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# Child Protection Policy

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Alyson Carson

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Adopted by Governors on:	Signed:	Signed:
	CHAIR	PRINCIPAL



## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

### **I. Ethos**

1.1 Every child in Bloomfield Primary School has the right to feel safe and secure in a caring and disciplined pastoral environment, with protection from physical, mental and sexual abuse irrespective of ability, race, religion and culture. At Bloomfield integration and empowerment are values central to our Child Protection policy and procedures.

1.2 At Bloomfield Primary School we have a fundamental responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty using our Pastoral Care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. We try to protect our pupils by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognize unwelcome behaviours in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

1.3 All actions concerning children must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children in their charge must be above reproach. The staff of our school have also adopted a Code of Conduct for their behaviour towards pupils. This is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. Staff, at all times, are also directed to the guidelines for self-protection. All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks.

1.4 The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

## **2. The Safeguarding Team:**

Designated Teacher – Miss Alyson Carson  
Deputy Designated Teacher (Primary) – Mr Michael Magee  
Deputy Designated Teacher (Nursery) – Mrs Anne Stewart  
Principal – Mrs Rebecca Bishop  
Chair of Board of Governors – Mr Bill Gowdy  
Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs Christine Wilson

### **2.1 The role of the Designated Teacher – Miss Alyson Carson**

- To raise awareness in child protection with all school staff including new staff and volunteers
- Responsible for discussing Child Protection concerns of any member of school/support staff
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs
- Responsible for making the referrals to Social Services or PSNI
- Responsible for notifying the EA designated officer
- Responsible for keeping the school Principal informed
- Responsible for notifying the Chair of the Board of Governors of school if there is a complaint against the Principal
- Taking lead in the development of the school's child protection policy, and ensure that parents receive a copy every 2 years
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Team has identified key safeguarding lessons from the curriculum to be delivered at each key stage
- Responsible for promoting a child protection/safeguarding ethos within the school
- Responsible for written annual report to Governors re child protection issues

2.1.1 In Miss Carson's absence, Mr Magee (P7 teacher) and Mrs Stewart (Nursery teacher) will assume responsibility for child protection matters. Mr Magee is the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Primary School and Mrs Stewart for the Nursery Unit. If the occasion arises when Miss Carson and Mr Magee are both absent from school, Mrs Stewart will take on the role of the Designated Teacher.

### **2.2 Role of School Governor – Mrs Christine Wilson**

Advises the governors on:

- The role of the designated and deputy designated teachers
- The content of the child protection policies
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff

## 2.3 Role of the Chair of the Board of Governors - Mr Bill Gowdy

- Pivotal role in creating safeguarding ethos
- Receives training from CPSS
- Assumes lead responsibility in the event of a Child Protection complaint or concern about the Principal
- Ensure compliance with legislation and policy
- Ensure Child Protection records are kept
- Signing and dating the record of Child Abuse Complaints annually

## 3. Child Abuse

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

(Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures)

**Child** – a child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

## 4. Types of Abuse

**4.1 Physical Abuse** – is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

### 4.1.1 Possible signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses given to injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which appear excessive
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Withdrawal of physical contact
- Flinching at sudden movements
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self – destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Chronic running away

**4.2 Emotional Abuse** – is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that (s)he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as (s)he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse may take the form of under-protection, and/or over-protection, of the child, which has a significant impact on a child’s development.

#### 4.2.1 Possible signs of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development, delay or disturbance
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to stressful situations
- Neurotic behaviour – rocking, hair-twisting, thumb sucking
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug / solvent abuse
- Compulsive stealing
- Scavenging for food
- Enuresis / encopresis – wetting , soiling
- Very low self-esteem
- Lack of any sense of pleasure in achievement

*\*It is important to be aware of the implications for a child who may be living with domestic violence. If we know a child is living at home with domestic violence we would be obliged to report it or check that Social Services are involved.*

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

#### 4.3.1 Index of suspicions of sexual abuse

Key:                    Red = high probability of sexual abuse occurring  
                              Green = a sexual abuse possibly occurring  
                              Blue = one hypothesis amongst many

<b>Under 5</b>	<b>5 -12 years</b>
<b>Red</b> Disclosure Genital injuries Vivid descriptions of sexual activities Compulsive masturbation Sexual drawing Explicit sexual behavior	<b>Red</b> Disclosure Genital injuries Exposing themselves Promiscuity Suicide attempts Running away
<b>Green</b> Specific person fear Nightmares Urinary infections Fear of specific situations being bathed being changed being put to bed	<b>Green</b> Unexplained large sums of money Soreness of genitals Urinary infections Depression Bed wetting Anorexia Truanting washing Glue sniffing
<b>Blue</b> Development regression Hostile or aggressive behavior Psychosomatic conditions	<b>Blue</b> Abdominal pains Hostile or aggressive behavior Peer problems

