

Wheatfield Primary & Nursery School



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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Wheatfield Safeguarding Team

Mrs A. Whiteside	Designated Teacher
Mr D. Lister	Acting Principal, Deputy Designated Teacher
Mrs K. Batchelor	Deputy Designated Teacher
Mr W. Gourley	Chair of Board of Governors
Mrs M. McCausland	Designated Governor

Introduction

“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of child shall be of primary consideration.”

Article 3 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The central thrust of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration*, and it is this essential principle which underpins Wheatfield Primary & Nursery School’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures.

We fully recognise that the pupils in our care have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and we will do whatever is reasonable to safeguard our pupils’ safety and well-being. Children cannot learn effectively or develop unless they feel secure.

There are three main elements to our policy:

1. Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of child abuse.
2. Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with our pupils.
3. Raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues and equipping our pupils with strategies to keep them safe.

This policy is consistent with the guidance and procedures set out in DENI Circular 1990/10, ‘Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection’ and the Area Child Protection Committees’ ‘Regional Policy and Procedures’ (2005).

The most recent DE Circulars and letters are accessed regularly by the Safeguarding team, and are brought to the attention of the Board of Governors. Any relevant information is relayed to school staff, and changes made to the policy as appropriate. These DE Circulars and letters can be viewed online at www.deni.gov.uk.

Definition of Safeguarding

- Safeguarding promotes the welfare of children in all aspects of school life – it is not just child protection.
- Safeguarding depends on effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies and professionals.

There are two aspects to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. They are:

- arrangements to take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised;
- arrangements to take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of children, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies (Safeguarding Children in Education 2004)

Embedding Safeguarding

The 'Preventative Curriculum' is key in safeguarding children. Therefore, in Wheatfield PS we will ensure that we embed safeguarding in all aspects of school life, including our ethos and curriculum.

School Ethos:

- Pastoral Care
- Promoting positive behaviour and welfare through our Positive Behaviour Policy
- School assemblies
- Classroom ethos of a listening environment (e.g. feelings tree, social stories, buddy system, worry box, building caring and positive relationships etc.)
- Pupils are made aware that they can specifically talk to their class teacher, the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teachers if they are worried that something is happening to them or to someone they know. This is done through the use of age-appropriate signs displayed in classrooms and around the school and the teachers introducing themselves in assembly time.

The curriculum:

- Personal Development & Mutual Understanding
- Information and Communication Technology – E-safety
- Collaborating with outside agencies (e.g. PSNI, Lifeguards Programme, Jigsaw Counselling Service)
- Theme days/weeks (e.g.: Anti-bullying week, International E-safety Day/Week)

The Role of Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection has responsibility for co-ordinating action on child protection matters within the school and liaising with Social Services and the Police over cases of actual or suspected abuse of children. A deputy will carry out these responsibilities in the Designated Teacher's absence.

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mrs Whiteside. In her absence, Mr Lister and Mrs Batchelor will assume responsibility for child protection matters as the Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.

If Mr Lister/Mrs Batchelor is required to be released from duties/class to deal with a Child Protection concern, the SEN or Nurture teacher will release them.

If the Designated/Deputy Designated Teachers are unavailable, these responsibilities will be carried out by a member of our Safeguarding Team.

The broad areas of responsibility for the Designated Teacher for Child Protection are:

Referrals

The Designated Teacher:

- refers cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies using the agreed regional UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral forms;
- acts as a source of support, advice and expertise within the school when deciding to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- maintains detailed, accurate, contemporaneous written records of referrals and/or concerns in a secure location;
- works collaboratively with partner agencies to ensure that vulnerable children are protected.

Training

The Designated Teacher:

- takes responsibility for the regular training of all staff (teaching and non-teaching) on how to recognise signs and symptoms of child abuse and how and when to approach the Designated Teacher with concerns;
- ensures that each member of staff has a copy of and understands the school's Child Protection Policy, including new or part-time staff and volunteers who may work with different educational establishments;
- ensures that all staff have induction training covering child protection and are able to recognise and report any concerns immediately when they arise;
- accesses resources and attends any relevant training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS);
- liaises with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection for advice and support;
- develops a working knowledge of the conduct of a child protection conference, attends the case conference (where appropriate) and provides a written report to the conference.

Raising Awareness

The Designated Teacher:

- reports on all aspects of child protection activity to the Board of Governors monthly and in a written annual report to the governors;
- ensures the school's Child Protection Policy is updated, reviewed annually and works with the Safeguarding Team regarding this;
- ensures parents receive a copy of the child protection policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the establishment in this to avoid conflict later;
- promotes a child protection ethos in the school in collaboration with the Safeguarding Team.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child such as a foster parent or a staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person.

