

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock



Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policy

Policy Details

Legal Status	Adopted	Version Date	Last Review	Next Review	Responsible
Statutory	4 th June 2025	May 2025	December 2024	May 2026	Ms McCarthy

Related Documents and Location

1. Administration of Medication in School Policy
2. Addressing Bullying Policy
3. Attendance Policy for Students
4. Drugs Policy
5. Educational Visits Policy
6. eSafety and Digital Technology Policy
7. Intimate Care Policy
8. Pastoral Care Policy
9. Positive Behaviour Policy
10. Recruitment Policy
11. Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
12. Remote Learning Policy
13. Whistle Blowing Policy
14. Record Retention and Destruction Policy and the Disposal of Records Schedule
15. DE Annual Child Protection Evaluation

All policies are available on the College Website and Private Folders.

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1. Introduction

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock is committed to providing a safe, caring environment which promotes the protection and safeguarding of each individual child. In accordance with the aims of the College and in order to fulfil our statutory obligation under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which requires schools to play their part in the prevention and reporting of child abuse, this Policy aims to ensure the protection and safeguarding of all our students. The central thrust of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration and it is this essential principle which underpins the Policy which follows. This policy also reflects the guidance and procedures set out in Safeguarding and Child Protection - A Guide for Schools (DE, updated 2024), Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS, March 2016) and the DE Circulars listed on Page 41.

2. Aims

1. To promote safeguarding through the preventative curriculum.
2. To ensure that staff act in the best interests of the child at all times.
3. To inform all staff (teaching and support) and volunteers of statutory requirements re suspected or alleged child abuse.
4. To provide all staff and volunteers with definitions of abuse and the potential signs and symptoms of abuse.
5. To enable students and parents to make a complaint or report of child abuse if necessary.
6. To provide clear procedures for staff and volunteers to follow in a case of suspected abuse.
7. To explain the roles and obligations of personnel involved in reporting suspected abuse.
8. To provide guidelines for the protection of staff/volunteers dealing with students.
9. To provide support for staff/volunteers to cope with the anxieties of initial reporting, and the aftermath of involvement in suspected abuse.
10. To help create a protective and supportive environment for all students, staff and volunteers.

3. Definition of Safeguarding and Child Protection

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS, March 2016) states that,

"... safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with **promotion and preventative** activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. **Child protection** refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm".

4. Designated Teachers for Child Protection

If any parent, student or member of staff has concerns about the possible abuse or the welfare of a child, those concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Deputy Designated Teachers.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Ms G McCarthy
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection	Mrs M Davey Mrs A Fox Mrs F Sloan

Staff should complete and sign a Child Protection - Note of Concern (Page 32-33) which is then stored securely by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

5. The College Safeguarding Team

Chairperson of the Board of Governors	Mr L O'Reilly
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mr N Hunt
Principal (Chair)	Miss D McLaughlin
Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Ms G McCarthy
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection	Mrs M Davey Mrs A Fox Mrs F Sloan

If appropriate, other staff, e.g., Learning Support Coordinator or ICT Coordinator may be invited to attend a meeting of the College Safeguarding Team.

The Responsibilities of the College Safeguarding Team are to:

- monitor and periodically review Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements in the College;
- support the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post;
- ensure attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.

As best practice, the College Safeguarding Team should review the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding practices annually using the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) pro forma.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 (Part IV - Welfare and Protection of Pupils) places a statutory duty on the **Board of Governors** to:

- at all times safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils (Article 17);
- ensure there is a Child Protection Policy at their school and that it is implemented (Article 18);
- address the issue of bullying through their Positive Behaviour Policy (Article 19); and
- consult with pupils and parents in the development of their Positive Behaviour Policy (Article 19).

The Board of Governors must ensure that:

- a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- a Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection are appointed;
- they have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection training is given to all staff and governors, including refresher training;
- the College has a Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually;
- parents and students receive a copy of the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and complaints policy every two years;
- the College has an Addressing 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 (ref: The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016);
- all safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 2-3 years, or as specified in the relevant guidance;
- there is a Code of Conduct for all adults working in the College;
- all College staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted in line with DE Circular 2025/06.
- they receive a termly report of child protection activities and a full annual report on all child protection matters. These reports should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the College, including training for staff.
- The Record of Child Abuse Complaints (Allegations Against Staff) is made available to them at least annually;
- the College maintains child protection records in line with the following DE Circulars: 2015/13 - Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff; and 2019/08 - Child Protection: Record Keeping for Schools:
 - Safeguarding and child protection concerns;
 - Disclosures of abuse;
 - Complaints against staff;
 - Staff induction and training.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors must ensure that:

- he plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the College environment;
- the College is compliant with legislation and policy;
- a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- Governors have undertaken the appropriate Strand 1, 2 or 3 training in relation to Child Protection;
- The Board of Governors annually receive a Child Protection report and the Record of Child Abuse (Allegations Against Staff);
- procedures relating to the recruitment, selection and vetting of staff including volunteers are being followed;
- there is a robust Code of Conduct for all adults working within the school - this must include volunteers, sports coaches, extended school personnel;
- he liaises with the Principal regarding allegations of child abuse against a member of staff or volunteer;
- he assumes lead responsibility in the management of any child protection/safeguarding complaint/allegation against the Principal in keeping with DE Guidance and the College's policies and procedures;
- Child Protection records are kept;
- he signs and dates the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries;
- he attends CPSSS Child Protection/Safeguarding training as appropriate.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Governor for Child Protection

- To advise Governors on:
 - the role of the Designated Teachers;
 - the content of the College's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy;
 - the content of the Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers within the College;
 - the content of the full annual Designated Teacher's Report and any termly updates;
 - recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff;
 - any deficiencies in the College's child protection/safeguarding best practice arrangements as identified in audits undertaken by the College Safeguarding Team;
 - any remedial action taken or recommended to address deficiencies in child protection/safeguarding practice requirements.
- To attend CPSSS Child Protection/Safeguarding training as appropriate.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Principal

- As Secretary to the Board of Governors, to assist the Board of Governors to fulfil its child protection /safeguarding duties.
- To keep Governors informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to child protection/safeguarding and to ensure that any circulars and guidance from the Department of Education are shared promptly.
- To ensure Child Protection/Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for each meeting of the Board of Governors.
- To chair meetings of the College Safeguarding Team.
- To ensure there is a Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection and they attend relevant child protection training.
- To ensure that all paid and voluntary staff are vetted and/or risk assessments are in place.
- To ensure that new staff and volunteers have child protection/safeguarding awareness as part of an induction programme.
- To take the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.
- To ensure maintenance of any records of allegations against staff, including the Record of Child Abuse Complaints (Complaints Against Staff).
- To ensure that the College's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and a copy, or summary, is issued to parents and students at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.
- To ensure that the College's Addressing Bullying Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy are regularly reviewed and issued to students and parents who must be consulted during the review process.
- To attend CPSSS Child Protection/Safeguarding training as appropriate.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- The induction and training of all College staff, including support staff.
- Being available to discuss the safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the College's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the College.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.
- To notify the Chairperson of the Board of Governors in the event of an allegation against the Principal.
- To attend CPSSS Child Protection/Safeguarding training as appropriate.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection

- To work cooperatively with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in fulfilling her responsibilities.
- To undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

Parents should be aware that the College will always protect the best interests of the child and, in cases of suspected abuse, may refer cases directly to the investigative agencies.

It is important that parents know they are required to inform the College:

- if their child has a medical condition or educational need;
- if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or well-being 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.

7. Types of Abuse

Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Child abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse. It is always preferable to prevent abuse, or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Through their day-to-day contact with individual students, school staff, especially teachers, but also support staff, including lunch-time supervisors, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development.

Observation of signs and symptoms of possible abuse can do no more than give rise to concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. It must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. However, staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are repeated regularly.

It is imperative that any disclosure by a student, or concern that indicates a student may be at immediate risk, is reported immediately to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk to the child at home.

Staff should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations, including reporting of offences. Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence. This includes crimes against children.

Child abuse may take a number of forms, including:

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.

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.

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.

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS, March 2016)

8. Potential Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

Since they are in regular and frequent contact with students, school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs and symptoms of child abuse or unexplained changes in behaviour or performance, which may indicate abuse.

It is not possible to give complete lists of signs and symptoms. The following signs and symptoms may not necessarily point to abuse, as they can be due to other medical or social reasons. However, in all cases where signs and symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or about the welfare of the child, the teacher or other member of staff/volunteer should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher.

Signs and Symptoms of Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Emaciation
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging or begging
- Poor personal hygiene
- Persistent tiredness/listlessness
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems/illnesses
- Exposure to danger/lack of supervision
- Low self-esteem
- Destructive tendencies
- Lack of peer relationships
- Chronic running away

Signs and Symptoms of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries (scratches, bite marks, welts) particularly if they are recurrent
- Bruises in places difficult to mark
- Burns
- Bald patches
- Discrepancy between an injury and the explanation
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive

- Undue fear of adults
- Fearful watchfulness
- Fear of medical help
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Fear of returning home
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Withdrawn
- Chronic running away

Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse

- Soreness, bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- Itching in genital areas
- Stained or bloody underwear
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks
- Repeated urinary tract infections
- Signs of sexually transmitted infections
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains/upsets and headaches
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Inappropriate language/sexual knowledge for age group
- Making sexual advances to adults or other children
- Being inappropriately seductive
- Not being allowed to go out on dates or have friends around
- Sexually abusing a child, sibling or friend
- Chronic depression/suicidal
- Using drugs/drink excessively/self-mutilation
- Being anorexic/bulimic
- Being unable to concentrate/playing truant
- A sudden change in school/work habits
- Being withdrawn, isolated/becoming excessively worried
- Wariness of being approached by anyone
- Having a friend who has 'a problem'
- Being fearful of undressing for PE
- Acquisition of money, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation
- Association with older people, particularly men, outside the usual range of contacts
- Phone calls/messages from adults outside the usual range of contacts
- Chronic running away

Signs and Symptoms of Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development delay
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Continual self-deprecation
- Neurotic behaviour
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of change/new situations
- Self-mutilation
- Wetting or soiling
- Frequent vomiting

- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Poor peer relationships
- Chronic running away

Signs and Symptoms of Exploitation (Barnardo's)

- Going missing for periods of time
- Regularly returning home late
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections
- Mood swings or changes in emotional well-being
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Displaying inappropriate sexual behaviour

9. Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS, March 2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:

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

Sexual violence and abuse is '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)'.

Domestic violence represents a particularly serious risk because the child may be affected by a number of forms of abuse. "Children in violent homes face three risks: the risk of observing traumatic events, the risk of being abused themselves, and the risk of being neglected." (Mullender et al. 2003)

Any concerns about domestic and sexual violence and abuse will be referred to Social Services/PSNI. The College is an Operation Encompass school. Please refer to Section 39.

10. Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People

"Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point."

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS, March 2016)

Any concerns about the sexual exploitation of children and young people will be referred to Social Services/PSNI.

11. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls.

“FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.”

Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (Department of Health, 2014)

In Northern Ireland, civil and criminal legislation on female genital mutilation (FGM) is contained in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. FGM is illegal and is a form of child abuse and violence against women. In addition, The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 makes forced marriage illegal in Northern Ireland. Forced marriage is a violation of human rights and a form of child/adult/domestic abuse.

Any concerns about female genital mutilation or forced marriage will be referred to Social Services/PSNI.

12. Bullying and Cyberbullying

The following is an extract from the College’s Addressing Bullying Policy:

Bullying is a complex, multi-faceted problem which can be found, in varying degrees, in almost every school. It can have a negative impact upon the physical and mental health of both the target of bullying behaviour and the person displaying bullying behaviour. Any form of bullying, including cyberbullying, is contrary to the College’s Mission Statement and Aims, and will not be tolerated in the College. Everyone in the College has a responsibility to contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect for all.

All members of staff, teaching and support, have a responsibility to create and maintain a safe and caring environment within the College. They must listen to and take seriously any report of bullying. They must deal with any bullying incident in the appropriate manner or refer the matter to the relevant Tutor, Head of Year or Head of School.

Students have a responsibility to respect the rights of every other individual in the College. Students must treat all others with respect and must not engage in bullying behaviour. Equally, they are encouraged not to be a bystander to bullying behaviour. They should report bullying of which they are aware to a member of staff.

Parents have the right to expect that the College is a safe and caring environment for their children. They have a responsibility to ensure that their children respect all others in the College. Parents should monitor their child’s use of the Internet and mobile devices. Parents should report any alleged bullying of which they are aware to the relevant Tutor, Head of Year, Head of School or Vice Principal (Pastoral).

13. Information for Parents and Students

The College’s Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, together with arrangements for reporting a child protection issue and other information, are available on the College’s website: www.knock.co.uk.

A summary of these arrangements is included in the College Prospectus and is circulated to parents once a year.

Posters giving information to students on how to report concerns, and to whom, are displayed throughout the College.

The full Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy is available to parents and students on request.

14. How a Parent Can Raise a Concern about Child Protection/Safeguarding

If a parent has a concern about the safety of his/her own child or any other child, the parent should contact the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Deputy Designated Teachers without delay.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Ms G McCarthy
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection	Mrs M Davey Mrs A Fox Mrs F Sloan

The Designated Teacher(s) will inform the Principal and will clarify the facts of the allegation (Discreet Preliminary Clarification). The Designated Teacher(s) will refer the matter to Social Services if it is deemed necessary and will report back to the parent on the progress and outcome of the complaint as soon as possible.

If a parent is still concerned he/she may contact the Principal directly. If the parent is dissatisfied with the outcome he/she may refer the complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors in the first instance, then to the NI Public Services Ombudsman (Tel: 0800 343 424).

At any time a parent can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team (Tel: 028 9050 7000 - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; Tel: 0300 1000 300 - South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust) or the PSNI Central Referral Unit (Tel: 028 9025 9299).

15. How to Report a Concern about School Staff or Volunteers

If any parent, student or member of staff wishes to report a child protection/safeguarding concern about school staff or volunteers, he/she should contact the Principal or the Designated Teacher for Child Protection without delay. Section 26 outlines College procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff.

16. Guidance for Staff on Dealing with a Disclosure - The 5Rs

Receive

- Stay calm
- Listen actively with open body language
- Accept what the student is saying
- Be supportive and non-judgemental

Reassure

- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing
- Tell him/her that help is coming
- Do not give the student any undertaking of confidentiality
- Reassure him/her that only those who need to know will be informed
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep

Respond

- Use open phrases (Tell me what has happened)
- Do not ask leading questions (Did they do X to you?)
- Explain what you are going to do next (speak to Designated Teacher)
- Ensure the child is OK before leaving

Report

- Report as soon as possible to the Designated Teacher

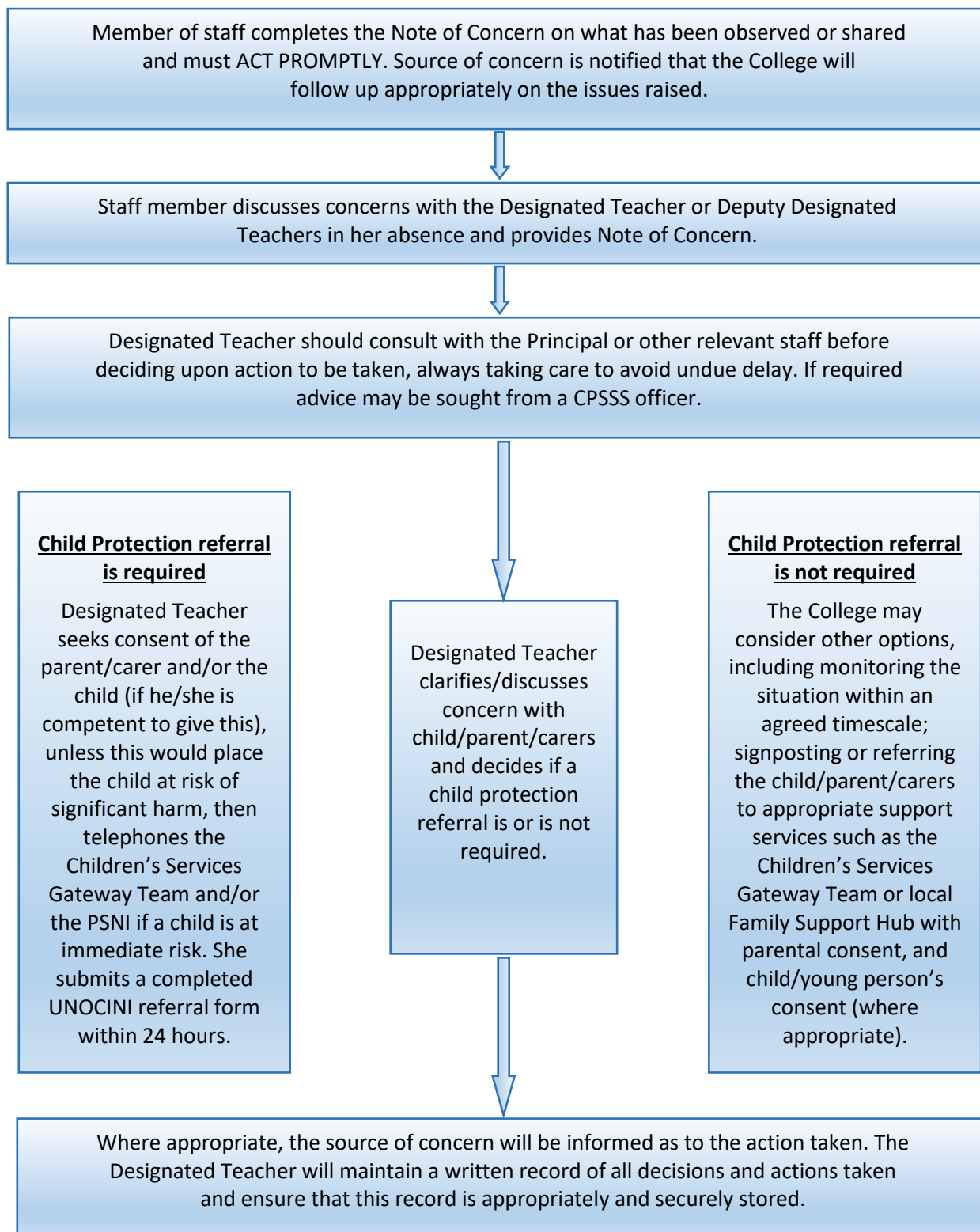
Record

- Make objective, detailed, handwritten notes of the discussion (Child Protection - Note of Concern (Page 32-33))
- Record facts (When? Where? Who? What?)
- Use the child's exact words as much as possible
- Sign the notes
- Record the date and time that the notes were passed to the Designated Teacher
- Notes will be filed by the Designated Teacher and could be used in court

If a student reveals an allegation of abuse, the information must be treated seriously. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore, be kept to a minimum.

17A. Processes for Referral - Students Under 18

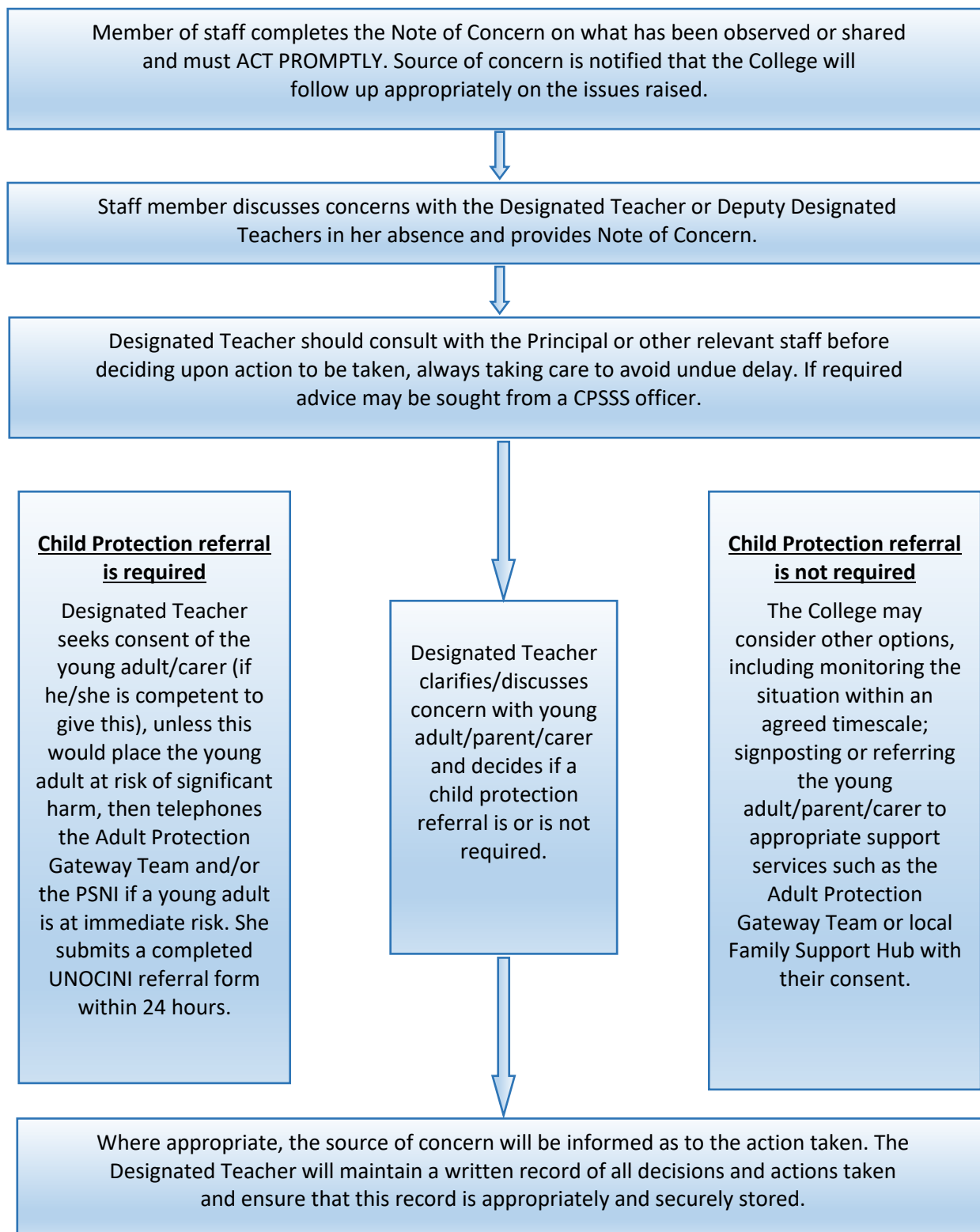
Procedure where the College has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff.



It is imperative that any disclosure by a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk, is reported immediately to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk to the child at home.

17B. Processes for Referral - Students Over 18

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



It is imperative that any disclosure by a vulnerable young adult, or concern that indicates they may be at immediate risk, is reported immediately to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk to the child at home.

Adult Protection Gateway Teams:

Belfast Trust (Tel: 028 9504 1744)

South Eastern Trust (Tel: 028 9250 1227)

18. Allegation of Peer on Peer Sexual Abuse

For the purpose of this policy a peer is defined as another student of the College.

In a situation where child sexual abuse is alleged to have been carried out by a peer, the College's Child Protection Procedures will be followed. Whether a child initiated harmful sexual behaviour, has been harmed themselves, or both, it is important to apply principles that remain child centred. Harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children must be recognised as damaging to both the child who has alleged to have been harmed and the child who has allegedly caused the harm. EA guidance for Schools highlights that a child who engages in harmful sexual behaviour may be suffering, or be at risk of, significant harm and may also be in need of protection. Some children who engage in harmful sexual behaviour may have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties and may have experienced some form of abuse themselves in the past. Nonetheless, in the balance of what is in the child's best interests, the needs of the child who has alleged to have been harmed must be given priority; and nothing should be done which causes them further harm. The needs of children and young people who engage in harmful sexual behaviour towards others should be considered separately from the needs of the child who has alleged to have been harmed. A clear safety and support plan should be put in place in the College which considers the physical and emotional safety of the child who has alleged to have been harmed. A support meeting should be convened with the relevant people i.e. child, parents/carers, school staff, Social Services, PSNI and external support agencies, as needed, to develop a clear safety and support plan. CPSS could be included if required.

The Designated Teacher will follow the Processes for Referral (Page 14-15). The Designated Teacher will also take account of the relevant parts of the supplementary advice in DE Circular 2022/02: Children who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour' (22/02/22).

19. Students Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Issues of concern, including inappropriate sexual behaviour, should be notified to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, the Designated Teacher will contact the Education Authority's Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) for support and advice on the appropriate action to take. The CPSSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

20. Child Protection Files

The Designated Teacher stores Child Protection Files in a separate locked cabinet or in CPOMs. The Child Protection File should contain:

- Chronology of events/action taken
- All Notes of Concern
- Any notes initially recorded
- Records of discussions and telephone calls (with colleagues, students, parents, other agencies/services)

Where relevant, the Child Protection File should also contain:

- Correspondence with other organisations (sent and received)
- Referral forms (for support services/specialist services)
- Formal plans linked to the student (Child Protection Plan/Child in Need Plan)
- Risk assessments
- Risk Management Plans/Individual Safety and Support Plans
- College reports to interagency meetings and conferences
- Minutes of interagency meetings
- Any other relevant notes/papers

21. Storage of Child Protection Information

The Designated Teacher stores Child Protection Files and the Record of Child Abuse Complaints in a separate locked cabinet. This cabinet is accessible to only the Designated Teacher, the Deputy Designated Teachers or the Principal. The cabinet is not accessible to anyone else, including administrative staff, the ETI and members of the Board of Governors. The keys to the cabinet should not be removed from the College premises and should be stored securely in a key safe. The Safeguarding Team will also use CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) to monitor safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral issues. Access to the safeguarding information requires an elevated security level only available to the Principal, Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers.

Child Protection information which is held electronically must be encrypted and appropriately password protected. The Principal may allocate a C2k Private Folder for Child Protection with access limited to the Designated Teacher, the Deputy Designated Teachers and the Principal.

22. Vetting Procedures

The College acknowledges that pre-employment vetting remains a key preventative measure in denying an unsuitable individual access to children through the education system. Vetting is only one of a number of important elements in the recruitment process and will be considered with other key aspects such as a candidate's application form, the interview process, proof of identity and qualifications, references and knowledge of his/her employment history, including any gaps in employment.

All staff wear a personalised lanyard to identify that they are staff of the College.

Paid Staff

The Principal and College Business Manager will ensure that newly appointed paid staff such as teachers and support staff including classroom assistants, technicians, language assistants, librarians, music tutors, office, catering, cleaning and caretaking staff are appropriately vetted according to the practice and procedures outlined in DE Circular 2025/06. The College has a Service Level Agreement in place with DE who manage the administration of AccessNI application forms and issue Enhanced Disclosure Certificates. As part of this agreement, the College must adhere to the requirements outlined in the AccessNI's Code of Practice. Paid staff work in Regulated Activity* and therefore an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from AccessNI is required. These checks through AccessNI will include a check of the Barred Lists.

*Regulated Activity is summarised as: (i) unsupervised activities: e.g. teach; train; coach; instruct; care for or supervise children/young adults; provide advice/guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children/young adults; (ii) work in a range of establishments 'specified places,' with opportunity for contact: e.g. schools; education settings; youth centres; pre-school settings; EOTAS centres for children/young people; children's homes; childcare premises (not work by **supervised** volunteers).

Volunteers

Volunteers are vetted or supervised according to the practice and procedures outlined in DE Circular 2025/06 (March 2025) - Pre-Employment/AccessNI Check Requirements and Safer Recruitment Practices for Staff and Volunteers Working in or Providing a Service for Schools/Education Settings.

Volunteers Who Work Unsupervised

Volunteers who are unsupervised are regarded as working in Regulated Activity and therefore an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from AccessNI is required. These checks through AccessNI will include a check of the Barred Lists.

Volunteers Who Work Under Supervision

If a volunteer is supervised he/she is not regarded as working in Regulated Activity and therefore the College is not required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate. However, the College is still entitled to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate if it so wishes. It is unlawful for a school to seek a check of the Barred Lists in these circumstances.

Supervision

- The volunteer will be supervised by a person who is in Regulated Activity, e.g., a teacher.
- The supervision must be regular and day to day.
- The supervision must be “reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children and young adults”.

The precise nature and level of supervision will vary from case to case. The Designated Teacher will ensure that the supervision in place is sufficient, in her judgement, to provide reasonable assurance for the protection of the children concerned through completion of a Risk Assessment for a Volunteer Working in the College (Form CP2 - Page 34). Supervision will take place on an ongoing basis, whether the volunteer has just started or has been doing the activity for some time.

23. Visitors to the College

All visitors to the College, including former learners who return to the school to sit examinations and external candidates, are required to report to Reception.

Visitors passing beyond the Reception area will have their details recorded at Reception. This includes their name, organisation (if relevant), arrival time, departure time and the name of the supervising member of staff.

All visitors wear a lanyard for the duration of their visit to identify that they are visitors to the College.

24. Managing Information on Persons Who Pose a Risk to Students

In accordance with the Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI), the Principal will liaise with the local Public Protection Unit when informed about a person in the neighbourhood of the school who may pose a risk to students. The information and advice on how to proceed must be recorded and stored with the College’s child protection records.

25. Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers

The protection and promotion of the welfare of our students is a responsibility for all members of staff, teaching and support, and volunteers. In meeting this, staff and volunteers should work towards a culture of mutual trust and respect in the College through which the best interests of the students entrusted to our care is paramount. Naturally, implicit in this is the assumption that the conduct of College staff and volunteers towards our students must be above reproach.

The College operates a Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers (Appendix 1 - Page 35-37) which extends to staff, both teaching and support, and volunteers. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences our students gain from positive interaction with staff and volunteers within the education sector. Rather, it is intended to assist staff and volunteers by drawing attention to the areas of risk and by offering guidance on conduct.

26. Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff (DE Circular 2015/13)

26.1 The Purpose of this Guidance

In all child related decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration (The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995). It must inform the handling of all cases, and this is the primary reason for taking precautionary measures. The child must be listened to and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by the member of staff named in an allegation needs to be effectively evaluated and managed, including the child involved in the allegation, and any other children in that member of staff's home, work or community life. In some cases this will require consideration being given to suspending that person as a precautionary measure.

However, it is also recognised that in applying precautionary measures (including suspension), the welfare of the member of staff is also important. The Principal and the Board of Governors have a continuing duty of care to any member of staff who is subject to an allegation. Therefore, it is essential that any allegation of abuse made against any member of staff in the College is dealt with thoroughly, fairly, efficiently, consistently and timely, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time takes account of the rights and needs of the person who is the subject of an investigation.

Precautionary suspension can have far reaching implications, not only for the member of staff involved, but also for his/her family, for other children at the College, their parents and for other members of staff. All concerned will wish to be reassured that the responsible agencies will act in a constructive and measured way when allegations of abuse are brought to their attention, whilst ensuring that the needs of the child are of paramount consideration.

26.2 Allegations

Allegations can be made in a number of different ways and from a variety of sources such as:

- In person, by correspondence, by phone, by electronic means such as social media, e-mail, twitter, etc.
- From students, their parents/relative/guardian, a member of staff, a witness, Social Services, the police, the media, the Board of Governors, Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) or anonymously.

Allegations against a member of staff can include their alleged behaviour outside of their job/role, including in their own home or community, relating to children.

Allegations can also be historical, for example: where the person making the allegation has left the educational establishment or where the member of staff may have worked in another educational establishment.

26.3 Key Points

- It is extremely important that when an allegation is made the College makes every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Allegations should not be shared with other staff and students.
- If an allegation is made against a member of staff, the resolution of that allegation should be a clear priority to the benefit of all concerned. Any unnecessary delays should be avoided.
- **All allegations against a member of staff should be reported immediately**, normally to the Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- A Lead Individual to manage the handling of an allegation should be identified from the outset. This would normally be the Principal or the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. If the Principal is the subject of concern, the allegation should be reported immediately to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, the Vice-Chairperson, the Designated Governor for Child Protection and the person appointed to be the Lead Individual.
- Where the Principal is not the subject of the allegation, she should advise the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson in his absence as soon as is practicable.

- In accordance with agreed disciplinary procedures **the Board of Governors, the Chairperson or the Principal can impose a precautionary suspension on a member of staff** and should only do so following full consideration of an individual case in conjunction with the Lead Individual.
- A precautionary suspension should be kept under regular review and can only be ended by the Board of Governors.
- In response to an allegation, other options should be considered before suspending a member of staff. Suspension should not be the default option. An individual should be suspended **only** if there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification should be recorded by the employer and the individual notified of the reasons. The precautionary suspension should be reviewed monthly. The requirement to maintain confidentiality must be emphasised.
- All allegations **must** be recorded in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints book, which must be retained securely. However, these should not be referred to in employer references. It should be noted that, if involved, CPSSS, Social Services and the PSNI may retain their own records of any investigation, subject to their record and disposal policies.
- A record should also be placed on the relevant student's Child Protection File.
- Records should be signed and dated by the Principal unless she is the subject of the concern.
- Students who are found to have made malicious or unfounded allegations may have breached the College's Positive Behaviour Policy. This matter may be considered under the College's discipline process. In the event of a malicious or unfounded allegation being made by a person from outside the school, consideration should be given to reporting that person to the PSNI, if appropriate.
- In advising parents and/or the person who made the allegation regarding the outcome, assurance should be provided that the matter has been dealt with under the relevant procedures. However, details of the outcome of HR procedures, such as Disciplinary Procedures, should be dealt with in confidence and should not be shared.

26.4 Duties of the Employer

Employers have a duty of care to their staff and should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation. The Principal will act as the named contact in the College for a member of staff who is suspended. The individual should be advised to contact his/her trade union regularly if he/she is a member and wishes to do so.

The guidance below will be used when managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in respect of **all** cases in which an allegation has been made against a member of staff that relates to one or more of the following:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child/student, or may have harmed a child/student.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child/student.
- Behaved towards a child/student in a way that indicates he/she would pose a risk of harm if he/she works regularly or closely with children.
- Behaved in a way that creates a safeguarding concern.
- Abused his/her position of trust.
- Acted outside the Code of Conduct relating to Child Protection.

26.5 Guidance on Next Steps

The procedure when dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff should be applied with expediency, sensitivity, common sense and judgement. All actions taken should comply with the inter-agency arrangements outlined in the Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures.

26.5.1 Establish the Facts

While it is necessary for the Lead Individual to establish the facts of the allegation, he/she **must not** investigate the incident by interviewing either those directly involved or any witnesses. It is the role of Social Services/PSNI to conduct any investigations. Interviews undertaken by untrained staff are likely to jeopardise any subsequent criminal/disciplinary investigation, and may lead to unjust outcomes for the child/student or the member of staff who is the subject of investigation.

Where possible the Lead Individual should establish the following:

- The general nature of the allegation.
- That the allegation is of a child abuse nature.
- When and where the incident is alleged to have occurred?
- Who was involved?
- Whether any other persons were present?
- If the records of the educational establishment are likely to be able to support or contradict the allegation.
- Any history of similar allegations being made about the member of staff or by the person making the allegation.

26.5.2 Seek Advice from Key Agencies

The Lead Individual should not unduly delay seeking advice, even if all information is not immediately available to them. A discussion with key agencies may be the most appropriate mechanism to do this. The Lead Individual should seek advice in the first instance from CPSSS. This discussion can be an organised meeting or more likely a series of phone calls that provide the Lead Individual with the opportunity to seek advice from and hear the views of the other key agencies involved in safeguarding children. These can include:

- The Chairperson of the Board of Governors.
- The Designated/Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- CPSSS.
- Social Services/PSNI.

The outcome of the discussion with key agencies should be used to inform what action, if any, is appropriate and/or necessary.

In this discussion the agencies involved should share all relevant information pertaining to the allegation. Where the police is investigating, the employer should ask them to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer disciplinary process, if appropriate.

Social Services should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the child/student named in the allegation is in need of protection or other services, so that any information obtained in the course of those enquiries, which is relevant to a disciplinary case, can be passed to the employer without delay.

A discussion with key agencies may include:

i. When is precautionary suspension likely to be appropriate?

Precautionary suspension is most likely to be considered in any case where:

- A child/student is at risk of significant harm.
- The allegation is so serious that, if proven, there may be grounds for dismissal.
- It is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded e.g. there is a possibility of the member of staff named in the allegation exercising an influence over the child/student and other witnesses, or tampering with potential evidence.
- Following the discussion with the key agencies it is decided that any of the above apply.

Precautionary suspension can be considered at any stage of an investigation. However, Lead Individuals should also consider whether the result that would be achieved by suspension, could be obtained by alternative arrangements.

ii. Alternatives to precautionary suspension

Alternatives to precautionary suspension can include, where available and appropriate:

- Moving the member of staff to other duties that do not involve direct contact with a specific child or children identified as being at risk.

- Moving the member of staff to other duties that do not involve direct contact with children.
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children.

26.6 Who Decides to Suspend?

The Board of Governors, the Chairperson or the Principal can impose a precautionary suspension on a member of staff. If the case has been referred to Social Services and/or requires an investigation by the PSNI, the Lead Individual will be aware of the views of the other agencies. The Lead Individual can request a statement in writing from Social Services and/or PSNI that will support the outcome of the discussion from their agency perspective. Social Services or PSNI **cannot** require that a member of staff is placed on precautionary suspension.

26.6.1 Is a precautionary suspension appropriate/necessary?

Following the discussion between the key agencies, the Lead Individual should consider what action is appropriate and advise the Board of Governors, the Chairperson or the Principal accordingly.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Lead Individual may still be undecided as to whether to invoke a precautionary suspension following the outcome of the discussion with the key agencies. In such circumstances the Lead Individual should discuss their views with the Board of Governors, the Chairperson or the Principal and consider if any alternative action is appropriate.

If the Board of Governors, the Chairperson or the Principal decides not to proceed with the precautionary suspension, there should be clear documented evidence of the reason(s), in particular where the decision is different from the outcome of the discussion with the key agencies.

26.7 Possible Outcomes

Following discussion with the key agencies there are four possible outcomes:

1. Precautionary suspension under child protection is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.
2. Allegation to be addressed through the use of the appropriate Disciplinary Procedures where consideration may be given to the requirement for a precautionary suspension under those procedures.
3. Precautionary suspension under child protection to be imposed.
4. Alternatives to precautionary suspension to be imposed.

The action to be taken on each of the above outcomes is set out below.

1) Precautionary suspension under child protection is not appropriate and the matter is concluded

The Lead Individual should advise the Board of Governors, the Chairperson and the Principal, if appropriate, and action should be taken to:

- Advise the member of staff that an allegation has been made, the nature of it, and that no further action will be taken.
- Advise the member of staff of available counselling/welfare services such as Inspire.
- If the outcome of the discussion with key agencies concluded that the allegation may have been made in an attempt to draw attention to abuse emanating from another source (this is known as displacement), the Lead Individual should refer the matter to Social Services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of any specialist services.

2) Allegation to be addressed through the use of the Disciplinary Procedures

- Appropriate Disciplinary Procedures for teaching and support staff apply.

3) Precautionary suspension under child protection is to be imposed

Following the internal process as stated in section 26.5:

- Advise the member of staff that an allegation has been made, the nature of it, and the action to be taken. (See section 26.8).
- Advise the member of staff of available counselling/welfare services such as Inspire.
- A referral to Social Services/PSNI for investigation, if not already done so. A decision to be taken by the Board of Governors, Chairperson or Principal to place the member of staff on precautionary suspension. (See section 26.5.2(i) for details of when precautionary suspension is likely to be appropriate).
- Any further action under the Disciplinary Procedures should be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the external investigation.
- Following notification of the outcome of the external investigation, the status of the precautionary suspension should be reviewed and consideration given to action under the relevant Disciplinary Procedures.

4) Alternatives to precautionary suspension to be imposed

Following the internal process as stated in section 26.5:

- Advise the member of staff that an allegation has been made, the nature of it, and the action to be taken.
- Advise the member of staff of available counselling/welfare services such as Inspire.
- A referral to Social Services/PSNI for investigation, if not already done so. A decision to be taken by the Board of Governors, Chairperson or Principal to consider and implement alternatives to precautionary suspension. (See section 26.5.2(ii) for list of alternatives).
- Any further action under the Disciplinary Procedures should be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the external investigation.
- Following notification of the outcome of the external investigation, the status of the precautionary suspension should be reviewed and consideration given to action under the relevant Disciplinary Procedures.

26.8 Informing a Member of Staff of a Precautionary Suspension

When it has been decided that a precautionary suspension is necessary while a full investigation of the allegation is undertaken, the member of staff should be notified that he/she is suspended from work/duty.

In the majority of cases, informing a member of staff that he/she is suspended from work/duty will take place at a meeting convened for that purpose. This should be arranged at the earliest opportunity.

The individual should be informed of the following:

- The nature of the allegation and in particular that it is a child protection allegation.
- The reason for the precautionary suspension.
- What is likely to happen next (insofar as you know and are at liberty to say).
- Reassure the member of staff that a precautionary suspension is a neutral act intended to protect all concerned.
- Advise the member of staff of the College's Welfare Support contact details and of the availability of confidential and independent staff care services, such as Inspire, as appropriate.
- Advise the member of staff who his/her appointed contact person in the educational establishment will be during the period of suspension.
- Advise the member of staff of his/her right to be accompanied or represented at any future meetings.

Written confirmation of the precautionary suspension should be issued within **one working day**, including the details as discussed above.

26.9 After a Member of Staff is Placed on Precautionary Suspension

Due consideration should be given to the initiation of the period of suspension, taking into account the need for dignity.

The suspended member of staff should also be given the name of an agreed person from the College. The main role of this person is to provide information as to the progress of the Social Services/PSNI investigation.

The Principal should provide the member of staff with general information about developments at the educational establishment, according to the wishes of that member of staff.

Social contact with the member of staff's colleagues and friends at the educational establishment should not be precluded, except where likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Although it is the aim that all investigations should be conducted as efficiently as possible, consistent with establishing the full facts, arrangements should be made for the member of staff or his/her representative to be contacted regularly (4-6 weekly or more often as decisions are taken), with information on progress and developments on the case.

These arrangements do not preclude the member of staff, or his/her representative, contacting those conducting the investigation at any time.

The member of staff should be offered access to the Staff Welfare Services and Staff Care Services such as Inspire, which is a confidential service and is independent of the Employing Authority's Human Resources function.

A precautionary suspension should be kept under regular review and can only be ended by the Board of Governors.

26.9.1 Support for Others Concerned

Support will be needed for the child involved in the allegations, any siblings and their parents. Consideration should be given to the form such support should take. Advice on the type of appropriate support available can be discussed with the CPSSS.

Consideration should also be given to what support may be needed for others at the educational establishment, both staff and children, according to the circumstances of the alleged abuse.

It is extremely important that when an allegation is made the College makes every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. This allegation should not be shared with other staff and children.

26.10 Actions Following an Investigation

26.10.1 Resignations and “Compromise Agreements”

The fact that a member of staff tenders his/her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up.

Under no circumstances should “compromise agreements” be used to avoid an investigation, e.g. where a person agrees to resign and the Principal/Board of Governors agrees not to pursue disciplinary action. Such practice fails to protect children and brings the education service into disrepute. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate, nor must it override the statutory duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where circumstances require that.

It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations about the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the member of staff concerned refuses to co-operate with the process. Wherever possible, the member of staff should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it to the Board of Governors, in accordance with the relevant Disciplinary Procedures. However, the process of recording the allegation along with any supporting evidence, and reaching a conclusion about whether it can be regarded as substantiated should be completed. While it may be difficult to reach a conclusion in such circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a member of staff’s period of notice expires before the process is complete, the investigation should continue to its conclusion.

26.10.2 Return to Work after Suspension

In cases where it is decided on the conclusion of the investigation that a member of staff who has been suspended can return to work, the Principal, in consultation with the member of staff and those who supported him/her during suspension, should consider how best to facilitate that. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a very stressful experience.

Depending on the circumstances of the member of staff, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The Principal should also consider how the member of staff’s contact with the child/student who made the allegation can be best managed if he/she is still attending the College.

26.10.3 Member of Staff’s Employment is Terminated

If, on conclusion of the investigation, the Board of Governors terminates the person’s services, or, at any time the person resigns or leaves their employment, the Principal or Lead Individual should consider whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is required.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 places a legal duty on regulated activity providers, such as schools and employers of school staff, to make a referral to the DBS where they have dismissed or removed a person from working with children or vulnerable adults (or would/may have if the person had not left or resigned, etc) because they have:

- been cautioned or convicted for a relevant offence.
- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults (i.e. an action or inaction (neglect) that has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm).
- satisfied the Harm Test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults. (i.e. there has been no relevant conduct (no action or inaction), but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult still exists).

The DBS will consider all the evidence provided and decide whether to bar the person from working in regulated activity, which will include most work in educational establishments.

The College has a statutory duty to make reports, and to provide relevant information to the DBS. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the member of staff involved and within one month of ceasing to use the person’s services.

Consideration should also be given to DE Circular 2015/12 General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Registration of Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, which confirms that from 1 April 2015 the Department conferred powers on the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland to enable it to consider cases of serious teacher misconduct and to remove a teacher from its register.

26.11 Confidentiality

When an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff the College will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

Restrictions outlined in Part 3 of the Education Act 2011, "School Workforce - Reporting Restrictions", should be applied as best practice in Northern Ireland.

The Act makes clear that "publication" of material that may lead to the identification of the individual who is the subject of the allegation is prohibited.

"Publication" includes "any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public".

This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site would be in breach of the reporting restrictions if what was published could lead to the identification of the individual by members of the public.

27. Historical Allegations

Historical allegations of abuse may include the following types of scenarios:

Member of staff currently employed in an educational establishment.

- In this case the current policy will be applied and the Board of Governors, the Chairperson or the Principal will manage the response like any other case, in co-operation with the CPSSS officer and other key agencies as appropriate.

Member of staff no longer employed by the educational establishment and the Principal is aware of the current employer.

- In this case the Principal will record the incoming information and inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. Decisions will be taken regarding the process of managing the allegation, communicating with the other key agencies as appropriate and forwarding the information to the current employer for action.

Member of staff is retired AND no longer working.

- In this case the Principal will advise the person making the initial contact with the College to contact the police directly. The Principal will cooperate with any further action deemed appropriate by any subsequent investigation.

Member of staff is retired, no longer working in an educational establishment, but thought to be working in an environment with children.

- In this case the Principal will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, and discuss with the CPSSS officer and other key agencies as appropriate in decision making about passing the information to the current employer/manager of place of work.

Member of staff is deceased.

- The Principal will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the CPSSS officer of the allegation. The person making the initial contact with the educational establishment will be informed of the status of the alleged individual and advised of his/her right to approach the police to pursue the allegation. The Principal would assure this person of his co-operation in any future investigation.

28. Use of Reasonable Force/Restraint

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Article 4, outlines the powers a member of staff can use in restraining pupils. The legislation extends to the premises of the school and when a member of school staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned.

Staff may only use reasonable force/restraint:

- to prevent a pupil from committing an offence;
- to prevent a pupil causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);
- to prevent a pupil from engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils.

Reasonable force/restraint should:-

- only be used as a measure of last resort;
- preserve the dignity and respect of all concerned;
- never be used as a form of punishment or to make a child behave; and
- never deliberately cause pain/injury to a pupil.

All instances of the use of reasonable force/restraint should be recorded; parents should be informed and follow up support provided to the pupil and staff involved. (DE Circular: 2021/13)

29. Record Keeping: The Record of Child Abuse Complaints

Where an allegation is made about a member of staff, and is pursued either as a referral to Social Services or under the relevant disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record must also be entered by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or Principal on the Record of Child Abuse Complaints. A copy should be held on the child's file which is maintained for this purpose and kept in a secure place and not circulated.

The summary should include:

- A unique entry number.
- The date and brief details of the nature of the allegation.
- By whom and against whom it was made.
- If the allegation was referred to Social Services, to whom it was referred.
- The date of referral.
- If the allegation was dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.
- A copy should be provided to the person concerned.

The Record of Child Abuse Complaints should be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will ask to see the Record during inspections.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for information, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS Disclosures reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time.

If, on foot of a subsequent investigation by one of the investigating agencies, the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record on the file of the member of staff concerned must be expunged, and the entry in the College's Record of Child Abuse Complaints struck through with an explanation entered. The record on the student's file should be noted with the outcome of the investigation, and should stand until the student's date of birth + 30 years.

Given the number of recent historical allegations, unless the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record on both the student's file and the staff member's file should be maintained indefinitely. All

documentation retained should comply with Data Protection Guidance and be retained in line with the DE Schools Disposal Schedule.

References – Although **all** allegations must be recorded in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints book, they should not be referred to in employer references. It is extremely important that when an allegation is made the educational establishment makes every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

30. Staff Liability

Any member of staff who follows this policy and procedures in making a report of suspected child abuse is acting within his/her employment. The Board of Governors of Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock indemnifies any teacher who acts in accordance with these procedures in reporting any incident of child abuse or suspected child abuse.

31. The Preventative Curriculum

Students are informed of the arrangements for Child Protection/Safeguarding during their initial Induction and subsequent Induction each academic year. The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers also attend an assembly for each year group every September where they explain their roles.

Safeguarding messages are actively promoted through:

- Personal Development lessons;
- Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) lessons;
- Mentor lessons;
- Careers lessons in preparation for Work Experience;
- Learning for Life and Work;
- Assembly;
- Safer Internet Day;
- Addressing Bullying Week;
- Child protection posters and information leaflets;
- Talks by PSNI/SHAHRP;
- The College Student Planner;
- Focus of the Week;
- The College website;
- Monitoring of Securus.

Specific Child Protection training is given to Senior Prefects (Year 14), Mentors (Year 13), Peer Mentors (Year 13) and students who undertake community service.

32. Incident Involving Sexual Activity by an Underage Student

In accordance with the ethos of the College if a disclosure is made to a member of staff of underage sexual activity parents will be informed and a referral made to Social Services.

In the event of such a disclosure a member of staff must always report the matter immediately to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teachers.

33. Monitoring and Supporting Students on the Child Protection Register

The College will monitor students whose names are on the Child Protection Register in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan. The plan sets out the role of the child's parents and various agencies in protecting the child. For schools, this would include alerting the child's Case Coordinator from Social Services, or the Education Welfare Officer, when a student on the Child Protection Register is absent for more than a few days, or on a regular basis, or to any signs which suggest a deterioration in the student's home circumstances.

34. Child Protection Conferences

When a referral has been made of a case of suspected or alleged abuse, a member of staff, either the Designated Teacher or the member of staff who knows the child best, may be asked to contribute the College's knowledge of the child to the Child Protection Conference convened by Social Services to assess the child's circumstances and decide on further action. The College may also be asked to prepare a report. Reports prepared for Child Protection Conferences should focus on the child's educational progress and achievements, attendance, behaviour, participation, relationships with other children and adults within the school and, where appropriate, the child's appearance. If relevant, reports should include what is known about the child's relations with his/her family and the family structure. Reports should be objective and based on evidence. They should contain only fact, observations and reasons for concern. Reports will be made available to the child's parents at the Child Protection Conference, and may be used in court. All reports should be checked and signed by the Designated Teacher.

35. Closure, Retention and Disposal of Child Protection Records

When a student leaves the school or child protection concerns cease to be current or ongoing, and records cease to be of active use other than for reference purposes, the student's individual Child Protection File should be closed. The Designated Teacher should consult the College's Disposal of Records Schedule, review the file and indicate the date on which the file can be destroyed. All child protection records for a student of the College will be held in a separate locked cabinet until the student's date of birth + 30 years. The file will then be destroyed.

Where an allegation has been made about a member of staff, records will be retained or disposed of as per Section 29: Record Keeping: The Record of Child Abuse Complaints.

Information held electronically within private folders on the C2k system should also be deleted within the timescale set.

36. Transfer of Child Protection Records

When a student whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school, the College will inform the receiving school immediately that his/her name is on the Child Protection Register and pass on contact details for the student's social worker to the Designated Teacher in the receiving school. The College should then destroy all child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences, and should inform the child's Case Coordinator in Social Services. The remaining child protection record should be copied, as relevant, to the new school. The College can retain original copies of its own documents. It is good practice for the Designated Teacher to discuss concerns directly with the Designated Teacher from the receiving school in advance of sending the child protection record.

37. The Selection and Use of Volunteers and Sports Coaches to Support School Activities

Volunteers can have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other paid staff in schools and in contributing to the life of the school. Ensuring that schools obtain the maximum benefit from the involvement of volunteers requires careful preliminary planning to ensure that the volunteer has appropriate and worthwhile duties, understands and is equipped to carry out his/her role and can complement and support the activities of the teacher or other member of staff. It is also essential that appropriate steps are taken, through vetting and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school. Vetting Procedures will be carried out as outlined on Page 17-18.

The engagement of volunteers will only be undertaken with the knowledge and agreement of the Principal. Acceptance of any individual's offer of help should not be automatic. Appropriate areas of work and the duties attached to these, the supervisory arrangements, the implications for Child Protection/Safeguarding and the conditions attached to the volunteer's role will be clearly established before any volunteer is accepted by the school.

All potential volunteers will be asked to provide the following information:

- Personal details such as name (including any previous names) and address, date of birth and any relationship with the school e.g. parent, relative of member of staff;
- Details of any qualifications and of any previous work with children;
- A declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound-over Order;
- A declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for child protection (and the outcome of the investigation) or had a child removed from their care;
- A current qualification through a national governing body coaching award (if relevant);
- The names of two referees who are not family members or members of the staff of the College.

The volunteer must attend an interview with the Principal or his nominee.

Further Guidelines for the Use of Volunteers to Support School Activities are outlined in Appendix 6 - Page 42.

38. Procedures After School Hours

Staff who need to pass on information after school is closed can contact the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teachers by telephone.

39. Operation Encompass

The College is an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local police and our school, aimed at supporting any 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, if the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our students is present, the PSNI will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the College Safeguarding Team. This will allow the College 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 student's child protection file. Any information received on an Operation Encompass call from the PSNI 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 College Safeguarding Team.

For further information, please refer to The Domestic Abuse Information-sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

40. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy, please contact Ms McCarthy, Vice Principal, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the College's Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at www.knock.co.uk. Should you remain dissatisfied with the College's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided on Page 11 of the Complaints Procedure.

Signed: *Mr Leo O'Reilly*
(Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: *4th June 2025*

Signed: *Miss Deborah McLaughlin*
(Principal)

Date: *4th June 2025*



Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock

Child Protection - Note of Concern

Please complete and sign this Note of Concern and pass it immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Student Details			
Student Name		Tutor Group	
Date of incident/ disclosure		Time of incident/ disclosure	

Record: • Make objective, detailed, handwritten notes of the discussion • Record facts (When? Where? Who? What?) • Use the child's exact words as much as possible

Circumstances of incident/disclosure:

Nature and description of concern:

Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event; 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:

Note of Concern Passed to Designated Teacher				
Written Report Passed to Designated Teacher	Yes		No <i>(If 'No', state reason)</i>	
Date and Time of Report to the Designated Teacher	Date		Time	
Placed on Student's Child Protection File	Yes <i>(completed by Designated Teacher)</i>		No <i>(If 'No', state reason)</i>	

Name of Staff Member Making the Report			
Signature of Staff Member		Date	
Signature of Designated Teacher		Date	

The Note of Concern will be locked in a secure cabinet by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.



Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock

Risk Assessment for a Volunteer Working in the College

The proposed supervisor (paid member of staff) should complete and sign this form and pass it to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. A volunteer may only begin work if supervision is approved by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Volunteer Details			
Name of Volunteer		Name of Supervisor	
Date of Birth		Activity	
Address		Ages of Students	
Home Number Mobile Number		Number of Students	

Risk Assessment (Please tick Yes or No)	Yes	No
The worker will be doing work that, if unsupervised, would be Regulated Activity.		
The supervised worker will be a volunteer.		
The supervisor is in Regulated Activity.		
The supervisor will be in close proximity to the volunteer for most of the time.		
The supervisor will usually be able to see the volunteer.		
The supervision will be 'day to day' and ongoing.		
The supervision will be reasonable in all circumstances to ensure the protection of students.		

Reasonable Supervision (Please state the following:)	
Ages of the students.	
Number of students that the volunteer will work with.	
Are other volunteers helping to look after the children?	
The nature of the volunteer's work.	
How vulnerable are the children?	
How many volunteers would be supervised by each supervisor?	

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Designated Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervision Approved: Yes / No (delete as appropriate) Date: _____

Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers

Adopted from DE Circular 2017/04 (02/09/24) - Safeguarding and Child Protection - A Guide for Schools

Objective, Scope and Principles: This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all College staff and volunteers are expected to observe. College staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust; they must, therefore, adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within the College. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain his/her reputation and the reputation of the College, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the College.

This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

1. Setting an Example

- 1.1 All staff and volunteers who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Staff must, therefore, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- 1.2 All staff and volunteers must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same.
- 1.3 All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- 1.4 Teachers should avoid teaching materials the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- 1.5 This Code of Conduct helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the College.
- 1.6 All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all College policies and procedures.

2. Safeguarding Students

- 2.1 All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 2.2 The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a student or colleague to a member of the College's Safeguarding Team.
- 2.3 The College's Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Ms G McCarthy and the Deputy Designated Teachers are Mrs M Davey, Mrs A Fox and Mrs F Sloan.
- 2.4 All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the College's Child Protection /Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents and other relevant safeguarding policies.
- 2.5 All staff and volunteers should treat students with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine students, their parents, carers or colleagues.
- 2.6 All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
- 2.7 Staff must be aware of the dangers which arise from private interviews with individual students. There are occasions when confidential interviews must take place, but such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door opened, or in a room or area which is frequented by other people. Vision panels should not be obstructed.
- 2.8 Staff/volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with students, as even perfectly innocent actions can be misconstrued. If, on occasion, a teacher/volunteer must physically restrain a student to protect the student him/herself, or another student, no more than minimum force should be used.

- 2.9 Following any incident where a member of staff/volunteer feels that his/her actions have been or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal. This would apply especially in a case where a member of staff had been obliged to restrain a student physically to prevent him/her inflicting injury on others or on him/herself.
- 2.10 Staff/volunteers should be particularly careful when supervising children in a residential setting, such as a ski-trip, outdoor education camp, or external visit away from home, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to students in circumstances very different from the normal environment.
- 2.11 All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with College policy.

3. Relationships with Students

- 3.1 All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the College is aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in Appendix 3.
- 3.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times. Sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

4. Student Development

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers must comply with College policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of students.
- 4.2 All staff and volunteers must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of students.

5. Honesty and Integrity

- 5.1 All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of College property and facilities.
- 5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the College must be declared to the Principal with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate, could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

6. Conduct Outside of Work

- 6.1 All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the College or the staff/volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the College community.
- 6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.
- 6.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the College. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the College. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.
- 6.4 Staff and volunteers are not to socialise with students who currently attend the College. They should be aware of the potential for actions or speech to be misconstrued in a social setting and, therefore, should avoid such contact e.g. Year 14 leavers party, Years 13 and 14 formals and pre-formals.

7. eSafety and Internet Use

- 7.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the College's eSafety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

- 7.2 Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the College, school community or employer into disrepute. They should not correspond with students through personal social networking sites or add them as 'friends'. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.
- 7.4 Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students. If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.
- 7.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using College equipment for purposes authorised by the College. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the College's Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his/her family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.
- 8.2 Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
- 8.3 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.
- 8.4 If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Principal.
- 8.5 Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.
- 8.6 Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or the Designated Teacher for Child Protection without delay.

9. Dress and Appearance

- 9.1 All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promotes a professional image.
- 9.2 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- 9.3 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

10. Disciplinary Action

Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

11. Compliance

All volunteers must complete the form in Appendix 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with College's Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers. This form should then be signed and dated.

Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers (2)

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the College's Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers.

Signature of Volunteer Print Name		Date	
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The form should be signed and dated and returned to the Principal.

Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the College are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the Code of Conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student privately in a paid capacity outside of school, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, give individual tuition to the child in question as part of my daily timetable in the College - this is a stipulation of such tutoring.
- I emphasise to parents that this tutoring is done completely independently of the College.
- No monies come through the College at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally.
- No private tutoring is to take place on College premises.
- I do not tutor a child outside of school who I currently teach in my subject class in the College.

I confirm that, if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the College is aware of any relationships.

Signature of Staff Member Print Name		Date	
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The form should be signed and dated and returned to the Principal.

Contacts

- **Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)**
 - Education Authority (Dundonald, South Eastern Region)
 - Tel: 028 95985590

Social Services - Gateway Services/Child Protection

- **South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust**
 - Tel: 0300 1000 300
 - Tel: 028 9504 9999 (out of hours)
 - South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Stewartstown Road Health Centre, 212 Stewartstown Road, Dunmurry, BT17 0FB
- **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**
 - Tel: 028 9050 7000 (Gateway Team)
 - Tel: 028 9504 9999 (out of hours)
 - Social Services Gateway Team, 110 Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 6HD
- **North Down Gateway Team**
 - James Street
 - Newtownards, BT23 4EP
 - Tel: 028 9181 8518
 - Tel: 028 9056 5444 (out of hours)

Wherever you live in Northern Ireland, Out of Hours Social Workers can be contacted through one central telephone number: 028 0800 197 9995. **This is an emergency service to be used only when you need a social worker urgently after hours.**

- **PSNI**
 - CRU (Central Referral Unit) only by email - cru@psni.police.uk
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
 - Tel: 03000 200 190
- **Safeguarding Board for NI**
 - www.safeguardingni.org
- **Childline 0800 1111**
 - www.childline.org.uk
- **NSPCC 0808 800 5000**
 - www.nspcc.org.uk

Useful Links

- [Home - Safer Schools NI](#)
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

Safeguarding and Child Protection: DE Circulars and Letters

DE Circular 2003/13 (18/06/03) - Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003

DE Circular 2006/08 (03/03/06) - Child Protection: Training Requirement for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels

DE Circular 2007/01 (18/06/07) - Acceptable Use of the Internet/Digital Technologies in Schools

DE Circular 2008/03 (13/03/08) - Child Protection: Pre-employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools

DE Circular 2008/10 (14/05/08) - Employment of Substitute Teachers – Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register (NISTR)

DE Letter (02/02/09) - Child Protection: Legislation Changes to Age of Consent

DE Circular 2010/01 (13/01/10) - Guidance on Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)

DE Circular 2010/18 (01/10/10) - Every School a Good School – The Governors’ Role

DE Circular 2011/22 (27/09/11) - Internet Safety

DE Letter (03/05/12) - Provision of Free School Meals on Humanitarian Grounds

DE Circular 2013/16 (25/06/13) - Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools

DE Circular 2013/25 (06/12/13) - eSafety Guidance

DE Circular 2014/14 (02/06/14) - Pupil Participation

DE Letter (22/07/14) - Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation

DE Letter (September 2014) - Disposal of Child Protection Records

DE Letter (October 2014) - Child Sexual Exploitation

DE Circular 2014/27 (26/11/14) - Managing Information on Persons Who Pose a Risk to Pupils

DE Circular 2015/13 (30/04/15) - Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

DE Letter (12/06/15) - eSafety: General Advice to Everyone/General Advice to Parents

DE Letter (September 2015) - SBNI Leaflet about ‘Sexting and the Law’

DE Circular 2015/22 (26/08/15) - Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidance

DE Circular 2015/23 (26/08/15) - Drugs Guidance

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016) - DHSSPS

DE Circular 2016/26 (01/12/16) - Effective Educational Uses of Mobile Digital Devices

DE Circular 2016/27 (01/12/16) - Online Safety

DE Circular 2017/04 (Updated 02/09/24) - Safeguarding/Child Protection - A Guide for Schools - Update

EA Guidance for Schools ... on Supporting Transgender Young People (October 2019)

DE Circular 2020/07 (11/08/20) - Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools

Understanding the Child Protection Structures in Northern Ireland (January 2021) - EA CPSS

DE Circular 2021/13 (10/05/21) - Interim Guidance on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings

CPSS School Governor Handbook: Safeguarding and Child Protection (Revised September 2021)

DE Circular 2022/02 (22/02/22) - Children Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour

DE Circular 2022/16 (15/11/22) - Guidance on Remote Learning

Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) Act 2022

DE Circular 2023/02 (13/02/23) - Parental Responsibility: Updated Guidance for Schools

DE Circular 2023/03 (17/02/23) - Revised Personal Education Plan Guidance for Children Looked After

DE Circular 2024/01 (01/01/24) - Guidance on Amendments to the RSE Curriculum Content

DE Circular 2024/13 - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording by Schools - (26/08/24)

DE Circular 2025/06 (31/03/25) - Pre-Employment/AccessNI Check Requirements and Safer Recruitment Practices for Staff and Volunteers Working in or Providing a Service for Schools/Education Settings

Guidelines for the Use of Volunteers to Support School Activities

The following fundamental principles are to be observed when using volunteers in the College:

- The purpose of the volunteer is to assist paid staff. They should not be used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties.
- Volunteers should only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff in Regulated Activity and these arrangements should be such as to minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised, access to students.
- Volunteers should not be placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of students, premises or equipment.
- Volunteers should understand the tasks which they are to undertake and receive appropriate training to enable them to perform these.
- Volunteers should only be allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the supervisor with whom the volunteer will be most closely involved.
- Volunteers should not be afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or students. An exception might be made where a student has a medical or other condition of which all those working with him/her should be made aware.
- Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety legislation. The College will therefore ensure that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees in terms of the school's obligations under the legislation.

The volunteer will receive information on:

- The Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers (to be signed and dated by the volunteer)
- The College's Positive Behaviour Policy and the extent of the volunteer's authority within it
- The College's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy

The volunteer should report any issue of concern relating to the welfare of students to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.