

# **Knocknagoney Primary School and Nursery**

## **Child Protection Policy**

The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe. All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The members of staff of Knocknagoney Primary School have also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils.

### **1) Aims**

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in Knocknagoney Primary 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 overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

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

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, “Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

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

- the child or young person’s welfare is paramount;
- the voice of the child or young person should be heard;
- parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together;
- partnership;
- prevention;
- responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- protection; and
- evidence based and informed decision making.

### **3) Other Related Policies**

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

- Addressing-Bullying
- Positive Behaviour
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Educational Visits
- ICT Policy- E-Safety & Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras sections
- Intimate Care
- Pastoral Care
- Safeguarding Policy
- Disposal of Records Schedule
- Special Educational Needs
- Safe Handling

### **4) Knocknagoney Primary School's Safeguarding Team:**

- Chair of the Board of Governors: Rev J Frazer
- Principal: Mrs McCullough
- Designated Teachers: Mrs Kirkpatrick and Mrs Murray
- Deputy Designated Teachers: Mrs Campbell

The school employs a dedicated Pastoral teacher, Mrs Johnston, 2 days per week who is engaged in Solutions Focus work with designated children and in agreement with parents.

### **5) The Preventative Curriculum**

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects as detailed in our Safeguarding Policy. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations. Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there are permanent child protection displays throughout the school, which provide advice and displays child helpline numbers. Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues include:

- NSPCC make presentations & hold workshops
- Anti-Bullying week
- Assemblies- bullying, dealing with worries and fears, talking to a friend/ adult to solve problems, healthy lifestyle assemblies
- Circle Time- talking about worries, concerns etc.
- PDMU scheme of work and external involvement from Holywood Youth Centre for P7 and SUNI
- transition to Year 8.

- InvisibleTraffick work with P7.

## 6) Child Protection Definitions

### Definition of Harm

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse. Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

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

Harm can be caused by:

- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation (includes Child Sexual Exploitation)
- Domestic abuse:
  - a) 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 or non-penetrative acts. 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.
  - b) Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.
  - c) Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.
  - d) 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.

- e) Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature. Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.
- f) Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017) The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging. Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis. CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.
- g) Domestic and Sexual violence and abuse. This can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children. Domestic violence and abuse is defined as 'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.' Sexual Violence and Abuse is defined as 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual /online perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).' (Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016). If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

We are part of the operation encompass scheme. Operation encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass ensures that there is a simple telephone call or notification to a school's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead /Officer prior to the start of the next school day after an incident of police attended domestic abuse where there are children related to either of the adult parties involved. This sharing of information enables appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

## **7) Cyber safety**

We recognise that the Internet is a part of everyday life for education, business and social interaction. Children use the Internet widely outside school and need to learn how to evaluate Internet information and to take care of their own safety and security. C2k and Jamf filters the Internet in Knocknagoney Primary School for the protection of the pupils. The purpose of Internet use in school is to raise educational standards, to promote pupil achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management functions. Each child has a unique log on and password. Children will be taught what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use. Children will be taught to be critically aware of the materials they read and shown how to validate information before accepting its accuracy. Children will use age-appropriate tools to research Internet content. The evaluation of online materials is a part of teaching and learning in every subject and will be viewed as a whole-school requirement across the curriculum. Teachers will closely monitor the websites being used by children and supervise any Internet research closely. Teachers should always evaluate any websites/search engines before using them with their students; this includes websites shown in class as well as websites accessed directly by the children.

It is expected that parents will have set filters and privacy settings on devices in a child's home to ensure their safety, and will monitor screen-time and the websites accessed by their children, ensuring they are age-appropriate.

## **8) Social media and Mobile Phone Use**

C2k filters and controls access to social media and social networking sites. Children will be taught never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them and/or their location. Examples would include real name, address, mobile or landline phone numbers, school attended, instant messaging (IM) and email addresses, full names of friends or family, specific interests and clubs etc. Children and parents are advised that the minimum age for using many social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram is 13 years old. Children will be advised on security and privacy online and will be encouraged to set passwords, deny access to unknown individuals and to block unwanted communications.

