

# St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit

## Safeguarding Policies and Procedures



*As a Rights Respecting School, our policy is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).*

- **Article 3:** Children have the right to have their welfare considered paramount in all decisions taken about them.
- **Article 12:** Children have the right to be heard.
- **Article 19:** All Children have a right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment by anyone who looks after them.

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## **SAFEGUARDING**

*'Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and prevention activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and well-being 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.'*

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI, March 2016)

### **SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The Safeguarding team at St Mary's

Mrs Mary McCann (Principal)

Mrs Claire McWilliams (Designated Teacher and ICT Co-ordinator)

Mrs Margaret Fegan (Deputy Designated Teacher)

Mrs Fiona McGill (Deputy Designated Teacher)

Karl Diamond (Chair of the Board of Governors)

Mrs Aileen Muldoon (Child Protection Governor)

Mrs Cathy McErlean (First Aider)

Full copy of St. Mary's Privacy Notice is available on the school website, [www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk](http://www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk)  
Or directly from the school office.

# THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT ST MARY'S

Mrs Mary McCann  
Principal



Mrs Claire McWilliams  
Designated Teacher and  
eSafety Co-Ordinator



Mrs Margaret Fegan  
Deputy Designated  
Teacher and First Aider



Mrs Fiona McGill  
Deputy Designated  
Teacher



Mrs Aileen Muldoon  
Child Protection  
Governor



Karl Diamond  
Chair of the  
Board of Governors



Mrs Cathy McErlean  
First Aider



## AIMS

At St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Bellaghy, we are committed to the development of the whole child. We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty, ensuring, at all times to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment valuing all individuals for their unique talents and abilities. A child cannot learn effectively or develop unless they feel secure.

Our school vision is:

**'Childhood is a Unique Experience.**

**Respect it.**

**Enjoy it.**

**Protect it.'**

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, we recognise that all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, have an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. The school will provide a neutral place where the child feels safe to talk. Staff will listen carefully to what child is saying, treat it seriously and value what is said. Sensitivity to disclosure is vital.

By following child protection procedures, we

- Care for Children
- Care for our school
- Care for the community we serve
- Respond to the guidelines and procedures of other agencies



## OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that everyone who works in our school – teaching or non-teaching staff and anyone who has regular contact with our children, is aware of the procedures to follow in the event of suspected child abuse or neglect or a child.

Child Protection awareness by the school involves all pupils and adults. The school can contribute by:

1. Ensuring all pupils have sufficient knowledge about themselves to be able to understand what constitutes as appropriate and inappropriate contact.
2. Enabling children to become aware of strategies they may use to protect themselves from possible abusive situations.
3. Developing an ongoing programme of Personal and Social Development e.g. Circle Time, In the Beginning, PDMU programme, Pastoral Assemblies, Peer Mediation. Children know what they can do if they are worried, etc. posters of 'If I unhappy, I can talk to...'. This includes which staff to talk to, telephone numbers to ring e.g. Childline.
4. Ensuring that all new staff are made aware of Child Protection Procedures on appointment.
5. Making sure that all staff and regular voluntary helpers have undergone security clearance by the police.
6. Ensuring that the designated teachers avail themselves to update their knowledge of Child Protection Procedures.
7. Assisting with regular in-service training to maintain a working awareness among staff of Child Protection issues and Child Protection procedures.
8. All records are stored in line with EA Guidelines

## St. Mary's Who's Who 2020-2021

<b>TEACHING STAFF</b>	<b>LEARNING ASSISTANTS</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL SUPPORT STAFF</b>
Principal – Mary McCann Nursery – Fiona McGill P.1 – Grainne Dobbin (temp) P.2 – Fiona Conway P.3 – Margaret Fegan P.4 – Lauren Elliott (temp) P.5 – Claire McWilliams (VP) P.6 – Aileen McLea P.7 – Caitriona Mallon Deirdre Mulholland	Nursery – Cathy McPeake P.1 – Pamela Donnelly Zara McKeague P.2 – Margaret McKenna P.3 – Megan Mawhinney P.4 – Mary Curran P.5 – Kelly Mulholland P.6 - Cathy McErlean Pauline Cullen Natasha Brown P.7 Kirsty Hughes Gemma O'Hagan	Clerical – Nicola Scullion  Building Supervisor – Sharron McQuade  Cleaner – Donna Donnelly  <div style="text-align: center;"><b>CANTEEN STAFF</b></div> Cook – Joanne Glasgow Kitchen Staff- Dymphna Cartmill Mary Convery Imelda Kearns

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors of St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit comprises of one parent governor, one teacher representative, four trustees, two representatives from the Education Authority (NE) and one representative from the Department of Education. The School Principal, while not a Board member, is in attendance and acts as secretary.

#### THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS IN ST MARY'S ARE AS FOLLOWS:

CATEGORY

POSITION

**TRUSTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

Fr A Dolan	Vice-Chairperson
Mrs Aileen Muldoon	Child Protection Governor
Mrs Louise Lennon	
Mr Joe Diamond	
Mrs Tracey Scullion	

**DENI REPRESENTATIVE**

Mr Karl Diamond	Chairperson
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**EA REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr Francis Hughes

**PARENTS' REPRESENTATIVE**

Mrs Lucia Boyle

**TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE**

Mrs Fiona Conway

**PRINCIPAL**

Mrs Mary McCann	Secretary
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**SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each school has appointed a Designated teacher and a Deputy-Designated teacher to manage procedures in the event of a child or adult confiding information to a member of staff, or if a member of staff sees signs or observes behaviour which gives them concern.

The staff's responsibility is to immediately make their concerns known to the designated teacher if they have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse.

**DESIGNATED TEACHER**  
Mrs C McWilliams  
*(in the absence of Mrs C McWilliams)*

**DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER**  
Mrs Margaret Fegan  
Mrs Fiona McGill

It is NOT the responsibility of school staff to undertake investigations or to make enquiries of parent or guardians and in some cases, it might be counterproductive for them to do so. It is for the Social Services departments to investigate suspected abuse and determine what action to take, including notifying the PSNI.

## **SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The Safeguarding team at St Mary's:

Mrs Mary McCann (Principal)  
Mrs Claire McWilliams (Designated Teacher and ICT/e safety Co-ordinator)  
Mrs Margaret Fegan (Deputy Designated Teacher)  
Mrs Fiona McGill (Deputy Designated Teacher)  
Mr Karl Diamond (Chair of the Board of Governors)  
Mrs Aileen Muldoon (Child Protection Governor)

The team meets regularly to ensure that appropriate child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and to offer support to the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **DESIGNATED TEACHER**

The role of the designated teacher

- To raise awareness in child protection with all school staff including new staff and volunteers
- Responsible for discussing Child protection concerns by any member of the school staff and keeping of all records
- Responsible for making the referrals to social services or PSNI (Child Abuse Investigation Unit)
- Responsible for keeping the school principal informed
- Responsible for notifying the Chair of the Board of Governors of the school if there is a complaint against the Principal
- Taking the lead in the development of the school's Child Protection policy and ensure that parents receive a copy
- Ensure that the safeguarding team has identified key safeguarding lessons from the PDMU curriculum to be delivered
- Responsible for promoting a child protection/safe guarding ethos within the school
- Responsible for written report to the Governors regarding child protection issues.

