

# **HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL MAGHERAFELT**



## **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION**

**Policy Statement  
2021-2022**

## **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **School Ethos**

Holy Family Primary School aims to provide a positive environment suited to all of the pupils entrusted to our care - an environment that is caring, supportive and safe and one in which each child feels welcome and respected. It is the aim of Holy Family P.S. to educate all our children in a stimulating environment where pupils enjoy their learning and are given the opportunity to realise their potential; academically, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

### **Policy Statement**

The Board of Governors of Holy Family Primary School acknowledge that along with outside agencies we have a statutory responsibility for the safeguarding and protection of children. It is consistent with the aims and objectives of our school that all staff have a duty to help protect children from abuse or the risk of abuse.

We aim to create a stimulating safe and happy environment which adapts to the needs of all pupils of all abilities and backgrounds.

We take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety preserved. We have a pastoral responsibility for the children in our charge.

The child's welfare is of paramount importance.

The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school.

We are committed to supporting parents/carers in protecting children from harm i.e. ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development.

Necessary action in the interests of child welfare and safety will be considered and well-informed.

The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children will be respected. Information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

### **Guiding Principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- The voice of the child or young person will be heard.
- Parents will be supported to exercise parental responsibility and families will be helped to stay together.
- Partnership.

- Prevention.
- Responses will be proportionate to the circumstances.
- Protection.
- Evidence-based and informed decision making.

All staff acknowledge and adhere to the following statement;

“Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection.”

*Co-operating to safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016*

### **Safeguarding Team**

In Holy Family PS there is a Safeguarding Team that deals with all matters of Child Protection. The team is made up of:

**Mr Enda Quinn – Acting Chairperson BOG**

**Mr Ciaran Higgins – BOG**

**Mr John McCormack – Principal/ Deputy Designated Teacher Child Protection**

**Mrs Catherine Mulholland – Vice Principal/ Designated Teacher Child Protection**

### **Role of the Safeguarding Team**

The Safeguarding Team is responsible for:

- The monitoring and review of safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in school.
- Supporting the DT in all Child Protection issues.
- Ensuring attendance of both Governors and staff at relevant training.
- Reviewing and up-dating ETI Child Protection pro-forma.

### **Designated Teacher**

**The designated teacher** dealing with and leading all matters of child protection in Holy Family Primary School and Nursery Unit is **Mrs Catherine Mulholland** and in her absence **Mr John McCormack and Mrs Mary Monaghan (Nursery)**.

In the absence of the above all other members of Senior Management Team will assume responsibility.

## **Role of the Designated Teachers**

The designated teachers have responsibilities for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of safeguarding and child protection procedures, including internal school arrangements.
- Responsible for discussing child protection concerns of any member of the school/support staff and keeping all records.
- Co-ordinating action by teachers in cases of suspected bullying or child abuse and, in conjunction with the Principal, reporting to the appropriate agencies, the chair of the Governors and Senior Management Officer (CCMS).
- Ensuring that the school's EWO is aware of children in care or on the Child Protection Register.
- Monitoring pupils whose names are on the Child Protection Register.
- Taking the lead in the development of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Establishing and maintaining links with outside agencies.

Social Services

Gateway Team

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference - MARC

Educational Welfare Officer - EWO

Looked After Child - LAC

*(This list is not exhaustive)*

*The school will endeavour to communicate and liaise with the above agencies to ensure that pupil needs are discussed and shared with all the relevant professionals in a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary forum.*

*Information will then be relayed to the appropriate teachers/members of staff in a need to know basis only. Targets addressed in Personal Educational Plans (PEP) will be devised by the class teacher and DTCP. These if appropriate will also inform Individual Education/Behaviour Plans.*

## **What is Child Abuse?**

"Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a

house 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.”  
(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young people in Northern Ireland)

### **Child in Need of Protection**

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm as defined in *Article 50 of the Children Order*.

### ***There are five types of abuse***

- Neglect
- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Exploitation

The staff of Holy Family Primary School adhere to the definitions outlined by the **Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young people in Northern Ireland 2016** document.

### **Definition of Neglect**

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.

### **Definition of Emotional Abuse**

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

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their

views, deliberately silencing them, or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may also involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers.

