St. Mary's Primary School Cabragh

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Review of Policy	September 2022
Ratification of Policy by the Board of Governors	November 2022
Next Review Date	September 2026

1. Child Protection Ethos

We in St. Mary's Cabragh have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

We are firmly committed to:

- the aims of the Catholic Education.
- providing effective education for all our children.
- developing positive pastoral care systems in our school.
- establishing close links with the home, the parish and the wider community.

2. Principles

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, "Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland" (DHSSPSNI, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" Circular 2017/04 (amended September 2019; updated June 2020, updated June 2022) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

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

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount;
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard;
- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together;
- Partnership;
- Prevention;
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- Protection; and
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

3. Other Relevant Policies

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

- Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Attendance Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Pastoral Care Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.
- First Aid Policy.
- Administration of Medicine Policy.
- Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy.
- ICT and E- Safety Policy.
- Procedures for Intimate Care/ Supervised toileting.
- Educational Visits Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Procedures for Supervision of Volunteers and Visitors.
- Complaints Policy.
- Data Protection Policy
- Managing Critical Incidents
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling

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

4. School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team:

- Designated Teacher: Lauren Cush

- Deputy Designated Teachers: Donna Quinn

- School Principal: Louise Quinn

- Designated Governor for Child Protection: Genene Cullen

- Chair of the Board of Governors: Rev. Fr. Patrick Hannigan

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers

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

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role.
- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- The promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in St Mary's.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents.
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents.
- Promote a safeguarding and child protection ethos in St. Mary's.

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities.

It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required. Deputy Designated Teachers are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

5.2 Principal

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

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

It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the Designated Teachers to carry out this important role effectively and that Designated Teachers are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role. The Principal must ensure that all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner. Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need- to- know basis. The Principal must maintain the school's record of child abuse complaints.

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

5.3 The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Board of Governors delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to advise the governors on: -

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

5.4 The Chair of the Board of Governors

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

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant

guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

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

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment.
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy.
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the EA Governor Support and Human Resource departments.
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity.

5.5 Other Members of the School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse.

Remember the 5 Rs: **Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer**.

The member of staff must:

- Refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection.
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child.
- Act promptly.
- Use the "Note of Concern" to make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (Appendix 3).
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children.
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures.
- **Not** investigate.
- **Not** ask leading questions.

In addition, the Class Teacher should:

Keep the Designated Teacher informed and complete the Note of Concern if there are safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.

Support Staff

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

5.6 Parents

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

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies.
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child, with the school
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school.
- Informing the school if the child has a medical condition or educational need.
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- Informing the school 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.
- Informing the school if there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- Letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home.
- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence.

More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

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

5.7 The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19 and DE Circular 2013/01.
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

6. Child Protection Definitions

6.1 Definition of Harm

(*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and young People in Northern Ireland August 2017*)
Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

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

Harm can be caused by:

- **Sexual abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Exploitation**

6.2 What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse occurs when a child/young person is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children/young people may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institution or community setting, by those known to them, or, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child/young person may suffer more than one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to protect children/young people who are at risk of, or have suffered, significant harm because of abuse or neglect.

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from the **SBNI** (Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland) Procedures and Policy Manual 2018.

6.3 Types of Abuse

Physical 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

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

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child/young person. 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

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child/young person'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/young person's health or development. Children/young people who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs.

Exploitation

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People revised 2017).

6.4 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.

When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity the Designated Teacher has a duty to share this information with Social Services.

6.5 Domestic Violence

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Symptoms which young people may display and which are indicators only include:

- Nervousness
- Low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nightmares / flashbacks
- Physiological – stress / nerves

- Stomach pain
- Bed wetting
- Immature / needy behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Aggression
- Internalising distress or withdrawal
- Truancy
- Alcohol and drugs
- Bullying

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

If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information to Social Services.