The Designated teacher is supported by the Deputy Designated Teachers.

### **PRINCIPAL**

## The role of the school Principal

- To manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection
- To appoint a designated teacher/deputy designated teacher who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- To have an understanding of current assessment and referral processes through UNOCINI
- To manage allegations/complaints against school staff
- To ensure BoG are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding
- To ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection
- To maintain the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The following statements of principle, policy and procedure aim to set the conceptual framework, which underpin the practices within St. Mary's. This ethos is reflected in all actions and decisions taken by staff as they follow the detailed guidance set out in the CCMS Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 199/10, Children (NI) Order 1995 Guidance and the Child Protection Procedures. The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' (UK Agreement 1991) and enshrined in the Children (N.I.) Order 1995 (effective from 1996). In particular, the principle we support is that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care by those looking after them, to their physical, emotional, spiritual well-being.

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection activity and underpin the guidance we follow:

- Each child's welfare must always be paramount: this over-rides 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 a conflict, each child's interests must always come first.
- Children have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives. Where a child has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that affect their family.
- Actions taken to protect the child (including investigations) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child unnecessary distress or further harm.
- Intervention should not deal with the child in isolation: the child's needs should be considered in the context of the family. Agencies' actions must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and consider each child's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture, race and any special/additional needs.
- Where necessary to protect the child from further abuse, alternatives that do not involve moving the child and which minimise disruption to the family should be explored.

## PREVENTION

The Board of Governors ensure that school follows the Code of Practice for the conduct of all members of staff, teaching, permanent and temporary, non-teaching, towards the pupils attending our school. The

Code of Practice covers all activities organised in and by our school, whether on school premises or elsewhere. We ensure that persons beyond the school staff who are invited to be involved as helpers/leaders on trips, residential visits or other out of school activities are subject to vetting procedures in keeping with current arrangements for the care and protection of young people. This includes students who attend our school for work experience from second and third level colleges and universities.

### **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

The overriding concern of every caring adult must be the safety of the child. The problem of child abuse belongs to everybody and is never 'not the concern' of an adult. The welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration.

Child abuse includes:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Exploitation
- Domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour

However, a child protection record might be commenced if there is evidence of a safeguarding risk of, for example, self-harm, suicidal ideation or other behaviours that cause concern.

### **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the failure to provide a child'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's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse

### **PHYSICAL**

Physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

### **SEXUAL**

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 (e.g. 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, encourage 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.

### **EMOTIONAL**

Emotional is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

## 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 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.)

## BULLYING

Violence, which can be physical, verbal or psychological. It is the exercising of power over another who is powerless to defend him/herself. It can be for a long or short duration. It is intention, aggressive but never accidental. Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will not be tolerated in our school. All staff are aware of the school Anti-Bullying Policy.

### Indicators of Abuse

Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff are particularly well placed to observe acquired symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of causes, including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances, or drug, alcoholic or solvent misuse.

The following illustrations are examples of common signs and symptoms encountered by teachers, classroom assistants or auxiliary staff, which might indicate abuse or neglect. These signs are not a checklist, indeed many of them could have other explanations.

#### Physical Abuse

##### Physical Indicators

Unexplained bruises or burns particularly in places difficult to see e.g. behind ears, groin.  
Human bite marks, welts or bald spots  
Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions.  
Untreated injury.

##### Behavioural Indicators

Self-destructive tendencies.  
Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.  
Fear of returning home.  
Chronic runaway.  
Aggressive or withdrawn.  
Reluctant to have physical contact.  
Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body.

#### Neglect

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<p>Constant hunger.</p> <p>Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene.</p> <p>Untreated medical problems.</p> <p>Emaciation/ distended stomach.</p> <p>Constant tiredness.</p> <p>Exposed to danger/ lack of supervision.</p>	<p>Tiredness, listlessness, lack of concentration.</p> <p>Lack of social relationships.</p> <p>Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging.</p> <p>Frequently absent or late.</p> <p>Low self-esteem.</p> <p>Destructive tendencies.</p> <p>Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)</p> <p>Chronic running away.</p>

Emotional Abuse	
<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<p>Sudden speech disorder.</p> <p>Signs of mutilation.</p> <p>Signs of solvent abuse, (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness).</p> <p>Wetting and/ or soiling.</p> <p>Attention seeking behaviour.</p> <p>Poor peer relationships. Poor skin/ hair.</p> <p>Non-accidental injury.</p>	<p>Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking).</p> <p>Reluctance for parent liaison.</p> <p>Fear of new situations.</p> <p>Chronic runaway.</p> <p>Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.</p> <p>Extremes of passivity or aggression.</p>

Sexual Abuse	
<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<p>Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat.</p> <p>Torn, stained or bloody underclothes.</p> <p>Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches.</p> <p>Difficulty in walking or sitting.</p> <p>Frequent urinary or yeast infections.</p> <p>Vulnerable diseases.</p> <p>Unexplained pregnancies.</p>	<p>Be chronically depressed/ suicidal.</p> <p>Inappropriately seductive or precocious.</p> <p>Sexually explicit language.</p> <p>Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence.</p> <p>Recurring nightmares, fear of the dark.</p> <p>Outbursts of hysteria/ anger.</p> <p>Over protective to siblings.</p> <p>Obsessive washing.</p>

**NB: If in doubt, speak to someone NOW.**

# PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

The Designated teacher in both Nursery and Primary school for child protection is Mrs C. McWilliams. In her absence, Mrs Fegan (Primary) and Mrs McGill (Nursery) will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

## ADVICE FOR STAFF

- If a child discloses abuse 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, that member of **staff must act promptly**.
- **He/She must not investigate** – but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated teacher, discuss the matter with her and make full notes. (See Appendix 6)
- The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and to 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, if the matter needs to be referred to Social Services.
- **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, 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 Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Designated Officer from the Education and Library Board, CCMS or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to the Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.
- **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

## IN THE EVENT OF A CHILD DISCLOSING ABUSE:

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY:

- I am glad you told me this.
- We are going to do something about this together.