### **Definition of Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different form, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

### **Definition of Sexual Abuse**

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. Woman can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Definition of Exploitation**

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

### **Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status.

Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn’t always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of

children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

The following illustrations outline common indicators of abuse and neglect. These signs are not a checklist but guidance. Indeed, many of them could have other explanations. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone

#### **Physical Indicators**

- Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries

#### **Behavioural Indicators**

- Self destructive tendencies
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Clothing inappropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body

### **Neglect**

#### **Physical Indicators**

- Constant hunger
- Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Emaciation/distended stomach
- Constant tiredness

#### **Behavioural Indicators**

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Lack of social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self-esteem

## **Emotional Abuse**

### **Physical Indicators**

- Sudden speech disorder
- Signs of mutilation
- Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. Mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)
- Wetting and/or soiling
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relationships

### **Behavioural Indicators**

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. Rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Reluctance for parent liaison
- Fear of new situations
- Chronic runaway
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

## **Sexual Abuse**

### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Personality change
- Feelings of guilt
- Depression
- Aggression
- Eating disorders
- Withdrawn
- Insecurity
- Seeking male/female attention
- Explicit drawings/language
- Sexualised behaviour
- Promiscuity

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc
- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Change of mood – agitated/stressed
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age
- New peer groups
- Low self-esteem
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair
- Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis

## **Domestic Violence**

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Symptoms which young people may display and which are indicators only include:

- Nervousness
- Low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nightmares / flashbacks
- Physiological – stress / nerves
- Stomach pain
- Bed wetting
- Immature / needy behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Aggression
- Internalising distress or withdrawal
- Truancy
- Alcohol and drugs
- Bullying

If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with Social Services.

### **Specific Types of Abuse**

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some other types of abuse that we in Holy Family PS are aware of. These are found 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 – please refer to Appendix 2.

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

### **Bullying**

In Holy Family Primary School bullying is also viewed as a form of abuse. 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.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be initially dealt with by the class teacher. If a serious incident has been noted this will be brought to the respective Key Stage Co-ordinators/Vice-principal. If deemed necessary, the Principal will be notified. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a serious complaint about bullying will have a personal response from a member of the Senior Management Team within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.  
(Refer Anti-Bullying Policy)

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

### **The Responsibility of staff**

All staff need to know

- How to identify signs and symptoms of abuse
- What the relevant Child Protection procedures are

- How to talk to children about whom there are concerns
  - Know who the designated and deputy designated teachers are.
- Where staff members see signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step seek some discreet preliminary clarification from the child with tact and understanding. DO NOT INVESTIGATE.
  - Non-teaching staff should bring their concerns to the attention of a member of the teaching staff or the designated teacher.

### **Seeking Clarification**

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some cases, talking to the child will crystallise initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred, and point to the need for an immediate referral. Staff should therefore be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings.

**Do not ask the child leading questions – this may be interpreted as putting ideas into the pupil's mind.**

**NOTE: No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.**

### **PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW WHEN AN ACCUSATION IS MADE OR THERE IS A SUSPICION OF ABUSE**

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse:

- Do not agree to keep it a secret.
- Tell the child that you want to help and may need to tell someone who can help.
- Do not suggest a reason for what has happened to them.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing to talk about it.

**IMMEDIATELY AFTER A DISCLOSURE OR AFTER YOU SUSPECT ABUSE HAS OCCURRED:**

- Using Child Protection Disclosure Record, (Refer Appendix 3) write down your suspicions or make a contemporaneous note of the words spoken, and also note the demeanour of the child including a note of when and where disclosure took place.
- Report it immediately to the Designated Teacher along with the completed record sheet.

**The steps for Managing a Disclosure are:**

***RECEIVE***

- Stay calm
- No promise of confidentiality can or should be made were abuse is alleged
- Tell the pupil that you want to help and may need to tell someone who can help
- Listen
- Do not ask leading questions
- Do not suggest a reason for what has happened
- Take factual notes if possible or as soon as possible afterwards.

***REASSURE***

- Reassure the pupil that he/she has done the right thing to have talked about it
- Affirm feelings and explain the process.

***RESPOND***

- Take action to ensure that the child is safe and secure

***RECORD***

Complete Incident Referral Form using factual language

If appropriate describe signs of abuse – pupil's clothing should never be removed

Take note of any indication of stress.