4.3.2 In addition to the above there may be other behaviours especially noticeable in school:

- Poor peer group relationships and inability to make friends
- Inability to concentrate, learning difficulties or a sudden drop in school performance
- Reluctance to participate in physical activity or to change clothes for P.E. or swimming
- Unusual or bizarre sexual themes in child's art work or stories
- Frequent absences from school that are justified by one parent only, apparently without regard for its implications for the child's school performance
- Unusual reluctance or fear of going home after school

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

4.4.1 There are a number of types of neglect that can occur separately or together, for example:

- Medical neglect
- Educational neglect
- Environmental neglect
- Failure to provide adequate supervision and a safe environment

#### 4.4.2 Possible signs of neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor clothing
- Emaciation
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical conditions
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour – rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking
- Poor social relationships
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Scavenging for food or clothes

***The above indicators should not be taken in isolation.***

**4.4.3 A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.**

## **5. Specific Types of Abuse**

**5.1 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse** - The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:-

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

Sexual Violence and Abuse: *'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).'*

5.1.1 Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. More usually it's a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim.

5.1.2 Crime statistics and research show that domestic violence is gender specific - that is, it is most commonly experienced by women and perpetrated by men. However, men can also experience violence from their partners.

Domestic Violence has an enormous effect on the children in the family – on health, educational attainment and emotional wellbeing and development of children. The DfES Consultation Document: Safeguarding Children (Jan, 2004) states that; “The effect of domestic violence on children is such that it must be considered as abuse. Either witnessing it or being subjected to it is not only traumatic in itself but likely to adversely impact on a child’s behaviour and performance at school”.

### **5.1.3 Warning Signs of Domestic Violence**

As a result of living with or witnessing domestic abuse, children **may**:

- Exhibit signs of physical abuse (either inflicted by self or others)
- Become a victim or perpetrator of bullying
- Present violent and disruptive behaviour
- Experience difficulty in concentrating on school work
- Focus on school and attaining good results as a way of blocking out
- Difficulties at home
- Experience difficulty in making friends at school
- Become withdrawn
- Develop an eating disorder

5.1.4 The indicators above are not conclusive evidence that a child is affected by domestic violence but the presence of one or more should alert staff to the **possibility** that domestic violence may be the root cause.

**5.1.5 It is important to make children aware that violent behaviour towards them or around them is not acceptable and teach them how they can keep themselves safe.**

5.1.6 Where the Designated Teacher is concerned/has recognised the signs of domestic violence, they are obligated to refer the matter onto Social Services and the PSNI and complete a UNOCINI referral form.

**5.2 Grooming** - Grooming\* of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves the perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child’s/young person’s loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

5.2.1 Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

5.2.2 Adults may misuse online settings eg chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms of digital communications, to try and establish contact

with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared.

5.2.3 Those working or volunteering with children or young people should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming, and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs.

5.2.4 Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given to any punitive approach or 'criminalising' young people who may, themselves, still be victims and/or acting under duress, control, threat, the fear of, or actual violence. In consultation with the PSNI and where necessary the PPS, HSC professionals must consider whether children used to groom others should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm.

5.2.5 DoH publication 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (March 2016) [www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland)

5.2.6 \* NSPCC definition - 'Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.'

**5.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** - The sexual exploitation of children and young people under-18 is defined as that which:

*'involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.'*

5.3.1 Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.'

(Department for Education, 2012)

5.3.2 Child sexual exploitation is a form of abuse which involves children (male and female, of different ethnic origins and of different ages) receiving something in exchange for sexual activity.

### **5.3.3 Who is at risk?**

Child sexual exploitation can happen to any young person from any background. Although the research suggests that the females are more vulnerable to CSE, boys and young men are also victims of this type of abuse.

5.3.4 The characteristics common to all victims of CSE are not those of age, ethnicity or gender, rather their powerlessness and vulnerability. Victims often do not recognise that they are being exploited because they will have been groomed by their abuser(s). As a result, victims do not make informed choices to enter into, or remain involved in, sexually exploitative situations but do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or fear. Sexual exploitation can happen face to face and it can happen online. It can also occur between young people.

5.3.5 In all its forms, CSE is child abuse and should be treated as a child protection issue.

### **5.3.6 WARNING SIGNS AND VULNERABILITIES CHECKLIST**

The evidence available points to several factors that can increase a child's vulnerability to being sexually exploited. The following are typical **vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse**:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality)
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang-associated CSE only)
- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited
- Learning disabilities
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- Homeless
- Lacking friends from the same age group
- Living in a gang neighbourhood
- Living in residential care
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence
- Young carer

5.3.7 The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are **already being sexually exploited**.

- Missing from home or care
- Physical injuries
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Involvement in offending
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
- Absent from school
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from their family
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations
- Poor mental health
- Self-harm
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide

5.3.8 Evidence shows that any child displaying several vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk of sexual exploitation. If school staff identify a child who they consider to be suffering from or a high risk of CSE, it is important that the Designated Teacher in school is informed so that they can contact the PSNI and Social Services.