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO:

- Stay calm, listen and say you will take a few notes (very important as a safeguard for you.)
- DO NOT interrogate.
- Record later the details (e.g. time, place, date, behaviour of child, place the abuse occurred.)
- Follow guidelines immediately. (Appendix 3)

If a Child discloses abuse or staff are suspicious, there are three things to do.

1. **Report immediately to the designated teacher Mrs Claire McWilliams**  
(or in her absence, Mrs Margaret Fegan, Mrs Fiona McGill or Mrs McCann).
2. **Do not speak to the parents**
3. **Do not promise the child that it will be kept a secret**

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concerns they are necessarily starting procedures.

It is very important in these cases that prompt and correct procedures are followed under CCMS Protection Procedures. The reporting teacher will be informed of any further action taken e.g. Referral to Social Services.

When a member of staff gives the Designated Teacher a written record of concern about a child, that child is placed on the Child Protection Record. This is a log of children causing concern and the nature of those concerns. It is kept by the designated teacher. Staff are informed of any child in their class who is on this record. Information from the records is disclosed on a need to know basis only.

In the case of a long-term absence of the designated teacher, another member of staff would be asked to take responsibility for Child Protection.

Glossary of Terms	See Appendix 2
Contact Addresses/Telephone Nos.	See Appendix 3
Flow map of Reporting a Concern	See Appendix 4

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given to a child, or anyone else, giving information about possible abuse. The information will be disclosed to another member of staff i.e. the designated teacher. The child, however, should be assured that the matter will only be disclosed to others on a need to know basis. The Principal should obtain a written record from the member of staff who received the information as soon as possible. Proper records, dated and signed should be kept of all complaints or information received and all concerns about possible abuse noted by staff.

The designated teacher will plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The designated teacher, in consultation with the principal, will decide, whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The designated teacher may consult/seek clarification/advice from the EA Designated Officer/ Senior Education Welfare Officer/Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the designated teacher will inform:  
Social Services

EA Designated Officer for Child Protection.

For reasons of confidentiality the only people who need to know are:

- The person making the complaint or reporting the abuse.
- The parents of the child (unless involved)
- The designated teacher
- The Principal
- The Chairperson of the Board of Governors
- Appropriate outside agencies.

Staff should never touch a child 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 (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives, guidance on Article 4 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).

Physical Punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.

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.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

All safeguarding records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal's office, in accordance with our Data Protection Statement. The cabinet is marked confidential and is only accessible to the Designated teacher, Deputy Designated teachers and the principal. The keys are stored securely in a key safe. Each file identifies the child by their initials and date of birth.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a summary is entered on a Record of Abuse Complaints. This entry, which will contain details of the complaint, will be made available to the Board of Governors annually.

The Designated Teacher will always seek and follow advice from EA and CCMS Designated Officers when requested to share documents.

## **ALLEGATIONS OR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF**

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 to her directly by the person to whom it was made.

If the complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the principal should

- Inform the designated teacher, who will initiate the record of the complaint.

- The Designated Teacher should consult as a matter of urgency and confidence with the EA and CCMS Designated Officers to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action taken.
- Inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors immediately.

### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL**

If a complaint is made against the Principal:

- the designated teacher (or her deputy if she is unavailable) must be informed immediately.
- The Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they consult as a matter of urgency and confidentiality with the EA and CCMS Designated Officers and ensure that the necessary action is taken.

### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

- Any complaints must be referred to the Principal. The principal will follow the above procedures, taking the role of the Designated Teacher.

### **COMPLAINTS AGAINST A VOLUNTEER**

- Any complaints against a volunteer should be treated in the same manner as above and the same procedures followed.

### **COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBER(S) OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

- Notify the Principal.
- Notify the Chairperson (unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case, the Vice-Chairperson should exercise the Chairperson's role).
- Designated Officers of C.C.M.S. and EA should be informed immediately and the necessary action is taken.

### **SUSPENSION FROM DUTIES**

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The school will follow the appropriate Employing Authority Policy and Procedures.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY FOR STAFF**

### **Our Code of Conduct is underpinned by Article 3 of the UNCRC**

#### **Article 3: The best interests of the child must be top priority in all actions concerning them.**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interest of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of children and young people in their care. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff. 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.

## **PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH PUPILS**

Staff should be aware of the dangers that 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, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that a 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. It is school policy that staff do not conduct private tutoring on school premises.

## **PHYSICAL CONDUCT WITH PUPILS**

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

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. There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance 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. 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 of P.E. Teachers should be aware of the limits within such contact would properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the pupil.

Staff who have to administer first-aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present, if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact in the circumstances could be misconstrued. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present. All incidents should be recorded in the Accident Book (in accordance with the First Aid Policy) which is stored in the First Aid Kit at the 'First Aid Station'.

Following any incident where a teacher feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal of the school. This would apply especially in a case where a teacher had been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury.

## **CHOICE AND USE OF TEACHING MATERIALS**

Teacher should avoid teaching materials, including the Internet, where the choice of teaching materials might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the 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 the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

## **RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTRIBUTES**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of our school, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to

comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff of either sex are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

## **GUIDELINES FOR STAFF SELF PROTECTION**

- In the event of injury to a child, ensure that it is recorded and witness by another adult.
- Keep records of any false allegations a child makes against you or other staff e.g. 'you're always picking on me', 'you hit me' or comments such as 'don't touch me'.
- If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be totally innocent, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage and then say the child instigated it.
- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with one child away from other people. If it is a one-to-one, make sure the door is open. Tell another member of staff if you are going to see a child on your own.
- Never do something of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms, helping them to get dressed after PE etc, or any other activity that could be misconstrued.
- Do not go into the toilet alone with children if possible.
- Be mindful of how and where you touch children. Never pat a child on the bottom.
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about a child, even in jest.
- Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempted cover-up, you would be implicated in the silence.
- Ensure that you have the opportunity to discuss your own feelings, if possible with other members of staff.
- Mobile phones for personal use is not permitted in the school. Staff are reminded they are not permitted to take photographs of children using personal devices such as phones or cameras. The school cameras or iPad should be used. All photographs on school mobile devices should be transferred to the Staff e-folder as soon as possible and archived. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the original photographs are deleted from devices. (Class iPads will be periodically checked by the ICT co-ordinator.)
- Staff should always be alert to Safeguarding issues when displaying photographs of children.
- Photographs should not be displayed with their names or in such a way that the children can be easily identified. Photos displayed in the front foyer should be placed in the locked cabinet. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure parental permission has been given before distributing photographs within or beyond the school e.g. Newsletter, Website, Newspapers.
- (See Photograph Policy and Procedure)

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF/VOLUNTEERS, STUDENTS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

### **Remember:**

- To treat all individuals equally and with respect
- To provide an example of good conduct and use appropriate language including in the use of Seesaw.
- To respect personal privacy
- To stop dangerous behaviour and report unacceptable behaviour to the staff
- If you are concerned about a child, or a child makes a disclosure to you, report it to the teacher or Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs Claire McWilliams) or the Deputy Designated

Teachers, (Mrs Margaret Fegan or Mrs Fiona McGill) or the Principal (Mrs Mary McCann.) Be careful not to exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues. Seek advice and guidance if in doubt.