***REPORT***

**IMMEDIATELY AFTER DISCLOSURE OR AFTER YOU SUSPECT ABUSE HAS OCCURRED:**

Report it immediately to the Designated Teacher -Mrs Mulholland or in her absence to Mr Donnelly the Deputy Designated Teacher

Give the completed referral to the above, where it will be filled in the Vice-Principal's office.

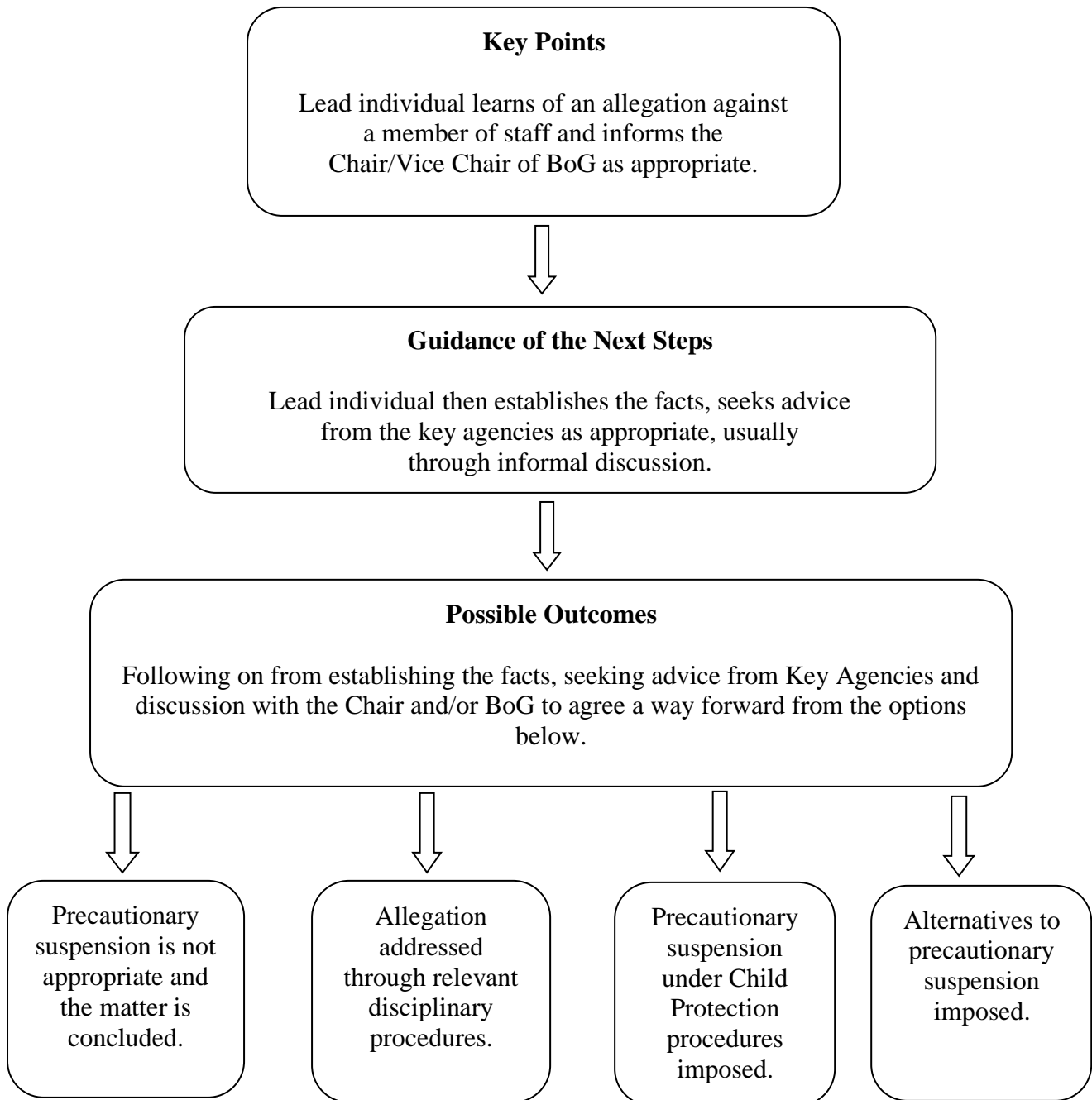
**The Procedures to follow for making a Referral:**

