

St Joseph's
Primary School
Killough



CHILD PROTECTION /
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Children's Order, which is now in operation, places a responsibility on all staff (teaching & non-teaching) to act on behalf of any child who is abused or under threat of abuse. However, the statutory responsibility for the protection of children rests with Health & Social Services.

SCHOOL ROLE

At St Joseph's Primary School, Killough, we have a pastoral responsibility towards young people in our care, and by law must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the child's welfare is protected.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

St Joseph's Primary School, recognises the importance of people's rights to confidentiality and is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about children and their families. The only exception may be when child protection or welfare concerns arise in relation to a child. In this situation information will be shared on a need to know basis in the best interest of the child as follows;

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/ young person
- Giving information to appropriately designated persons and/or statutory authorities for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.
- Parents/Guardians have a right to know if personal information is being shared and a report is being made to Social Services unless doing so could put the child at further risk.

• CHILD ABUSE – DEFINITION

- There are four categories of child abuse i.e. Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Neglect and Emotional Abuse.
- A Child may be abused by a parent, a sibling or carer, an acquaintance or a stranger.
- The abuse may be the result of a direct act or failure to act on the part of a parent to provide proper care and may take a number of forms including:

- **Neglect** – the actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive;
- **Physical Injury** – actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child. Or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child;
- **Sexual Abuse** – actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles;
- **Emotional Abuse** – actual or likely persistence of significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.
- **Domestic Violence** – Domestic Violence is abuse which takes place within a relationship. So it can occur between people who are married, living together, in a relationship, or separated.

Domestic Violence affects not only adults involved, but also any children living with them. The law recognises that witnessing domestic violence can cause children significant harm. Children can witness domestic violence in a number of ways. They may be in the same room and see the abuse, hear it from another room, or discover a parent’s injuries afterwards.

Children who witness domestic violence may suffer in a number of different ways: it can affect their emotional, psychological, physical and sexual development, and it can also have an impact on their education.

Where the school has a concern about possible domestic violence it has a duty to make a referral to Social Services.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Physical Indicators	Behaviour Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Bruising, scratches, bite marks or other injuries.• Poor standard of hygiene.• Inadequate clothing.• Hunger.• Deficient Nutrition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.• Rocking/head banging; inability to play; perverted appetite.• Indifference of separation from family.• Indiscriminate attachment.

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behaviour Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Signs of sexually transmitted infections. • Chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches. • Difficulty in walking or sitting. • Frequent urinary tract infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers. • Unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/ gross over eating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ejaculation, male masturbation, erection and other details of adult sexuality. • Role reversal; overly 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 out bursts; 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 or emotional exploitation, promiscuity.

Social Services will always be contacted when we become aware of any instances of domestic violence within the home, whether or not the child is directly involved.

BULLYING

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully.

For further information see the school Anti-Bullying Policy.

THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

The designated teacher for child protection will have responsibility for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures, including internal school arrangements; Co-ordinating action by teachers in cases of suspected child abuse and reporting to the appropriate agencies i.e. Senior Management Officer (Schools) and where appropriate Social Services.
- Ensuring that the teaching staff and the school's Education Welfare Officer are aware of children in care or on the Child Protection Register.

Schools should recognise importance of the role played by the designated teacher, and should enable him or her to carry out the duties of that role effectively and with appropriate training.

Designated teachers and indeed all teachers need to know:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral;
- The Pastoral Care in schools policy (99/10) and the Education Authority N.I.'s policy and procedures and the designated teacher's role within them;

- The role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them;
- The requirements on record keeping;
- The conduct of a Child Protection conference and how the designated teacher or another member of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs C Toner. In her absence Mrs F Macfarlane will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

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, either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time, the member of staff must act promptly.

If a member of staff has concerns, he or 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.

The designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that a 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.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Education Authority N.I. or CCMS Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

- the Social Services;
- the Education Authority N.I. or CCMS Designated Officer for Child Protection.