- There should be no unnecessary physical contact with a child. Please familiarise yourself with the code of conduct
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intended
- Do not discuss any observations made about children with other parents
- Do not place yourself in a situation where you will be alone with a child
- No food or gifts should be given or bought on a trip
- Do not take photographs of pupils unless asked to do so by the teacher, using school equipment.
- If on a trip, do not discuss your child's progress with the class teacher
- Parents should not approach children to discuss issues between their child and another child. Report concerns to the class teacher.

See Appendix 1 **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF/VOLUNTEERS, STUDENTS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

## **HANDLING COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **COMMENTS / COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES – POLICY STATEMENT**

As a Rights Respecting School we are committed to respecting human rights and are dedicated to protecting the rights of the child as set out in the UNCRC.

At St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit we are committed to listening about our service. We will use this information, wherever possible, to help maintain and improve our service. We encourage and welcome all comments and views, both positive and negative. This policy is designed to establish a clear mechanism for the resolution of complaints which can be verbal, written, taped or e-mailed. Our comments / complaints policy is outlined below.

### **AIMS**

When dealing with complaints the school will

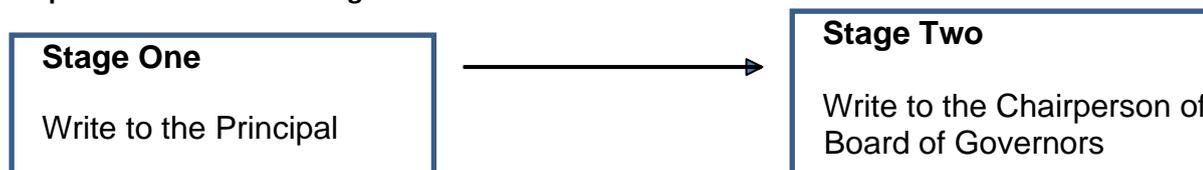
- encourage resolution of all concerns as quickly as possible
- provide timely responses to concerns and complaints
- keep you informed of progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- respect confidentiality
- fully address complaints and provide an effective response
- take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate
- be responsive to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school.

A copy of this Procedure is available from the school on request.

These procedures do not replace or supplement other established procedures and/or appeals mechanisms in such areas as Child Protection, Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions etc. In addition, where it becomes evident at an early stage that the nature of your complaint may give

rise to further disciplinary action, these procedures will be set aside in favour of other established Disciplinary Procedures. We are not able to deal with anonymous complaints and therefore these procedures do not provide for a resolution of anonymous complaints except for the referral of child protection concerns to the appropriate Child Protection Procedures and Guidelines.

#### Complaints Procedure – At a glance



#### Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.

#### Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. *If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed to Stage Two.* The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process.

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- name and contact details
- what the complaint is about
- what has already been done to try to resolve it and
- what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.***

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

#### Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (*care of the school and marked 'private and confidential'*). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday period.***

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House

33 Wellington Place Belfast

BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 02890 233821

Free phone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk) Web:

[www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

**1. SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**1.1** The Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

***Some examples of complaints dealt with***

- not following school policy
- communication delays / lack of communication
- difficulties in staff / pupil relationships.

**1.2 Complaints with separate established procedures**

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Principal/ Chair of Governors will advise on the appropriate procedure to use when the complaint is raised.

***Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.***

Exceptions	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusion of children from school</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Operations and Estates Sara Long
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services Dr Clare Mangan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Development Proposals</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Education John Collings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child Protection / Safeguarding</li></ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services Dr Clare Mangan
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- 1.3** The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors to be of a serious nature. The decision of whether to deal with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors.

## WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THIS PROCEDURE

### 1.4 Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with complaint we will ensure

- fair treatment
- courtesy
- a timely response
- accurate advice
- respect for privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint and
- clear reasons for decisions.

### 1.5 Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

In making a complaint it is important to

- raise issues in a timely manner
- treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised
- use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels.

### 1.6 Rights of parties involved during the investigation

Where a meeting is arranged the complainant may be accompanied, but not represented, by another person.

This Procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

### 1.7 Timeframes

Where concerns are raised with the relevant Teacher or Principal, a response will normally be provided during the meeting or within an agreed timeframe.

**Stage 1** – normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

**Stage 2** – normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.

***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.***

### 1.8 Equality

The school requires complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process.

### 1.9 Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been completed and the complaint having been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the school with the same issue it may choose not to respond

## **THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE/SAFE HANDLING OVERVIEW**

### **What might be regard as constituting reasonable force?**

Physical intervention can take a number of forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force', for example, to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something. Staff should follow guidelines and requirements set out in the schools Safe Handling and Reasonable Force Policy. Risk assessments should be carried out if a potential, significant issue arises. However, staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by: holding a pupil round the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe. Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in any way that might be considered indecent.

All staff annually review the school Safe Handling and Reasonable Force Policy.

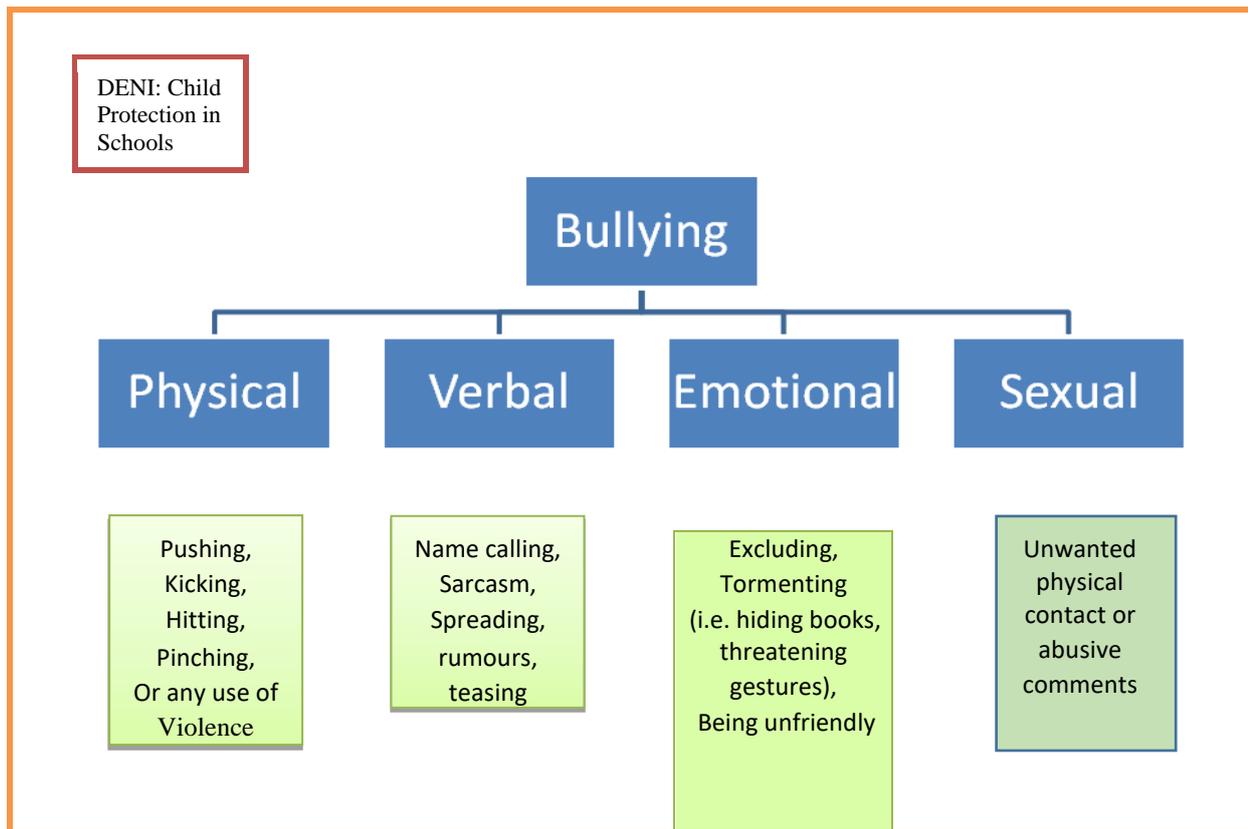
## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY OVERVIEW**

### **Our Anti bullying Policy is underpinned by Article 19 of the UNCRC**

#### **Article 19: All children have the right to be protected from all forms of bullying within school.**

Bullying is a highly distressing and demoralizing 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. All complaints will be fully investigated by the designated teacher for Child Protection. A parent making a complaint will have a personal response from the teacher as soon as possible (within one week at the most), indicated the investigation, which has been carried out, and the action being taken.

Bullying is the use of REPEATED aggression with the intention of hurting another person, and which results in pain and distress to the victim.



### **SCHOOL OBJECTIVES**

- All staff, governors, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Clear procedures for reporting bullying should be understood and followed.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Bullying**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied.

Adults should be aware that these are possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Becomes withdrawn, starts stammering
- Regularly has books or clothes destroyed
- Becomes disruptive or aggressive
- Has possessions going 'missing'
- Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- Starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Attempts suicide or runs away; or
- Has nightmares

These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. More detailed information is available in our Anti-Bullying policy.

## **CYBER BULLYING**

Today our pupils are immersed in new technologies which open up a world of opportunities and learning potential. However, they too can be manipulated to cause hurt and upset, with that in mind, we include this section on cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined as ‘the use of technology, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.’

The school is committed to protecting pupils and staff from potential harm deriving from their use of the internet, mobile telephones and other electronic and digital technology or systems. The school’s ICT network is secure and subject to continuous monitoring in the interests of safeguarding the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

The pupil ‘e-Safety Rules at School’ agreement, aims to ensure that pupils are responsible in their use of ICT, making sure that they safeguard their own well-being, do nothing that adversely affects others, adopt good practise to enable the efficient operation of the school network and so not waste time.

Copies of the ‘e-Safety Rules at School’ Agreement are located in the ICT suite and in the classrooms. It defines what constitutes safe and acceptable use of the internet and any other electronic and digital devices. It is shared with parents at the beginning of each school year.

The school participates in Safer Internet Week annually. Pupils are educated on staying safe online, cyber bullying and the dangers of social networking sites through fun and informative games, video clips and websites. Whole School Friday Assemblies, led by Pastoral Care/ ICT and e-Safety co-ordinator, Mrs C McWilliams, are used to support educating the children on Internet Dangers. e-Safety posters are displayed in the ICT suite, classrooms and Corridors. The school monthly newsletters are used to inform parents of how they can help support children to keep them safe online at home. The school liaises with a large number of outside agencies to provide up-to-date e-safety information and training for pupils, staff and parents, such as PSNI, Beam, Magherafelt Council Bee Safe.

We encourage our pupils to report instances of this or any other dangerous or suspicious online behaviour. All staff have a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of pupils online by educating them, supporting them and reporting any instances of Cyber bullying or other dangerous or suspicious online activity in line with school procedures.

Incidents involving the use of the Internet and/or mobile phones will be responded to by following the guidance within this Child Protection Policy and/or our Anti-bullying Policy.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDRENS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING**

We want all our children to be able to learn about health and well-being to ensure they acquire skills to live healthy and happy lives. However, our children are faced with many challenges which previous generations were not exposed to. Children need to be aware of these social, emotional and environmental pressures around them on a daily basis and the level of control they have as an individual. If they are aware of how important certain aspects of their health and well-being are and to what extent their choices affect their future, then they will be better equipped to make better decisions.

Our children will have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. Some children may have found it difficult to spend more time at home, some may have experienced a bereavement and some

parents may have lost their jobs. Children may also have been unable to access support they usually receive from professionals during their normal daily school life.

Children may have difficult feelings about returning to school. Some might be anxious for a range of reasons, while others may be excited.

St. Mary's PS and NU is committed to best supporting children's mental health and well-being and supporting them on their return to school after lockdown and to prepare them for more possible lockdown scenarios where home learning may need to take place again.

As a school we will

- Ensure children are familiar with the new routines and rules of the school day and ensure staff are on hand in the mornings/afternoons to direct children and help them enter/exit the building using the correct door and use the correct path.
- Make time to talk to children about all the changes that are happening.
- Talk about their feelings and listen to children to see if there is anything in school they feel uncomfortable with.
- Teach children about making good choices through The Preventative Curriculum.
- Help children to build emotional resilience.
- Use programmes like Go noodle for mindfulness movement.
- Make sure children know who they can talk to in school if they have a concern or worry.
- PDMU lessons will focus on mental health and well-being.
- Regular mindfulness practices and meditation will be built into the weekly timetable for all classes.
- Daily Mile to ensure children are being active in the fresh air.
- Each class teacher will maintain contact via Seesaw with children who cannot attend school due to self-isolation.

## **SUPPORTING STAFF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING**

St. Mary's places a high priority on maintaining the well-being of all staff. We recognise staff are our most precious resource. As an employer the school has a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff as much as is reasonably practical. Good staff well-being is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy school, for retaining and motivating staff and for promoting children's wellbeing and attainment.