NEGLECT

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

Possible indicators:

- constant hunger
- poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene
- untreated medical problems
- emaciation/distended stomach
- constant tiredness
- lack of social relationships
- compulsive stealing or scrounging
- frequently absent or late
- low self-esteem

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Possible indicators:

- unexplained bruises or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- untreated injuries
- self-destructive tendencies
- improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- chronic runaway
- aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of returning home
- reluctant to have physical contact
- clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he or she is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he or she meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Possible indicators:

- sudden speech disorder
- signs of self-harm or mutilation
- compulsive stealing or scrounging
- signs of drug or solvent abuse
- eating problems
- wetting and/or soiling
- attention-seeking behaviour
- poor peer relationships
- continual self-deprecation
- neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb-sucking)
- reluctance for parent liaison
- fear of new situations
- chronic runaway
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

SEXUAL ABUSE

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

Sexual abuse may be in the form of **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** which is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.

Possible indicators:

- chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches
- difficulty in walking or sitting
- frequent urinary or yeast infections
- be chronically depressed or suicidal
- inappropriately seductive or precocious behaviour
- use of sexually explicit language
- low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence
- recurring nightmares/fear of the dark
- outbursts of anger or hysteria

- overly protective to siblings
- soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- torn, stained or bloody underclothes

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 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.

Possible indicators:

- sexual knowledge that is beyond their age or developmental age
- acting in sexually explicit ways towards adults
- going missing from school, home, care
- extreme relationship difficulties with parents / carers / school staff
- substance or drug misuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- association with older people, particularly men, outside the usual range of contacts
- phone calls/messages from adults outside the normal range of contacts
- self-harm
- isolation
- UTIs / STIs
- stomach pains or headaches
- bruising or other marks on the body
- pregnancy
- not in class / frequently going AWOL

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. Domestic violence can include violence inflicted on, or witnessed by children. The wide adverse effects of living with domestic violence are therefore recognised as a child protection issue by the school and the procedures for reporting suspicions or disclosures of domestic violence are the same as those for reporting other forms of abuse.

Signs such as those described above and others are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. All staff, however, should be aware of the possible implications of, and alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated. More detailed guidance regarding the signs and symptoms of child abuse can be found in Appendix 2 of the ACPCs' 'Regional Policy and Procedures' (2005).

Guidance On Dealing With Suspected Or Disclosed Child Abuse

Where a teacher receives a disclosure or sees signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, talk with the child with tact and understanding.

Where a classroom assistant or a member of the school's auxiliary/ancillary staff or a volunteer receives a disclosure or sees signs which cause them concern, they should immediately bring them to the attention of the Designated Teacher.

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child discloses abuse, or volunteer's information which amounts to a disclosure. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore, be kept to a minimum:

- The chief task at this stage is to *listen* to the child, and not to interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is freely recalling significant events.
- Questions should be open, not closed. The child should never be asked leading questions as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind or questions which encourage him/her to change his/her version of events in any way or which impose the adult's own assumptions.
For example, staff should say, "Can you tell me what happened?", rather than, "Did they do _____ to you?" or "Did _____ do this to you?"
DO NOT INVESTIGATE – that is the role for the statutory services (Social Services, Police).
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, preferably quoting words actually used.
- Staff should not give the child assurances of confidentiality, although they can and should be reassured that information will be only be shared with those professionals who need to know.
- As soon as possible afterwards, the member of staff concerned must make a note of the discussion/concerns/incident/disclosure using the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Record Sheet** (appendix 1) and pass this to the Designated Teacher.
It is imperative that only factual information is recorded, i.e. the date, time, place, members of staff/other children involved, conversations and any action taken (if appropriate). Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but *under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed*. If necessary, physical injury could be represented on a drawing to indicate the location and shape of the injury.

This may be remembered more easily by using the 5 'R's:

- **RECEIVE** – listen to what the child says but do not ask leading questions except to show you have understood;
- **REASSURE** – ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and that their interests come first;
- **RESPOND** – only to ensure that the child is safe and secure;
- **RECORD** – make note of what you have seen or heard and the date and time;
- **REFER** – refer to the Designated Teacher as soon as you have any concern for a child.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

1. Where there is cause for concern about a child, the member of staff or volunteer will notify the Designated Teacher on the same day if possible. They will record their concern/incident/disclosure using the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Record Sheet** (appendix 1) and pass this to the Designated Teacher.

It is imperative that only factual information is recorded, i.e. the date, time, place, members of staff/other children involved, conversations and any action taken (if appropriate). Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but *under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed*. If necessary, physical injury could be represented on a drawing to indicate the location and shape of the injury.

2. The Designated Teacher will decide if the information is such that the matter should be referred immediately to Social Services. The Designated Teacher may consult with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection as part of the decision-making process. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent or carer may be the possible abuser, the parents or carers will be informed immediately.
3. If the decision to refer is made, the Designated Teacher will ensure that the following are immediately notified:
 - Social Services (Gateway Team: 02890507000) or PSNI (Non-emergency 101);
 - EA Designated Officers for Child Protection (02890564289);
 - The parents or carers (except where the parent or carer is the alleged abuser).

The referral will be followed up in writing as soon as possible using the standard UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form. A copy will also be sent to the CPSSS (Child Protection Support Service for Schools) at EA. **(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION')**

4. If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. She will then:
 - inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors;
 - consult with a Designated EA Officer for Child Protection to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action; and
 - maintain records of all steps.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services or the police, the member of staff will be immediately removed from direct contact with children, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

5. If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. All aspects of the above procedures for complaints against a member of staff will be followed, save that the role set out above for the Principal will be exercised by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The EA Designated Officers for Child Protection will be informed immediately.

6. If a complaint is made against a member of the Board of Governors, it will be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is not on the school's staff, and the same procedures followed (as in point 4 above). The Principal should immediately inform the Chairperson, unless he/she is the subject of the complaint, in which case the Chairperson's role should be exercised by the Vice-Chairperson. The EA Designated Officers for Child Protection will be informed immediately.
7. If a complaint is made against a volunteer working in the school, it will be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is not on the school's staff, and the same procedures followed. If the Principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

Whistleblowing

If any adult working in the school has a child protection concern in relation to any other adult who works there, it must be reported to the Principal immediately. This course of action is supported by the EA's Whistleblowing Policy.

How A Parent Can Raise a Concern About Possible Child Abuse

In Wheatfield PS we are committed to helping parents understand our responsibility for the safeguarding of all the children in our care. Parents will be made aware of the school's child protection policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.

Parents of pupils entering Nursery and Year One will receive a copy of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at induction meetings. At any time, all parents may obtain a copy of the policy from reception. The policy will also be available on the school website (www.wheatfieldps.co.uk) and a condensed copy will be sent to parents every two years (Appendix 4).

A parents' guide to raising concerns is available on the school website and is displayed at school reception (Appendix 5).

Recruitment of Staff

The selection and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in close proximity with children, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

In order that all reasonable steps are taken to guard against employing people who might harm our pupils, or put them at risk of harm, we follow the guidance on pre-employment checking and safer recruitment practices provided in various DE Circulars, available to view on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk

The school will arrange for an Access NI (Criminal Records) check to be carried out on its behalf on any volunteers or sports coaches it engages to assist in activities either on or off the school premises.

Guidelines for Visitors

All visitors to school are required to wear a visitor's badge upon entering the school. On the reverse of this badge is a condensed guide to Safeguarding and Child Protection, including a code of conduct for school visitors, details of who the Designated Teacher is and a brief outline of the procedure to follow if they have a Child Protection concern. Contractors are

required to read the Safeguarding Guidelines before signing into school, and are therefore not required to wear a visitor's badge around school (this may be impractical due to the nature of their work).

Staff Code of Conduct

The duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils in our care rests with all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, and their conduct must be above reproach. All staff and volunteers adhere to the Code of Conduct (Appendix 6).

Physical Contact with Pupils

The school's Code of Conduct makes it clear that it is unnecessary and unrealistic to suggest that teachers should touch pupils only in emergencies. Particularly with younger children, touching them is inevitable and can give welcome reassurance to the child. Nevertheless, all members of staff should be conscious of the fact that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. Children may find being touched uncomfortable or distressing for a variety of reasons. Our members of staff will therefore be sensitive to a child's reaction to physical contact and act appropriately. They are also aware that it is essential not to touch pupils in ways that might be considered indecent. It is also possible that physical contact may result in a child responding inappropriately: this may in itself be indicative of abuse in another setting, and the member of staff will bring any concerns to the attention of the Designated Teacher.

In extreme cases, a member of staff might have to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him or her from committing an offence, from causing injury to him- or herself, to others or to property, or otherwise from behaving in an undisciplined way. Where such physical contact is necessary, members of staff will follow the school's policy on the use of reasonable force which is set out in our Safe Handling and Use of Reasonable Force Policy.