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

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

SPECIFIC TYPES OF ABUSE

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in St Mary's are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 1.**

CHILDREN WITH INCREASED VULNERABILITIES

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English and sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 2**

6.6 Signs and symptoms of abuse – Possible Indicators

Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

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

Neglect

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

Sexual Abuse

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

7. Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

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.

Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse

7.1 How a parent can make a complaint

At St. Mary's Primary School, we aim to work closely with the parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or the Principal (Mrs Louise Quinn), or the Designated teacher (Miss Lauren Cush) or the Deputy Designated teacher (Mrs Donna Quinn) for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors (Fr. Hannigan). At any time, a parent may talk to the NI Public Services Ombudsman. a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 4.**

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

In St Mary's 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 will complete a Note of Concern (see **Appendix 3**) and act promptly.

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they **will not investigate** – this is a matter for Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher and full notes should be made. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the designated teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated Teacher will consult with the Principal or other relevant staff always taking care to avoid due delay. The Designated Teacher may consult with the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our prime priority. The Designated Teacher may also seek clarification from the child or young person, their parent/carer.

If a child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent.

If a child protection referral is required, the Designated Teacher will seek consent from the parent/carer and/or the child {if they are competent to give this} unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.

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

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

Child protection procedures as outlined in **Appendix 5** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

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

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

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of The Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Child protection procedures as outlined in **Appendix 6** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

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

DO:	DO NOT:
• Listen to what the child says • Assure the child they are not at fault • Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret • Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words. • Remember not to promise the child confidentiality. • Stay calm. • Listen. • Accept. • Reassure. • Explain what you are going to do. • Record accurately. • Seek support for yourself.	• Ask leading questions. • Put words into the child's mouth. • Ignore the child's behaviour. • Remove any clothing. • Panic. • Promise to keep secrets. • Ask leading questions. • Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily. • Delay. • Start to investigate. • **Do Nothing**.

8. Consent

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

The communication/language needs of the parents/carers should be established for example in relation to disability/ethnicity and the parent's/carer's capacity to understand should be ascertained. These should be addressed through the provision of appropriate communication methods, including, where necessary, translators, signers, intermediaries or advocacy services.

In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person has been sought and is withheld we will consider and where possible respect their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

When a referral is deemed to be necessary in the interests of the child/young person, and the parents/carers have been consulted and do not consent, the following action should be taken:

- the reason for proceeding without parental consent must be recorded;
- the withholding of permission by the parent/carer must be included in the verbal and written referral to children's social services;
- the parent/carer should be contacted to inform them that, after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

Effective protection for children/young people may, on occasions, require the sharing of information without prior parental/carer consent in advance of that information being shared.

Where staff decide not to seek parental consent before making a referral to children's social services in the local Health and Social Care Trust or the police, the reason for this decision must be clearly noted in the child/young person's records and included within the verbal and written/UNOCINI referral.

Staff making a referral may ask for their anonymity to be protected as far as possible because of a genuine threat to self/family. In such instances this anonymity should be protected with an explanation to the staff member that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information may become the subject of court processes.

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis. Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will consider what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

In accordance with DE guidance we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in St Mary's primary School are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

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

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

11. Record Keeping

In accordance with DE guidance we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns. In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in St. Mary's are stored securely in a locked cabinet. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence. Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

12. Safe Recruitment Procedures

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate if they are engaged in regulated activity. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in St Mary's are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

13. Code of Conduct for all Staff (Paid or Unpaid)

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors.

The school's code of conduct is available on request.

14. Staff Training

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

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

15. Operation Encompass

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

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

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

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

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

16. The Preventative Curriculum

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. (2017/04)

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

In the classroom, Circle Time sessions are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and **there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor and relevant information in each resource area**, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in the staff room.

Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues:

- Primary 1-7 use the "Living Learning Together" Programmes to deliver PDMU and safety topics.
- Primary 1-7 use Road safety Calendars.
- Primary 1-7 use the "Click CEOP" app to access E-Safety materials and information. E-Safety websites such as www.thinkuknow.co.uk and www.kidssmart.org.uk are used to enhance E-Safety lessons in class.
- **NSPCC** delivered their 'Speak Out Stay Safe' workshops to P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7 on Tuesday 12th November 2024. All classes P1-P7 used the NSPCC Virtual Assemblies and resources week 11 November – 15 November 2024.
- **Love for Life** delivered the "Treasured" programme (P1 & P2) and the "Wonder" programme (P3 & P4) on Wednesday 13th November 2024.
- **Love for Life** delivered the "I-Smart" E-Safety programme to P5 on Wednesday 13th November 2024.
- **Love For Life** delivered the 'Choices and Changes' programme to Primary 6 and the 'What's Inside' programme to P7 on Wednesday 27th November 2024.
- **REIM** delivered P6 and P7 E-Safety Workshops on Thursday 7th November 2024.
- All staff are aware of the importance of the preventative curriculum and are integrating safeguarding messages through PDMU lessons, Circle Time etc.
- **Relax Kids** – Mrs Paula Mc Gilligan the Relax Kids Coach, delivered the Relax Kids Programme to our P1, P2, P3 and P4 pupils in September and October 2024. The programme has been very successful and has impacted positively on the social and emotional development of our children. During the Relax Kids classes, children learn how to identify and recognise their feelings and are taught important strategies to help them cope with a range of feelings. Relax Kids will resume in Term 2.
- **The Calm Kit-** Katie Carey delivered a well-being programme to P5-7 during September and October 2024. Katie promotes positivity in children through movement, yoga, story and mindfulness programmes.
- **Fire Safety Talk-** Plunkett Rafferty from the Fire Service visited Primary 5 on 23rd October to speak about Fire Safety in the Home.
- **Aware NI-** Primary 5 took part in the "My Mind and Me" Workshop, delivered by Aware NI, on Tuesday 26th November 2024. The aims of the programme are:
- To teach children about the 5 ways to Wellbeing and how they can use these to stay well.
- To help children understand when they might need support. • To promote mental health and wellbeing amongst children.
- To develop language and understanding around thoughts, feelings, emotions and healthy behaviours.
- To signpost pupils to those equipped to help if needed.
- St Mary's will take part in **Children's Mental Health Week** 3-7 February 2025.
- **Chester's Challenge-** P5 and P7 pupils will take part in the Chester's Challenge Programme in April 2025. The Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association will deliver 3 weeks of fun, interactive workshops promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- **Dairy Council-** Primary 5 and 6 will take part in a workshop in Term 2, delivered by the Dairy Council. They will learn all about finding the balance between food and fitness,

learning the importance of ensuring we are eating a balanced diet and getting enough exercise each day.

