

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit



Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy

Revised September 2025

N.B. See ‘**COVID-19 Changes to School’s Policies and Procedures**’ for additional consideration during the pandemic.

Ethos

At Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit we are committed to the development of the whole child. We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty, ensuring at all times to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment which values all individuals for their unique talents and abilities. A child cannot learn effectively or develop unless they feel secure. Our school motto is:

“Happy Together, Learning Forever”

We promote learning for life and high achievement by working with children to:

- practise the Catholic faith in their daily lives;
- have high self-esteem – respecting themselves, others, our local community and the world around us;
- recognise their talents and acquire the knowledge and skills to be their individual best;
- become happy, enthusiastic, highly motivated life-long learners;
- be able to work independently and collaboratively;
- gain the necessary skills to equip them for our ever changing world.

We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:

- a Catholic ethos of support and encouragement, where diversity is embraced and success is celebrated;
- a broad and challenging curriculum, ensuring inclusion and equality of opportunity;
- a learning partnership between school, home, parish and the wider community;
- a safe, healthy, stimulating learning environment;
- innovative teaching and an investigative approach to learning;

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:

- continually striving for improvement by working together towards common goals.

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'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
- evidence based and informed decision making

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.

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

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

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

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022.](#)

Other related policies

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

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Positive Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disposal of Records and Records Management Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines Policy
- Drugs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the School office or visit the school website at: www.ballymacrickettprimaryschool.co.uk

School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors – Mrs C. Kemp
 - Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs C Kemp
 - Principal – Mr S. Eastwood
 - Designated Teacher – Mrs D. Farnon
 - Deputy Designated Teachers – Mrs J McAllister and Miss A McCormick
- N.B. To contact the Designated Teacher or one of the Deputy Designated Teachers, contact the school office on 02894422708 and for the teacher by name.

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher

- 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
- 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 Designated Teacher/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
- to maintain the schools Record of Child Abuse Complaints

Board of Governors

- a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- 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
- 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
- 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; recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff

Teachers and Support Staff

- know the forms that abuse might take and how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse
- know the procedures to be followed within the school when faced with a disclosure or a suspected case of child abuse and to take the appropriate action
- know and follow the requirements on record keeping
- follow guidance supplied by DENI on standards of behaviour expected of them towards the pupils in their charge
- reflect on every aspect of contact with their pupils and ensure that their conduct is above reproach
 - work in partnership with parents and guardians and foster trust and good relationships, keeping parents informed of their responsibility for the welfare of the children in their charge
 - try to equip the children, through the curriculum, e.g. PDMU, Alive-O, Health Education, Circle Time, Cappy, Stories, Assemblies, Anti-Bullying, with the skills they need to stay safe. To help them to recognise unwelcome approaches or behaviour and to develop in them the confidence to resist them as far as possible

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. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at:
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

Definition of Harm

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others or themselves. 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.

Harm can be caused by:

Sexual abuse

Emotional abuse

Physical abuse

Neglect

Exploitation

Domestic Violence

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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

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

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.

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, and 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.

Concerns about any of the above categories will be referred immediately to the Social Services.

Domestic Abuse is "threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation".

(DHSSPS/NIO Tackling Violence at Home, 2005, p10)

Any concerns about instances of domestic abuse will also be referred immediately to Social services.

Identifying Signs of Possible Abuse

All staff should be alert to any outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. These symptoms may be due to a variety of causes including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances, drug, alcohol or solvent misuse, and accidental injuries such as bruising to the legs.

Sometimes however, outward symptoms or changes may be due to child abuse. While no list of symptoms can be exhaustive, the following may be noticeable:

- bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks or burns; (May be particularly noticeable when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities, or when very young children or children with special educational needs are helped with toileting.)

- possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition;
- possible indicators of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence, or attention-seeking;
- sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- any combination of the above may be accompanied by or solely manifested in marked deterioration in performance and/or increased absenteeism.

Specific types of abuse

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in Ballymacrickett Primary School are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 1**

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 2**

Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

All Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals. **Appendix 3** outlines the procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse by someone other than a member of the School's Staff.

- When teachers see signs that cause concern they should as a first step seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's ancillary or auxiliary staff sees such signs, he/she should immediately bring them to the attention of either the class teacher, Mrs Farnon as the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or in her absence, Mrs McAllister or Miss McCormick, as the Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Staff must take care in asking and interpreting children's responses to questions about indications of abuse. Staff should not ask leading questions or questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?"
- If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, the member of staff must act promptly and follow the "5R" Principles.

How to Respond To a Disclosure – The ‘5 R’ Principles

Receive

- Stay calm.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Be discreet.

Reassure

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable, for example, do **not** make promises you may not be able to keep, such as ‘I’ll stay with you’ or ‘everything will be all right now’.
- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to report. Explain that you will need to get some **help** to deal with what you have been told.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it.

Respond

- Respond only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details or make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- **Do not ask leading questions** for example, ‘What did s/he do next?’ or ‘Did s/he touch you?’ Such questions may invalidate your evidence and the child’s in any later investigation or prosecution.
- **Do ask open questions like** ‘Anything else to tell me?’ ‘Yes?’ ‘And?’ Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator, as the child or young person may love her/him.
- Do explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

Record

- Make some notes at the time on any paper that comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes.
- Using the Child Protection Reporting Form (**Appendix 4**), record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour observations, and the words used. If the child uses ‘pet’ words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into ‘proper’ words. Any injuries or bruises noticed may be recorded on a diagram showing position and extent.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.
- Note down when the suspicions were reported and to whom.

Refer

- Concerns about possible abuse must be referred as set out above within the working day. It is never suitable for staff to carry out any investigation. Remember to follow our guidelines and consult as appropriate.
- The chief task is to listen to the child and as soon as possible make a note of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but under

no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed. Any subsequent comments by the child, a parent, carer or adult about how the injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used. A written record of disclosure or concerns must be kept at all times. Any issues or concerns should be logged in the Class Record of Concern book. If these issues of concern are persistent then the information must be recorded in the Child Protection Reporting Form (CPRF) and passed to the DT/DDT. **(Appendix 4)**

- Staff should not give a child any undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should reassure the child that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know. No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.
- A parent or other carer may also give information to a member of Staff which gives rise to concern about possible child abuse. The member of Staff should listen, take notes and advise the person making the complaint that the matter will be brought to the attention of Mrs Farnon, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The person making the complaint should be advised of their responsibility to refer to the local Health and Social Care Gateway Team.
- Concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The Designated Teacher will discuss the child protection issue with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made in the School Child Protection Book, located in the school safe.

The Role of the Principal

- The Principal, DT and DDTs will decide whether in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
- The Principal, DT and DDTs may seek clarification or advice and consult with EA's and CCMS's Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.
- The DT or DDTs for Child Protection will contact Social Services regarding any referral and complete the UNOCINI Initial Assessment Referral Form. Appendix 5 provides background Information on the UNOCINI – Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland
All written correspondence will be marked 'Private and Confidential'.
- The Principal/DT or one of the DDTs for Child Protection will attend any Case Conferences organised by Social Services and will supply any relevant documentation or reports that are requested. Information from Case Conferences will be communicated to the Governors and appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis.

- The Principal/DT/DDTs for Child Protection will be involved in the training and in-service work necessary for the effective implementation of Child Protection Procedures by all staff, including new members of staff.

Complaints Against Members of Staff

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

Appendix 6 outlines the procedures to follow when a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Complaints Against The Principal

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

Appendix 6 outlines the procedures to follow when a complaint has been made against the Principal.

How a Parent Can Report Concerns

If a parent is concerned about their child or another child's safety or well-being they should follow the steps outlined in Appendix 7.

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

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

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/carers 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/carers must be included in the verbal and written referral to children's social services;
- the parent/carers 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

In accordance with DE guidance 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 Ballymacrickett Primary School are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records, these records will be stored from the child's date of birth plus 30 years. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

These notes or records should be 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

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate. All staff paid, or unpaid, who are appointed to positions in Ballymacrickett Primary School are vetted or supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

Code of Conduct for all Staff - Paid or Unpaid

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. All 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.

The Preventative Curriculum

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)

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 specific learning areas e.g. R.E and R.S.E. 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.

Additional strategies:

- child protection issues are addressed through assemblies
- there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main foyer
- there is relevant information in each classroom and other main areas of the school which provides advice and displays as well as child helpline numbers.
- visitors to the school e.g. fire fighters, police etc. health visitor parent programmes.

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 school's 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.

Additional Information

Designated Person's Record Keeping

All Child Protection records, including Complaints Against a Staff Member, will be kept confidentially in a locked cabinet by the Designated Teacher.

Management of the Child Protection Records, including: Storage of Information, Sharing Information, Transfer of Records and Closure, Retention and Disposal of Records will be in line with DE Circular 2020/07 and the Record Management Policy for Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit.

Reports for Child Protection Conferences

Teachers may have to prepare a report for a Child Protection Conference. These should focus on the child's educational progress and achievements, attendance, behaviour, participation, relationships with other children and adults within the school and the child's appearance if this is relevant.

Reports should be objective and based on evidence.

Reports should contain only facts, observations, and reasons for concern.

Reports will be made available to the child's parents at the Child Protection Conference and may be used in court.

The Child Protection Register

Social Services will inform the school if a child has been placed on (or removed from) the child protection register, or when a child whose name is on the register starts school.

Children on the register will be monitored closely by teachers in line with what has been agreed in the child's protection plan. Teachers should report absences or any other signs which suggest deterioration in the pupil's home circumstances.

Children with Special Education Needs

Children with special needs may be especially vulnerable to abuse. Extra care should be taken to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse and neglect and concerns reported as for other children.

Indemnity for Teachers

CCMS will indemnify its employees, i.e. teachers, who act in accordance with the foregoing procedures in reporting any incident of child abuse or suspected child abuse.

Volunteers

All volunteer staff will be accepted in line with the guidance for schools on changes to pre-employment checking as outlined in the DENI Circular 2012/19. The names of all volunteers will be submitted to the Board of Governors on an annual basis, for ratification. All volunteers will be briefed on the 'Code of Conduct for Staff'.

Useful Contact Numbers

Social Services Gateway Team	03001000300
PSNI Child Abuse Investigation Unit (Antrim):	028 94482633
CCMS Down and Connor Designated Person (Susan Sullivan):	028 90426972
Down and Connor Deputy Designated Person (Mary Cunningham):	028 90426972
EA Designated Officers for Child Protection (Colum Boal and Alison Casey):	02890566216
Child Protection Helpline for Schools	02895985590

Appendix 1

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 of Ballymacrickett Primary School 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 Ballymacrickett Primary School 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 school's 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 peer-to-peer exchange.
- **Commercial risks:** the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

We in Ballymacrickett Primary School 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) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's 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 2

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 parents/carers.

Children Looked After

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 decide 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 child looked after are taken into account when decisions are made.

A member of school staff will attend CLA 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.

Boarding schools and residential settings

Children in the above settings are particularly vulnerable to abuse. We will ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and trained in accordance with DE guidance.

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 3

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED CHILD ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S STAFF

Designated Teacher (DT) for Child Protection:

Deputy Designated Teachers (DDT) for Child Protection:

Mrs Debbie Farnon

Mrs Jacqueline McAllister

Miss Aine McCormick

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

**Staff member does not investigate but listens carefully to child and records what is said on Child Protection Reporting Form (CPRF).
ACT PROMPTLY**

A written report of disclosure or concerns must be always kept. Any issues or concerns should be logged in the Class Record of Concern book and communicated to the DT/DDT. If these issues are persistent then the information must be recorded in the Child protection Reporting Form (CPRF) and passed to the DT/DDT.

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

Staff member refers the matter to DT/DDT. They record disclosure/concern in the Child Protection Book (Located in Child Protection Safe). CPRF will also be kept in this book.

DT/DDT, in consultation with Principal, plans a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

If there is any doubt about whether to take further action, advice is available from:

- CCMS Senior Management Officer (School) 02890426972
- ELB Designated Officer 02895985590
- Social Services Gateway Team 03001000300

When seeking advice you do not have to give any names. You are making an enquiry.

Principal/DT/DDT makes a referral to:

- Social Services Gateway Team using **UNOCINI** Initial Assessment Referral Form.

Copies sent to:

- CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools)
- ELBS Designated Officer

Indicate that it is a Child Protection issue in an envelope marked "CONFIDENTAL"

Other Action:

- Record Advice Given
- Maintain regular contact with Social Services
- Monitor

Appendix 4

Child Protection Reporting Form

Name of child: _____

Class: _____

Details of Disclosure

Name of person who made Disclosure: _____

Name of person to whom Disclosure is made: _____

(Date, Time, Place, Observations, Verbal Details)

[illegible]

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 5

UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland)

Initial Referral Assessment Forms will be used to make referrals to the Social Services Gateway Teams.

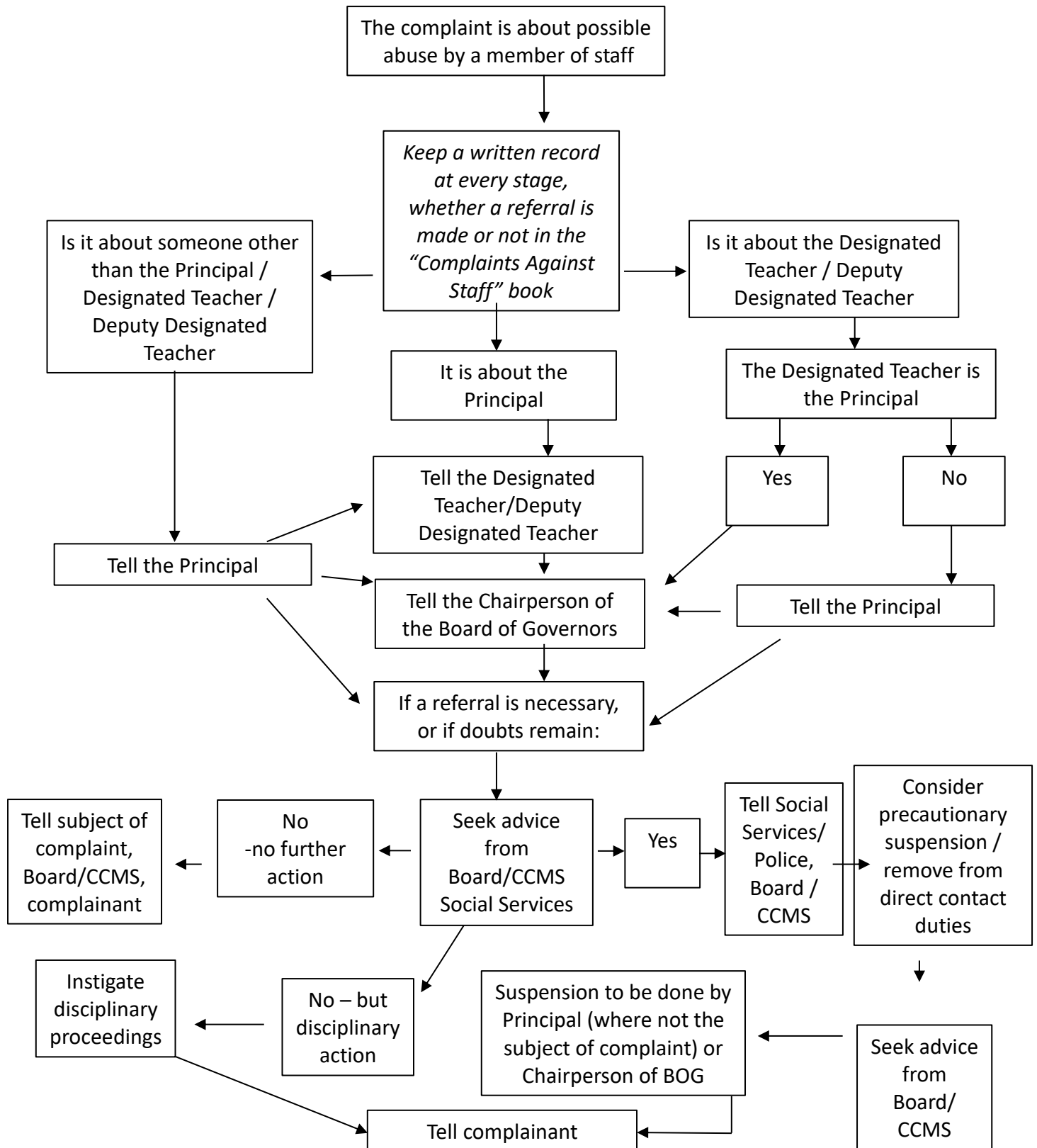
The UNOCINI has been introduced in response to a number of key developments, recommendations from inspections and audits, developing best practice in response to these, lessons learned from local and regional Case Management Reviews. There is a need to have a common language and understanding about all aspects of assessing children's needs. There is also a need to develop a consistent method of gathering information, understanding and analysing the data and accessing the appropriate services to meet the child's needs.

UNOCINI provides an assessment and planning framework to assist professionals in identifying children and their family's needs. The framework offers a logical framework within which children and their family's circumstances can be considered, analysed and understood in order to develop robust plans that aim to improve outcomes for the child.

The UNOCINI framework can also be used to make referrals to Social Services and access children's services. Using UNOCINI will ensure that children being referred come with the wealth of information that has already been collected by professionals working with them. Each level of the UNOCINI assessment framework builds on the previous one, ensuring a continuity of assessment. This will mean that children and their families will not need to go through the same questions with new professionals that others have already asked.

It is hoped that the UNOCINI assessment framework will be used by all professionals working with children as a tool to help them identify the needs of children at an earlier stage so their needs do not unnecessarily escalate to a point where they subsequently require further intervention, including referral to statutory services.

PROCEDURE WHERE A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S STAFF



CHILD PROTECTION

HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT OR RAISE A CONCERN