Positive staff well-being can increase productivity and engagement, improve people job satisfaction, and help to reduce absence from work. This means staff are better able in turn to support their pupils.

School recognises the impact of COVID 19 may have had on staff and are committed to fully supporting staff with transitioning back to school in a safe way and also to help prepare and upskill them for future possible lockdowns and home learning.

St. Mary's will

- Ensure all guidance from DE are implemented in order to maintain the highest possible level of health and safety as is reasonably practical.
- Provide all necessary personal protection equipment.
- Ensure all risk assessments are discussed with staff and fully implemented.
- Ensure everyone is aware of their roles.
- Provide staff training in the importance of health and well-being – Cormac Venney from HIP Psychology.
- Promote a positive working environment.
- Promote a culture of good communication.
- Listen to staff opinions.
- Have clear procedures in place for dealing with COVID 19 related scenarios.
- Have reasonable expectations regarding workload.
- Empower staff through supporting continuous professional development.

## **HEALTHY EATING POLICY OVERVIEW**

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

- to improve the health of pupils, staff and the whole school community by helping to influence eating habits through increasing knowledge and awareness of food issues including what constitutes a healthy diet;
- to ensure pupils are well nourished at school and that every pupil has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food and a safe, easily available water supply during the school day;
- to ensure that food provision in the school acknowledges the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs;
- to introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

### **ORGANISATION - CURRICULUM**

We regard healthy eating education as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum.

Healthy eating education forms an important part of our school's curriculum. The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the The World Around Us and PDMU curriculum.

All pupils should have the opportunity to learn about safe food preparation and to learn about where food has come from. Pupils learn about the requirements for plant growth, the food chain and the components of a healthy diet through The World Around Us curriculum.

### **ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EATING**

At St Mary's we have agreed the following statements:

- All children will be encouraged to eat only bread, fruit or vegetables at break time.
- All children are encouraged to bring in a water bottle so they can have access to water throughout the day.
- Chocolate, sweets, biscuits, crisps, and cakes are actively discouraged as everyday snacks in school or as part of lunch boxes. Chewing gum and fizzy drinks are not permitted on the school premises

or while the children are representing the school. Cereal bars are also discouraged because these can often contain as much sugar as chocolate bars.

- Children’s lunch boxes should offer balanced nutrition. Parents are encouraged to offer a variety of healthy foods in accordance with the **‘Guide to Healthy Eating’** which is made available to parents. The guidance recommends a balanced selection of foods which should be available to the children in their lunch box.
- Because we recognise that there is no such thing as “bad food”, we teach the children to enjoy treats in moderation. The School Council decided on ‘Treat Day’. On this day the pupils are allowed to include one small bar/bun in their lunch.
- Birthdays, and special events such as Christmas parties in class are also times where food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. On these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff should remind the children that this is an occasional treat and not every day food.
- The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical or religious reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information should be displayed in the staff room, school office and in the school dining area.
- Pupils are taught not to share packed lunches and parents are reminded about the need to avoid sending in packed lunches containing nuts. This is communicated through the school newsletter / website.
- St Mary’s cannot guarantee that all parents will comply with this request and for that reason the school does not purport to be a “nut free school”, instead we are a ‘nut allergy aware’ school.
- Portion size– no child is made to finish all the food that they are offered because we know that appetites vary from person to person. However, we do actively encourage the children to ‘try a little bit more’ if they can to ensure that they are not hungry later on in the day.

## **SCHOOL MEALS**

We work closely with the school cook and with the EA Catering Services to ensure the healthiest possible meals. There are strict guidelines determining the meals that are available throughout the course of the week and these are in accordance with the new **Healthy Food Standards in Schools** which came into force in 2006.

The Monthly School Lunch Menu is available to parents to take home to discuss meal choices with their children.

The principal and vice principal should monitor the quality of the meals on a regular basis.

## **DINING ROOM CODE OF CONDUCT**

We will:

- respect the children at all times;
- give the children time and space to eat in a calm and attractive environment;
- help the children to see that enjoying food and eating meals with others contributes to a happy lifestyle;
- encourage the children to find out more about achieving a healthy balance;
- encourage the children to try new foods and flavours in a supportive environment;
- promote school food to children and parents;

- listen to and accept constructive feedback and respond accordingly.

The dining room is well staffed with midday supervisors who assist the children in a variety of ways such as keeping table surfaces clean and tidy and assisting the children with their meals. The tables and chairs allow for the pupils to sit in friendship groups promoting the idea that lunch times are a happy, social occasion.

Children should be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners at lunch time and should be given plenty of time to eat. This may be achieved by:

- sitting freely with their friends from within their own class/year group;
- being encouraged to try a wide range of foods at lunchtimes to develop a taste for a greater variety of foods and achieve a balanced diet;
- entering and leaving the dining hall in an orderly way; to show respect for other diners;
- parents or carers will be advised if their child is not eating well;
- demonstrating good manners in the hall e.g. using quiet partner voices and saying “please” and “thank you”;
- seeking permission from a Supervisor before leaving the dining / lunch area.

**As with many areas within school day, COVID-19 rules and new routines are being implemented as the children enjoy their lunch and dinner in order to mitigate as much risk as possible and to strive towards keeping children and staff as safe as possible.**

## **INTIMATE CARE**

**The following are the fundamental principles (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991) upon which our policy and guidelines are based:**

- **Every child has the right to be safe**
- **Every child has the right to personal privacy**
- **Every child has the right to be valued as an individual**
- **Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect**
- **Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.**
- **Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.**
- **Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are consistent as possible.**

It is necessary for children to develop their own skills at toileting and we try to encourage a child’s independence as far as possible in his/her intimate care. However, a child’s emotional and physical well-being is always our first concern.

If a child wets themselves or is physically sick, changing clothes may be required. The child should always be allowed to choose whether this is something they can do themselves or something with which they require assistance. Spare changes of clothes are kept in the teacher’s classroom. Children may prefer home to be contacted and their own clothes brought in. This wish should always be respected.

If a child soils themselves, school will request a parent/carer to take the child home to be washed and changed.

When assistance is necessary, this will be carried out under supervision of the class teacher with assistance from another staff member – most often one of our auxiliary staff.

If a child appears to be having continual ‘accidents’, a strategy may need to be agreed between the parent and the school. (A change of clothes may be left in school).

When it is necessary for any staff member to enter the children’s toilet areas for purposes of cleaning they should place an appropriate sign at the entrance to the toilet or have another person in place to inform that the toilets are temporarily out of use. When intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy i.e. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or a screen put in place.

If a child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.

A written record of all incidents requiring Intimate Care are recorded by class teacher. Any concerns should be recorded and reported to the DT/DDT.