**5.4 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. 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.

5.4.1 FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, we have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed and established school procedures.

5.4.2 In the UK, FGM has been a specific criminal offence since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Serious Crime Act 2015 further strengthened the law on FGM.

5.4.3 FGM is a complex issue with many men and women from practising communities considering it to be normal to protect their cultural identity. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of five and eight, putting children in this age bracket at highest risk.

**5.5 Forced Marriage** - is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, we should contact the PSNI immediately.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety publication 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (March 2016)

5.5.1 There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with support needs, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

#### **5.5.2 Warning signs within the school environment:**

- Absence and persistent absence
- Request for extended leave of absence/failure to return from visits to country of origin
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality
- Poor exam results
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home
- Not allowed to attend extracurricular activities
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education

5.5.3 Due to the nature of forced marriage the involvement of the child's or young person's family may increase the risk of significant harm to the child or young person. The family may deny that the child or young person is being forced to marry and they may expedite any travel arrangements and bring forward the marriage.

**5.6 Harmful Sexualised Behaviour** - is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or

the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim

5.6.1 Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

- Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
- Inappropriate touching
- Using sexual violence or threats
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not

5.6.2 However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

**5.7 Online Abuse** - Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

5.7.1 In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

- **Content risks:** the child or young person is exposed to harmful material
- **Contact risks:** the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity
- **Conduct risks:** the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange
- **Commercial risks:** the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs

See [acceptable Internet Use Policy](#) and [Anti Bullying Policy](#)

**5.8 Sexting** - is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

- Sexting between individuals in a relationship

It is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship).

- Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is not forwarded to anyone else.

## 6. A Preventative Curriculum

At Bloomfield Primary, we provide preventive education in the form of key 'keeping safe' messages to the children through PDMU lessons, UICT lessons, and safeguarding assemblies and posters. We seek to protect our children by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse; helping them recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

- 6.1 Outside agencies are invited into school to deliver safe guarding programmes, for example **NSPCC** assemblies and P7 workshops.
- 6.1.1 Primary 5 children are involved in a 10 week Protective Behaviours Programme called '**Helping Hands for Children**'. The programme has been designed by Women's Aid and our in-school facilitators are Mrs Lynda Hetherington, Dr Graham Walker and Mrs Jenny Fry. The programme teaches children to express their feelings; make choices and solve problems; develop a strong sense of themselves and an ability to express their own wants and needs. It is a scheme used to develop skills and abilities, which are vital for personal safety, stress reduction and promotion of self-worth. The programme raises children's awareness of and promotes their rights in relation to safety and support.
- 6.1.2 We have a **Buddy Support Scheme** in Primary 7. The scheme creates an opportunity for children to develop their self-esteem, communication skills and understanding of how helping others can make for a better school community.

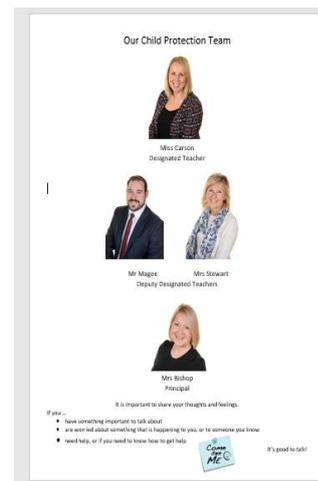
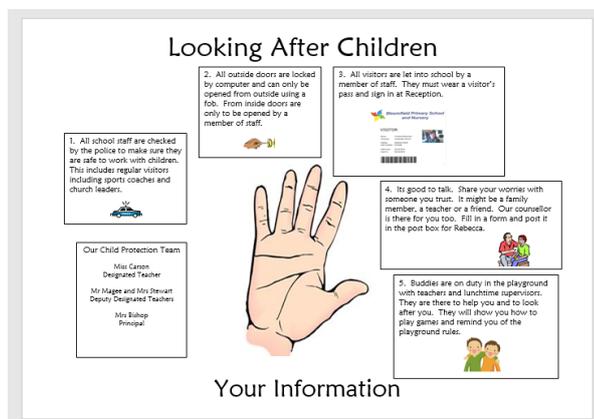
6.1.3 The scheme involves helping in the playground. The Buddies have a responsibility for setting out/putting away equipment, playing games and solving minor disputes. Buddies will also be available to play with children, at either Key Stage, who are feeling left out or lonely. They will look out for new children coming to school and help them with finding their way around. Buddies will also listen to any worries or problems children may have.

6.1.4 Buddies receive training with listening skills and how to solve disputes from Mr Magee, our PDMU Coordinator. They learn about situations they can handle and to know when an issue is too big for them that they need to involve adult help.

