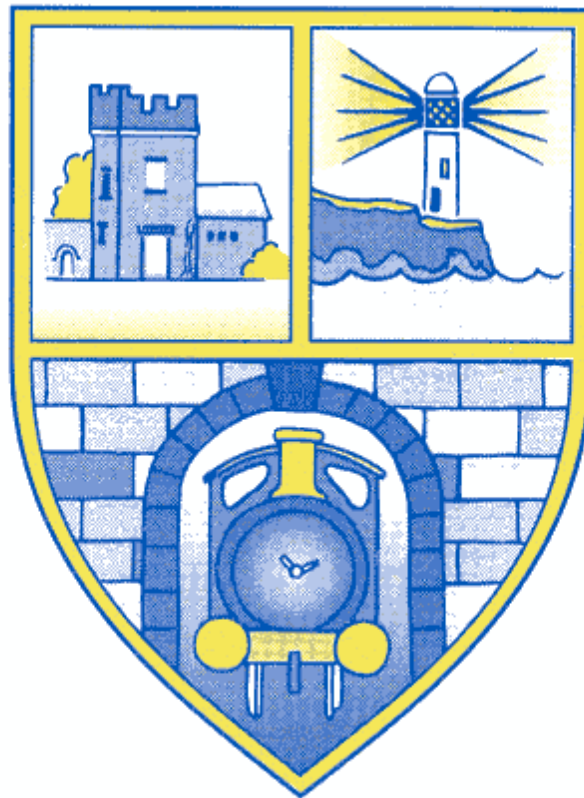


Whitehead Primary School and Nursery Unit

"Learning and Growing Together"



Child Protection Policy

Within the Pastoral Care policy of this school is the important issue of Child Protection. The following Child Protection guidelines should clarify the procedures which are to be followed by both teaching and non-teaching staff in Whitehead Primary School in ensuring the protection of all the children in the School. These procedures are set out for all staff to follow in cases where abuse is suspected or where the school has been alerted to possible abuse.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991 sets out the rights that all children have:

the right to be protected from all forms of violence;
they must be kept safe from harm; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them;

The Children (NI) Order 1995 also promotes children's rights and its underlying principle is:

the child's welfare must be of paramount consideration.

The Convention 1991 and the Children (NI) Order 1995 underpin the Child Protection ethos developed in this School. They also dictate the principles governing Child Protection and the procedures to be followed by staff in cases of suspected abuse.

For the purpose of these guidelines the children are any attending or visiting the school. Staff are the teachers, both permanent and temporary, classroom assistants, clerical officer, caretaker, supervisory assistants, crossing patrol, kitchen staff, ancillary workers and volunteers who come into contact with the children on a daily basis.

One of the school's aims is:-

- **to provide a happy and secure learning environment within which children may develop self-confidence.**

This aim could be further developed into a general principle offering protection to all children attending the school.

It is the intention of school staff to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare of children is safeguarded and that their safety is preserved.

Definition of Abuse

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

What is child abuse?

A child under the age of 18 who has suffered from:

- *physical abuse;
- * sexual abuse;
- * emotional abuse;
- * neglect;

which the person who had custody, charge or care of the child either caused or knowingly failed to prevent.

Under Section 5 (1) of the Criminal Law Act (N.I.) 1967 anyone who knows or believes that an arrestable offence has been committed, and has information which is likely to secure the arrest of the person responsible, has a duty to give that information to the police, failure to do so is in itself an offence. Physical and sexual abuse are arrestable offences.

We use the following definitions:

Neglect: The confirmed or suspected persistent or significant neglect of a child. Symptoms may include hunger, inadequate clothing, constant lack of cleanliness and regular tiredness or failure to thrive.

Physical Abuse: Confirmed or suspected deliberate injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical suffering to a child. Symptoms may include unexplained injuries, bruises or burns, especially repeated ones. There may be a refusal to explain these and/or fear of physical contact.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional ill-treatment or rejection. Symptoms may include delays in physical, mental and emotional development and unexplained fears.

Sexual Abuse: Confirmed or suspected sexual exploitation of a child; where any adult touches a child's private parts in a way which makes the child feel unhappy and embarrassed. Symptoms may include an unusual sexual awareness (evidenced in behaviour, conversation or in art work) or affection expressed sexually which appears inappropriate to the child's age. The child may, on the other hand, appear unusually withdrawn and unhappy.