Bullying

Bullying also constitutes a form of abuse. The school defines bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

The school's policy on bullying is set out in our Anti-Bullying policy.

Acceptable Use Of The Internet And Digital Technologies

The school's policy on the acceptable use of the Internet and digital technologies is set out in our E-Safety policy.

Mobile Phones

Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school. If mobile phones need to be brought to school for a specific occasion or reason they should be left in the school office and collected at end of day.

Educational Visits

The school has adopted the Educational Visits Policy, Practice and Procedures approved by BELB (EA) from 1 September 2005.

Maintaining Child Protection Records

The Safeguarding Team are responsible for securely maintaining the follow records in the school:

- Concerns/ suspected/ known abuse of children
- Contact details of social workers
- Records of Child Protection case conferences and LAC review meetings
- Child Protection Register
- Referrals to Social Services
- Safeguarding team meetings
- Staff training records

Review and Monitoring of the Policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team, as timetabled on the School Development Plan.



Safeguarding and Child Protection Record Sheet 1

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____ Class Teacher: _____

N.B. It is imperative that only factual information is recorded.

Details:

Concern/incident/disclosure – day, time, place, members of staff/other children involved, conversations, action taken (if appropriate).

Name:

Signature:

This form should be delivered to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher ASAP.



Safeguarding and Child Protection Record Sheet 2

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____ Class Teacher: _____

N.B. It is imperative that only factual information is recorded.

Record of meetings/conversations/telephone calls:

Name:

Signature:

This form should be delivered to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher ASAP.



Safeguarding and Child Protection Record Sheet 3

To be completed by the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____ Class Teacher: _____

Advice sought/conversation with – Board Officer for CP/Social Services/Police CPSA Unit, date, time, advice.

--

Action as a result of advice – who spoken to, day, date, time, what was said and agreed etc.

--

Decision not to refer and why. Other action taken, feedback to all those involved – how, when.

--

Decision to refer and why. Other action taken, feedback to all those involved – how, when.

--

Signed by the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher _____ Date _____



Safeguarding children within Wheatfield Primary & Nursery School

Good Practice Guidelines for Parents

This booklet is designed to help all parents and carers who visit our school, including at the beginning and the end of the school day, to understand the expected behaviour around our children in order to ensure their safety.

All adults coming onto the school premises, including the playground and inside the building, have a duty of care towards the welfare of the children at our school and that of all adults.

What is safeguarding?

Every child can potentially be hurt, put at risk from harm or abused regardless of their age, gender, religion or ethnicity.

Safeguarding means that:

- children are protected from mistreatment
- a child's health, or development, is protected
- children grow up with safe and effective care
- action is taken to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

It is everyone's responsibility!

Equally we are all responsible for ensuring we safeguard each other as adults.

Child protection

This is the process of protecting children who may be suffering from, or at risk of, significant harm. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation and emotional harm.

Child protection promotes the rights and welfare of all children. Our Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mrs Whiteside and Deputy Designated teachers are Mr Lister and Mrs Batchelor who are supported by our Child Protection Team. We are responsible for speaking to parents if concerns arise, and making referrals to Children's Social Services with, or without, parental permission. For more details, please read a copy of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

School Guidelines:

Parents in the school grounds

1. Parents must never approach other peoples' children to discuss any type of issue with them. This is unacceptable and the school will take immediate action should this happen. This may involve calling Children's Social Services or the police. When threatening and unfamiliar adults approach children, they feel:
 - frightened
 - vulnerable
 - unsafe
 - scared
 - intimidated.

You wouldn't like your child to feel this way. Take the right approach – **come into school and let us deal with it!**

2. Parents should not approach other parents if they have an issue with either them or their child. This is not the right way to deal with problems and leads to:
 - unacceptable behaviour on our school grounds
 - children feeling frightened
 - both adults and children feeling unsafe on school grounds.
3. If you see, or hear, something that concerns you regarding the welfare of one of our pupils:
 - come into school and ask to speak to **Mrs Whiteside**, the **Designated Teacher for Child Protection** or **Mrs Batchelor and Mr Lister (acting principal)** the **Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection** if Mrs Whiteside is not available.
 - make a note of the concern including the time, date, factual details and names where possible; pass this information to school. You can remain anonymous if you wish.

Social Networking

- **Talking on Facebook**

Please refrain from discussing the school, or its staff, on a social networking site such as Facebook or Twitter. This protects not only the school but yourselves too! Members of staff may contact the police if there are malicious comments made about them.

- **Photographs**

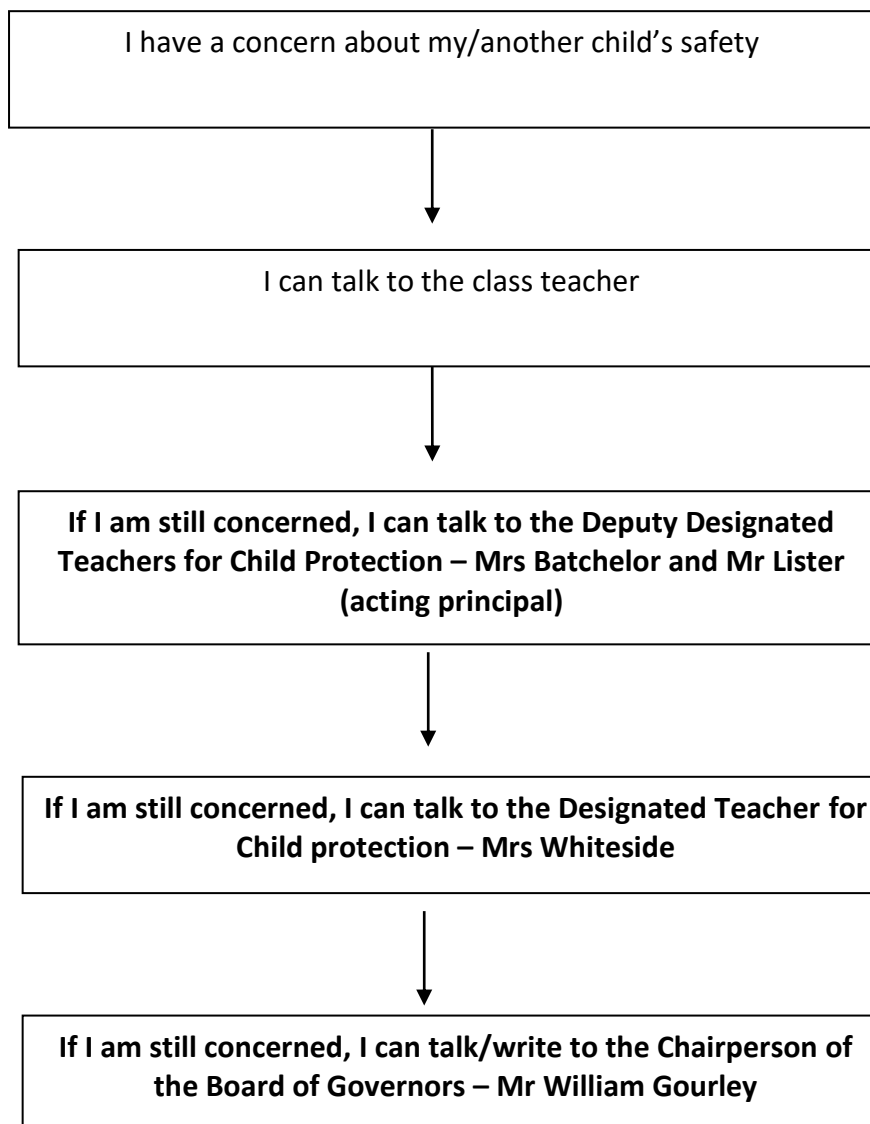
If you would like to upload any photographs of your children at school events such as the Christmas Carol Service or Sports Day, please remember that only your own child should be in the picture. We have some children who cannot be photographed, for safety reasons.

Think: how would you feel if your child was visible online without your permission or your knowledge?

Together we have a collective responsibility for the welfare of all our children!

Thank you for your support.

How a Parent Can Raise a Child Protection Concern



At any time, I can talk to:

- A Social Worker at the Gateway Team (028 9050 7000)***
- or the PSNI (Non-emergency number 101)***



STAFF CODE of CONDUCT (Child Protection)

Introduction

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 children and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

Code of Conduct

1. Private meeting with Pupils

- Staff 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 interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult know that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a young child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should never touch children who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. *References: Child Protection Policy, Safe Handling and Use of Reasonable Force Policy.*
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- Where children require assistance with their intimate care, parents will be contacted and staff will only provide this assistance with parental permission, in the presence of another adult. *Reference: Intimate Care Policy*
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal.

- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon motives for the choice.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

- Staff should ensure that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Conclusion

Whilst this code of conduct offers some useful guidance for staff, it would be impossible and inappropriate to set rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.