(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION')

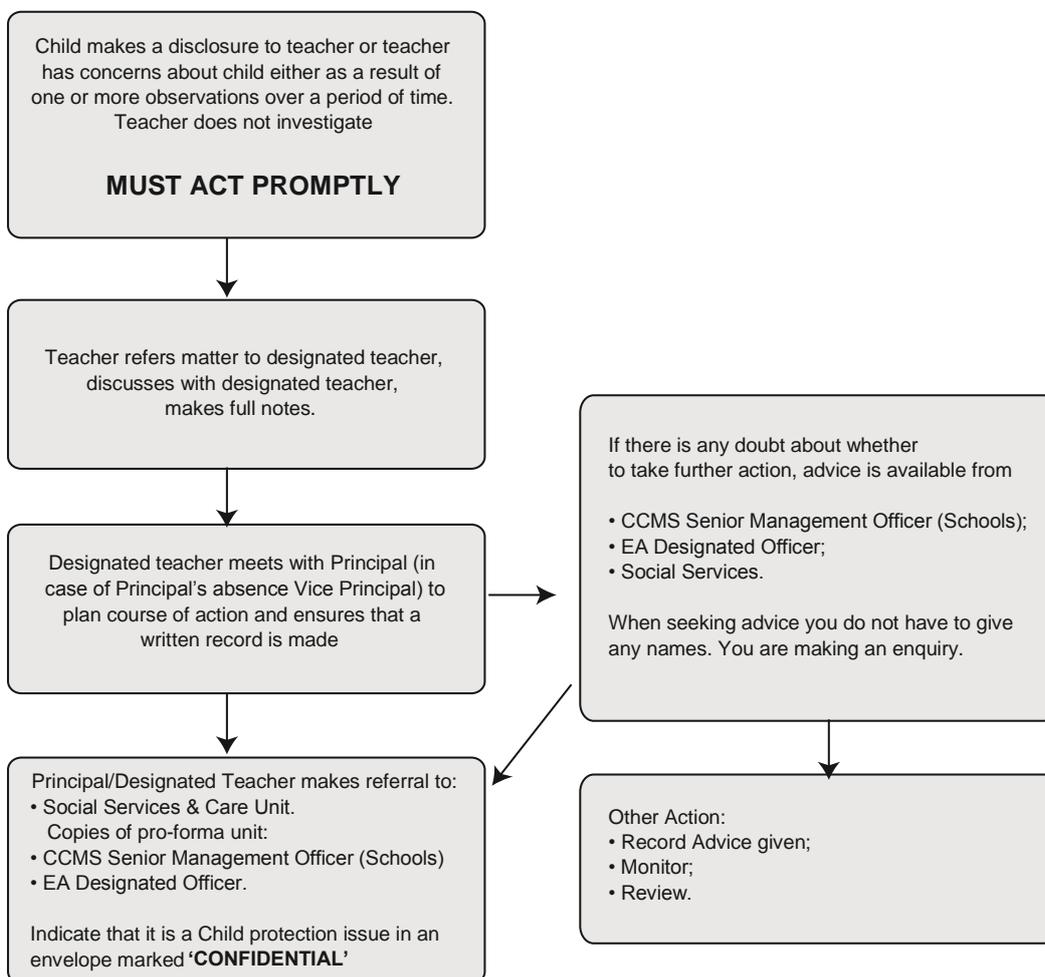
If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff/volunteers, the Principal (or designated teacher, if he/she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will normally be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher (or deputy, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher.

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.