It is always possible that the above symptoms could be attributed to other family situations and certain other causes. However, the fact that they may be attributed to child abuse must not be ignored.

What to do if concerned about the possibility of child abuse:

The school has a **designated teacher** whose role it is to take responsibility for liaising with social services and other agencies over cases of abuse. The designated teacher is **Mr Graeme Baird** (Vice-Principal). In the event of his absence, **Mr Jim Loughins** (Principal) will undertake the role within the Primary

School and Mrs **Roisin McConnell** within the Nursery Unit. All 3 teachers have received training in the procedures which follow.

1. Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have taken place, he or she must report this immediately to the **designated teacher**.
2. **No promise of confidentiality** can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged. This is in the child's best interest.
3. Where non-teaching staff are alerted to the possibility of abuse, they should **inform the designated teacher immediately**.

When a child makes a disclosure the following guidelines should be followed:-

- Give the child your time and listen carefully.
- Do not ask leading questions as this could be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind. Eg. Ask, "Tell me what happened?" rather than, "Did they do X to you?"
- Do not interrupt the child.
- Reassure the child that he or she has done the correct thing in telling.
- Note the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. Note also any comment made by the child.
- Signs of physical abuse should be described in detail or sketched but **under no circumstances** should clothing be removed or interfered with.
- Give **no undertaking of confidentiality** to the child although the child should be told that only professionals who need to know will be told.
- Teachers should be aware that their notes may be used in subsequent court proceedings.

- No investigation into cases of suspected abuse should be undertaken by staff beyond that of seeking discreet preliminary clarification from the child and noting the outcome of this.

Procedures for Referral: -

Where abuse is suspected or where an allegation of abuse has been made by a third party the designated teacher should immediately be informed.

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

He/she should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services/PSNI Public Protection Unit - but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, discuss the matter with him and make full factual notes. In the absence of the Designated Teacher the concerns should be reported to the Deputy Designated Teacher.

The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher will ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether a referral to Social Services or the Central Referral Unit is required. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is duty bound to make a referral.

The Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Education Authority's (North Eastern Region) Designated Officer for Child Protection or the Referral Gateway Team social worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services or the Central Referral Unit will be made without the

fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral is required, the following procedures will be followed by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or in her absence by the Deputy Designated teacher for Child Protection:

STEP 1

- a) In a case where the child is not considered to be at immediate or significant risk the Designated Teacher will make a written referral to Social Services by completing the UNOCINI referral proforma.
- b) In a case where the child is considered to be at immediate or significant risk a telephone referral should be made to the Referral Gateway Team or the Central Referral Unit by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. (A telephone referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours).

Under the "Protocol for Joint Investigations" established between the Police and Social Services, where either agency receives a report that a child is at risk, the other is automatically informed.

Procedures for the Handling of Information:-

Child protection records will be kept in the principal's filing cabinet and accessible only to the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers.

The report for a child protection conference should contain only fact, observations and reasons for concern.

When a child on the child protection register leaves the school, the new school will be informed that the child is on the register and all child protection records (including case conference records) will be destroyed.

Procedures for dealing with

Bullying:

Procedures for dealing with bullying as a form of abuse are held in our Anti-bullying Policy.

Peer Abuse:

Where there is suspected abuse of a child by another child or young person then the appropriate child protection procedures should be followed both for the victim and for the alleged abuser. Concerns about such abuse should be treated seriously and the designated teacher informed immediately. Where any conflict of interest arises between the welfare of the suspected abuser and that of the victim, the victim's welfare must take paramount importance.

Children with Special Needs:

Indications of abuse of children with special needs will be governed by the same procedures as for all other children. Where the involvement of the SENCO or Literacy Support teacher would be desirable to aid communication, this assistance will be sought.

Information and Procedures involving staff:-

Conduct of staff:-

The conduct of staff towards the children must be above reproach at all times. In safeguarding the welfare of the children, staff must never abuse their position of trust. Staff should be alert to any suspicion of physical or sexual abuse. They should also be aware of the negative aspect of emotional abuse in the form of persistent sarcasm or verbal bullying. Members of staff should ensure that their contact with the children could never be perceived or alleged as abusive. Our Code of Conduct is outlined in Appendix 1

Guidelines covering physical contact with children:-

It is important for staff to be sensitive to a child's reaction to physical contact and to act appropriately. It is also important not to touch children, however casually, on part of the body or in circumstances that may be considered indecent.

However, it is both unrealistic and unnecessary to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies (ie to protect a child, others or property from harm). A distressed child, especially a younger one, may need reassurance involving physical comforting as a caring parent would provide and staff should feel able to offer this.

Intimate Care

Nursery & Foundation staff having to deal with toileting incidents (or changing clothing for any other reason) should ensure that, whenever possible, this is done in the presence of another adult. No member of staff should fail to assist a young child simply because another person is not present. All details of toileting incidents are recorded on a form (Appendix 2) which is signed by the member of staff dealing with the incident, filed and reported to the parent/guardian on collection. At the beginning of the year all parents will have opportunity to complete a form giving their permission for staff to deal with such incidents. (Appendix 3)

Appointment of Staff:

Details of the procedures for ensuring suitability in the appointment and recruitment of staff are to be found in DENI circular 1997/4, 2006/6, 2006/7, 2006/8, 2006/9, 2006/25 & 2008/3.

Training:

The school's designated teachers will be given the opportunity to attend multi-agency child protection training. The continued training of staff will be undertaken by the designated teacher at inservice meetings. The subject will

also be addressed in the induction of newly appointed staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

Allegations against Staff:

Any complaints made that a member of staff has abused a pupil will be thoroughly investigated using the child protection procedures. Advice will immediately be sought from the designated child protection officer, NEELB and the social services. Preliminary enquiries will be carried out with an open mind. These enquiries will have regard to **the welfare of the child concerned and of the other children in school, to the efficient functioning of the school and to the rights of the individual against whom the complaint has been made.** (The right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty).

The procedures for dealing with such complaints will be in line with the employer's disciplinary procedure.

Parents will be made aware of the school's child protection arrangements within its pastoral care policy.

Through the curriculum children will be made aware of the skills they need to help them stay safe. Such teaching should be done carefully so as not to cause anxiety but should offer to the children the benefits of protection strategies. An agreed programme of personal safety will be adopted throughout the school.

Through the designated teacher, links will be established with the following as required:

social services

the NSPCC

the Clinical Medical Officer

the school nurse

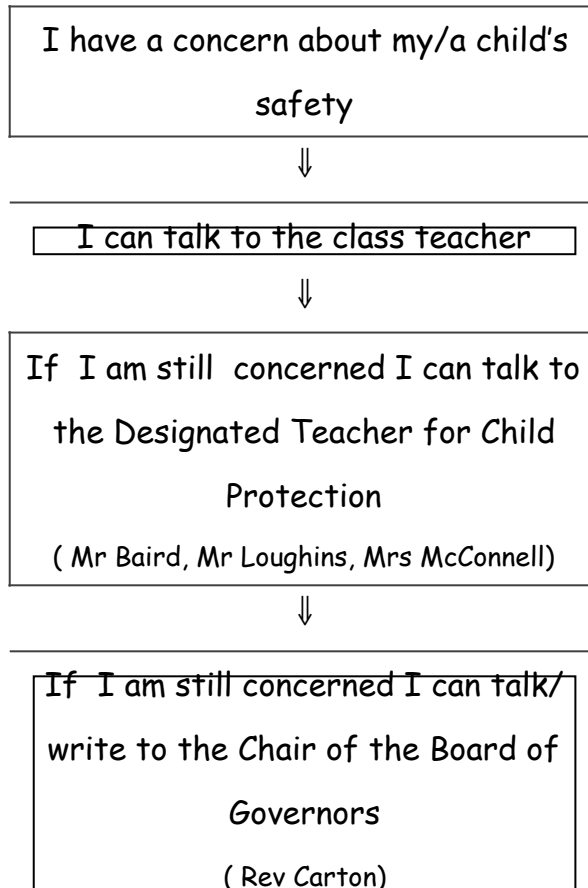
the EWO

the Educational Psychologist
the NEELB designated officer for child protection

The file of Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Area Child Protection Committees') and DENI circular 1999/10 are available in school and have been consulted in the preparation of these guidelines and procedures.

Parental Concerns/Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint about your / a child's safety there are a number of procedures which may be followed.

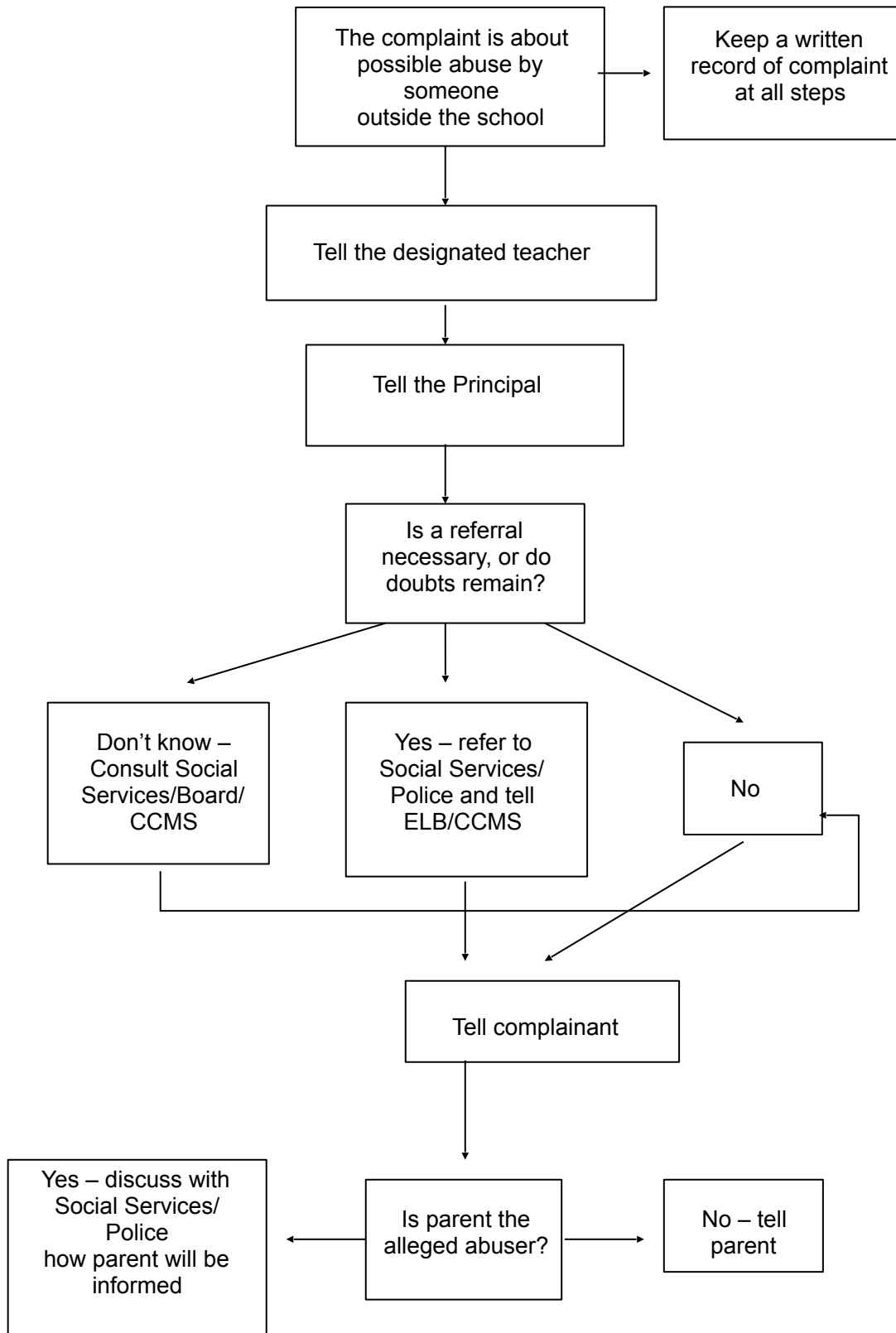


At any time I can talk to a Social Worker

tel: 028 9335 1424 or to the Police CARE unit tel: 028 9065 0222

