

OUR LADY'S GIRLS'
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Child Protection Policy

Our Lady's Primary School
June 2021

Policy Statement

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

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

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999) and the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and DHSS Policy on Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016).

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

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence. We also recognise the impact on children of an abusive family setting.

There are five main elements to our policy:

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

The Safeguarding Team at Our Lady's Primary School

- Principal: Mrs Hughes
- Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs D. Boyle
- Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Miss O'Donnell
- E Safety & Social Media Mr K Tolan
- Chair of Governors: Mr D McBride
- Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Mr D McBride

What is Child Abuse?

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995.)

Child Abuse occurs when 'a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger.' (ACPC, 2005)

Types of Abuse

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child or the wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

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

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.

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

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

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

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. (ACPC, 2005)

Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

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

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. It

may involve a parent or carer also 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)

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

Exploitation¹ 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

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.

Confidentiality

Where a child confides in a member of staff or a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret it is important that the child is told sensitively that it may be necessary to share the information with those who need to know about it, and explain that this is important to ensure the child's safekeeping.

All staff and volunteers who receive sensitive information about children or parents in the course of their professional duties should be aware that

¹ 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.

such information is confidential, and is not to be made the subject of general conversation, or disclosed to others outside the school other than statutory officials, as required by this policy.

All records of a safeguarding/child protection nature are held securely within the school. Access to such records is restricted to the Principal and the Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection.

Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response within ten days of making the complaint, indicating the investigation that has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. Her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

(Refer to Anti-Bullying Policy)

Children that Display Harmful or Inappropriate Sexual Behaviours

Child protection procedures require that issues of concern, including inappropriate sexual behaviour, should be notified to the designated teacher for child protection. This may result in school interventions, which at the more basic level, may be undertaken should the Child Protection Team feel confident in doing so. Other interventions, as the behaviours increase in severity or complexity, will require the support of the Education Authority's Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS). In either event, if the Child Protection Team has any reservations about any of the processes outlined below, or need help in clarifying any of the terms used, staff in the CPSSS will provide support.

What is harmful sexualised behaviour?

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. (See Relationships and Sexuality Policy: RSE). It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools 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 notice behaviours that give cause for concern.

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

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, drawing on the recently issued guidance issued by the Department on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

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

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.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention this child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSSS.

Early therapeutic intervention has a high success rate and few children and young people will continue to engage in harmful sexualised behaviour.

Assessment Checklist

An Assessment Checklist can 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, which should be considered. Where only limited information is available, the checklist should provide 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

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.

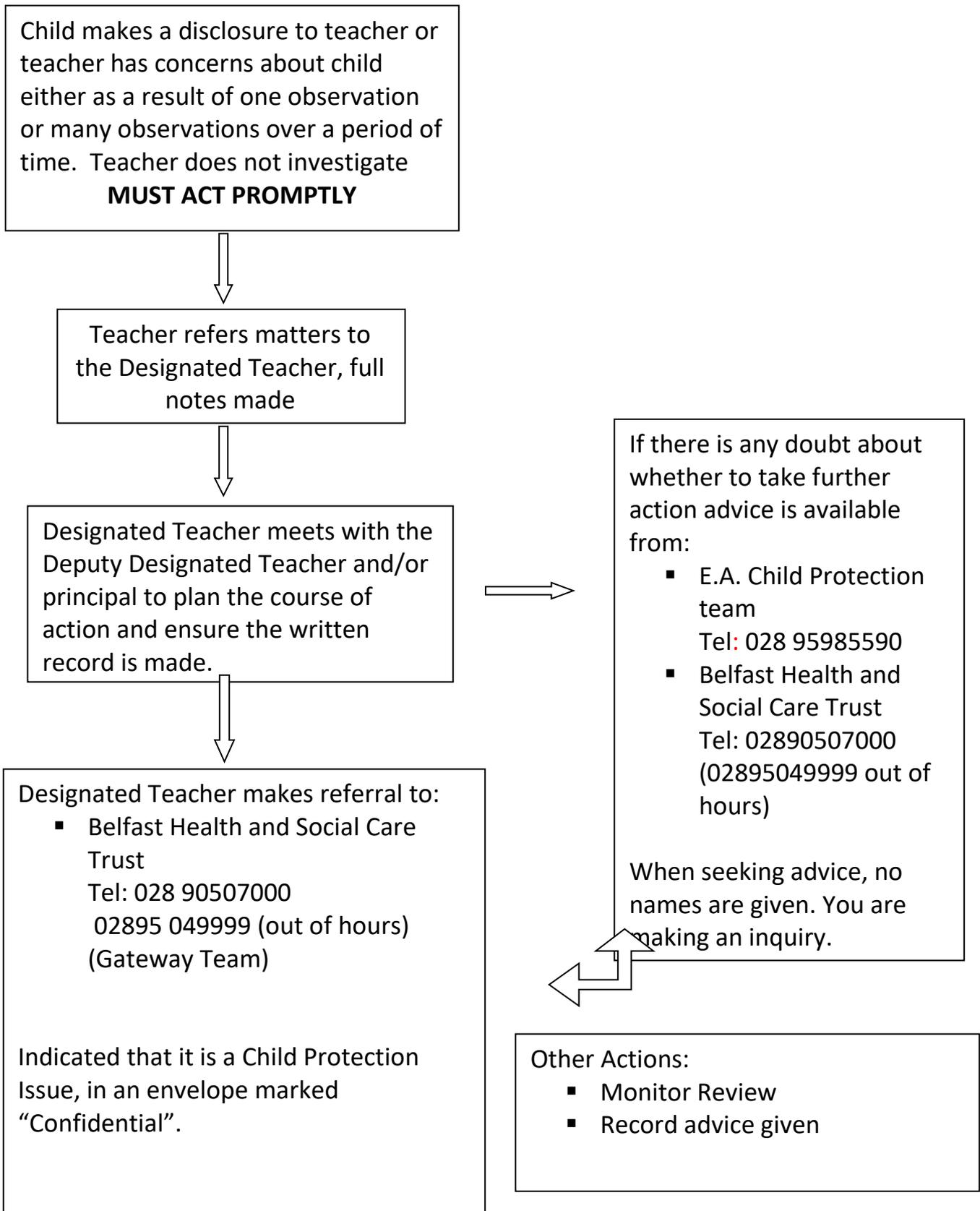
Nonetheless, in the balance of what is in the child's best interests, the needs of the victim must be given priority; and nothing should be done which causes the victim further harm. The needs of children and young people who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour towards others should be considered separately from the needs of their victims.

All staff will remain conscious of the fact 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'.

It must also be borne in mind that harmful sexualised behaviour is primarily a child protection concern and should **not** be addressed through the school discipline procedures.

The ethos of the school is important in terms of how all staff model appropriate and acceptable behaviours (Code of Conduct).

Procedures for Reporting Suspected (Or Disclosed) Child Abuse



The designated teacher for child protection (DT) is Mrs Boyle. In her absence **the deputy designated teacher for child protection (DDT) Miss O'Donnell** will assume responsibility for child protection. On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDT is in the school, the Principal Mrs Hughes will assume responsibility for child protection.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concern about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child: -

- **the member of staff must act promptly. Make face to face contact with DT.**
- **He or she should not investigate** – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.
- **All incidents should also be recorded on CPOMS. This should be the final action not the first.**

The DT will discuss the matter with the DTT/Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decision is made.

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services.

If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.

Unless there are concerns that a parent/guardian may be the possible abuser, the parents/guardians will be informed immediately.

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

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

- Social Services – using the regional UNOCINI framework (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) *
- EA's/CCMS's Designated Officer for Child Protection

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

(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION')

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'.

How to respond to a child who makes a disclosure

1. Receive

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

2. Reassure

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

3. Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection
- Do ask open questions (can you tell me what happened? Anything else you wish to tell me?)

- Do not ask closed questions (those that will evoke a yes/no response, e.g. Did _____ do this to you?) such questions invalidate evidence where a subsequent court action is necessary.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love that person
- Do explain what you will do next (talk with the designated teacher who will know how to get help)

4. Record

- Make notes as soon as possible after hearing what the child has said and write them up
- Do not destroy these original notes-scan and attach to CPOMS
- Record the date, time, place, people present and any noticeable nonverbal 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 interactions and assumptions
- Sign the record and hand it to the designated teacher

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

5. Refer

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

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated teacher for child protection in the school.

Supporting Vulnerable Children

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

Our Lady's Primary School will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such pupils in accordance with her agreed protection plan.

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

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

Complaints against a staff member

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the DT if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher or the Principal).

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

If the complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the appropriate action is taken.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the DT:

- To provide training to all school staff including support staff
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsible for managing and keeping of all child protection concerns
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI Public Protection Units where appropriate
- Developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences
- Liaising with BELB/CCMS designated Officers for Child Protection
- Keeping the school Principal informed
- The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school's child protection policy
- Ensure new P1 parents receive a copy of the child protection policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the school in this
- Ensure all parents receive a summary of the Child Protection Policy every 2 years
- Ensures the Child Protection Policy on the school website is kept up to date
- Promotes a child protection ethos in the school
- Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Promotes use of CPOMS and ensures sufficient training
- Maintains all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by The Safeguarding Team as appropriate)
- Ensures that, where a pupil on the child protection register changes school that, the Designated Teacher in the receiving school is informed of the child's circumstances and who the Social Worker is
- Ensures that where a child on the child protection register has missed 2 consecutive days from school, that the child's social worker is informed of the situation (following regionally agreed protocols).

DDT:

To support and undertake the duties of the DT as required.

The Chair of the Board of Governors should:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained across the Partnership and within the individual school environment
- Ensure that the Partnership has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy

- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the EA Governor Support and Human Resource Departments
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the school principal
- Ensure that their Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity

The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Designated Governor will provide the child protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

- The role of the Designated teacher
- The content of the school's Child Protection policy
- The content of a Code of Conduct for adults
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff
- The Designated Governor for Child Protection should avail of child protection awareness training delivered by CPSSS

The Principal

The Principal must ensure that: -

- DENI 1999 / 10 is implemented within school
- That a Designated teacher and Deputy are appointed
- That all staff receive annual child protection training
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- That their Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, their Board of Governors) is kept informed
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided
- Ensure that the school's Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy at least once every 2 years
- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis

Other Members of School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators, and hear allegations of abuse.

Remember the 5 Rs: **Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer.**

The member of staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection
- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (**Appendix 3**)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- **Not** investigate
- **Not** ask leading questions

It is our aim through in-service training that all staff know:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make referral
- The E.A. Child Protection policies and procedures and the Designated Teacher's role within them
- The contact details for Care Call: 028 9024 5821
- The role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them
- The requirements on record-keeping
- The conduct of a Child Protection conference and how the Designated Teacher or another member of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it

Parents

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- telephoning their school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation
- informing their school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school
- letting their school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home
- familiarising themselves with the school's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, eSafety and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child or any other within the school in line with the policy (**Appendix 4**)

How Can a Parent Make or Raise a Child Protection Concern?

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

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

I can talk to the class teacher

If I am still concerned I can talk to the
Principal Mrs Hughes
or
I can talk to the Designated Teacher for
Child Protection Mrs Boyle

If I am still concerned I can talk or write
to the Chairperson of the Board of
Governors Mr McBride

At any time, I can write or talk to a Social Worker
(02890507000) at the Gateway team or the Police

Out of hours' duty social worker (Belfast Trust) -
02895 049999

Our Lady's Primary School Vetting Procedures

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

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

- DE Circular 2006/06 Child Protection: Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings
- DE Circular 2006/07 Child Protection: Employment of Substitute Teachers
- DE Circular 2006/08 Child Protection: Training Requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels
- DE Circular 2006/09 Child Protection: Criminal Background Checking of Staff in Schools – Programme to Extend Coverage
- DE Circular 2006/25 Child Protection: Vetting of School Governors
- DE Circular 2008/03 Pre-Employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools – New Arrangements
- DE Circular 2008/10 Employment of Substitute Teachers

Code of Conduct for All Staff

The code of conduct is known to all staff- permanent and non-permanent and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school.

INTEGRATING PERSONAL SAFETY PROGRAMMES INTO THE CURRICULUM

The welfare of the pupils of our school has always been a priority. Within the curriculum children are taught on many different occasions in different subjects important lessons that relate to their own welfare and the welfare of others.

From time to time outside agencies are invited to the school to promote personal welfare e.g.:

- Drug abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Anti-smoking
- Road Safety
- Healthy Eating
- Bullying
- Home Safety

PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

All staff in the school recognise the important responsibility that we share to ensure that pupils are educated in a safe and secure learning environment. Pupils are treated fairly and equally and their concerns are listened to.

In our school the informal and formal curriculum is designed to give all pupils the important messages regarding safeguarding and child protection. The following is a summary of different approaches that are taken.

- Weekly Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) lessons
- Circle Time discussions
- Age appropriate puberty talk (P7)
- Regular training for staff
- Acceptable Use of the Internet policy
- Information and photograph of Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher 'If I am worried I can talk to....'
- Publicity of Child Protection arrangements on Newsheet
- Annual parental information leaflet

- Assemblies
- Pupil observation-accurate and timely use of CPOMS
- Women's Aid 'Helping Hands' Programme ETC

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

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Follow the curriculum for Personal and Development for Mutual Understanding- which equips children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.

PHYSIAL RESTRAINT

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

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

E-SAFETY

Our policy on e-safety is set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance (DE Circular 2007/01). It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically, it addresses safeguarding issues that might arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

See also Social MEDIA POLICY

GENDER IDENTITY **LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, QUESTIONING/QUEER (LGBQ)**

As an all-inclusive school community we cater for children of all genders. Being transgender is a recognised medical condition known as 'Gender Dysphoria'. Any child who is transgender within our school will be treated with respect and dignity. See LGBTQ policy

As an all-inclusive school community we cater for children regardless of gender. Our school is a place where the diversity and dignity of all individuals is respected. Teachers have a key role in tackling homophobia in school and in Our Lady's we create a positive environment for all of our pupils.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

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 practise is unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences. Teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion to appropriate agencies through established procedures.

REVIEWING OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Safeguarding Team at Our Lady's Primary School will review this policy annually, or in the event of a change in legislation, or following an incident when the policy will be evaluated as to its effectiveness. Any necessary changes will be made in light of any lessons learnt.

SECURITY

The school has set in place the following procedures to help with Child Protection: -

- restricted entrance to school during school hours
- all visitors to report to reception where visitor's badges will be distributed
- vetting of all volunteers
- any adults who comes into regular contact with children will be subject to background checks

The school has drawn up an Agreed Practice for Child Protection

Links with Outside Agencies

Contact and co-operation between the school and outside agencies has been established in the interests of both the children and their parents.

Our Lady's Primary School has on-going contact with:

- EWO
- Health Visitors
- School Nurse
- School Psychologist
- Social Services
- NSPCC
- New Life Counselling Service
- Outreach Support Service
- Business in the Community
- Other Schools

And others