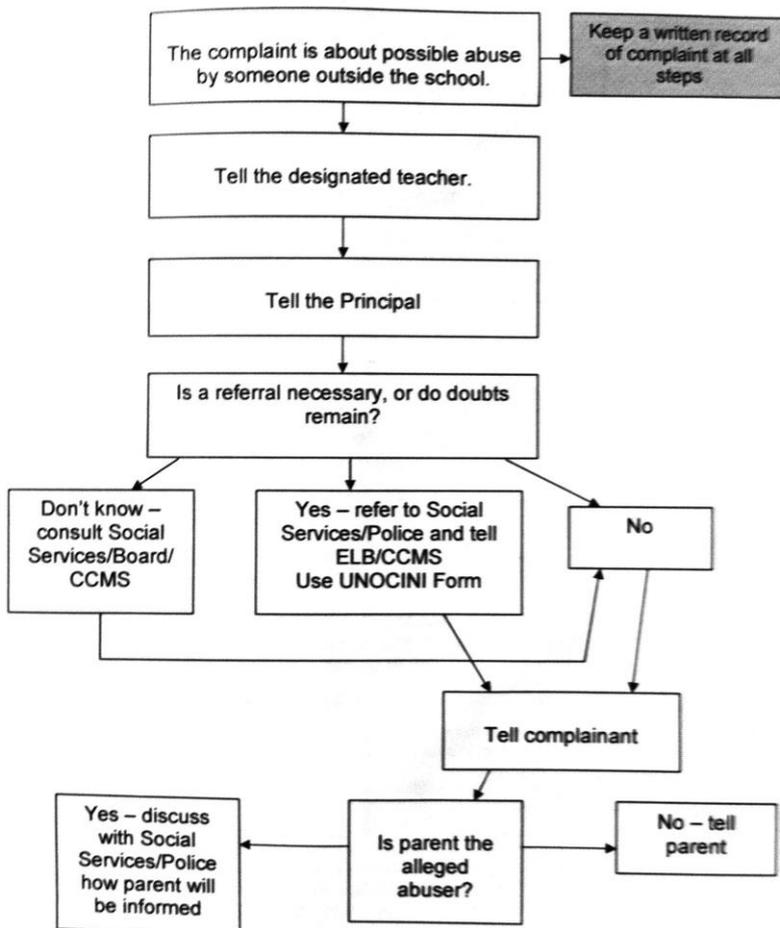
PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE IN CATHOLIC MAINTAINED SCHOOLS



PASTORAL CARE IN SCHOOL: CHILD PROTECTION

Figure 1

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



HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CONCERN

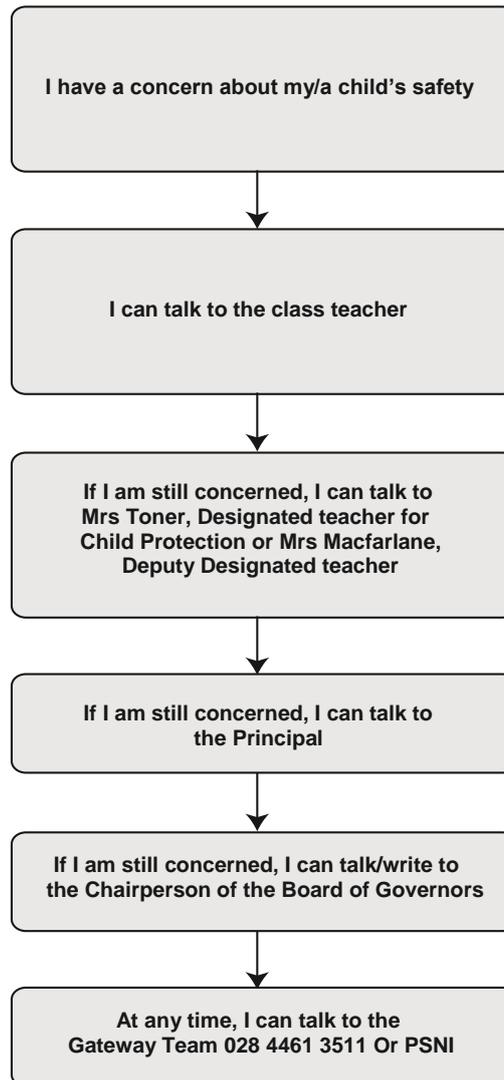
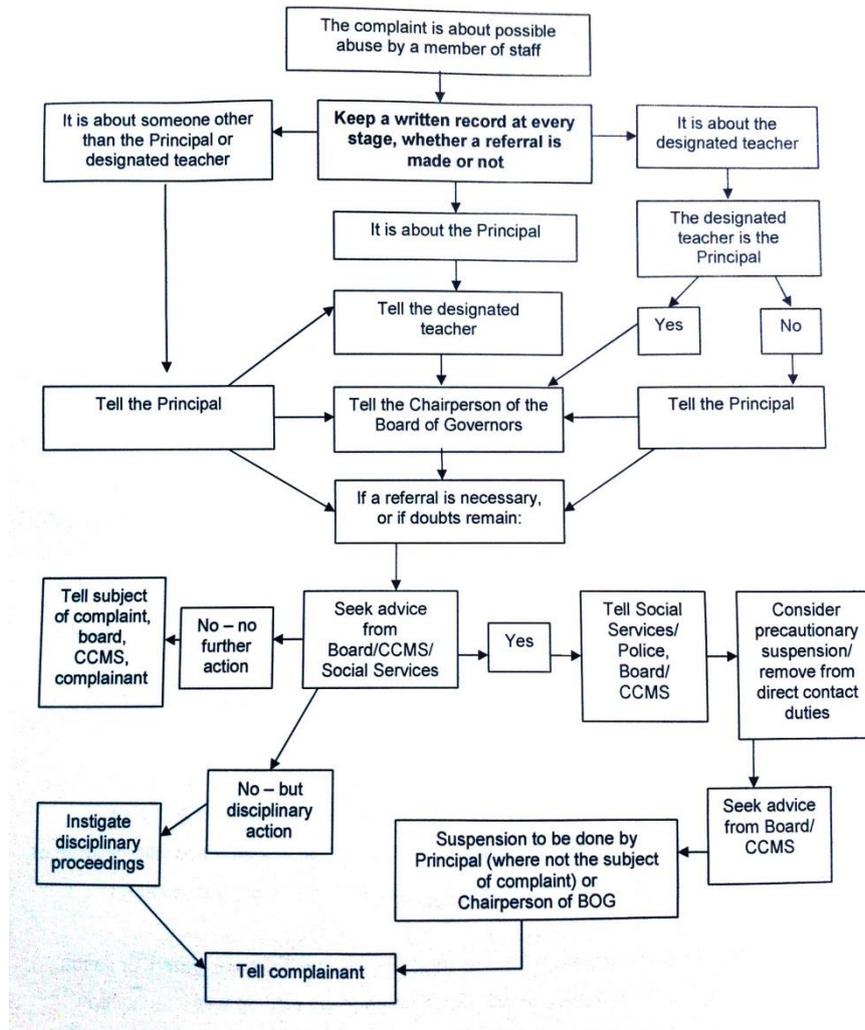


Figure 2

Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the schools staff.



CODE OF CONDUCT

PROTECTING THE TEACHER

(Reprinted from 'child abuse guidance to members' Irish National Teacher's Organisation 1993, by kind permission)

Code of Conduct Private Meetings with Pupils

(a)

Teachers should be aware of the dangers, which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interview must take place but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people.

(b)

Where such conditions cannot apply teachers are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. The use of 'engaged' signs or lights is not advisable.

(c)

Where possible another pupil or another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

Physical Contact with Pupils

(a)

as a general principle teachers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils. This is particularly the case with children of secondary age and maturing children of primary school age.

(b)

Physical contact which may be misconstrued by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. Such contact can include well-intentioned informal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which if repeated with an individual pupil, could be misconstrued, as well as more obvious and more intimate contact, which should never occur.

(c)

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and re-assurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Teachers should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen by others present to be, normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.

(d)

Some teachers are likely to come into physical contact with their pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching, for example when showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during games or P.E. Teachers should be aware of the limits teacher's professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of teachers this Code of Conduct confirms, what has always been their practice.