## 6.2 Talking with Pupils

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) highlights the right of a child to be heard. We at Bloomfield Primary hold this as a central tenet in our Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and foster an environment in which every child feels they have someone to talk to.

- **6.2.1 ‘Circle Time’** is a key element to our school’s pastoral care implementation. It is a time for pupils and teacher to discuss issues affecting self-esteem and self-confidence, while addressing personal safety matters such as stranger danger and drug awareness. For example, in Key Stage 1, issues such as friendships, feelings and being kind may be explored. Key Stage 2 may investigate and discuss matters such as alcohol and drug abuse and its implications on families and friends. ‘Circle Time’ provides an opportunity for children to talk through any problems they may be having in school or at home and perhaps to work through their problem with their friends and teacher in the security of their own class environment. Our staff are aware that a child may make a disclosure during ‘Circle Time’, or as a response to discussions during ‘Circle Time’. If a disclosure is made, the teacher should report immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, who will advise them on the course of action to be undertaken.
- **6.2.2 Pupil Council** – chaired by Mr Magee, PDMU Coordinator. Children are chosen by their peers to represent them in regular council meetings where issues discussed are raised and resolved by the council members. Agendas and minutes are shared on a display board.
- **6.2.3** As part of our ongoing pastoral care work in school we offer a **counselling service** provided by FamilyWorks. We are able to offer this service to our pupils through the Extended Schools Programme in partnership with five other schools in the local area. The counselling service provides 1:1 counselling and support sessions for children as well as the opportunity for group sessions and parent work.
- **6.2.4 Displays** - posters are displayed on noticeboards around the school. The aim of the school is always to act within the best interest of the child and to encourage the fullest possible involvement of and consultation with parents, but is important that our pupils know there is someone to talk to.



## 7. Child Protection strategies in school

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and **the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration**. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we recognise that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

- **7.1 Child Protection information boards** are placed in main entrances of the school and Nursery Unit and outside the staffroom. Information displayed is for parents, pupils and staff. Photographs of the Child Protection team are shown as well as key information concerning visitors, school security and support agencies e.g. Childline and the NSPCC. A smaller, briefer information poster is also displayed in each room within the school.
- **7.2 Gates** - the main entrance gate at the front of school shall remain open throughout the school day to allow visitors access to the front door and office. The driveway gate shall also remain open throughout the school day to allow staff to enter and leave school premises and deliveries to be made. Visitors with disabilities may use the car park and taxis provided by the EA but no other visitors/taxis should be in the school car park. All side gates will be unlocked to allow children to enter and exit school in the morning and at hometime. They will be locked during the school day. Internal gates will remain locked and unlocked/locked by staff as and when needed, ie during The Daily Mile
- **7.3 Visitors** - any person entering the school building **must** use the main entrance, ring the buzzer and report to the office. Here they will be asked to 'sign-in' to the visitor's book and read our visitors 'Code of Conduct'. They will then be given a visitors' pass. All visitors must report back to the office before leaving to 'sign-out' and return their pass.
- **7.4** Only staff members are permitted to greet visitors at the door. **Children are not permitted to open either entrance door to anyone, even people they may know.**
- **7.5** The **main school entrance door** will be opened for those pupils attending Breakfast Club at 8.30 a.m. Doors leading to classrooms from the playground will open at 8.50am, the beginning of the school day. All doors will be locked at 9 o'clock. Children arriving to school after this time must use the main entrance, when they should press the buzzer and subsequently be let in by a member of staff in the office. The side entrance will be open again at 2 o'clock and 3 o'clock home times.
- **7.6 Fobs** are used to unlock external doors. Doors should not be propped open at any time.

- **7.7 Supervision** - At break time the playground and field are supervised by teachers aided by classroom assistants. Classroom assistants will supervise those children with Special Educational Needs ie Lego Club.

7.7.1 At lunch time the playground and field are supervised by lunchtime supervisors and classroom assistants.

7.7.2 For supervision reasons the Jungle Gym is not to be used during break times or lunch times.

7.7.3 Children are encouraged to go to the toilet before coming to the hall to eat their lunch and to bring their coats.

- **7.8 First Aid** - Major accidents which occur during school hours are reported to the Principal. Accident report forms are filled in for accidents occurring in school.

7.8.1 There are trained First Aiders on the staff:

Mrs Amy Goudy (P3 teacher and First Aid Co-ordinator)  
 Mrs Lucy Gordon and Mrs Pauline Connolly (Nursery assistants)  
 Mrs Judith Embleton and Mrs Karen Carnduff (P1 classroom assistants)  
 Miss Alyson Carson, Mrs Janette Orr and Mrs Heather Elliott  
 (P2 teacher and classroom assistants)  
 Mrs Mandy McClune and Mr Michael Magee (P7 teachers)

See First Aid Policy

- 7.9 Children are encouraged to be vigilant on the roads and **Road Safety** is taught through outdoor play, Sustrans Active Travel, DOE resources, Skooter, Cycling Proficiency, Pupils Preventing Poor Parking and Junior Road Officer programmes.
- **7.10 Risk assessments** are carried out for activities both inside and outside of the school building.

## **8. Recruitment and Vetting of Staff and Volunteers**

8.1 All our paid staff (teaching and non-teaching) have been subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) from Access NI before taking up their post.

8.2 Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from Access NI.

8.3 A volunteer who works under supervision is not required to obtain an EDC, however, the Principal and Designated Teacher must determine the level of supervision meets the statutory standards (DE Circular 2012/19)

8.4 Visitors to school do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require.

8.5 Pupils on Work Experience – Health and Social Care programmes will require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate for pupils on long term placements. The education centre or college, or the student themselves, must apply for the EDC.

8.6 Pupils coming into the school on work experience do not require AccessNI clearance if they are fully supervised by school staff e.g. post-primary pupils.

8.7 All substitute teachers are booked online via the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher's Register (NISTR) where all members have undertaken the appropriate background checks.

8.8 There is a Staff Code of Conduct for members of staff and a visitors.

## **9. Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

9.1 If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly.**

9.2 Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's ancillary staff see such signs, he or she should immediately bring them to the attention of either the class teacher or the Designated Teacher.

**9.3 He/she should not investigate** – this is a matter for the Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes, completing the School Welfare Concern form.

9.4 The Designated Teacher (Miss Carson) will discuss the matter with the Principal (Mrs Bishop) as a matter of urgency; plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made. All notes taken regarding the incident will be stored in an individual folder, stored in the secure Child Protection cabinet. **These notes are only available to the Safeguarding Team** (Designated and Deputy Designated teachers and the Principal).

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

9.6 The Principal or Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA's Designated Officer or the Duty/9Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.

*\*\*Even when a disclosure has not occurred staff have to be alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and can document these on the School Welfare Concern Form*

## **10. Responding to a Disclosure**

### **10.1 Receive**

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Take notes – elaborate – retain notes

#### **10.1.1 Reassure**

- Reassure the child, but don't make promises you may not be able to keep
- Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt

#### **10.1.2 React**

- React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter
- Do not ask leading questions
- Do ask open questions e.g. 'Anything else to tell me?'
- Do not criticize the perpetrator
- Do explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk

#### **10.1.3 Record**

- Make notes at the time and write them up as soon as possible
- Do not destroy these original notes
- Record the date, time, any noticeable behaviour and the words the child used
- Any injuries or bruises noticed may be recorded on a diagram showing position and extent
- Record statements and observable things – not your interpretation
- Note down when the suspicions were reported and to whom
- Place records in pupil file

#### **10.1.4 Refer**

- To the Designated Teacher

10.1.5 It is important that we as a school are diligent in keeping records of concerns and incidents. The following points can explain how this can most effectively be carried out:

- Notes should be written on the presumption that parents can request access to them
- Note taker's personal feelings or reactions to clients or speculation about their motivations should not be recorded
- Notes should be factual and in neutral language
- Notes should always be dated and signed

10.1.6 Notes are an aid to memory and they offer protection for the note taker if the other party alleges something different agreed during the meeting. They also provide an opportunity for the note taker to reflect on the meeting and plan further action. Notes provide information and protection for the school.

## **10.2 What to record**

- The issues discussed and concerns raised
- Any suggested options
- What was agreed
- What is still in dispute or remains to be resolved
- What future action each party is to take
- Referral to other professionals, persons or agencies

Notes should be made as soon after a session as possible or during the session, if all parties are comfortable with that.

**10.2.1 When abuse is suspected or reported**, notes which will be useful if a court report is required

- Dates when injuries were observed
- A description of the injuries
- A description of the child's behaviour at the time
- A statement given by the child
- Action taken
- The outcome of the action
- If relevant, any changes in behaviour or rate of progress in school

10.2.2 If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do, if (s)he has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the sign or symptoms of possible abuse, (s)he should speak to the Designated Teacher.

10.2.3 It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

## **11. Retaining Child Protection records**

The Department of Education has the following retention time-scales for child protection records:

- 11.1 Child Protection records should be held until the child is 30 years old
- 11.2 If we receive a complaint about possible child abuse which is not referred to Social Services – or if it is referred, and Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register – school will maintain the record on the child's file, and send a confidential copy to any school to which the child subsequently transfers
- 11.3 If Social Services inform school that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, we will keep a record of this fact, and associated documentation from Social Services, on the child's file.
- 11.4 If a child moves school, school should pass on the name of the social worker (if there is one), shred any correspondence from Social Services and pass on to the new school a copy of any child protection notes the school has instigated, keeping the original copies for our records.

## **12. Procedures for complaints made against a member of staff**

12.1 If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the Designated Teacher, if he/she is not available) must be informed immediately. The procedures outlined below will apply (unless the complaint is about the Designated Teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

12.2 If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher (or her deputy, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors (Mr Bill Gowdy) and together they will ensure that any necessary action is taken.

12.3 In either case, a thorough investigation will be carried out, by instigation of the normal Child Protection procedures.

12.4 Where the school carries out preliminary enquiries, these should have regard:

- First and foremost, to the welfare of the pupil and that of other pupils at the school
- To the efficient functioning of the school: and
- To the rights of the individual against whom the complaint has been made, especially his or her right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

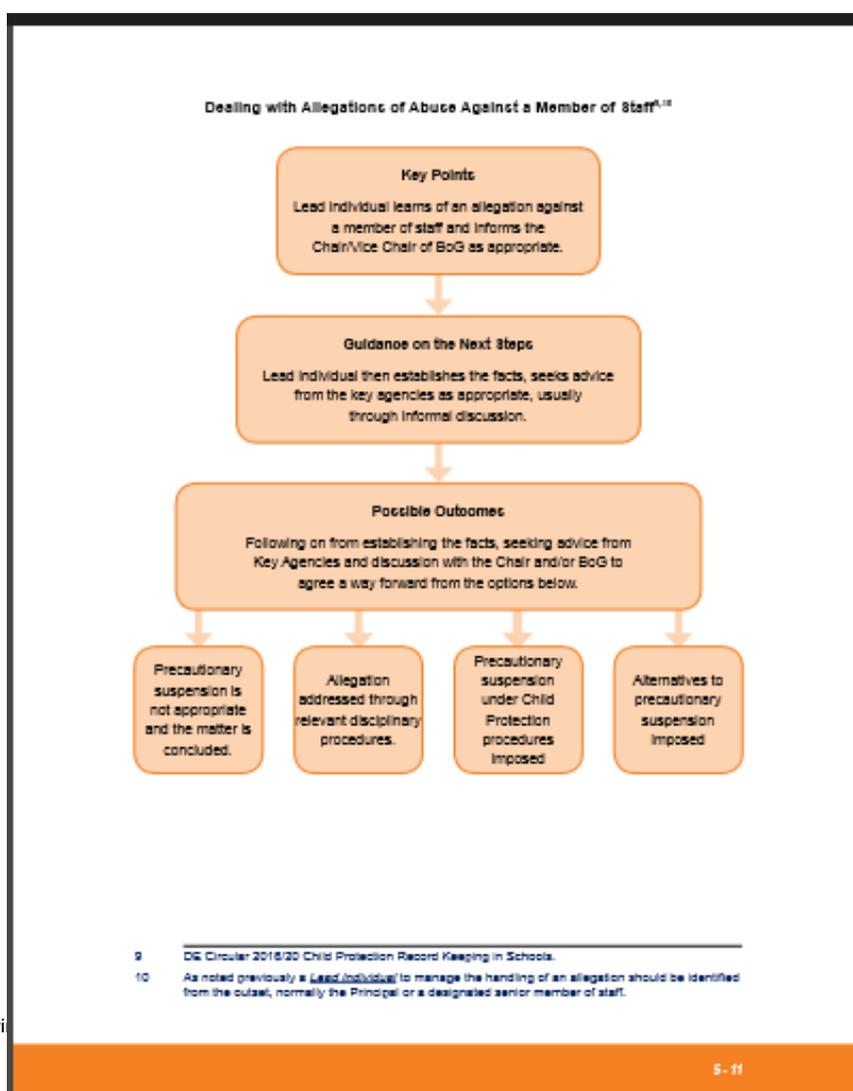
12.5 Where a complaint is made about a member of staff, and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record should also be entered by the Principal into the Record of Child Abuse Complaints book, maintained for the purpose and kept in the Child Protection cabinet.

12.6 The summary should include:

- The date and brief details of the nature of the complaint
- By whom and against who it was made
- If the complaint was formally referred, to whom it was referred, and the date of the referral
- If the complaint was dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome

12.7 The school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints book is made available to the Chairman of the Board of Governors annually, being signed off at the end of every academic year.

12.8



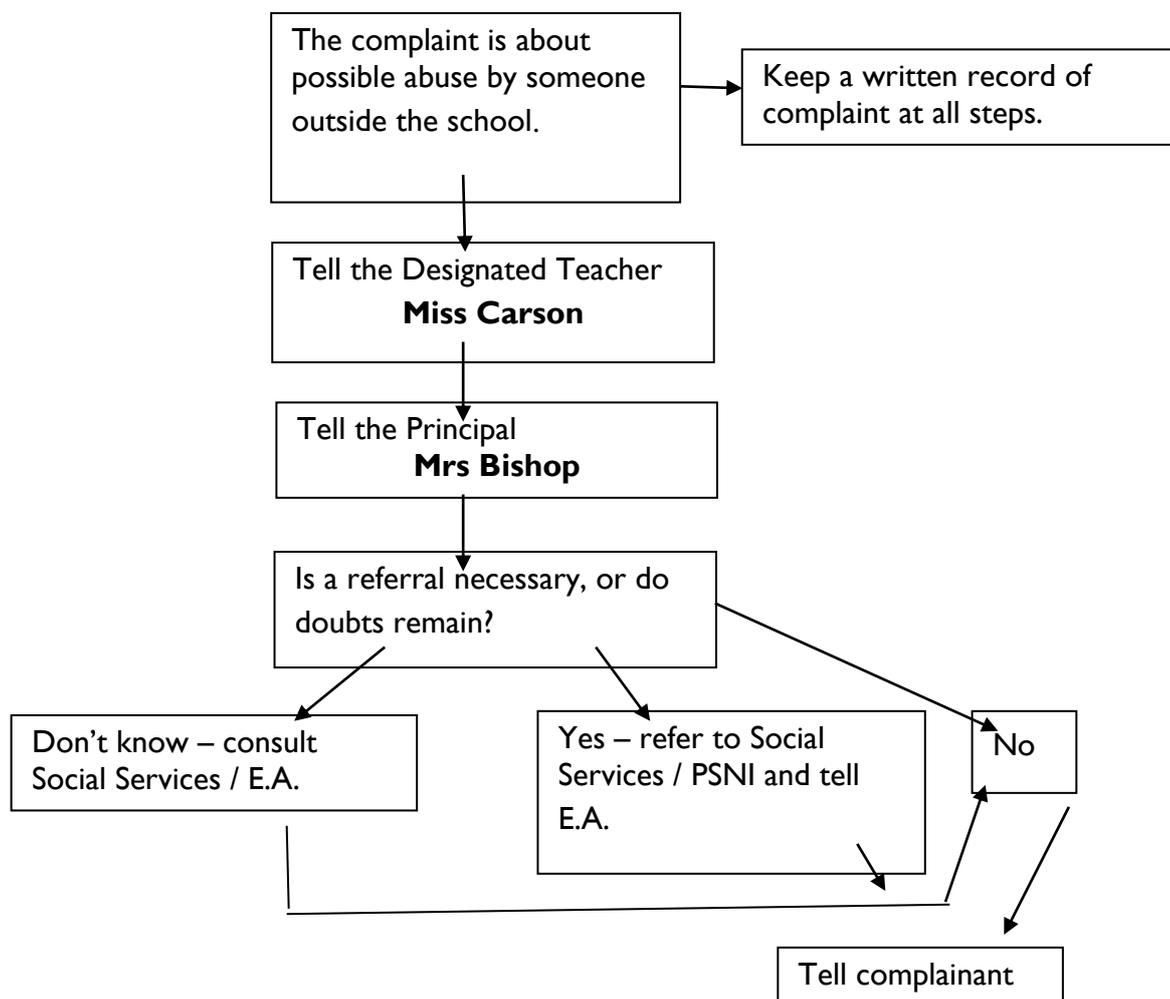
### **13. Procedures for reporting an incident of suspected / disclosed child abuse in schools**

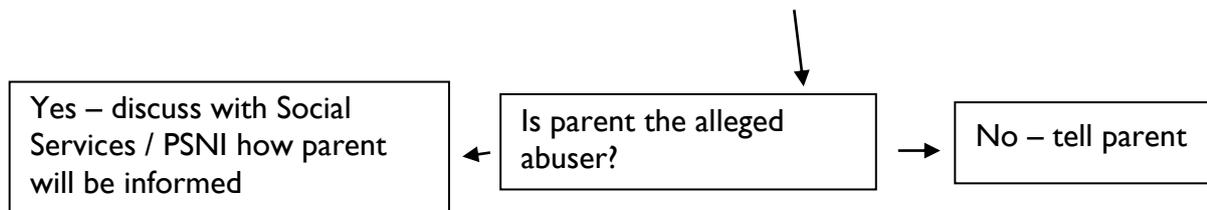
- 13.1 Child makes a disclosure to teacher or teacher has concerns about the child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time. The teacher does not investigate but must act promptly
- 13.2 Teacher refers the matter to the Designated Teacher, Miss Carson (or in her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher, Mr Magee). Teachers discuss the matter together and make full notes.
- 13.3 Teacher/s meet with the Principal (or in case of the Principal/Vice – Principal’s absence, the Senior Leadership Team) to plan a course of action. The Designated Teacher ensures that a written record is made.
- 13.4 Any report or disclosure referring to an incident of domestic violence **must** be referred onto Social Services and the PSNI
- 13.5 The Designated Teacher or Principal makes a referral using the UNOCINI form to Social Services
- 13.6 Indicate that it is a Child Protection issue and mark the envelope ‘CONFIDENTIAL’. Supplement with a letter and/ or report if necessary.

13.7 The Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Board’s Designated Officer or appropriate Social Workers before a formal referral is made.

13.8 Provided that no child is identified by name, the case and its circumstances may be discussed with complete confidentiality and with the full understanding that Social Services cannot be involved until a formal referral is made.

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





**Keep a written record of complaint at all steps**

**15. Partnership with parents**

Parents should always make known to staff concerns they may have over their child’s safety. The following channels are open to parents for this purpose:

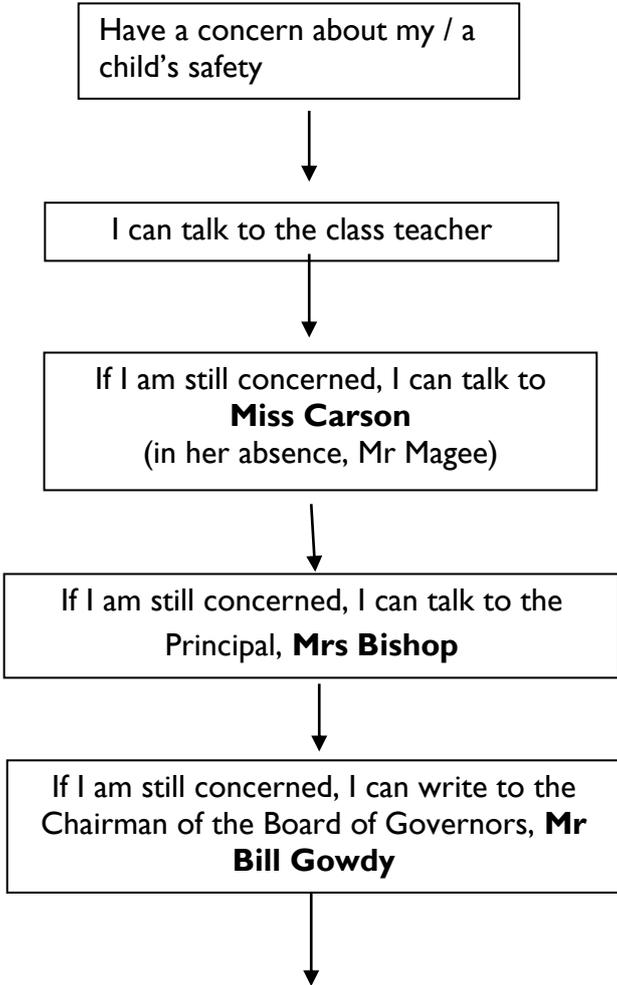
**15.1 Discussing concerns with parents**

Pros	Cons
<p>Problem may be easily remedied once Teacher / Parent knows what it is</p> <p>Can build up goodwill with the parent both concerned with the child + working for his/her welfare. Enhances parent / teacher relationship.</p> <p>Two heads are better than one i.e. the contribution of parent/teacher may create more options / solutions than separately</p> <p>United approach by parent / teacher may be more effective in dealing with child</p>	<p>Parent may tell you something that increase your concern for the child’s welfare.</p> <p><b>Be clear that no absolute guarantees of confidentiality are given</b></p> <p>Parent may feel they are being criticized, become defensive and un co-operative. This may make the situation more complicated.</p> <p>If the problem has to be referred on, parent may blame school for creating problems for their relationship and that with the child.</p> <p>Teachers have no investigative powers.</p>

<p>A solution freely agreed is more likely to work than one imposed through legal process</p> <p>Problem can be handled more quickly and more discreetly without the child being stigmatized, investigated or aware of the problem.</p>	<p>There is a risk that assurances from a pleasant parent may prevent proper investigations of legitimate concern.</p> <p>If case ends up in court, it may mean a court appearance for the teacher or an order that all documents are disclosed.</p> <p>If the parent is advising the child, talking to him/her may give the parent the chance to cover their tracks or destroy evidence.</p>
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15.2 There is not a right or wrong answer to the question of whether or not concerns should be raised with parents. It is the matter of weighing up all the circumstances in each individual case. If in doubt, staff should speak to the Designated Teacher, Miss Carson.

**16. How a parent can raise concerns about a child’s safety**



At any time, I can talk to Social Services (9181 8518), Gateway 03001000300 or the Police 9065 0222 (ask for the Public Protection Unit, Dundonald)

## **17. Links with other policies**

Pastoral Care  
Intimate Care  
Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy  
Anti Bullying Policy  
Health and Safety Policy  
Environmental Risk Policy  
Using ICT Policy  
First Aid Policy  
PDMU Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Visitor Code of Conduct

All policies can be found on the school website at [www.bloomfieldprimary.co.uk](http://www.bloomfieldprimary.co.uk)