Please refer to the St Mary’s full policy for Intimate Care for more information on policy and procedures.

## **COLLECTING CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL**

On each child’s Medical Information form, the parent or carer must have identified at least three names of nominated people who have their permission to collect their child/children from school or be contacted in the case of a medical emergency. If a different individual from these named people will be collecting a child the school must be advised prior to the pick-up.

Apart from Nursery and Primary 1 children settling into school during the month of September, all children are encouraged to come into school unaccompanied by an adult. We do this to encourage independence and reduce disruption in the morning.

Nursery, P1, P2 and P3 children must be collected from their classrooms from their teacher. Children in P4 –P7 can be collected or walk home alone or with friends. The teacher on duty will cross the children each evening at 3pm across the Mullaghboy Road in a safe manner. The teacher will wear the school’s high visibility coat or school high visibility vest.

Children remaining for after school for extra-curricular activities must have written consent forms from their parents.

If a child will not attend after-school activities on the specific day, school must be informed. Children cannot decide on the day if they do not wish to go.

If a child has been ill at school, they must be collected by a parent/carer.

Pupils must have their parents' permission to go to a friend's house after school. If a carer or parent is not picking up their child at home time, school must be informed in advance.

## **The School Day**

Due to Covid-19, times during the school day have changed in order to accommodate a staggered start and finish time and to ensure classes are staying in their bubbles/zones. This information was shared with parents in August 2020 and will be reviewed regularly in line with current guidance which is changing rapidly.

### **Supervision**

Teachers will be in their classroom to supervise from 8.45am onwards.

The teacher on supervision duty will cross pupils across the road in the evenings.

The teacher on duty is responsible for ensuring that all pupils have been collected or gone home.

## **EDUCATIONAL TRIPS POLICY OVERVIEW**

During the course of the school year, many educational trips will be organised. Information regarding the trip will be circulated to parents prior to a trip. Consent for trips is sought annually. Teaching staff carry out Risk Assessments for all trips.

Often, parent volunteers will accompany us on educational visits. Volunteers will not be left on their own with a child/children at any time. Only teaching and permanent support staff may supervise and deal with a child who requires attention relating to toileting or illness. Volunteers will be given guidelines before the trip explaining their role and outlining Child Protection Procedures and Code of Conduct. See Appendix 1

At various times throughout the year, parents may volunteer to come in to talk to the children about their jobs or to do storytelling or help with Sport's Day. In these circumstances, they will be supervised by a staff member at all times.

Staff/volunteers who work with, or supervise pupils have been subject to appropriate vetting procedures through Access NI. The need to vet volunteers is made on the basis of them having 'substantial access to children'.

(Reference for further information: DE Circular 2012/19; DE Safeguarding and Child protection – A Guide for Schools (April 2017) document.)

(More information can be found on our Policy for Educational Trips)

## **Data Protection Statement regarding Personal Data Capture Forms**

The information provided by you to St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit is required by us to ensure the health and safety of pupil's enrolled in St Mary's. Pupil data is an important factor in increasing pupil achievement and accessing appropriate support/funding for the school and pupils. When we process your personal information, for example, collect it on a form or store it in a file or on a computer, the school is obliged to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We will process your personal information on the legal basis that it is part of our duty to do so.

We will share the personal information you provide to us on this form with

- Department of Education
- Education Authority for Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessments
- The Board of Governors
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- Department of Health and Health & Social Care Trusts
- PSNI
- C2K School Management Information System

for the purposes of ensuring pupils' health and safety, assessment, access to services and as necessary for school funding requirements.

Your personal information will not be shared or processed for any other purpose without your express consent.

We have published detailed Privacy Notice for Parents for Pupils & Parents/Families/ Carers/Legal Guardians on our school website [www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk](http://www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk) **and we have hard copies available at our school office.** **Our Privacy Notice** provides further information on how and why we process your personal information as well as details on how to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

### **CONSENT FORM FOR PHOTOGRAPHS AND FOOTAGE**

Photographs and recordings of pupils for School, family and press are a source of pride to both the pupils and their families//legal guardians. Taking, keeping and publishing photographs and video footage involves processing personal data under data protection laws.

To enable us to comply with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation, we are required to obtain express consent to the use of a pupil's image for example in school displays, performances, newsletters, prospectus and our social media platforms.

In all instances below, the image or footage may be of an individual, small group, class or classes. Where pupils are named, we will use first names only unless we have sought prior permission from you to publish full names (\*newspaper and media companies will often use a full name and we will not seek further permission for this). We will only use photographs and footage where pupils are appropriately dressed to reduce the risk of inappropriate use of the images or footage.

Parents/legal guardians of pupils under the age of 13 are required to complete this form on behalf of the pupil.

Please be aware that websites and social media can be viewed throughout the world and not just in the United Kingdom where UK law applies. Our current social media account is only the school website.

We may continue to use your child's image or footage after they have left the School in promotional materials or on our social media or website accounts.

We will not include personal e-mail or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers on video, on our website or in any printed materials.

We may include a pupil's written work, projects and artwork including portraits of other pupils on our website and in promotional materials.

### **CONSENT FORM FOR USE OF TEXT AND EMAIL DETAILS**

This form explains the reasons why and how St Mary's may use your email address and mobile number for marketing which involves processing personal data under data protection laws.

To enable us to comply with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation, we are required to obtain express consent for the use of your/your child's personal information for emails and text messages.

Without your consent we will not use your email address, for example, to send Monthly newsletters, send information regarding your child's progress (reports), text reminders.

St Mary's primary aim is to inform you of the events that are taking place during the school year and, if you wish to participate in them, how you can do so and to what benefit. We also use it to text reminders to parents about events/trips/dinner menu changes etc.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW MY CONSENT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?**

**Consent can be withdrawn at any time by notifying the Principal and completing a new copy of this form.**

If you do not consent to a particular use of your child's information, your child will not suffer any detrimental effect as a result.

Where you would like to amend the provisions for which consent has been provided, you must submit your request in writing to the Principal. A new form will be supplied to you to amend your consent accordingly and provide a signature.

### **STAFF IN-SERVICE**

St Mary's is committed to on-going service training for all staff. All staff will receive annual training on Safe handling, Basic First Aid and Safe Guarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

St Mary's will update this policy and its procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. Participation and consultation with children, parents, staff and Governors, will be undertaken.

## **CONCLUSION.**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff inter-relate with pupils. In all circumstances staff professional judgement will be exercised.

The work that goes on in St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, is extremely important and valuable. We make a difference to the children by providing opportunities for them to achieve in many different ways. We are very proud to be a Rights Respecting School.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

*The Policy will be reviewed in August 2021 (or sooner due to COVID-19.)*

*The school reserves the right to amend this policy in line with any new guidelines issued by the EA throughout the year. Parents will be given notice of any changes in our school Monthly Newsletter or School Website.*

## **CIRCULATION OF THIS POLICY**

All parents will receive a full copy of this policy via a Sway link.

Full policies are available from the office if requested.

Parents will receive updated information throughout the year, if necessary.

## **REFERENCES**

- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UK Agreement 1991\)](#)
- [Children \(N.I.\) Order 1995 – An Introductory Guide for Schools 1996](#)
- [DENI Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection 1999/10 Circular and Guidance](#)
- [EA NI. Child Protection Procedures](#)
- [Wallace Report July 1998](#)
- [Educational Trips – A Good Practice Guide](#)
- [CCEA Integrating Child Protection into the Curriculum](#)
- [ETI Evaluating Pastoral Care – Guidance 1999](#)
- [CCMS Circular 'Child Protection'](#)
- [NSPCC Materials](#)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit Code of Conduct for staff, volunteers, students and parents/guardians



#### Remember:

- To treat all individuals equally and with respect
- To provide an example of good conduct and use appropriate language at all times
- To respect personal privacy
- To stop dangerous behaviour and report unacceptable behaviour to staff
- If you are concerned about a child, or a child makes a disclosure to you, report it to the teacher or Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs Claire McWilliams) or the Principal Mrs Mary McCann. Be careful not to exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues. Seek advice and guidance if in doubt.
- There should be no unnecessary physical contact with a child. Please familiarise yourself with the code of conduct
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intended
- Do not discuss any observations made about children with other parents
- Do not place yourself in a situation where you will be alone with a child
- No food or gifts should be given or bought on a trip
- Do not take photographs of pupils unless asked to do so by the teacher, using school equipment.
- If on a trip, do not discuss your child's progress with the class teacher
- Parents should not approach children to discuss issues between their child and another child. Report concerns to the class teacher.

**APPENDIX 2  
GLOSSARY OF TERMS-**

Throughout our policy the term ‘child’ should be taken to mean any young person under the age of 18.

The term ‘staff’ should be taken to mean any responsible adult i.e. professional, auxiliary or ancillary workers in our schools as well as any voluntary workers.

**APPENDIX 3 CONTACT ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

<p><b><u>ST. MARY’S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT</u></b> Telephone – 028 79 386360 Website – <a href="http://www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk">www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b><u>COUNCIL FOR CATHOLIC MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (CCMS)</u></b> Omagh Diocesan Office Telephone 028 82 255326</p>
<p><b><u>NSPCC</u></b> Telephone 0808 800 5000 Website: <a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b><u>CHILDLINE</u></b> Telephone 0800 1111 Website: <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b><u>PSNI (Central Referral Unit CRU)</u></b> Central Referral Unit (CRU) (028) 90259299</p> <p><b><u>EMERGENCY</u></b> <u>999</u></p> <p><b><u>NON-EMERGENCY</u></b> <u>101</u></p> <p><b><u>CARE UNIT</u></b> Maghera Telephone 028 79642222</p>	<p><b><u>CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES GATEWAY – CHILDREN’S SOCIAL WORK SERVICES</u></b> Regional Emergency Social Work Service If you are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child, call Gateway to Children’s Social Work Service. Telephone: 0300 1234 333</p> <p>If you need social work assistance outside of office hours: Telephone: 028 9504 9999</p>
<p><b><u>EDUCATION AUTHORITY</u></b> <b><u>Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)</u></b> Telephone: 028 95985590</p>	<p><b><u>FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES</u></b> <b><u>MAGHERAFELT</u></b> Telephone 028 79301700</p>

## If you have a concern about a child:

Article 19 of UNCRC "Every child has the right to be protected from harm"

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

I can talk to the child's teacher.  
Please call the school on **(028)79 386360** to make an appointment

If I am still concerned, I can talk to any adult who is responsible for child protection  
Designated Officer Mrs C McWilliams  
Deputy Designated Officer Mrs M Fegan  
Deputy Designated Officer Mrs F McGill  
Please call the school on **(028)79 386360**

Mrs Margaret Fegan  
Deputy Designated  
Teacher



Mrs Claire McWilliams  
Designated Teacher



Mrs Fiona McGill  
Deputy Designated  
Teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the  
Principal Mrs Mary McCann  
Please call the school on **02879386360** to make an appointment



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the  
Chair of the Board of Governors, Mr Karl Diamond  
Please call **02879 386259**



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman  
Tel: **0800 343 424**

*At any time, I can contact: Social services –Gateway*  
During Office Hours **0300 1234 333**  
Out of hours, weekends and public holidays **028 9504 9999**  
**Police (Central Referral Unit CRU) 028 90259299**  
**Educ. Auth. NE Region 028 94482223**



# Addendum

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy COVID 19

### Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection during Home Learning

#### 1. CONTEXT

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

#### 2. PROCEDURES

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

In addition the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety:

- The school email address, teachers' email addresses, main school phone number and an emergency mobile number have been made available to all parents and shared as a reminder on Seesaw. Parents have been informed that the DT is available at all times on this number.
- Teachers provide online learning via the class Seesaw and Teams with strict procedures in place to minimise risk.
- The website provides parents with a range of links to additional online learning, support and guidance.
- We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.
- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the EA CPSS, teachers may make phone calls to parents. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding team.
- If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff

#### 3. ONLINE SAFETY

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing or platforms recommended by and available via C2K.

- Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleep wear during the session.
- Students cannot participate from a bedroom.

- The teacher arranges the session and password and shares this only with pupils.
- Pupils must agree not to share the password with anyone else.
- Parental consent will be sought before their child attends online sessions.
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school.
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

**If there is a breach to any of these procedures e.g. pupil gives the password to someone else who joins the group the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.**

#### **4. HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN**

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the safeguarding team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

#### **5. IF SCHOOL IS OPEN DURING COVID-19 CLOSURES**

If school is open for vulnerable pupils and key workers children the school will adhere to EA guidance.

If our school is part of a cluster of schools which are open we will share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Teacher and/or Principal. In accordance with our Child Protection procedures this information will be shared on a need to know basis.

In any event, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

#### **6. HOW A CHILD CAN RAISE A CONCERN**

We know that while many children will be enjoying their time at home and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our children and young people:

- Respond to emails via the c2k email addresses only.
- Posts, comments and communication will be maintained through the use of Seesaw.
- When contacting parents via phone we will always ask about the child's well being during home learning.

#### **7. SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER AND OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES**

School telephone – 029 79 386360

During home learning, all school calls will be diverted to the school mobile.

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>

- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

#### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Safeguarding team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the period of Covid-19 school closure in line with Departmental guidance and advice.