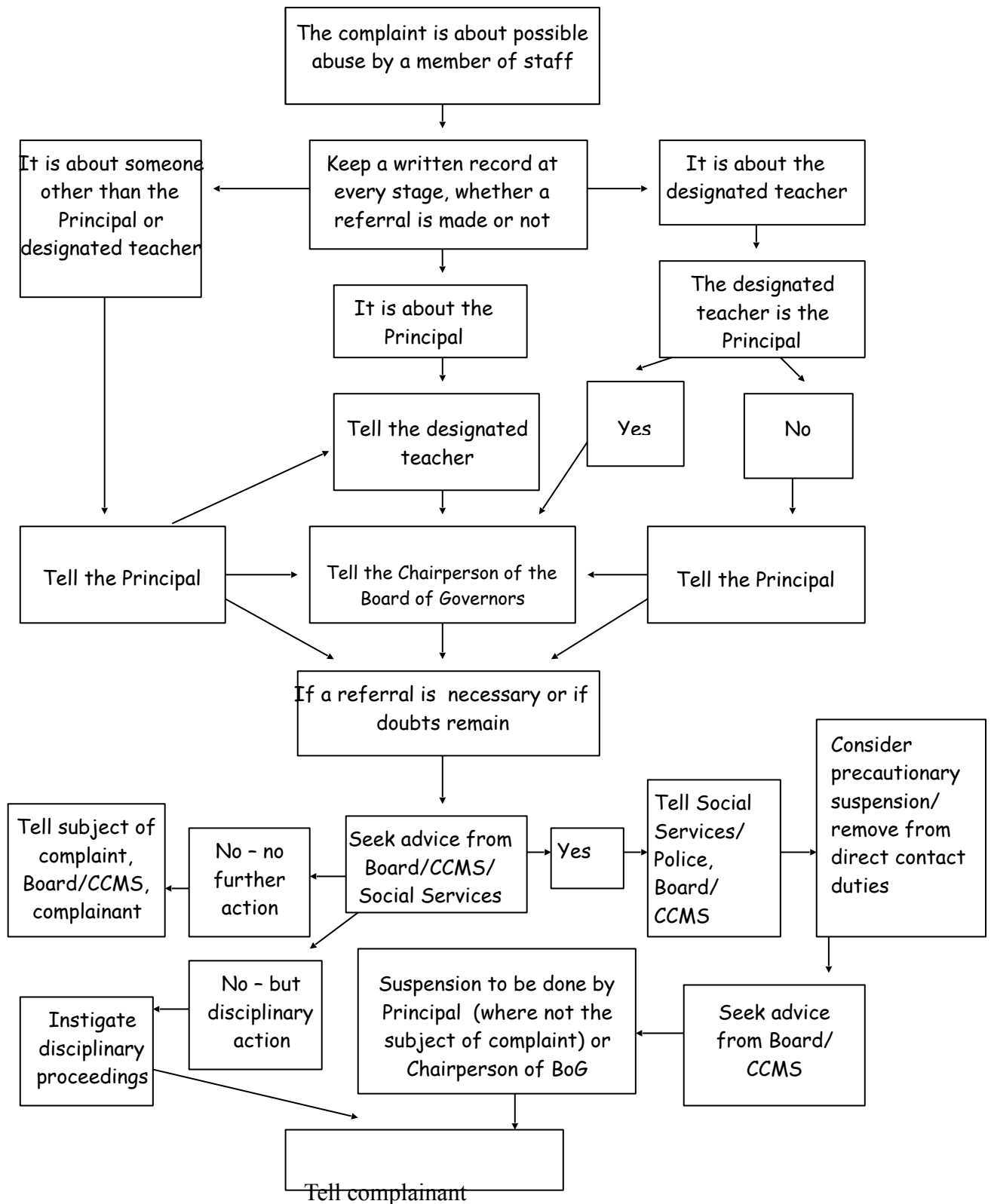
Where a concern has been raised we are obliged to discuss it with the Designated Teacher and/or the Deputy Designated teacher. Further advice and guidance may be sought from the NEELB Designated officer, Social Services or the PSNI CARE Team.

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



Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse

by a member of the school's staff



USEFUL CONTACT ADDRESSES & TELEPHONE NUMBERS

(Refer to Appendix 3 of the Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

North-Eastern Education and Library Board

Chief Education Welfare Officer (Mrs Linda O'Neill/Mrs Linda O'Hare)

County hall

182 Galgorm Road

Ballymena BT42 1HN

Tel: 028 25 662 563

PSNI CARE UNIT

Newtownabbey CARE Unit

Newtownabbey Police Station

418 Shore Road

Newtownabbey BT37 9RT

Tel: 028 90 259 305

NSPCC

Divisional Office

Jennymount Business Park

North Derby Street

Belfast BT15 3HN

Tel: 028 90 351 135

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Area Child Protection Committee

Northern Health & Social Services Board

County Hall

182 Galgorm Road

Ballymena BT42 1HN

Tel: 028 25 653 333

Website: <http://www.nhssb.n.nhs.uk>

Last reviewed August 2016

Date of next review August 2017

Appendix 1

Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers.

All actions concerning children must uphold the best interests of the child as a primary consideration. The child must be regarded with warmth and respect avoiding the use of sarcasm or demeaning them in any way. Staff must always be aware that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards children in their charge must be above reproach at all times.

This code is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff in School. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

Private meetings with pupils/ shared and paired reading sessions.

1. Staff should be aware of the dangers that arise from private meetings or interviews with pupils. As far as possible, staff should conduct such meetings in a room with visual access, or with a door open. In casual situations, where a member of staff finds himself/herself alone with a child in unexpected circumstances, extra care should be taken to avoid any situation that might be misinterpreted by the child.
2. Where a meeting is planned, members of staff are advised to ensure that another member of staff knows this meeting is taking place. Keep the door open.
3. Where possible another pupil or member of staff should be present or nearby. The School will take active measures to facilitate this.

Physical Contact with Pupils.

1. As a general principle, members of staff are advised not to make unnecessary contact with pupils.
2. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel prohibited from doing this.
3. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she would be uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
4. Physical punishment is illegal. Any form of physical response to behaviour is also illegal, unless it is by way of restraint to protect another child. (Non-teaching staff should be very wary of undertaking any form of physical contact in such circumstances but should refer immediately to a member of teaching staff.)
5. When alone with one child in a room, one should leave the door open. It is preferable to have several children, in a group, for shared reading.
6. Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure that this is carried out with another member of staff present. Failing this, other pupils should be present. Never remove or alter clothing. Ask the pupil to alter clothing where an injury is suspected. A cut can then be covered before taking the child to the Principal. Only teaching staff and classroom assistants should perform first-aid tasks.

7. Any physical contact, that would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer, should be avoided.
8. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misinterpreted or misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager.
9. 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 the norm and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.



Whitehead Primary School & Nursery Unit

CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT / WELFARE CONCERN FORM

PART 1 – To be completed by reporting member of staff

Child's name		Class	
Name of reporting staff member			
Date of incident	____ / ____ / ____	Time of incident	
Details of the incident / concern <i>Include relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay. Ensure the following factual information is provided – who, what, when and where. Include names of witnesses, if relevant, and immediate actions taken. Remember, do not lead the child – record actual details.</i>			
Action taken so far <i>Include date reported to Designated Teacher for Child Protection / Deputy Designated Teacher.</i>			
Signature of reporting staff member			
Date	____ / ____ / ____		

Notification date of incident / concern	___ / ___ / ___
Name of reporting staff member	
Response to the concern / incident <i>Note actions taken, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed.</i>	
Outcomes <i>Record outcomes of the actions taken.</i>	
Signature of Designated Teacher	
Date	___ / ___ / ___

Appendix 3

Should your child have an accident in school and require to be changed we are willing, with your permission to clean and change your child as required. We will follow the procedures outlined in our "Intimate Care Policy". This role will always be undertaken by a member of staff (teacher or classroom assistant) and you will be informed that an incident has taken place.

In such an event please indicate below how you would like us to proceed.

- In the event of my child having an accident in school and needing to be cleaned and changed, I give permission for a member of staff (teacher or classroom assistant) to clean and change him / her.

Child's name _____

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian)

OR

- In the event of my child having an accident in school and needing to be cleaned, I would like to be contacted so that I can proceed to school.

I accept that if you are unable to contact myself or someone on the emergency contact list you will proceed to clean and change him / her as based on the procedures outlined in the "Intimate Care Policy"

Child's name _____

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian)