

Fane Street



Primary School

Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed: 12 February 2018

To be reviewed on or before: 12 February 2019

Definition:

“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.”

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.

DHSSPS March 2016)

The school, in exercising its pastoral responsibility towards the children in their care, will take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved. It is important that we all work together to prevent abuse and protect all children from abuse. We will implement preventative programmes and lessons through our PDMU and ICT Education, working with outside agencies where possible.

The school has procedures that have to be followed if a teacher, other adult working in the school, a parent or any other adult expresses a concern, or makes a complaint that involves the possible abuse of a child. Schools have a statutory responsibility to report concerns where cases of child abuse or suspected child abuse come to their attention.

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

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

In addition to these types of abuse, Domestic Abuse is also deemed to be seriously detrimental.

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

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

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

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

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

Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or
 - (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

*(All above definitions are taken from Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland. DHSSPS March 2017, except for **Exploitation** which was amended in September 2017)*

Domestic Violence

Concerns around Domestic Violence MUST be reported immediately. Domestic Violence is defined as threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (Irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.

(Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, NI. DHSSPS 2013 – 2020)

Where a teacher has a concern about a child in school that concern must be reported to Mrs Cunningham, who is referred to as the Designated Teacher. If Mrs Cunningham is absent, then the concern must be reported to Mr Nicholl, Mrs Eades or Mrs Brown, who are Deputy Designated Teachers.

ROLE OF DESIGNATED TEACHER

- Ensure that all teaching and ancillary staff are aware of the correct school procedures and that parents receive a copy of the Safeguarding Policy
- Make certain that staff follow the correct procedure should a concern be raised and reporting to the Child Protection School Support Service, Board's Designated Officer and PSNI (as appropriate)
- Make sure that staff are kept aware of children who are on the Safeguarding Register
- Take care that referrals are made to the appropriate service

HOW TO HANDLE A DISCLOSURE MADE BY A CHILD

- Maintain a calm and reassuring manner
- Try to arrange for the Designated Teacher to take over as soon as possible if appropriate

If this is not possible then:

- Keep calm and be sensitive to the child – they will have normally chosen to make this disclosure specifically to you

FIVE THINGS TO SAY TO THE CHILD

1. I believe you
2. I am glad you have told me this
3. I am sorry that this has happened
4. It is not, nor was it ever, your fault
5. We are going to try to help you

WHEN LISTENING TO THE CHILD:

- Listen carefully without cross-examining the child
- Never promise confidentiality, inform them that this information will be passed to the Designated Teacher
- Do not interrogate – if a child decides that he/she doesn't want to continue the disclosure you **must not** pressurise them to do so

- Ensure that any questions asked are not leading questions
- Don't criticize the offender
- Don't ask child to repeat this to another teacher
- Take brief notes and add details later – date, time, place, behaviour (exact words)
- Keep a written record – using quotes and observations as soon after the meeting as you can. These should be signed and dated.
- Act immediately don't delay
- Pass this information to the Designated Teacher as soon as possible
- Access some support for yourself

PROCEDURE FOLLOWING A DISCLOSURE

A report form should be completed by the teacher and this report discussed with the Designated Teacher. A decision on whether to refer the matter to CASA, Gateway, PSNI or Barnardos Services is taken based on the circumstances. The action to be taken will be determined by the Designated Teacher, and is highly likely to involve consultation with the Child Protection School Support Service (CPSSS) in the first instance. The school will pass on concerns to the appropriate authorities. The school has no choice in this. If a child appears to be at risk, the school has a legal obligation to pass the information on without delay, whether it turns out to be true or not.

It is not a teacher's responsibility to decide if abuse has taken place but it is their responsibility to report on any concern to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teachers.

Under no circumstances should any accusation be made against, about or to any person; nor should any language be used that would give any child, parent or guardian any cause for anxiety. Should any person question a referral, the Designated Teacher will point to the procedures and the obligation of the school to conform to them.

Parents may have concerns about children that they know. Parents can contact the PSNI or Social Services if they think a child may be being abused. They can also report the matter to the Designated Teacher in the school who will pass on the information to the appropriate authorities. The school will ask those authorities to inform parents of the progress they have made on this complaint and when those authorities tell school of the progress they have made, we will also pass this information to the parents who reported the concern.

If a complaint is made against a member of the school staff, the matter will be investigated in whatever way is appropriate, in accordance with Board guidelines, and the parent will be informed of the outcome.

In all matters relating to Safeguarding, the safety and welfare of the child is the priority. All adults must understand that their personal welfare and feelings are

secondary to those of the child. If a child alleges any form of abuse, it is the responsibility of the school to report the allegation regardless of who may be affected by any such allegation.

VETTING

All parents and volunteers working in the school will be required to complete an Access NI form online checking by EA. All newly appointed members of staff must be Police checked prior to commencing work in the school. School Governors will be Police checked prior to taking up their membership on the Board.

ACCEPTABLE INTERNET USE

- All staff should be aware of their online reputation: All electronic communications should be compatible with staff's professional roles. Members of staff should ensure that online conduct will not bring their professional role or that of the school into disrepute in and out of school.
- Images must be taken, stored and used in line with our school policy.
- All staff should note that their Internet and Technology use can be monitored, logged and made available to the Principal.
- Staff should support the school approach to online safety and not upload or add any images, video, sound or text that could upset or offend any member of the school community.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Where any member of staff becomes aware of a family in need or to possible abuse, the following procedure will be followed:

- 1 The matter is reported to the Designated Teacher, who will after appropriate consultation decide if it is necessary to refer the matter further and where the referral would be most appropriately placed. If it is a matter for Gateway, then the Designated Teacher will proceed to item 2
- 2 The issue is reported to Gateway by telephone and followed up by a UNOCINI form (to be found in the Safeguarding file and in Private 5/Pastoral/UNOCINI). A copy of the UNOCINI must be forwarded to CPSSS. In the case of less urgent issues, a UNOCINI may be sufficient.
- 3 Written records will be kept of any information relating to the cause for concern.
- 4 In the case of suspected child abuse involving a member of staff employed in the school, the case will be referred directly to the Board's Designated Officer on duty at CPSSS (See note 1)

- 5 In consultation with the Education Authority and the Chairman of the Board of Governors, where an arrestable offence is suspected a referral will be made to the police. (See Note 1)

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Physical punishment of children is not permitted under any circumstances. Any physical contact made must be in line with the School's *Use of Reasonable Force Policy*.

ALLEGATIONS REGARDING STAFF

Note 1

If a child makes a statement or allegation that suggests that a member of staff has acted inappropriately:

- Staff members should keep records of any 'casual' allegations that a child makes against them or other staff which they believe to be untrue or spurious:
e.g. "You're always picking on me" Record any statement from a witness to the allegation if possible. If a child touches a member of staff or talks to them in a sexually explicit way, the staff member should record what has been said and tell another adult. This information should be passed to the Designated Teacher.
- Staff should never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to themselves

If a formal allegation is made against a staff member:

- The Principal will record the allegation and speak to the Chairman of the Board of Governors and inform an EA Designated Officer
- If the allegation is against the Principal then the Deputy Designated Teacher will follow the above procedure
- Once you have reported any concerns to the appropriate person keep the information that you have confidential – it should not be discussed with anyone else
- Speak to the Designated Officer if you feel you need extra pastoral support arranged

ADDITIONAL FANE STREET PRIMARY POLICY STATEMENTS

This Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with the information contained in documentation regarding the following Policy statements:

- *First Aid and Illness*
- *Use of Reasonable Force Policy*
- *Pastoral Care Policy*
- *Bullying Policy*
- *ICT Policy*
- *Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy*
- *Guidance for Adults Working with Children*
- *Vision Statement*