Appendix 2

THOSE IN CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Under the Children's Order, employers can check with the Police whether persons who apply to work with children whether as employees or as volunteers have a criminal background.

Criminal record checks will thus be conducted

- All staff (professional, ancillary, administrative and clerical)
- Those who volunteer services, namely parents/guardians/carers who may accompany children with teachers, on residential outings/trips.

Vetting procedures

- All our staff are appropriately vetted in line with the practice and procedures operated by their employing authority and as outlined in DE Circular 2013/01 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements Requirements for Paid Staff Working and Providing a Service for Schools'

The request for Police check will be completed with the individual's permission using Access NI Form – EANI SER.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF

Where a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the school (see also figure 2).

Procedures to be followed

1. A complaint or allegation may be made, in the context of child protection, about the conduct or activities of a member of staff of the school towards a child or children. If the complaint has not been made directly to the Principal and she is not the subject of the complaint, it should be referred directly to her by the person to whom it was made.
2. To form a clearer view on the complaint, the Principal may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information or from others who may have relevant information. It is not, however, the responsibility of the school to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse, or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child's family or other carers. The school should not take action beyond that set out in the procedures established by Dept. of Education in their document Pastoral Care in Schools.
3. Having satisfied herself that a complaint has indeed been made, the Principal should immediately:
 - Inform the designated teacher (if she is not the subject of the complaint), who will initiate the record of the complaint;
 - Consult, as a matter of urgency and in confidence, with the designated officer of the Education Authority N.I. or CCMS, as appropriate, to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action and;
 - Consult the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.
4. Deciding what to do when such an allegation is made is a difficult and sensitive matter. The need to protect children must be paramount, but the need to protect members of staff against unfounded, but nonetheless potentially damaging, allegations must also be considered. Officers of the Education Authority N.I. and CCMS are experienced in dealing with such cases, and are willing to give advice to any school facing these circumstances.

5. In light of any advice taken, the Principal (where she is not the subject of the complaint), in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, will decide that:

- a) The allegation is apparently without substance, and no further action is necessary; or
- b) An immediate referral to the Social Services or the Police is warranted; or
- c) The allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedures.

6. The following are some general examples (by no means exhaustive) of the types of complaints or allegations, and or circumstances, in which a decision falling within these categories may be made:

- a) no further action: where the Principal is able to satisfy herself immediately that it would be impossible for the person complained of to have committed the alleged action or offence, for example where it is established that he/she was absent from the alleged location (perhaps on holiday abroad, hospitalised, on a training course or attending a conference) at the time when it is claimed the offence took place;
- b) an immediate referral is warranted: where the Principal believes that it was possible for the alleged offence to have been carried out by the person against whom the allegation is made; and where the allegation is sufficiently detailed and, in particular, if it substantiated (e.g. by an account from a third party, or by physical evidence), in such manner that the Principal believes that the allegation may have substance. Clear, detailed allegations which give rise to concerns about physical abuse, or inappropriate sexual conduct, either verbal or physical, towards a child, whether or not corroborated, should always merit a referral. In particular, allegations of sexual abuse made by a child need to be investigated. Children, particularly young children, rarely fabricate claims of sexual abuse, and in such cases the presumption should always be in favour of the protection of the child or children.
- c) The complaint should be addressed under the disciplinary procedures: where complaint relates to inappropriate teaching content, or certain types of bullying behaviour by a teacher or other member of staff.

7. A complaint may be made by a child or a member of a family with a history of making complaints of the school. While such a history can be borne in mind, every allegation of misconduct must be treated seriously and the above procedures followed.

a) No further action

8. Where it is decided that no further action is necessary, it is the Principal's responsibility to:

- Advise the member of staff concerned (where this has not already been done) that a complaint has been made and the nature of it; and also the fact that it is considered to be without substance and no further action is being taken;
- Advise the designated officer in the Education Authority N.I./CCMS, as appropriate, of the decision taken; and
- Advise the complainant, in writing, of the action taken on foot of the complaint and its outcome, including information on other means of pursuing their complaint if they remain dissatisfied: for example, to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, including how he/she can be contacted through the school.

Record Keeping

9. The Principal should place a brief record of the complaint on the file of the pupil concerned, indicating the nature of the complaint, when, by whom and to whom it was made, and a short explanation why it was considered that no further action should be taken, together with copies of any correspondence on the complaint.

b) A formal referral

10. Where the Principal decides that a formal referral of the complaint is necessary, it is her responsibility to ensure that the following are notified immediately:

The Social Services, or, especially where physical or sexual abuse is suspected or alleged, the Police.

The designated officer of the Education Authority N.I. and CCMS as appropriate.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors should bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Governors at the next available opportunity.

Precautionary suspension

11. An immediate decision will be necessary on whether the member of staff (teaching or non teaching) who is the subject of the complaint or allegation should be suspended with pay as a precautionary measure. A member of staff of a school may be suspended only by the Principal or by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The employing authority must, where possible, be consulted before a suspension is imposed, or, where this is not practicable, as soon as possible thereafter. Precautionary suspension should not be automatic, and depending on the circumstances of the case, some preliminary investigation by Social Services and/or Police may be necessary before a decision should properly be taken to suspend, even as a precautionary measure. In all cases where the Principal has decided that a formal referral is warranted, the member of staff should be immediately removed from direct contact with children and should undertake non-contact duties; depending on the nature and severity of the allegation and the potential risk to children, it may be necessary for the member of staff to be suspended immediately. Where the suspension is implemented by the Principal, the Chairperson or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairperson, must be informed immediately. All members of the Board of Governors must be informed of the suspension as soon as possible.

12. In some cases the school may be made aware of an allegation against a member of staff by the Social Services or Police, to whom the allegation has been made directly. In any case where the Principal considers that a child or children may be at risk, or the Police or Social Services advise that the member of staff's continued presence in the school would impede their investigation, the member of staff concerned should be suspended as a precautionary measure.

13. Once a decision has been taken to make a formal referral and that the member of staff will be suspended, he/she should be advised, in writing, of the nature of the allegation and the reason for

precautionary suspension, and should also be advised to seek professional advice before making any form of response. The right of the member of staff to consult with a recognised trade union representative should always be respected. Where the member of staff is initially informed verbally of his/her suspension, written notification should follow as soon as possible.

14. The person making the complaint (and the pupil's parent, where different) should also be informed immediately, in writing, of the decision to make a formal referral and of the suspension of the member of staff concerned.

15. The Principal should take steps to ensure that she is kept informed of progress by the investigating agency to whom the referral was made. If an allegation is substantiated, the investigation may need to be widened to determine whether other children have been involved. The Social Services and/or Police will advise on how to manage information to parents, children and other staff.

Record Keeping

16. Where a formal referral is made, it is particularly important that the Principal should ensure that a detailed written record of the complaint, including dates and times, is maintained. This should include:

- When, by whom and to whom the complaint was made;
- What supplementary evidence, if any, was offered, from whom, and its nature;
- Details of any physical injury noted;
- From whom advice was sought, and its nature;
- The decision taken and how, when, by whom and to whom it was conveyed, and the reasons for it;
- By whom, to whom and when referral was made; and
- A copy of any correspondence on the complaint.

This record should be signed and dated by the Principal countersigned by the designated teacher (where neither is the subject of the allegation) and retained in the school, on the files of both the

child and the member of staff concerned; an entry should also be made on the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints (see below).

17. If, on foot of a subsequent investigation by one of the investigating agencies, the member of staff is totally exonerated, the record on the file of the member of staff concerned must be expunged, and the entry in the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints deleted or struck through. The record on the child's file should be noted accordingly, and should stand until the child's twenty-first birthday in case there should be subsequent complaints. In all other cases, the record on both the child's file and the staff member's file should be maintained indefinitely.

Internal inquiries by the school

18. Once a formal referral is made, the appropriate agencies will conduct their own investigation in accordance with local child protection procedures. Early action by the school to establish the nature of the allegation and consideration of whether it should be investigated should be undertaken in such a way that it does not prejudice any subsequent action. In particular, there must be no interference with evidence. Any investigation by the Police or Social Services will take priority over internal inquiries by the school. Normally any internal inquiries should be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the external investigation.

c. Complaints to be pursued under the school's disciplinary procedures

19. A complaint may be made in the context of child protection about the conduct or behaviour of a member of staff towards a pupil or pupils, which, in the opinion of the Principal, does not warrant a formal referral as a child protection matter but nevertheless warrants pursuit as a disciplinary matter.

In considering such cases, the Principal should take into account:

Whether the behaviour complained of goes beyond the actions and the conduct which could reasonably be expected of a teacher in encouraging reluctant pupils to learn; and whether the behaviour complained of exceeds what should properly be pursued as a disciplinary matter and

does, in fact, constitute abuse, in which case the appropriate child protection procedures should be instituted.

Where the Principal takes the view that the behaviour complained of should be pursued as a disciplinary matter, disciplinary procedures should be followed, but in addition the Principal should ensure that details of the complaint and the disciplinary sanction, including dates and details of all spoken communications and copies of all correspondence, are maintained on the file of both the member of staff and the child or children concerned, for a period of 5 years, and a summary entered in the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints. (It should be noted that this recording procedure in disciplinary cases applies only to those cases raised in the context of child protection). As soon as possible after the decision is taken, the complainant should be informed that the complaint is being pursued under disciplinary procedures, and he/she should be kept regularly informed of the proceedings and the result, including the sanction taken, as appropriate.

Complaints which do not result in a conviction

20. For a variety of reasons, a complaint against a member of staff referred to one of the investigating agencies may not result in a prosecution, or a prosecution in pursuit of a complaint which is referred to Social Services or Police may not result in a conviction, even when the school believes that the evidence against the member of staff is strong and he/she represents a risk to a child or children. Schools should be aware that in such cases it remains open to them to pursue disciplinary proceedings against the member of staff concerned, and that the burden of proof is less stringent in employment law than in criminal law. The school should seek advice from the employing authority in such cases. If the member of staff is subsequently dismissed, the employing authority should convey this in writing to the Department of Education for consideration as to whether his/her employment as a teacher should be prohibited or restricted.

Complaints against the Principal

21. Where a member of staff receives a complaint concerning possible child abuse by the Principal, all aspects of the above procedures for complaints against a member of staff should followed,

save that the role set out above for the Principal should be exercised by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, in whom the power to suspend is vested. The employing authority should be immediately consulted in any such case.

Anonymous information

22. The school may receive an anonymous letter or telephone call alleging abuse either by someone outside the school or by a member of staff. In such cases the Principal should consider carefully whether the allegation may be substance: as in the case of information from a named source, the impetus for action should be the potential risk to children. If the Principal believes that the allegation may have substance, he/she should ensure that it is referred immediately to the Social Services or Police. Again, if he/she is unsure about the appropriate course of action, or if unsubstantiated anonymous information is received which the Principal believes to be malicious or mischievous, the Education Authority N.I. and/or CCMS will be able to offer advice, as will Social Services or the Police. If a referral is made, the procedures above should be followed on the same basis as a complaint from a named source, including recording arrangements.

REFERENCES

Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection Department of Education 1999/10

Child Protection CCMS	Intimate Care
CCMS Circular 1999/6	Attendance Policy
DENI Circular 1999/9	Road Safety
Linked Policies	Care in the Sun
Code of Conduct for Staff	
Pastoral Care	
Positive Behaviour	
Anti-Bullying	
Health & Safety	JAN2016