- Anti-Bullying -St. Mary's PS took part in **Anti-Bullying Week** Monday 11th - Friday 15th November 2024. The theme this year is Respect. St. Mary's used a range of resources to bring Anti-Bullying Week to life in school. (NIABF) and celebrated **Odd Socks Day** on Tuesday 11th November 2024. Odd Socks Day is an opportunity to encourage our pupils to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique!
- **Safer Schools NI App-** Letter and Guidance sent out to parents on Friday 15th November All parents and members of our school community asked to download the **Safer Schools Northern Ireland App**. The Safer Schools NI App contains contextual safeguarding information, advice and guidance, researched and written by online safeguarding experts. It's interactive, with engaging content which is easy-to-access, simple to understand and intuitive to use. The Safer Schools NI App provides contemporary, credible and relevant content and resources for our entire school community. The Safer Schools NI App is updated with the latest news and alerts as-and-when they happen so you'll also be in the know, in the here and now. This App is designed to be a one-stop-shop for accessing essential safeguarding information, advice, and guidance. It's a reference point you can turn to any time, right there on your phone.
- Classes in Key Stages One and Two use the **"Worry Box"** in their classroom.
- Children can use the locked **"Keeping Safe"** box to post any worries they have. This box is checked daily by the Designated Teacher and School Principal.
- St Mary's took part in "Safer Internet Day" on 7th February 2023.
- Eat Them To Defeat Them – Healthy Eating Campaign launched on 20th February 2023.
- Katy Carey (The Calm Kit) – Wellbeing Workshops for P5, P6 and P7 – 10th March 2023- 12th May 2023 (Every Friday)
- Launch of Sensory Garden on 17th June 2023.
- Every two years in Term 3, HSENI visits each of the three Key Stage groups and uses a series of age appropriate presentations to focus on the importance of farm safety.
- The EWO Team visit P7 annually in Term 3 to teach the children coping strategies for making their transition to Secondary School.
- St. Joseph's Grammar School Donaghmore, hosted an Online Safety event on Tuesday 3rd December 2024. This session was open to all the parents in our local community. The workshop was delivered by Ineqe, who are leading experts in online safeguarding and creators of the Safer Schools NI app. We wrote to our parents and recommended all parents to avail of this vital Internet Safety training. To safeguard our children, it is important that all parents promote e-safety in the home and monitor their child's internet use. This workshop equips parents with the technological skills needed to protect their children whilst online.

At St Mary's we believe we have a key role in promoting and supporting the positive mental health and well-being of our pupils.

Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

- A strong school ethos which values positive emotional wellbeing and promotes a sense of caring, belonging and respect for difference and diversity.
- A whole child, holistic approach, embedded within the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.
- Providing an emotionally secure and safe environment and spaces.
- Robust policies and procedures, supported by staff and governors, and communicated to all staff, parents and children.
- Assemblies to raise awareness about mental health
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures. Anti-bullying assemblies and events.
- Establishing clear rules, routines and expectations about behaviour for learning and social cohesion.
- Encouraging positive, caring and constructive relationships
- Recognising parents and carers as being integral to the school and the child's wellbeing and adopting an inclusive and partnership approach, working with parents, pupils and the wider staff group as well as relevant external stakeholders.
- Recognising that teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships are crucial for wellbeing. A whole person approach is adopted, founded on a caring school ethos with opportunities to build supportive relationships between staff and pupils.
- Having active listeners, to whom a child may turn
- Opportunities for pupil leadership, through school council, eco-council, prefects, bus prefects, head boy and head girl and buddy system.
- A child rights approach and a strong commitment to pupil voice.
- An emphasis on praise and reward. Positive behaviour strategies are used including Star of the Week, House/Point System, Golden Time, sticker charts, star in the jar, etc
- Opportunities for reflection and spiritual development through art, literature and the RE curriculum
- Targeted interventions- Mrs Kathryn Tierney is employed by St Mary's one day a week and assigned to work with identified children using a range of therapy strategies including CBT.
- Nurture sessions (led by Miss Lauren Cush in our Sunshine/Nurture Room) for general wellbeing and interventions dealing with anxiety or emotions.
- Use of DE Funding, including 'Healthy Happy Minds', to employ therapists, counsellors, Art/Play therapists etc to work with identified children.
- The provision of physical space within the school, dedicated to emotional wellbeing, so that there is a safe space for a child to seek or receive support.
- Enhancing school and classroom layout, facilities and resources, such as our Sunshine/Nurture Room, Sensory Garden and Fairy Garden.
- Each classroom has a calm area with access to a wide range of resources including; sensory pop-up tent, calm boxes, sensory/fidget toys, weighted blankets etc

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team and approved by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. The Safe - Guarding Team in St. Mary's Cabragh will update this Policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the child protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

The policy will be implemented through the school's staff induction and training programme and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the designated teacher for child protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team.

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

Date Policy Reviewed:

Signed:

_____ (Designated Teacher)

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

Appendix 1

Specific Types of Abuse

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves 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. 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. If the staff in St. Mary's become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017) The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging. Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis. CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

Domestic and Sexual violence and abuse can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children. Domestic violence and abuse is defined as '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 defined as '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).' (Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016). If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

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. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy.

Forced Marriage - A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and if in St. Mary's we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. As a school we support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. 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. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2016/05 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?

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

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the schools positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred. Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and in our school we will refer to our child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

E safety/Internet abuse

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

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

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

We in St. Mary's have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and will be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like.

The school's actions and governance of online safety are reflected clearly in our safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet.

Pupils need to be aware that 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) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. We may also seek advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of a sexual image.

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. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individuals consent.

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures of the school will be followed.

Appendix 2

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

• Children with a disability

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and those working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues.

Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

• Children with limited fluency in English

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

Designated Teachers should work with their SEN co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer pupils, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. All schools should try to create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

• Pre-school provision

Many of the issues in the preceding paragraphs will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedures in consultation with the child's parent[s]/carer[s]

• Looked After Children

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then make arrangements for the child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily. It is important that the views of children, young people and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the

looked child are taken into account when decisions are made.

A member of school staff will attend LAC meetings and will provide a written report. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

- Children / young people who go missing

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and young people may have been abused.

School staff will work in partnership with those who look after the child or young person who goes missing and, if appropriate, will complete a risk assessment. Current school policies will apply e.g. attendance, safeguarding, relationships and sexuality education.

- Young people in supported accommodation

Staff will work in partnership with those agencies involved with young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation and will provide pastoral support as necessary.

- Young people who are homeless

If we become aware that a young person in our school is homeless we will share this information with Social Services whose role is to carry out a comprehensive needs and risk assessment. We will contribute to the assessment and attend multi-disciplinary meetings.

- Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children and young people

Separated children and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver.

Unaccompanied children and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.

Child Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation.

If we become aware of a child or young person who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking we in St. Mary's will immediately follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

• Children of parents with additional support needs

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action school staff take to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children's social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist us in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will give consideration to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

• Gender identity issues and sexual orientation

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

• Boarding schools and residential settings

Children in the above settings are particularly vulnerable to abuse. We will ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and trained in accordance with DE guidance.

• Work experience, school trips and educational visits

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE guidance on educational visits, school trips and work experience to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

Children/young people's behaviours:

• Peer Abuse

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all school staff should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and, where necessary, should contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

• Self-Harm

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however, this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

• Suicidal Ideation

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child or young person who presents as being suicidal as it is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

Appendix 3

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF CONCERN

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date and time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom: Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:

Any further action taken:
Written report passed to Designated Teacher: Yes No If 'No' state reason:
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file: Yes No If 'No' state reason:
Name of staff member making the report: Signature of Staff Member: Date: Signature of Designated Teacher: Date:

Appendix 4

How a parent can make a complaint:

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:

I have a concern about my/a child's safety

↓

I can talk to the class/form teacher

↓

If I am still concerned I can talk to the Designated Teacher (Miss Lauren Cush)/Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Donna Quinn) for child protection or the Principal (Mrs Louise Quinn)

↓

If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors (Fr. Hannigan)

↓

At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team (028 3741 5285) or the PSNI Central Referral Unit (028 9025 9299 or 101)

Appendix 5

Processes for Referral are set out in the Flowcharts below:

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

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY. Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issue raised.

↓

Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.

↓

Designated teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.

↓

Designated Teacher clarifies/ discusses concern with child/parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.

Child Protection referral <u>is</u> required Designated

Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form

Child Protection referral <u>is not</u> required

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed time scale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children's Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and

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Where appropriate, the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

Appendix 6

Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff.

Key points

Lead individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chairperson of the Board of Governors as appropriate.

Guidance on the Next Steps

Lead individual then establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.

Possible outcomes

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or BOG to agree a way forward from the options below.

- Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.
- Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.
- Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed.
- Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed