

LURGAN COLLEGE

CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING POLICY



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1. Child protection ethos

We in Lurgan College have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. 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 neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

2. Principles

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, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance 'Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection' (DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy.

- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.

3. Other relevant policies

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

- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Pastoral Care
- Special Educational Needs
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Educational Visits
- Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Acceptable use of ICT and the Internet
- Online Safety
- Bring Your Own Device

These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact the School Principal.

4. School safeguarding team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Principal – Mr T. Robinson
- Designated Teacher – Dr N. McKee
- Deputy Designated Teacher – Mr R. Uprichard
- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs S. Matthews
- Deputy Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs G. Cuthbert
- Chair of the Board of Governors – Mr S. Abraham

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, roles and responsibilities
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training)
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of the school's Child Protection arrangements for parents
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate
- Liaise with the Education Authority (Southern Region) Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Maintain records of all child protection concerns
- Keep the School Principal informed
- Provide a written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding child protection

5.2 The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:-

- DENI 1999/10 is implemented within the school
- He attends training on Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection
- A Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed
- All staff receive child protection training
- All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- The Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed
- Child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates and an annual report are provided
- 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
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

5.3 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 Teachers
- The content of child protection policies
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school
- The content of the termly updates and full annual Designated Teacher's report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

The Designated Governor for Child Protection should avail of child protection awareness training delivered by Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS).

5.4 The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that he has received appropriate Education Authority training
- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment and selection training provided by the Education Authority CPSSS and the 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 the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity

5.5 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 their concerns or a child's disclosure and complete a Note of Concern (**Appendix 1**)
- 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

In addition the Head of Year/House Teacher/Subject Teacher should:

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, and concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

5.6 Parents

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- Telephoning the 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 the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school
- Letting the 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, Acceptable Use of ICT and the Internet, Online Safety, BOYD, and Child Protection Policies
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

5.7 The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance including:

- Having a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually
- Having a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- Attendance at relevant training by governors and that up-to-date training records are maintained
- The vetting of all staff and volunteers
- Relevant Child Protection training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

6. What is child abuse?

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

6.1 Definition of abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

6.2 Types of abuse

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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

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

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

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a child or young person is exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person.

When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity or, where we have concerns about a 16/17 year old in a sexual relationship, the Designated Teacher has a duty to share this information with Social Services.

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

These symptoms can lead to a child/young person being misdiagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive.

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.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self-harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts. The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will immediately follow the school's child protection procedures.

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.

6.3 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

Physical abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing – grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday</p>	<p>Self destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; come to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories</p>

Emotional abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).</p>	<p>Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.</p>

Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.</p>	<p>Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.</p>

6.3 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

Sexual abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identify of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self esteem; self devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material.

The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a child protection nature.

Do:	Do not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Listen to what the child says ❖ Assure the child they are not at fault ❖ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret ❖ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words ❖ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality ❖ Stay calm ❖ Listen ❖ Accept ❖ Reassure ❖ Explain what you are going to do ❖ Record accurately ❖ Seek support for yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ask leading questions ❖ Put words into the child's mouth ❖ Ignore the child's behaviour ❖ Remove any clothing ❖ Panic ❖ Promise to keep secrets ❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily ❖ Delay ❖ Start to investigate ❖ Do Nothing

7. Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse

7.1 How a parent can make a complaint

At Lurgan College we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the Head of Year, House Teacher, Subject Teacher or any member of the school's Safeguarding Team: the Principal, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2**.

7.2 Where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff including volunteers

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child about possible abuse, they should not investigate as this is the responsibility of Social Services and/or the PSNI. Staff should report these concerns immediately to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher and full notes should be made. 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 Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

The Designated Teacher may consult with the Education Authority's (Southern Region) Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. She will also notify the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team with a copy sent to the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection.

If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 3**.

7.3 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher if she is not available) **must be informed immediately**. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher).

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

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 investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chair of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Child protection procedures will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance. This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 4**.

8. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

9. Confidentiality and information sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected, schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

10. Record keeping

All child protection records including Notes of Concern, UNOCINI documents, information and confidential notes, are placed in the pupil's Child Protection File are stored securely in a locked filing cabinet. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the pupil and are only accessible by members of the Safeguarding Team. The pupil's Educational Record is marked to indicate the presence of a separate confidential Child Protection File.

When Social Services inform the school that a pupil's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, this information is recorded in a Private Folder on the C2K system which has been allocated for Child Protection. The associated documentation from Social Services is stored in the pupil's Child Protection File.

When a pupil whose name is on the Child Protection Register transfers to another school, we will inform the receiving school immediately that his/her name is on the Register and pass on contact details for the social worker.

Where a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the school, the allegation is recorded in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints book which is retained securely. A record is also placed on the relevant pupil's Child Protection File.

Child Protection records will be retained and then disposed of, in accordance with the school's Disposal of Records Schedule.

11. Vetting procedures

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Lurgan College are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance (AccessNI).

12. Code Of Conduct for all staff paid or unpaid

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. The school's Code of Conduct for staff is shown in **Appendix 5**.

13. Staff training

Lurgan College is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support service for Schools.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and are given copies of these documents.

14. The preventative curriculum

Throughout the school year, child protection issues are addressed through a PowerPoint presentation on the first day of the Autumn term and occasional reminders during the year. Child Protection information is displayed on notice boards and screens around the school. This includes advice, helpline numbers and a flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint. A flow diagram for a teacher allegation is displayed in the staff room.

Through the curriculum, children can also be taught about the risks of different kinds of abuse, and can be equipped with the skills they need to help them to stay safe, by recognising unwelcome approaches or behaviour and developing the confidence to resist them as far as possible.

The Personal Development programme, which is delivered by House Teachers, provides a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates.

The taught programme for Learning for Life and Work in Years 11 and 12 includes lessons on recognising, assessing and managing risk.

Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues:

- The Years 11 and 13 Induction Programmes include activities which ensure that the child protection arrangements are understood by the pupils.
- Child Protection/Safeguarding and Safe Use of Technology information are included in the Student Planner
- Activities are arranged during Anti-bullying Week.
- The Miss School = Miss Out leaflet was distributed to pupils in December.
- Presentations to pupils from Love for Life, Adapt Eating Distress Association, MensSana, Freedom Acts, the Reach Team, ASCERT, REACT, YMCA, Theresa Burke, and the PSNI.
- The Acceptable Use of ICT Policy is distributed to Year 11 and new Year 13 pupils and both the pupils and their parents are required to sign a form as evidence of their approval and acceptance of the school rules. The safe use of the internet is addressed in Personal Development lessons, is reinforced in ICT lessons and is highlighted in lessons and assembly during the week in which Safer Internet Day falls.
- At the beginning of each school year, parents are asked to sign a form, consenting to their child's photograph being used for publicity purposes.
- Liaison with the Education Authority's Pupil Personal Development and Child Protection Teams
- Access to the School Counsellor
- Partnership with Social Services

15. Monitoring and evaluating

The Safeguarding Team in Lurgan College will update this Policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

Date Policy Reviewed: _____

Signed:

_____ (Designated Teacher)

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

Lurgan College**Confidential****NOTE OF CONCERN****CHILD PROTECTION RECORD – REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an even and what was said or done and by whom:

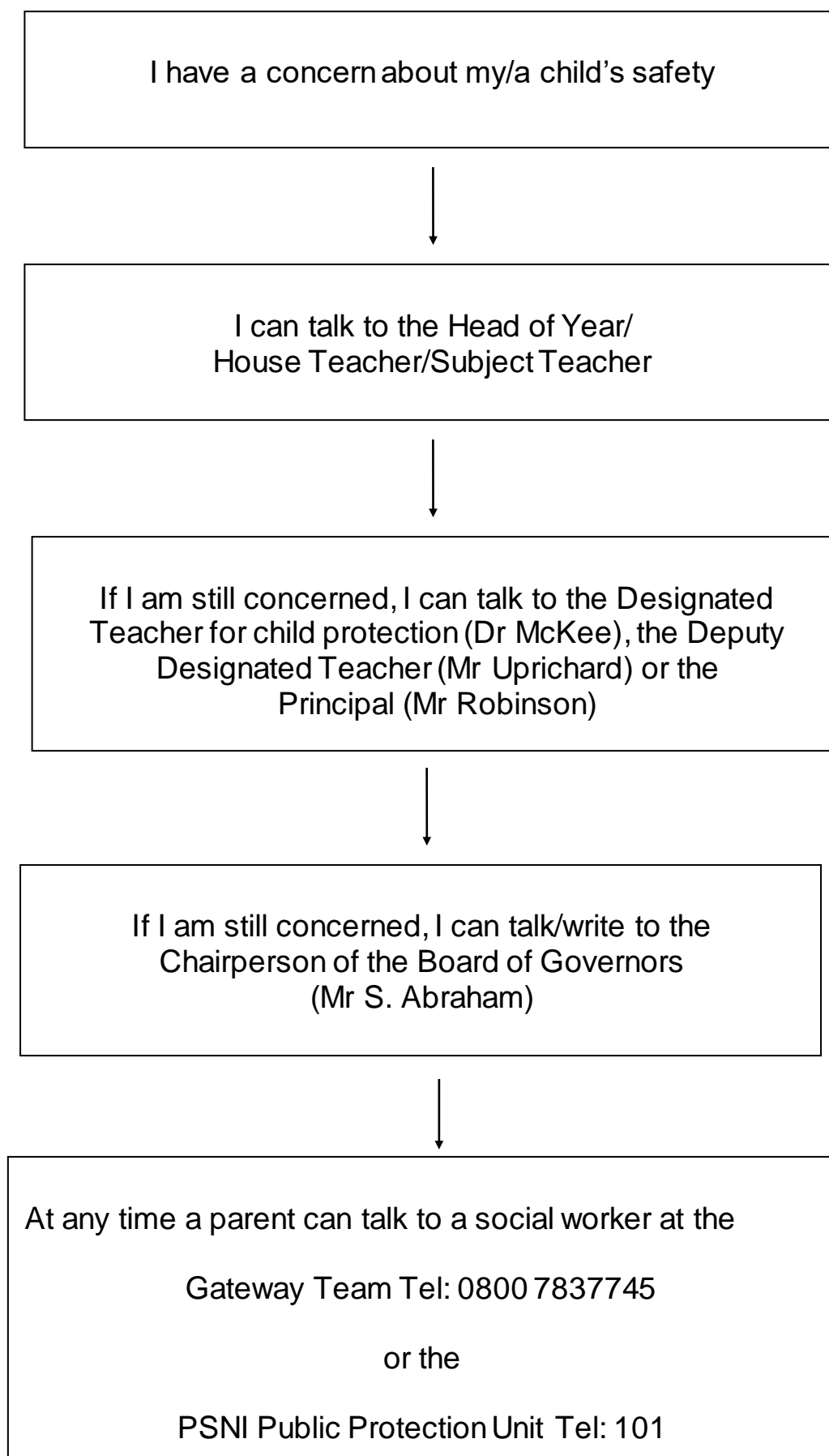
Action taken at the time:	
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:	
Any further action taken:	
Written report passed to Designated Teacher: If 'No' state reason:	Yes <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> No <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:	
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file If 'No' state reason:	<input style="width: 60px; height: 25px;" type="checkbox"/>

Name of staff member making the report: _____

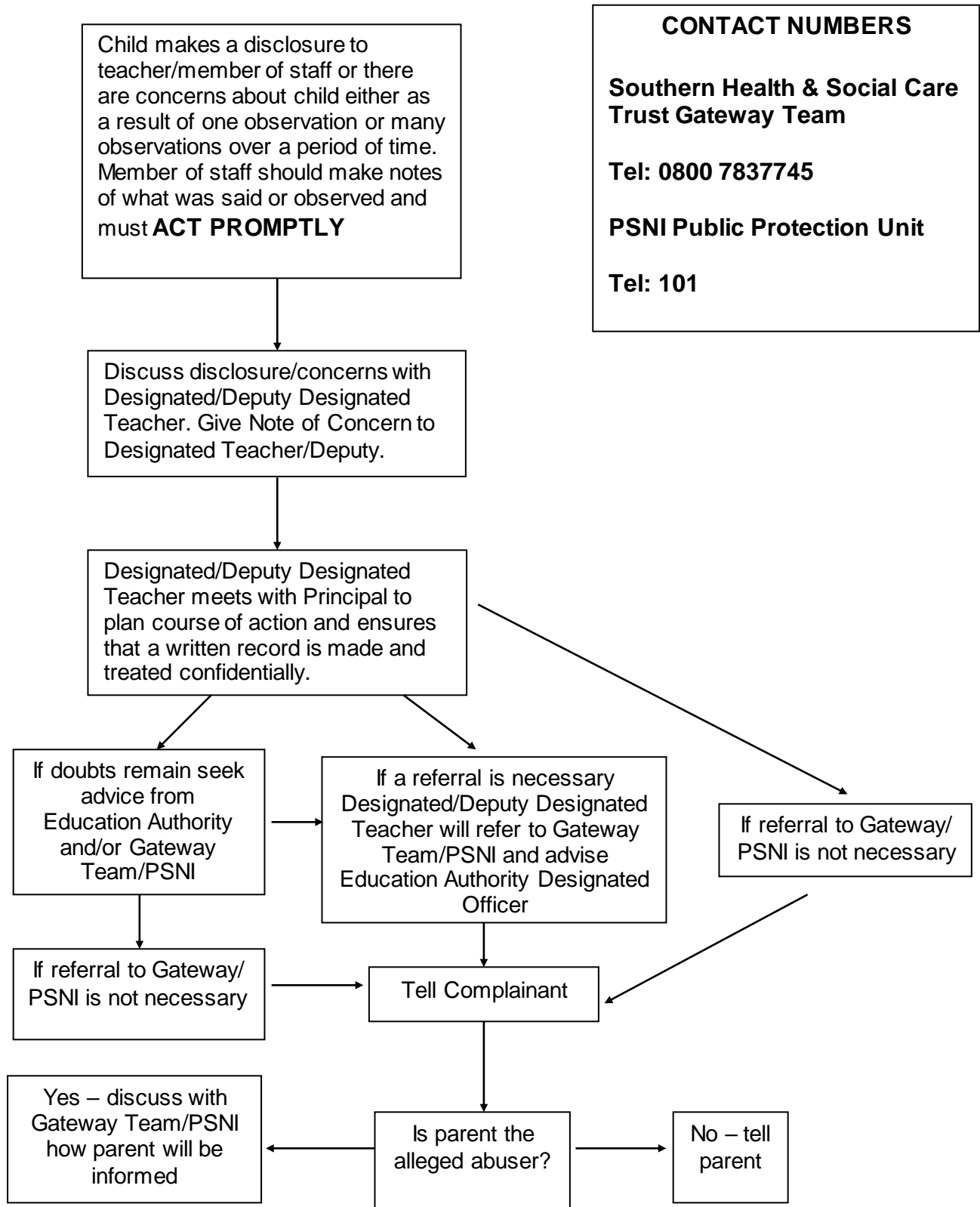
Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

How a parent can make a complaint



Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff



CONTACT NUMBERS

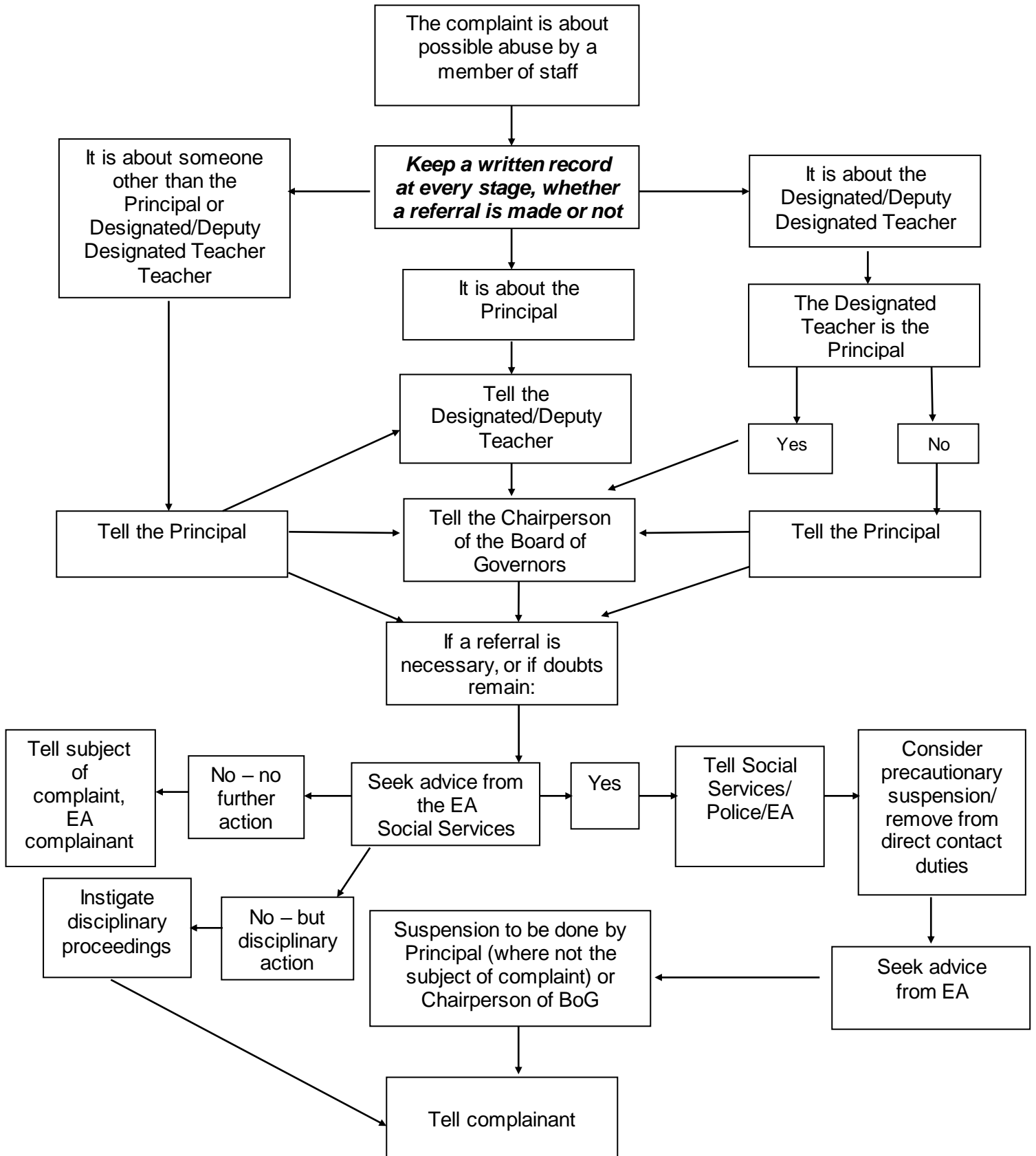
Southern Health & Social Care Trust Gateway Team