Teachers will not take photographs of any children using their mobile phone or tablet. They are advised not to be a 'Friend' on social media with a pupil, past pupil or parent. Parents must give permission for their child's photograph to be used on the school Facebook page and website.

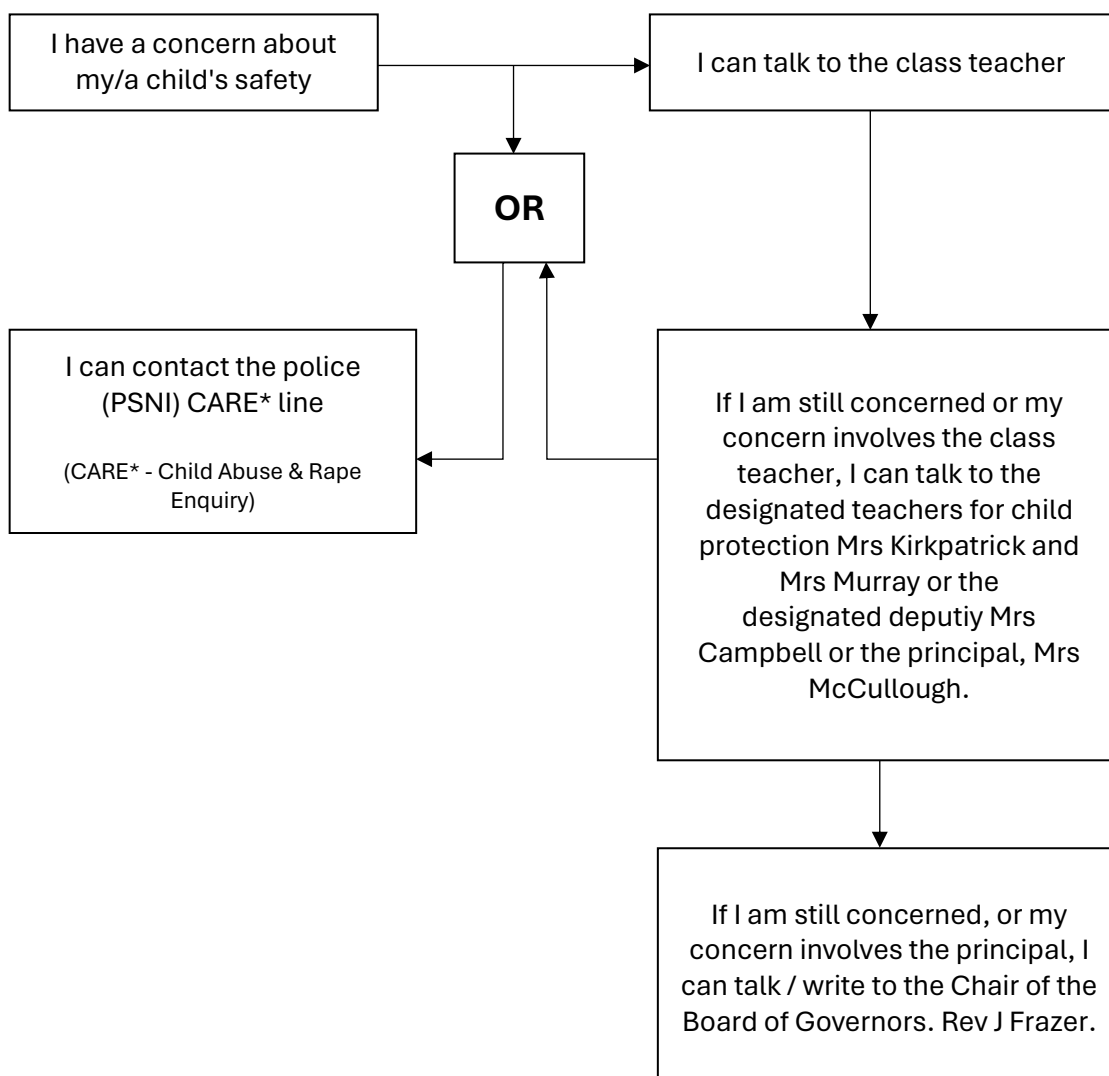
Children's full names will not be used anywhere on the website, particularly in association with photographs. Staff and Governors are reminded that their social media use should not negatively reflect on the school and are advised to keep their Facebook page 'Friends only' rather than public.

Children are not allowed to use mobile phones in school. If a child has to bring a phone to school in an exceptional circumstance, phones must be switched off on school grounds and given to teachers at the start of the day for safe keeping. If a child breaches the school policy, then the phone or device will be confiscated and will be held in a secure place in the school office. Mobile phones and devices will be released to parents / carers at the end of the day.

It is expected that parents/carers will monitor their child's social media and mobile phone use, ensuring activity is safe and age appropriate. If a case of cyber-bullying outside school is reported, the school will support the children involved, inform parents and follow the procedures set out in our Addressing Bullying Policy. Please note, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to monitor their child's online activity and mobile phone use outside school.

## 9) Reporting Procedures

### a) Parents/carers



### b) Teaching and Non-teaching staff

If a teacher suspects that a child in his/her class may be a victim of abuse, or if they have received a report of concern from a parent/carer, they immediately inform the Designated Teacher or, in their

absence, the Deputy using the internal Record of Concern document. Any action that the named person takes when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in line with the procedures outlined in the Department of Education Child Protection<sup>1</sup> guidelines. The school's designated teacher works closely with the Social Services department and any other relevant and authorised agency when investigating any allegations of abuse to determine if a referral is necessary. All parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive and confidential manner, but the interest of the child is of paramount importance.

If a referral is necessary, the DST will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form to Gateway (Social Services).

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/ or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person, or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

If a pupil has a concern about another child in the school in terms of abuse, they can report it to a trusted adult in school or a member of the Safeguarding Team. Children are made aware of how to report a concern about another child in school in line with our Safeguarding Policy. The same procedure as above will be followed. If necessary, emotional support will be provided for the child raising the concern in line with the school's Pastoral Care Policy. The parents of the child raising the concern will also be informed (if they are not already aware) to ensure emotional support is being provided for the child at home but confidential information will not be disclosed.

#### c) Disclosure by a Pupil

If a child alleges abuse in the form of a disclosure then the school is under a legal obligation to contact social services following the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education. The adult will record the disclosed information on a Record of Concern using the following procedure:

**Receive** – listen to child but do not ask leading questions.

**Reassure** – ensure the child knows he/she will be safe

**Respond** – only to ensure the child is safe and secure. Explain that you will have to pass the information on to appropriate adults who can help. You cannot keep secrets.

**Record** – make factual notes on the Record of Concern of exactly what has been seen and heard, along with the date and time.

**Refer** – refer to the DST as soon as possible

For confidentiality, staff will not discuss any disclosures with any other adult except the Designated teacher, Deputies or principal as appropriate. The DST will then follow the procedures in section b) above.

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<sup>1</sup> Pastoral Care in School - CHILD PROTECTION, DENI, available at [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) or from The Stationary Office. The document is also available for reference from the school.

We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat this accordingly. We only pass information on to appropriate persons. Any records kept at the school are stored securely and confidentially.

d) Complaint about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff or a Volunteer

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher if the principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the principal then the designated teacher should be informed and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the board of governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority.

## **10) Record Keeping**

In accordance with DE guidance we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns. In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in our School Name are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

## **11) Safe Recruitment Procedures**

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

Date: October 2023

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