The Designated Teacher:

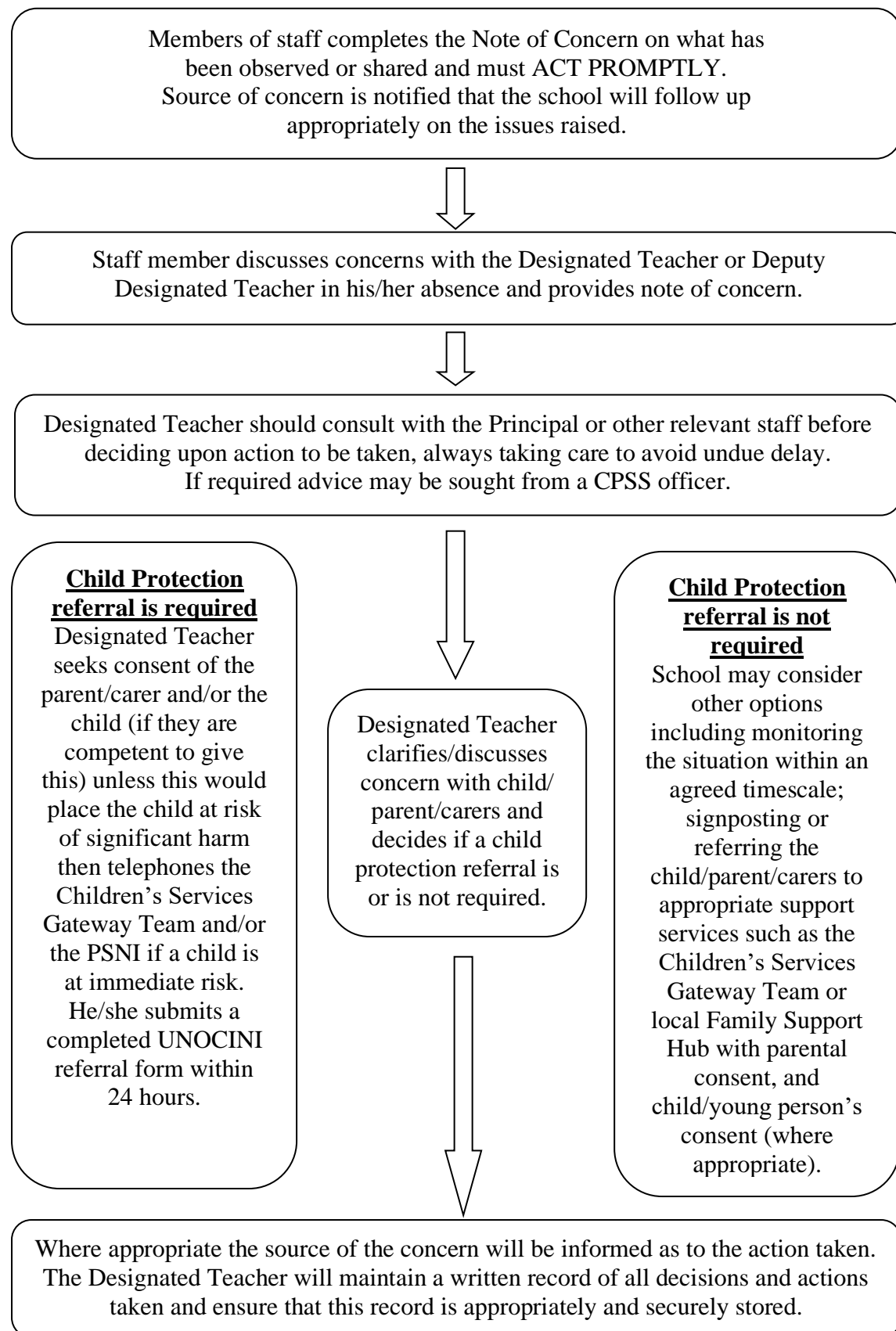
- Will consult with the Principal, members of the Safeguarding Team and together will agree the subsequent action and who will undertake it