Tel: 0800 7837745

PSNI Public Protection Unit

Tel: 101

Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff



Code of Conduct

1. Private Meetings with Pupils

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

- (a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Some teachers are likely to come into physical contact with their pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching, e.g. when showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE. Teachers should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the pupil.
- (d) 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.
- (e) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- (f) The use of certain areas like the photographic darkroom, should always be by a minimum of three persons.
- (g) 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.*
- (h) Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- (i) Following an 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.

- (j) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising 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

- (a) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- (b) 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 be criticised after the event. 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 Relationships and Sexuality Education programmes.
- (c) 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 always maintain professional boundaries and should not attempt to establish inappropriate relationships. They 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.

Staff should be particularly alert to the dangers of socialising outside school with the pupils under their care. They should also refrain from engaging with pupils using electronic means of communication such as email, text messaging, instant messaging or through social networking sites such as Facebook.

The school recognises the benefits of using technology, including social networking, in an educational context. When doing so it should be clear that that teacher is communicating in a professional rather than a personal context. For example, school email accounts should be used and any social networking profile should be based on a subject department or professional role. It should also be made clear to users that any comments made, while professional, are not necessarily those of the school authorities.

What you can do to protect yourself:

- Keep personal mobile phone numbers private; do not use your own mobile phone to contact pupils and parents. If there is a need to contact pupils during weekly activities such as sporting events or on less regular occasions such as a school trip, for example, you should use a school mobile phone.
- Do not give out personal e-mail addresses to pupils and parents. If pupils do need to contact you with regard to assignments or exams, always use your school e-mail address. Pupils should be encouraged to use their school email address when contacting a member of staff.
- If you use social networking sites, avoid 'friending' pupils, recent pupils or parents or adding them to your contact lists. Always restrict access to your personal Internet

accounts, set appropriate privacy levels and keep passwords secret. Think carefully before making any posts, status updates or having discussions regarding the school, its staff, pupils or parents in an online environment – even if your account is private. Do not post information about yourself publicly that you would not want employers, colleagues, pupils or parents to see. Anything that is put online is potentially public and permanent.

- A school camera should be used for taking photographs of pupils on trips and in the classroom. You should not take or store photographs of pupils on your personal camera or phone. Also, before using any images, check with the school policy about the taking and sharing of photographs. In particular, before using photographs of pupils for publicity purposes ensure that their parents have signed a consent form.
- If you are the victim of cyber bullying, for example, a pupil makes inappropriate comments or posts images of you or another member of staff, do not retaliate, but save/print all available evidence. Report the incident to a member of the Safeguarding Team. You should also make a report to the service provider; this could be your mobile phone operator, or the social networking service on which the abuse is taking place.

These measures are designed to safeguard staff from allegations.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff inter-relate with pupils, or where opportunities for their conduct may be misconstrued.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement should be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this policy, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult their Designated Teacher.

Members of staff should be alert to the risk of emotional abuse, such as persistent and vindictive sarcasm, verbal bullying, or severe and persistent negative comment or actions, particularly when directed consistently at a single child or a small number of children in a class.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual pupils, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of pupils or of their parents/guardians.