**St. Patrick’s P.S.**

**Hilltown**

# Child Protection Policy



**13, Castlewellan Road, Hilltown, Co. Down BT34 5UY**

**Ratified by Board of Governors: March 2022**

**VISION STATEMENT AND SCHOOL AIMS**

**Vision Statement**

St Patrick’s will provide a well ordered and caring environment in which the children can work and play. As part of a believing community committed to a Catholic way of life, we believe that all are equal in the sight of God and that each child should have the opportunity to ‘walk tall’ within themselves, knowing that they are important, whatever their individual talents and abilities. We strive to work in conjunction with the home and parish so that children grow in their own self-esteem and develop an attitude of caring for and sharing with others, as well as cultivating a healthy tolerance for everyone’s beliefs, respect for their property and their environment. We encourage shared responsibility among the pupils and promote a positive attitude to discipline by actively encouraging qualities like patience, gentleness and a sense of ‘fair play’. We expect our pupils to work hard and for parents to assist us in laying the important foundations for future learning.

**School Aims**

**In our school we aim to:**

* Create a safe, enjoyable learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
* Implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
* Help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
* Value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
* Encourage pupils to respect themselves and others, and to support and care for one another;
* Equip our children with the necessary life skills, to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
* Develop and strengthen each pupil’s understanding and love of Catholic values, by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
* Endorse the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention; and
* Involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school, and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

**Rationale for this Policy**

St Patrick’s Primary School is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life. We are a Rights Respecting School and this policy is in line with Articles 6, 9 and 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 6: ‘Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential’.

Article 9: ‘Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm’.

Article 19: ‘Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

**1. Child Protection Ethos**

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

# 2. Principles

The general principles which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and which are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” Circular 2017/04 (amended September 2019,updated June 2020 and June 2022) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures(2017).

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

* It is a child’s right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
* We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
* In any incident the child’s welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.
* A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child’s interest must always come first.

**3. Other Relevant Policies**

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

* Behaviour Policy
* Anti-Bullying
* Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
* Special Educational Needs
* Educational Visits
* First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
* Health and Safety Policy
* Relationships and Sexuality Education
* Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
* E Safety
* Intimate Care

These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact the School Principal or visit the school website at [www.stpatrickspshilltown.com](http://www.stpatrickspshilltown.com)

4. **School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team

* Designated Teacher (Mrs O Reavey)
* Deputy Designated Teacher (Ms McNeill)
* Principal (Mrs Smith)
* Designated Governor for Child Protection (Mrs Anne Marie O’Hagan)
* Chair of the Board of Governors (Mr Eugene Byrne)

**5. Roles And Responsibilities**

**Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

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

* The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
* Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
* Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
* Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg Family Support Hubs.
* Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
* Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
* Keeping the school Principal informed.
* Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school’s child protection policy.
* The promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
* Compiling written reports to the BoG regarding child protection

**Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

The role of the DDT is to work co-operatively with the DT in fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

It is important that the DDT works in partnership with the DT so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

**5.2 The School Principal**

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

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

It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the DTs to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role.

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

**5.3 The Designated Governor for Child Protection**

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

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

**5.4 The Chair of the Board of Governors**

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

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school’s own policies and procedures.

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

**5.5 Other Members of School Staff**

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

They should remember the 5 Rs: *Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record* and *Refer*

**The member of staff must:**

* refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal
* listen to what is being saidwithout displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
* act promptly
* make a concise written record of a child’s disclosure using the actual words of the child (**Appendix 1 Note of Concern**)
* Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
* **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
* **Not** investigate
* **Not** ask leading questions

**In addition, the Class Teacher should:**

* Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self-harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts.

The Designated/Deputy Designated teacher will immediately follow the school’s child protection procedures.

**5.6 Parents**

Parents should play their part in safeguarding by:

* telephoning the school on the morning of their child’s absence, or sending in a note on the child’s return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child’s situation;
* informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
* letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
* familiarising themselves with the School’s Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies

* reporting to the office when they visit the school
* raising concerns, they have in relation to their child with the school

**5.7 The Board of Governors**

* A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
* A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools.

* They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
* Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
* Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
* The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
* The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
* The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
* There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.

* All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19 and Circular 2013/01
* They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
* The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

6. **CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS**

# Definition of Harm

(*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and young People in Northern Ireland August 2017*)

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

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

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

Harm can be caused by:

**Physical abuse**

**Emotional abuse**

**Neglect**

**Sexual abuse**

**Exploitation**

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of forms, including, hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

**Emotional Abuse** 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. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying-including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones-by a child’s peers.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for 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 suffer from other types of abuse.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse {including via e-technology}. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**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.

**6.3 Specific Types of Abuse:**

**Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People**

Child sexual exploitationis a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Children Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in **section 7** of this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority’sDesignated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved. The above guidance follows DE Circular 2022/02: Children Who Display Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

**Domestic Violence**

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

* Psychological
* Physical
* Sexual
* Financial
* Emotional

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

* Nervousness
* Low self-worth
* Disturbed sleep patterns
* Nightmares / flashbacks
* Physiological – stress / nerves
* Stomach pain
* Bed wetting
* Immature / needy behaviour
* Temper tantrums
* Aggression
* Internalising distress or withdrawal
* Truancy
* Alcohol and drugs
* Bullying

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

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

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

**Operation Encompass**

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

When the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day, to share this information with a member of the safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete the online Operation Encompass training, so they able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

**6.5 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators**

### Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

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

### Neglect

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

**6.4 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators**

### Sexual Abuse

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

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

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

**7. Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse**

**7.1 How a Parent can make a Complaint**

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child’s development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or any member of the school’s safeguarding team: the Principal, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2**.

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

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate as this is the responsibility of Social Services and/or PSNI. Staff should report these concerns immediately to the Designated/Deputy Teacher and full notes should be made. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest 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 parent will be informed immediately.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher may consult with members of the school’s safeguarding team, the Education Authority’s Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team 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 prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made, the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team and a copy will be kept in the school’s child protection file.

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

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 3**.

**7.3 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school’s staff**

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

If a complaint is made against the Principal the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that necessary action is taken.

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

Child protection procedures as outlined in Appendix 4 will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 4**

**Consent**

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

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

**8. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings**

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

**9. Confidentiality And Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

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

**10. Record Keeping**

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

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

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

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

**11. SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

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

**12. Code Of Conduct For all Staff Paid Or Unpaid**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

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

**13. Staff Training**

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

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

**14. The Preventative Curriculum**

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through PDMU and the Grow In Love/Alive O Programme and there is a permanent child protection notice board at the main entrance to the school and relevant information in each classroom and throughout the school, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent or child may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in the staff room.

Other initiatives, which address child protection and safety issues:

Helping Hand

Speak Out, Stay Safe Programme

Anti-bullying week

PANTS - NSPCC

**15. Monitoring And Evaluation**

The Safeguarding Team in St. Patrick’s will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

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

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

Date Policy Reviewed:  **March 2022**

Signed:

**Orla Reavey**  (Designated Teacher)

Geraldine Smith (Principal)

Eugene P. Byrne (Chair of Board of Governors)

**Appendix 1**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**

**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

|  |
| --- |
| Name of Pupil: |
| Year Group: |
| Date, time of incident / disclosure: |
| Circumstances of incident / disclosure: |
| Nature and description of concern: |
| Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom: |
| Action taken at the time: |
| Details of any advice sought, from whom and when: |
| Any further action taken: |
| Written report passed to Designated Teacher: Yes: No:  If ‘No’ state reason: |
| Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher: |
| Written note from staff member placed on pupil’s Child Protection file  If ‘No’ state reason: |

**Name of Staff Member making the report: Date:**

**Signature of Staff Member: Date:**

**Signature of Designated Teacher: Date:**

**Appendix 2**

**If a parent has a potential child protection concern within the school**

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

I can talk to the class teacher

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the designated teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Orla Reavey, the deputy designated teacher for child protection,

Ms Maeve Mc Neil

or the Principal, Mrs Geraldine Smith

If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the

Chairperson of the Board of Governors,

Mr Eugene Byrne

At any time a parent can talk to a Social Worker at the Gateway Team

**Tel:** **0800 7837745** {Free Phone from a Landline}

Or can contact the PSNI Central Referral Unit **101**

If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart, and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school’s complaints policy. This policy should culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

If a parent has a concern about a child’s safety or suspect child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children’s Services Gateway Team

**Appendix 3**

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

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must act promptly.

Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.

CONTACT NUMBERS

Southern Health & Social Care Trust:

**028 37567100**

PSNI Public Protection Unit:

**101**

Staff member discusses concerns with the designated teacher or deputy designated teacher in her absence and provides Note of Concern.

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

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

**Child Protection referral is not required**

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parents/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children’s Services Gateway team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person’s consent (where appropriate}

**Child Protection referral is required**

Designated teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children’s Services Gateway team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk.

She submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

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

**Appendix 4**

**Dealing With Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff**

**Key Points**

Lead Individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of BoG as appropriate

**Guidance on next steps**

Lead Individual then:

Establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion

**Possible Outcomes**

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

Allegation addressed through relevant Disciplinary Procedures

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection Procedures imposed

Alternatives to Precautionary Suspension imposed

Precautionary Suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded

**ST PATRICK’S PRIMARY SCHOOL, HILLTOWN**

**PASTORAL CARE: CHILD PROTECTION**

**HOW CAN A PUPIL EXPRESS A CONCERN IN SCHOOL**

I am worried about something that is happening to me or to

someone that I know

I can talk to my class teacher or any adult that works in our school

I can talk to any teacher

I can talk to Mrs Smith, Mrs Reavey or Ms McNeill

I can call Childline 08001111/ Text Free 0900400222 or NSPCC

**Pastoral Care in Schools**

**Child Protection**

**How a parent can express a concern**

**I have a concern about my/ a child**

**I can talk to the class teacher**

**If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Orla Reavey and in her absence the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection Ms Maeve McNeill**

**If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Principal: Mrs Geraldine Smith**

**If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr Eugene Byrne**

**At any time, I can talk to the Social worker at the Gateway Team Ph:0800 783 7745**

**Or the PSNI Public Protection Unit ‘E’ District Phone: 101**