

**Appendix 4: Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the College staff**



## **Appendix 5: Potential Signs and Symptoms of Abuse**

### **Physical Abuse**

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

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

### **Emotional Abuse**

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**

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**

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

## **Appendix 6: Summary of Advice to Staff and Volunteers on How to Respond to a Child Making a Disclosure (5 Rs)**

1. Receive
  - Stay calm.
  - Go at the child's pace.
  - Listen without displaying shock or disbelief or interrupting.
  - Accept what the child is saying without judgment.
2. Reassure
  - Reassure the child that he/she have done the right thing by talking to you.
  - Do not make promises that you cannot keep (e.g. everything will be alright now, I'll stay with you).
  - Do not promise confidentiality.
  - Explain that you will need to talk to Mrs Logan who will know what to do.
  - Do not investigate, make assumptions or speculate.
3. Respond
  - Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter to the Mrs Logan.
  - Do ask open questions (Can you tell me what happened? Anything else you wish to tell me?)
  - Do not ask closed questions (those that will evoke a yes/no response). Never ask why or how. Such questions invalidate evidence where a subsequent court action is necessary.
  - Do not criticise the perpetrator.
  - Do explain what you will do next (talk with Mrs Logan who will know how to get help).
4. Record
  - Make notes as soon as possible after the disclosure and write them up.
  - Do not destroy the 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 Mrs Logan.
5. Refer
  - Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the Designated Teacher as soon as possible within the working day. She will liaise with the Principal in the decision making process regarding referral to statutory services, if appropriate.

## **Appendix 7: Assessment Checklist, advice and support for dealing with sexualised behaviour.**

An Assessment Checklist may be used to evaluate individual incidents, or a series of incidents, retrospectively and are a guide for decision-making about level of concern/intervention. There are 8 factors, drawn from the AIM Project (Assessment, Intervention, Moving On) guidelines, to be considered. Where only limited information is available, the checklist provides a prompt for the information that needs to be gathered.

### Assessment Factors:

- \* The type of sexual behaviour
- \* The context of the behaviour
- \* The young person's response when challenged about their behaviour
- \* The reaction/response of others
- \* The relationship between the children / young people / targeted adult
- \* The persistence and frequency of the behaviour
- \* Any other behavioural problems; and
- \* Background information known

### **General Principles**

- (i) Whether a child is responsible for harmful sexualised behaviour, is a victim of sexual abuse, or both, it is important to apply principles that remain child centred. Harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children must be recognised as damaging to both the victim and the child who engages in the abusive behaviour. A child who engages in abuse of this kind may be suffering, or be at risk of, significant harm and may also be in need of protection. Some children who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour are likely to have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties and may have experienced some form of abuse themselves in the past.
- (ii) Nonetheless, in the balance of what is in the child's best interests, the needs of the victim must be given priority; and nothing will be done which causes the victim further harm. The needs of children and young people who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour towards others will be considered separately from the needs of their victims.
- (iii) The College acknowledges that it is not appropriate to refer to children or young people displaying harmful sexualised behaviour using such terms as 'sexually aggressive', 'sexually precocious' or 'child perpetrators'.
- (iv) It must also be borne in mind that harmful sexualised behaviour is primarily a child protection concern and may not (be addressed through the College's disciplinary procedures.

The recognition and management of such harmful behaviour is integrated into the school policies on safeguarding and child protection, behaviour and anti-bullying and hence will be handled under the existing arrangements for recording and reporting.

Preventative work will be done through identifying the areas in school where physical, verbal or sexual bullying may take place. Reducing access to or monitoring these areas means fewer

incidents are likely, or that these areas of the school may be restricted for a pupil whose behaviours are causing the risk.

### **Advice and Support**

It can be difficult to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate behaviours. Complicating factors can include the age of the child concerned or whether the child has special educational needs. Professional judgement is therefore likely to be required and the College will contact the CPSSS for support and advice on the appropriate course of action to take.

Identification of problematic/harmful behaviours and analysis of any attending risks is based on multi-agency risk assessment and analysis. The CPSSS will support the Principal and designated Teacher for Child Protection in managing the process and communicating with partner agencies where appropriate (primarily Social Services, the Youth Justice Agency and the PSNI).