- May along with the Principal seek discreet preliminary clarification
- May seek advice from the Designated Officer for Child Protection at EA, NE, and or Senior Management Officer CCMS, Gateway Team or Social Services
- If needed make a referral to Social Services – using UNOCINI or to the Public Protection Unit
- Will inform parents that a referral is being made
- Will forward copies of the referral to both EA, NE and CCMS
- Will continue to liaise with all relevant agencies
- Will up-date the pupil's records accordingly (Refer Appendix 4)

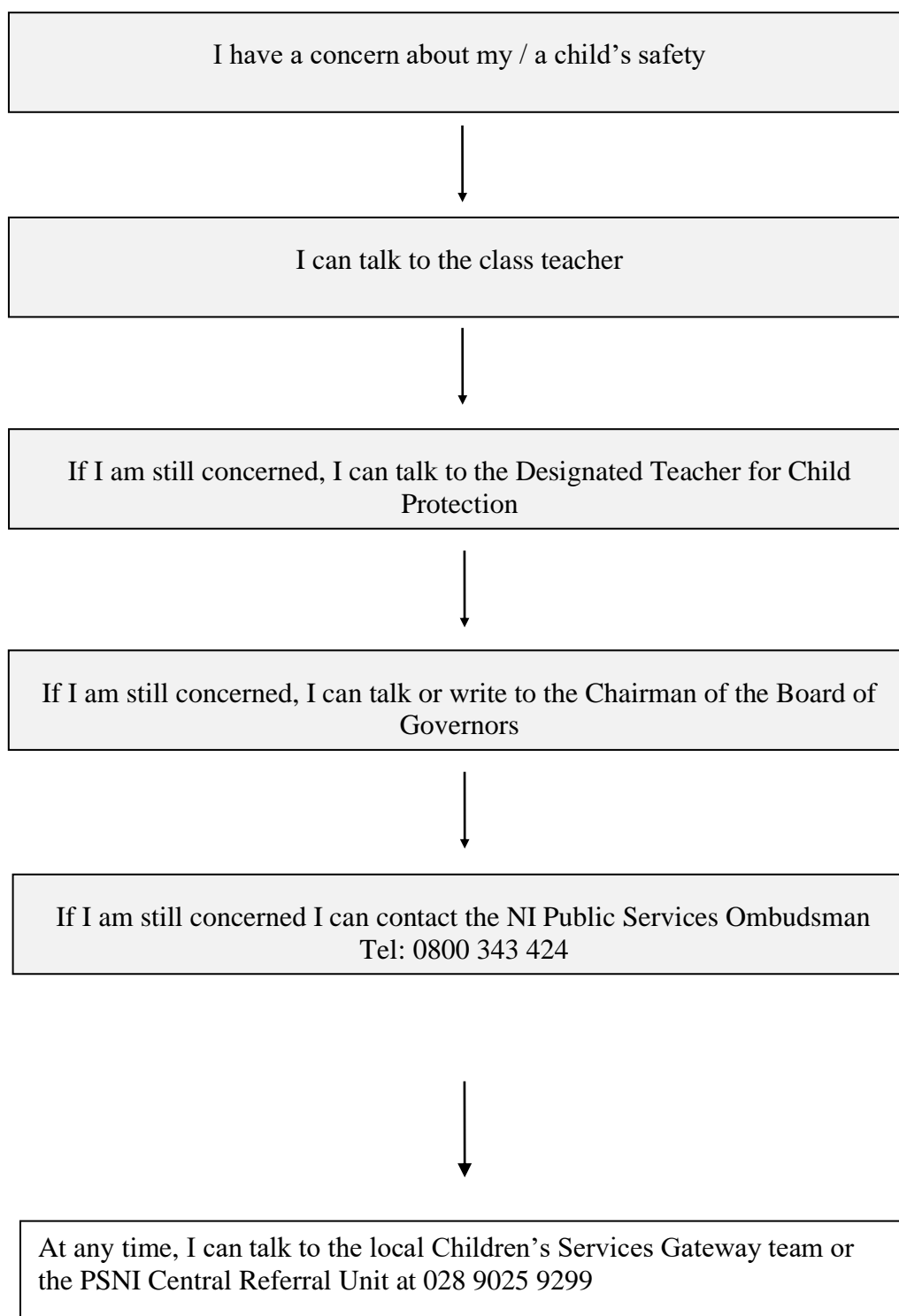
**Procedures to follow where a complaint has been made about possible abuse  
by a member of the school's staff.**



**Procedures to follow if the school has concerns, or if information has been given about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff**



### Procedure to follow if a parent has a Child Protection concern



**Designated Teacher:** Mrs. C. Mulholland  
**Deputy Designated Teacher:** Mr. J. Mc Cormack

## **Statutory Responsibilities**

In Holy Family Primary School, we recognise and adhere to our statutory responsibilities to ensure that all children feel both safe and protected in the school environment. The welfare of the child is paramount.

All staff adheres to the following procedures.

### ***Vetting***

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks.

Procedures for the recruitment of all staff are in line with DENI, CCMS and Access NI - New Guidelines for Criminal Record Checking, as part of the new Disclosure and barring Arrangements (DBA –Sept 2012/July 2017) guidance is followed by the school.

**All staff/volunteers will be vetted accordingly.**

### ***Substitute Teachers***

On arrival to the school all first time substitute teachers will be provided with a copy of the day to day school routines and expectations of their duties. A summary leaflet of the Child Protection Policy will also be given – outlining the procedures to follow if a disclosure or signs of abuse have been noted.

### ***Volunteers***

Volunteers to the school will have been vetted before commencing any duties. On arrival to the school they will attend a meeting an induction meeting with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection – addressing school policies and procedures as well as outlining Child Protection procedures.

All staff/volunteers to the school will be furnished with a copy of the Child Protection Policy or Summary leaflet, in which they have clear guidance on the action which is required, where abuse of a child is suspected or if a disclosure has been made.

### ***Code of Conduct***

The staff of our school have adopted and agreed to a Code of Conduct for behaviour towards pupils. (Refer Appendix 5)

### ***Photographic and Media Coverage***

It is common place for schools to be involved in public relations exercises and this can often include children having their photograph taken with a school team or as part of a school activity. Also children's photographs will be taken and used for a variety of reasons. These may include school photographer, school displays or as part of project work. The school will from time to time video children as they take part in school events or school performances.

If it is the wish of any parent, not to have their child's image used or stored via any of the above mentioned media, the school must be informed in writing so that any such children can be withdrawn from these events at the appropriate time. (Refer Appendix 6)

### **The Preventative Curriculum/Contribution of the Curriculum**

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through the curriculum. The PDMU programme aims to empower our pupils to recognise and avoid the danger of abuse across a range of issues including bullying. Each year group covers a planned scheme of skills, values and attitudes and knowledge and understanding.

The overall objective is to encourage all children to talk about their feelings and experiences and to know that they will be listened to. Teachers work on increasing the confidence and self esteem of children so that they have the assertiveness and personal resilience to develop coping strategies as well as the ability to make positive choices in a range of situations. This objective is deemed more prevalent and essential to help and assist pupils with the impact that Covid 19 and school closures has had on our pupils. Staff recognise that anxiety for many of our pupils is now a part of everyday life and to address this they now plan for and deliver a Wellbeing & Resilience Programme (PDMU) that focuses on supportive and nurturing routines and structures.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually and presented for ratification by the Board of Governors. The full policy will be disseminated to all new admissions throughout the school year. Parents will receive a summary version every two years.

Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher and periodically by the Safeguarding Team. The Board of Governors will also monitor the provision through the reports of the Designated Teacher.

Policy Reviewed: Oct. 2022

Signed:

Catherine Mulholland (Designated Teacher)

John McCormack (Principal)

Enda Quinn (Chair of BOG)

## Important Contact Numbers

Elaine Craig  
Acting Chief Education Welfare Officer  
EA, NE  
County Hall  
182 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena  
Co Antrim  
BT42 1HN

Tel: 028 95985590

EA,NE Educational Psychologist

Dr Karin Stewart 028 25653333

Local Social Services 028 79301700

Local Police 028 79633701

PSNI – Central Referral Unit (CRU) 028 90259299  
101 Ext 30299

School Nurse- Nuala Higgins 028 79634831

NSPCC 0800 800 500

EA,NE Education Welfare Officer

Lynn Dinsmore 028 70868588

## 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 in Holy Family 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.

**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 Holy Family 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 through the PDM 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 not need for intervention however; consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of interventions, 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 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, threatened 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 Holy Family 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](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individuals' consent.

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

### **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.

- **Looked After Children**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Young people in supported accommodation**

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

- **Young people who are homeless**

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

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

**Separated children** and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver. **Unaccompanied children** and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking. **Child Trafficking** is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by

force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of difference 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 Holy Family Primary School 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, 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 serious 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 Intent**

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.

**CHILD PROTECTION**

**Disclosure of Child Abuse**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Disclosure \_\_\_\_\_

Present at time of disclosure:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signs of Abuse:

Report of what was said:

Action Taken:

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Report forwarded to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

*Child Protection records are exempt for the disclosure requirements outlined in the Data Protection Act 1998. Moreover, under the Education (Pupil Records) Regulations (NI) 1998, any information held (manually) in school on a child, whether or not directly related to possible child abuse, need not be disclosed where, the Principal believes the disclosure may cause serious physical harm to the child or any other person.*

### PUPIL RECORDS

**PURPOSE:** To protect individuals from the unauthorised and unreasonable use of disclosure of information about themselves (personal data).

### CHILD PROTECTION RECORDS

- **Collated:** Period in school. From Designated Teacher in Nursery/play Group to school's Designated Teacher.
- **Stored:** Child Protection File in Vice-Principal's Office for storage of Child Protection reports and minutes of meetings/referral to Social Services.
- **Retained:** DOB +30

Presented annually to BOG

### PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MEDIA RECORDS: (Photographs/Records/CD's/Videos/DVD's, etc)

At the beginning of each academic year the school seeks permission from parents/guardians to allow their child/children to be photographed or to be part of any media coverage.

- **Collated:** Approval sought from parents on entry to school and responses/records kept by the Principal.
- **Stored:** Filed on Computed System (Password Protected). Teacher responsible for access of all digital images he/she has created.
- **Created:** All temporary files to be deleted periodically. Teacher responsible for creation of digital image to store such images in appropriately named files.

## **A Code of Conduct for Employees within Holy Family Primary School.**

### ***Introduction***

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 children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### ***1. Private Meetings with Pupils***

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

#### ***2. Physical Contact with Pupils***

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.

- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Designated teacher.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

### **3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials such as the AIDS education for schools and in connection with sex education programmes.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

### **4. Relationships and Attitudes**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

## ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET AGREEMENT

Dear Parents

Children are being given more and more opportunity to use computers and have greater internet access as part of their learning environment. This access must be governed by rules for child safety as outlined below. Pupils must be made aware of these rules and must agree to them in order to be given access.

### Using the Computers/Laptops

I will only access the computer system with the login and password which I have been given

I will not attempt to access other people's files

I will not bring discs or software from outside school and attempt to use them on the school machines.

### Using the Internet

I will ask permission from a teacher before using the internet

I will report any unpleasant material to my teacher immediately because this will help protect myself and others.

I understand that the school may check my computer files and monitor the internet sites I visit.

I will not complete any forms online without the permission of my teacher.

I will not give my full name, my home address or telephone number when completing any forms.

### Using e-mail

I will ask permission before checking any e mail.

I will report any unpleasant messages immediately to my teacher because this will help protect myself and others.

I understand that any e mail messages I receive or send may be read by others.

I will not give my full name, home address or telephone number in any e mail

I will not use e mails to arrange to meet anyone outside school hours.

**This Internet Use Agreement is in place for the safety and of all children as they access the Internet.**

**Please read through this information with your child and complete overleaf.**

*(Whilst I understand that this may not all be applicable to the very young children please complete in principle.)*

**PUPIL NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **CLASS** \_\_\_\_\_

### ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET AGREEMENT SLIP

I understand and accept that the above rules [see overleaf] are in place for my child's safety and I agree that my child will follow the rules guiding Acceptable Use of the Internet.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### MEDIA PERMISSION SLIP

During the course of the year your son/daughter may be photographed or videoed participating in school activities such as:

- Sporting activities;
- School trips and other curriculum activities;
- Publicity e.g. in the school prospectus or on the school website.

These photographs/video clips would be used for display purposes in the school, for publication in the local press or for promotional purposes on school notice boards or website and so on as we feel it is important that pupil achievements are recognised.

I do / do not give permission for my child to be photographed/videoed and the photographs/video clips to be displayed as mentioned above.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return the completed permissions page to your child's class teacher as soon as possible.**

Thanking you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINCIPAL