

**MOSSGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY UNIT**



LEARNING, CARING, ACHIEVING

**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD
PROTECTION POLICY**

Policy Reviewed: May 2024

Policy Ratified by Governors: June 2024

Policy Review Date: May 2025

Child Protection Ethos

In Mossgrove Primary School and Nursery Unit we aim to provide an educational environment which is safe, caring and supportive for all pupils. The health and safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance. Our children have the right to protection from harm, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.

In our school we respect our children and seek to provide a warm and caring environment where the children are happy and relationships with peers and adults are positive.

Through our teaching programme for personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU) and personal safety programmes we help children to learn how to recognise different risks in different situations and how to behave in response to them and to keep themselves safe.

All staff, governors and volunteers are subject to appropriate background checks and are vetted through Access NI to ensure the safety of all our pupils. The school has an agreed a Code of Conduct for teaching staff, non-teaching staff and volunteers, which outlines appropriate behaviour towards pupils. (Appendix 4)

We also seek to ensure appropriate measures are in place to ensure children's safety in a variety of situations eg. Use of the internet, mobile phones, medicines, intimate care etc. as outlined in [Appendix 5](#).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff in our school are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. It aims to:

- raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues.
- set down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.

General Principles

The principles and philosophy, which underpin our work with children, are those set out in the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' (UK Agreement in 1991) and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. In preparing this policy consideration has been given to the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance 'Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools' (Circular 2017/04) and the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) Multiagency Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (December 2017).

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection in our school and underpin the guidance which we follow:

- The child's welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a child is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is a conflict, the child's interests must always come first.
- Children have a right to feel safe, to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. Where a child has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family.

- Actions taken to protect the child (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child unnecessary distress or further harm.
- Intervention should not deal with the child in isolation; the child's needs should be considered in the context of the family. Agencies' actions must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race, and any special needs.
- Where it is necessary to protect the child from further abuse, alternatives which do not involve moving the child and which minimise disruption of the family should be explored.

SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • Chair of the Board of Governors: | Mr R Young |
| • Designated Governor for Child Protection: | Mrs V Bryans |
| • Principal: | Mrs E Sinton |
| • Designated Teacher: | Mrs A Gillespie |
| • Deputy Designated Teacher: | Mrs O McKee |
| • Deputy Designated Teacher/Contact for Nursery Unit: | Mrs L Elliott |

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19.

- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

Chair of Board of Governors

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the Record of Child Abuse Complaints against staff members even if there have been no entries.

Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Board of Governors delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues 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 Teachers Report;
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Every school is required to have a DT and DDT with responsibility for child protection. These are highly skilled roles developed and supported through a structured training programme, requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues. The role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- The promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The role of the DDT is to work co-operatively with the DT in fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

It is important that the DDT works in partnership with the DT so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

Mossgrove Primary School and Nursery Unit have two Deputy Designated Teachers, with Mrs Elliott being the point of contact for the nursery.

The School Principal

The Principal, as the Secretary to the BoG, will assist the BoG to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from DE are shared promptly, and termly inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. In addition, the Principal takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of DT and DDT Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.

It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the DTs to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role.

The Principal must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

Other Members of School Staff

- Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Deputy Designated Teacher if he/she is not available.
- Class teachers should complete the Note of Concern [Appendix 6](#) if there are safeguarding concerns such as: 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 circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.
- **Staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions

Support Staff

- If any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member they should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher if he/she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made and any further necessary action will be taken.

Parents

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.

- Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school.
- If the child has a medical condition or educational need.
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- If their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.

What is 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.

The following information is taken from the 'Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young people in Northern Ireland' (Department of Health, August 2017):

The Concepts of Harm and Significant Harm

'The Children Order defines '**harm**' as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. The Order states that 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse, forms of ill-treatment which are physical and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; 'health' means physical and / or mental health; and 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Types of 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 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. **Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.** Harm can be caused by:

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

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.

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

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

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

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, 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.

Signs and symptoms of abuse - Possible Indicators

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.

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 to Social Services.

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>

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 identity 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.

Specific Types of Abuse

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in **Mossgrove Primary School and Nursery Unit** are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established school procedures. For more details regarding FGM please refer to the Department of Education's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in schools' – A Guide for School 2017, Section 6.8.

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. Adults may misuse online settings such as chat rooms or social and gaming environments to try and establish contact with children. Those working with children should be alert to the signs that may indicate grooming and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken.

Signs will include:

- sudden changes in behaviour
- secretive use of technology
- having unexplained gifts.

If the staff in Mossgrove 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. The HSCT and PSNI should be involved as early as possible to ensure any evidence that may assist prosecution is not lost and to enable a disruption plan to reduce the victim's contact with the perpetrator(s) and reduce the perpetrator(s) control over the victim to be put in place without delay.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to directly witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children. Children can witness domestic violence and abuse directly and indirectly between their carers and/or the effects of it; this frequently constitutes emotional abuse and can have profoundly damaging effects on a child's or young person's well-being. Young people may experience domestic violence and abuse in their own relationships.

(Ref: 'Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young people in Northern Ireland' (Department of Health, August 2017.)

Operation Encompass

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

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

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

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

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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017).

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited. CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males. While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, **the majority of CSE victims are living at home.**

Statutory Responsibilities

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to directly witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children. Children can witness domestic violence and abuse directly and indirectly between their carers and/or the effects of it; this frequently constitutes emotional abuse and can have profoundly damaging effects on a child's or young person's well-being. Young people may experience domestic violence and abuse in their own relationships.

(Ref: 'Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young people in Northern Ireland' (Department of Health, August 2017.)

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:-

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'

Sexual Violence and Abuse

'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).' Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

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.

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 **Mossgrove Primary School and Nursery Unit** 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.

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

Children whose first language is not English/Newcomer pupils should be given the opportunity 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. DTs and other relevant school staff should seek advice and support from the EA’s Intercultural Education Service if necessary. All schools should create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

Pre-School Provision

Many of the issues in the preceding paragraphs will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedures in consultation with the child's parent[s]/carer[s]. Teachers, nursery assistants and other adults will come into contact with children while helping them with toileting, washing and changing their clothing. Boundaries will be made clear to parents through the Code of Conduct.

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.

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 and EA guidance on educational visits and school trips to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

Staff Guidelines

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❖ Ask leading questions❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily❖ Delay❖ Start to investigate❖ Do Nothing

Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse

How a Parent can make a Complaint

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their 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 class 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 Central Referral Unit. The Office of the NI Public Ombudsman can also be contacted. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in [Appendix 1](#).

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 they should not investigate as this is the responsibility of Social Services and/or PSNI. Staff should report these concerns immediately to the Designated/Deputy 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 Designated 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/Deputy Designated Teacher may consult with members of the school's safeguarding team, the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Education Authority's 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. He/she will also notify the EA'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 EA Designated Officer for Child Protection and a copy will be kept in the school's child protection file.

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 2](#).

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 the Principal 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 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 or 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 as outlined in [Appendix 3](#) will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend 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.

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. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Record Keeping

All child protection records will adhere to the latest guidance from DE (NI) including circulars 2016/20 and 2017/04. Information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by members of the safeguarding team.

Vetting Procedures

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the School are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

Code Of Conduct For all Staff Paid Or Unpaid

An agreed staff Code of Conduct is in place [Appendix 4](#). 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.

Staff Training

Mossgrove Primary School and Nursery Unit 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.

The Preventative Curriculum

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies, circle time and PDMU activities. 'Worry boxes' and 'bubble time' give children the opportunity to share their feelings and concerns in a safe environment. The NSPCC are invited to provide safeguarding information to children at assemblies. There is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor with relevant information in each classroom. Child Line Help numbers are on display and a flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is on display in the main foyer and infant corridor.

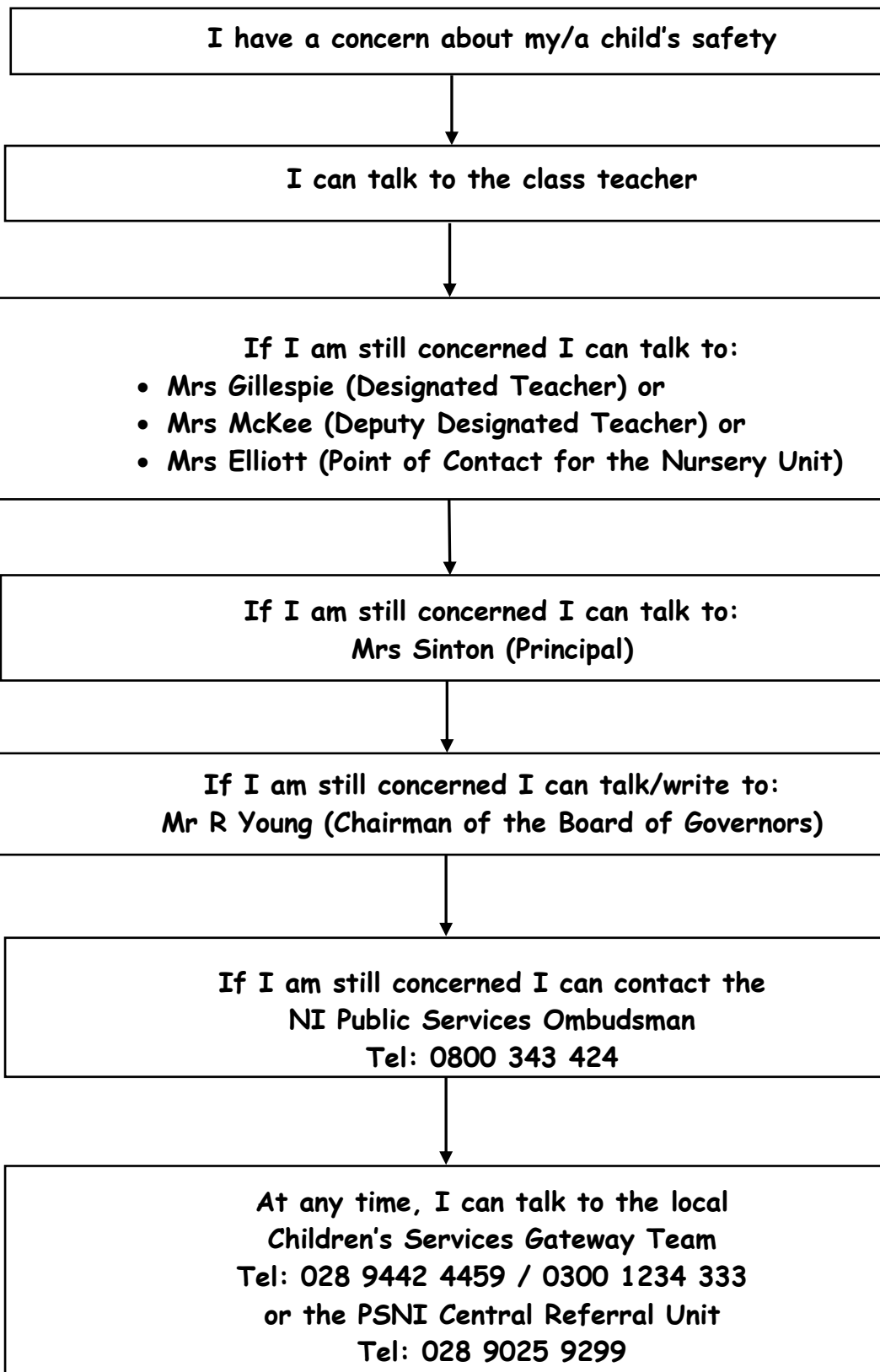
Monitoring And Evaluation

The Safeguarding Team of Mossgrove Primary School will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

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.

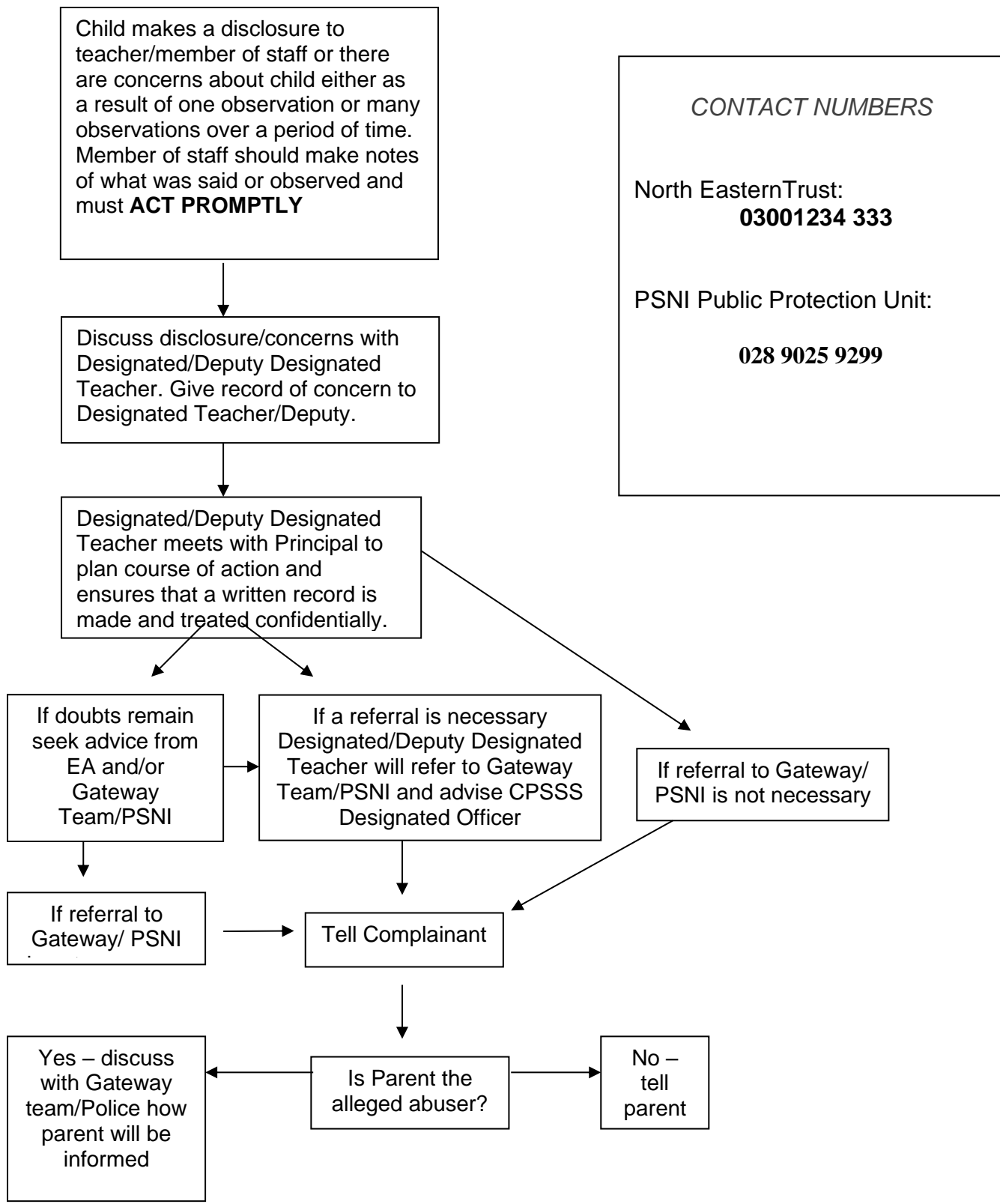
APPENDIX 1

**WHAT TO DO IF A PARENT HAS A
CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN**



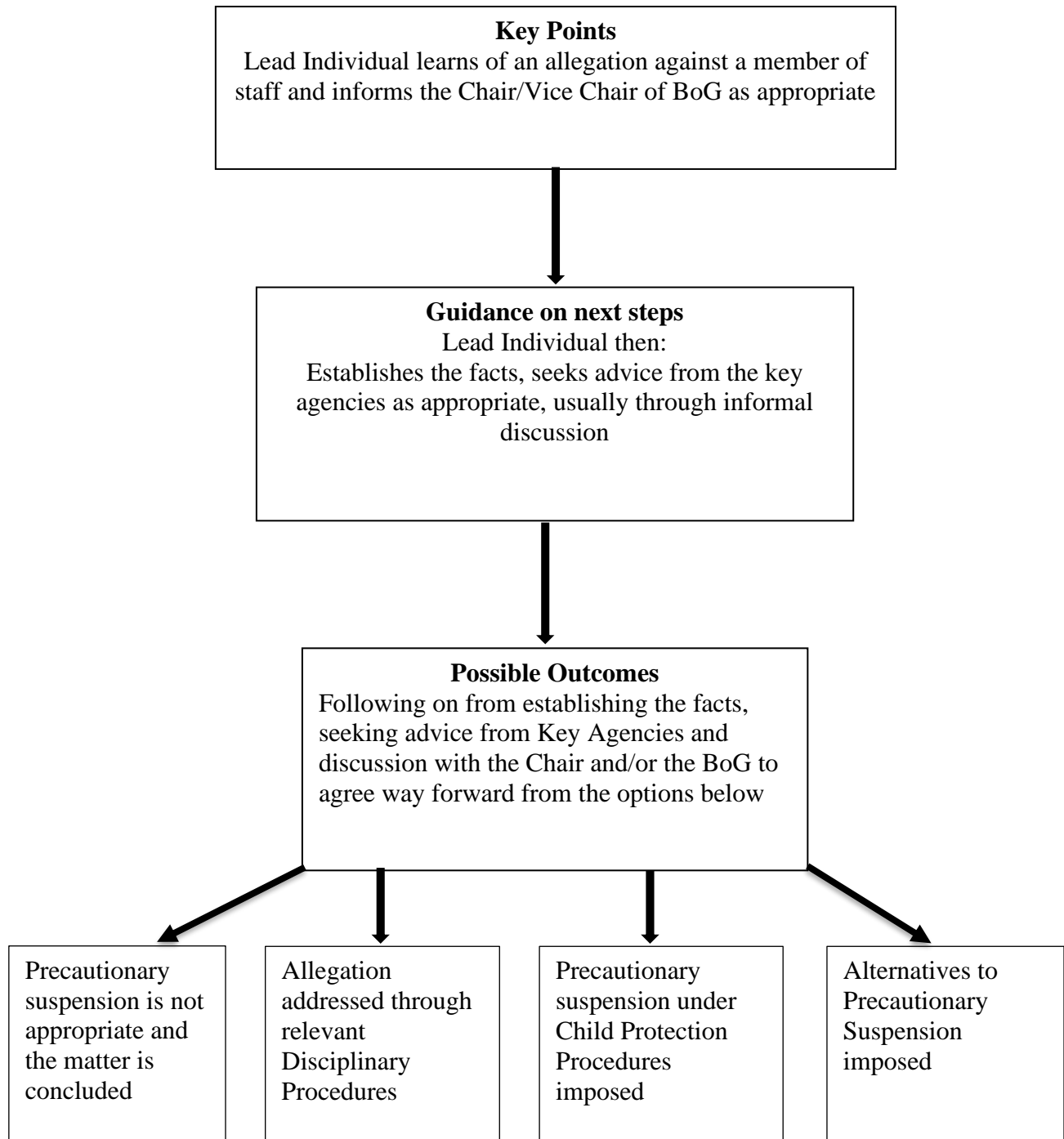
APPENDIX 2

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



APPENDIX 3

Dealing With Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff



APPENDIX 4

Staff Code of Conduct

Objective, Scope and Principles:

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. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It is merely for guidance and specific breaches of the Code must not be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

The Code includes sections on:

- Setting an Example
- Private Meetings with Pupils
- Physical Contact with Pupils
- Choice and Use of Teaching Materials
- Relationships and Attitudes
- Honesty and Integrity
- Conduct Outside of Work
- E-Safety and Internet Use
- Confidentiality

1. Setting an Example

All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which pupils can copy. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive languages at all times, and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils. Staff and volunteers must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

2. 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 and ensure that another member of staff is aware that the meeting is taking place. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

3. Physical Contact with Pupils.

As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with 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 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. (DENI Circular 1999/9 on the use of reasonable force gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of a member of staff to restrain pupils)).

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 Principal.

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.

4. 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 subsequently be criticised. When appropriate we consult parents when proposing to use materials in connection with sex education programmes.
- c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

5. Relationships and Attitudes.

All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with current and past pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, and discriminating against or favouring pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times.

Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school; perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.

Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner, which within the context of this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;

- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service; *f* respect for school property;
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

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 the 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.

6. Honesty and Integrity

All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

7. Conduct Outside of Work

Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school. Advice should be sought from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

8. E-Safety and Internet Use

Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

9. Confidentiality

Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

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 children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will 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 the Principal or a representative of their professional association.

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

APPENDIX 5

Use of the Internet

Children are safeguarded and protected when using the internet as C2K have provided an automatic firewall on the computer wireless network which helps to prevent pupils and staff access to unsuitable websites. We also have an Internet Policy in place and any use of the internet is in accordance with the policy guidelines. The full E-safety policy is available on request.

Photographic Images of Children

Photographs of children are taken at school activities (inside and outside of school) throughout the year. These may be used for display purposes in school, the school website and for publication in the press or for promotional purposes. At the beginning of each year parents/guardians will be issued with a letter requesting permission for this.

Use of Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones (or other electronic equipment with photographic capability e.g. Smart watch, iPod Touch) by pupils during school hours is strictly prohibited. Pupils may carry a mobile phone in their school bag for personal use/safety after school. This must remain switched off during school hours. Smart watches that record or take photos may not be worn in school. This ensures camera phones or text messages are not used inappropriately. Mobile phones are also prohibited during day trips out and on residential visits. Mobile phones will be confiscated and parents informed if these guidelines are found to be broken. Smart watches that record or take photos may not be worn in school.

Prescribed Medicines

At Mossgrove Primary School we prefer not to administer medicines unless absolutely necessary e.g. a continuous illness. Written consent will be sought from parents before administering any medicine. Medicines will be kept out of reach from pupils.

Toileting and Intimate Care

Care and consideration of the child's needs will be respected if the child has a toileting accident. Such incidents are dealt with discreetly, calmly and quickly to ensure minimal discomfort or distress. Only teachers and assistants employed by the school are permitted to change the clothes of a child. A consent form will be issued to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. Records are kept of all changing incidents and a note will be given to the parent/guardian of the child concerned detailing the reason for the clothes change.

In certain circumstances a child's parent/guardian may be asked to come and change their child if, for example, their child becomes distressed, seeks their parent's assistance or is heavily soiled.

[APPENDIX 6](#)

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 event 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:

No:

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:

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____