



ANAHILT
Primary School

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

NOVEMBER 2023

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The following policy is based on the 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools 2017', 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016', DENI circular (2015/13), and the 'Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Policy and Procedures 2005'.

The systems in place for safeguarding children involve joint working and shared decision making by the professionals and agencies involved. Children's needs must always come first.

SCHOOL ETHOS

In Anahilt Primary School our pupils are at the heart of everything we do. It is a happy and welcoming place where children's learning and personal development are central. In Anahilt, we recognise that we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our 'Pastoral Care' policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our pupils can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, both 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 and outlines referral procedures within our school.

One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and by acquiring the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The staff (teaching and non-teaching) of Anahilt have also adopted a **Code of Conduct** (Refer to Staff Code of Conduct which assists staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct).

The **purpose** of the following procedures on safeguarding and child protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school including volunteers – have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected or disclosed. The overriding concern of all adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. Child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school.

PRINCIPLES

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools (2017)', Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

The following principles form the basis of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

- In any incident the child's or young person's **welfare is paramount**, this overrides all other considerations;
- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously; **(Articles 12 and 19: United Nation Conventions on the Rights of a Child);**
- 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;
- An appropriate balance should be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interests must always come first. All efforts should be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety;
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met. Sound decision-making depends on the fullest possible understanding of the child or young person's circumstances and their needs. This involves effective information sharing, strong organisational governance and leadership, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals and professionals;
- Decisions and actions taken must be considered, well informed, and based on outcomes that are sensitive to, and take into account, the child's specific circumstances, risks to which they are exposed, and their assessed needs.

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:

- Social Media Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- eSafety and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

These policies are available to parents/carers. Any parent/carer requiring a copy should contact the school office or visit the school website. (www.anahiltprimary.co.uk)

LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

There is a broad range of international and domestic legislation relating to child welfare and protection. Details of all relevant legislation are set out in Annex A of the Department of Education Northern Ireland's document, '**Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide**

for Schools (2017)'. Schools must be aware of their responsibilities; however, as a starting point schools must be aware of the following:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;
- The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003;
- Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007;
- The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011;
- The Public Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016;
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016);
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020 and subsequent action plans;
- Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Prevention in Partnership.

OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mr A Smyth (Principal)
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs A McCune (Vice Principal)
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mr J Harshaw
Deputy Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mrs H Annett

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The responsibilities of the team should include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school;
- Support for the Designated Teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post;
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements;
- The Safeguarding Team should review their child protection/ safeguarding practices annually using the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) pro-forma entitled 'Guidance for the evaluation of child protection/safeguarding'. Phase and sector appropriate versions of the pro-forma (which is annually reviewed and updated) and other information from ETI is available on the ETI website. (www.etini.gov.uk/articles/safeguarding)

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 places a statutory duty on Boards of Governors (BoG) to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- have a written Child Protection Policy; and
- specifically address the prevention of bullying in school behaviour management policies.

All Governors should have initial Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) child protection training with the Chair and Designated Governor for Child Protection undertaking full CPSS training. All Governors should undertake refresher Child Protection training every term of office (four years).

Boards of Governors must ensure that:

- 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;
- 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 behaviour;
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every three 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;
- 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 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

Record keeping should include:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns;
- Disclosures of abuse;
- Complaints against staff; and
- Staff induction and training.

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THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The chair of the Board of Governors should ensure that:

- He/ she has received appropriate Education Authority training;
- A safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment;
- The school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools {CPSSS} and the Governor Support and Human Resource departments;
- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- He/she assumes lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the school Principal;
- That the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity;
- The Record of Child Abuse Complaints is signed and dated annually even if there have been no entries.

THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN / CHILD PROTECTION

The Designated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection should avail of safeguarding and child protection awareness training delivered by CPSSS and will take the lead in child protection issues in order to advise the Governors on:

- the role of the Designated Teachers;
- the content of the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy';
- 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 and vetting of staff.

THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal will assist the Board of Governors 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 the Department of Education is 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.

The Principal must ensure that:

- He attends training on managing safeguarding and child protection;
- A Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed;
- All staff receive Safeguarding and Child Protection training annually;
- There is protected time and support to allow the Designated Teachers (DTs) to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role;
- All necessary referrals are procedurally correct;
The Chair of the Board of Governors is kept informed
- Safeguarding and child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates and annual reports are provided;
- The school's Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy/summary of this policy at least once every two years;
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis;
- New staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction.

THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The designated teacher must:

- Avail of training so that he is aware of duties, responsibilities and roles;
- Organise induction and training for all staff (whole school training);
- Lead in the development of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents/carers;
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements for parents/carers;
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate;
- Liaise with the Education Authority's (EA) Designated Officers for Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Maintain records of all safeguarding / child protection concerns;

- Promote a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school;
- Provide a written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection.

THE DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling her responsibilities.

It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required. Deputy Designated Teachers are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

ALL MEMBERS OF SCHOOL STAFF

Staff should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations (see Annex A of DE NI Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Schools Guide 2017), including reporting of offences - Section 5 of the **Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence. This includes crimes against children.

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

Staff should remember the 5 Rs:

- *Receive;*
- *Reassure;*
- *Respond;*
- *Record;* and
- *Refer.*

Staff must:

- Refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teachers for Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Listen to what is being said without 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;
- 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 behaviours, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

We 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 Teacher and Deputy Designated teachers will immediately follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.

PARENTS/CARERS

References to 'parent' have the same meaning as anyone with 'Parental Responsibility' as defined in the Article 6 of the Children Order ie 'all rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property'. In practical terms, it means the responsibility to care for, and the right to make important decisions about, the child.

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents/carers who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. As part of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents/carers, the school will help parents/carers to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the children in its charge.

It should be clear that the school will always protect the best interests of the child and, in cases of suspected abuse, may refer cases direct to the investigative agencies. It is important that parents take time to read policies and know they are required to inform the school:

- If the child has a medical condition or educational need;
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child;
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility;

More information on parental/carer responsibility can be found on the EA website at:

www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/

Parents/carers should play their part in safeguarding by:

- Informing 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 other school policies relevant to Safeguarding and Child Protection. **(Refer to Other Relevant Policies on page 2)**
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school;
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

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

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

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from ‘**Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016**’.

TYPES OF ABUSE

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 persistent 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. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

These types of abuse detailed above apply equally to children with disabilities but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status.

Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

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;
- virtual.

Symptoms which young people may display when suffering domestic violence and abuse which are indicators may include:

- nervousness;
- no 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 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.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE: POSSIBLE INDICATORS

Observation of signs and symptoms of possible abuse can do no more than give rise to concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. It must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological, or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. However, teachers and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and be alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are repeated regularly.

Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he/she must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher who has specific responsibility for safeguarding / child protection.

It is imperative that any disclosure by a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk, is reported **immediately** to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk of the child at home. Contact details for the PSNI Central Referral Unit and Duty Social Workers can be found in the 'Contacts Section'.

Pupils who are the victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties which may require a holistic assessment of need to determine appropriate levels and types of intervention

It is always preferable to prevent abuse or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage.

All school staff are well placed to observe outward symptoms which may be due to child abuse.

Physical Abuse

<i>Physical Indicators</i>	<i>Behavioural Indicators</i>
unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing; grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; cigarette burns; unexplained fractures; lacerations or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – 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 artwork or stories.

Emotional Abuse

<i>Physical Indicators</i>	<i>Behavioural Indicators</i>
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;	apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family;

<p>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).</p>	<p>indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental/carer liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.</p>
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Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>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.</p>	<p>tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.</p>

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>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; abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE unexplained pregnancy anorexia/gross over-eating.</p>	<p>withdrawn; chronic depression; children having knowledge beyond their years e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts; 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 artwork or stories; exposure to pornographic material.</p>

THE FOLLOWING ARE GUIDELINES FOR USE BY STAFF SHOULD A CHILD DISCLOSE CONCERNS OF A CHILD PROTECTION NATURE.

Do:	Do not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask leading questions. • Put words into the child's mouth. • Ignore the child's behaviour. • Remove any clothing. • Panic. • Promise to keep secrets. • Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily. • Delay. • Start to investigate. • Do Nothing.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the school's Designated Teacher/Deputy Teacher for Safeguarding/Child Protection.

TALKING TO CHILDREN WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's non-teaching staff sees such signs, he/ she should immediately bring them to the attention of either the class teacher or the Designated Teacher, and it may be appropriate for the necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher.

Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family is in need of intervention by statutory, voluntary or community-based services through a 'child in need' referral (with parental/carer consent).

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some circumstances, talking to the child will quickly clarify initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred, and point to the need for an immediate referral. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore, be kept to a minimum:

- Staff should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- Staff should not, therefore, ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?"
- The priority at this stage is to actively listen to the child, and not to interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is freely recalling significant events (*the child must not be asked to unnecessarily recount the experience of abuse*), and as soon as possible afterwards to make a record of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher, using for example, the template 'Note of Concern' from the DE 'Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools' circular 2016/20. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but ***under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed, nor a photograph taken.***
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred, should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used.
- Staff should not give the child undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should, of course, reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.
- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings. It should be emphasised that lack of proper records will not, of itself, exempt the school from any subsequent requirement to give evidence in court. *It is therefore essential that accurate contemporaneous records are maintained.*
- Staff should **not** ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

PROCEDURES FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS IN RELATION TO CHILD ABUSE

How a parent/carer can make a complaint. We aim to work closely with parents/carers in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent/carer may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent/carer 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 Teachers for Safeguarding and Child Protection. If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent/carer may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit.

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.

If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is duty bound to make a referral.

In all cases where symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or about the welfare of the child, the teacher or other member of staff should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher and keep notes of the concern or disclosure. 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.

A parent or other carer may also give information to a member of staff of the school which gives rise to concern about possible child abuse by someone outside the school, or by a person working in the school in a volunteer capacity. The person making the complaint should be advised of their responsibility to refer to the local Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team. The staff member should also inform the Designated Teacher responsible for Child Protection matters in the school who will refer, if necessary to the appropriate statutory authorities.

In order to form a view on whether a child or children may indeed be being abused, or at risk of possible abuse, the Principal/DT/DDT may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information, or from others who may have relevant information.

While such clarification will often help to confirm or allay concerns...

it is not the responsibility of teachers and other education staff to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse, or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child's family or other carers.

The 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. The parent/carer will be informed of the referral unless it is considered this action may place the child/children at risk of harm.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher may consult with the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection (Child Protection Support Service) or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Education Authority's Designated Officer the child's details may be shared. 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. He/she will also notify the EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team with a copy sent to the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection and a copy will be kept in the school's child protection file.

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

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.

Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff. Refer to DE Circular 2015/13.

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/Deputy Designated Teacher).

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the 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.

Process

Principals and Boards of Governors have a duty of care for the welfare of pupils. and any allegation needs to be effectively evaluated and managed. However, as employers, they also have a duty of care to their staff and should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

All allegations should be reported immediately, normally to the Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. A Lead Individual should be identified to manage the handling of the allegation from the outset. This would normally be the Principal or a designated senior member of staff. If the Principal is the subject of concern, the allegation should be reported immediately to the Chair of the Board of Governors, Deputy Chairperson, Designated Governor for Child Protection and the person about to be the Lead Individual.

In the interests of all involved the issue should be dealt with as a priority and unnecessary delays should be avoided. Every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity must be made. Allegations should not be shared with other staff or children.

All allegations of a child abuse nature must be recorded in the hard backed and bound Record of Child Abuse Complaint, which must be retained securely. A record of this should be placed on the relevant pupil's Child Protection File. For more information on recording of child protection complaints see DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF ABUSE (Refer to DE NI document 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools' 2017)

Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children and young people, through the **Personal Development** element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It must also be borne in mind that sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the school's positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be identified as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. More details on each type of behaviour can be found in **DE Circular 2016/05 'Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour'**.

Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting.

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required.

The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when: There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim.

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

- Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and schools should refer to their own child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

eSAFETY AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern. **(Refer to our eSafety and Internet Acceptable Use Policy for further details).**

ATTENDANCE AT 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.

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.

RECORD KEEPING

The school has a responsibility to create and retain accurate and reliable records to demonstrate accountability for decisions and actions taken. All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked cabinet. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child and are only accessible by members of the Safeguarding Team.

It is essential that an accurate record of all cases of child abuse, or possible abuse, is maintained detailing all actions taken. DE Circular 2016/20 provides a framework for managing child protection records in order to ensure that schools create and retain reliable records to demonstrate accountability for decisions and actions taken.

Files must not be removed from school premises except when taken to a case planning meeting or on foot of a court order. A record should be kept of when information is removed, by whom, for what purpose, and when it is returned.

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

Refer to Departmental Guidance;

- DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping School;
- DE Circular 2015/13 Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff;
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995; and
- Data Protection Act 1998. and guidance in DE Circular 2016/20.

RECRUITMENT, VETTING AND INDUCTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals gaining access to children through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted and supervised as appropriate.

Anahilt Primary School's recruitment and selection of staff strictly follows the recommendations and guidance provided by **the Department of Education**.

TEMPORARY TEACHING POSTS

In accordance with **DE Circular 2006/07** only teachers who are on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register (**NISTR**) should be employed. All teachers on the register have been subject to the vetting procedure and no further checks are required. Schools are not permitted to employ any teacher not registered. It should be noted that compliance will be monitored by the Department of Education.

Access NI Clearance

DE Circular 2013/01 (updated September 2015) sets out vetting requirements for schools.

Volunteers

There are two types of volunteers working in schools: those who work unsupervised and those who work under supervision. Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an EDC. A volunteer who works under supervision is not required to obtain an EDC, however, schools/ organisations must determine whether the level of supervision meets the statutory standard - see **DE Circular 2012/19**.

Visitors to Schools

Visitors to schools, such as parents/carers, suppliers of goods and services, to carry out maintenance etc., do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require.

Visitors should:

- Report to the school office;
- Be signed in and out of the school by the school secretary;
- If appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school;
- Where possible, be escorted by a member of staff eg caretaker;
- Be clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes;
- Have access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit;
- If delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF PAID OR UNPAID

All actions concerning children must uphold the best interests of the child 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 in their charge must be above reproach.

The school's staff **code of conduct** is available on request.

STAFF TRAINING

We are committed to in-service training for our entire staff (teaching and non-teaching). 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 will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

NEW STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

As part of the recruitment process, unsupervised volunteers are vetted by 'AccessNI' in accordance with Department of Education recommendations.

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

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS/CARERS

The staff will work alongside parents/carers in the best interests of the child. Any concerns identified within school regarding any child will be shared with the parents/carers. In most cases a referral to Social Services and or PSNI will be discussed with parents/carers, unless it is considered that the child may be at risk by informing them. The staff have a statutory duty to report to statutory agencies if they have concerns.

THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

The statutory **personal development curriculum** requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours.

In recent years, the use of "keeping safe messages" have become more widely used to denote the proactive promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils within and across the broader school community. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional, and health issues, developing the confidence, resiliencies and coping skills of pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing certain difficulties.

Schools are well-placed to teach pupils how to develop healthy relationships, and to make informed choices in their lives so that they can protect themselves.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and class teaching.

A flow diagram of how a child can get support is also on display in the school.

As an integral part of our delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (particularly in the area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) the staff plan and deliver lessons to raise the pupils' awareness of how they can keep themselves safe from abuse.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION / REVIEW OF POLICY

Our 'Safeguarding Team' will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually (Next review: Autumn term 2024).

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.

A summary of this policy will be presented to parents/carers on an annual basis.



ANAHILT
Primary School

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF CONCERN

This form (when completed) should be presented to the school's Designated Teacher for Safeguarding children and Child Protection.

Name of Pupil:	Class:	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: If 'No' state reason:	Yes	No
Date & time of report to the Designated Teacher:		
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file: If 'No' state reason:	Yes	No

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____

Date: _____

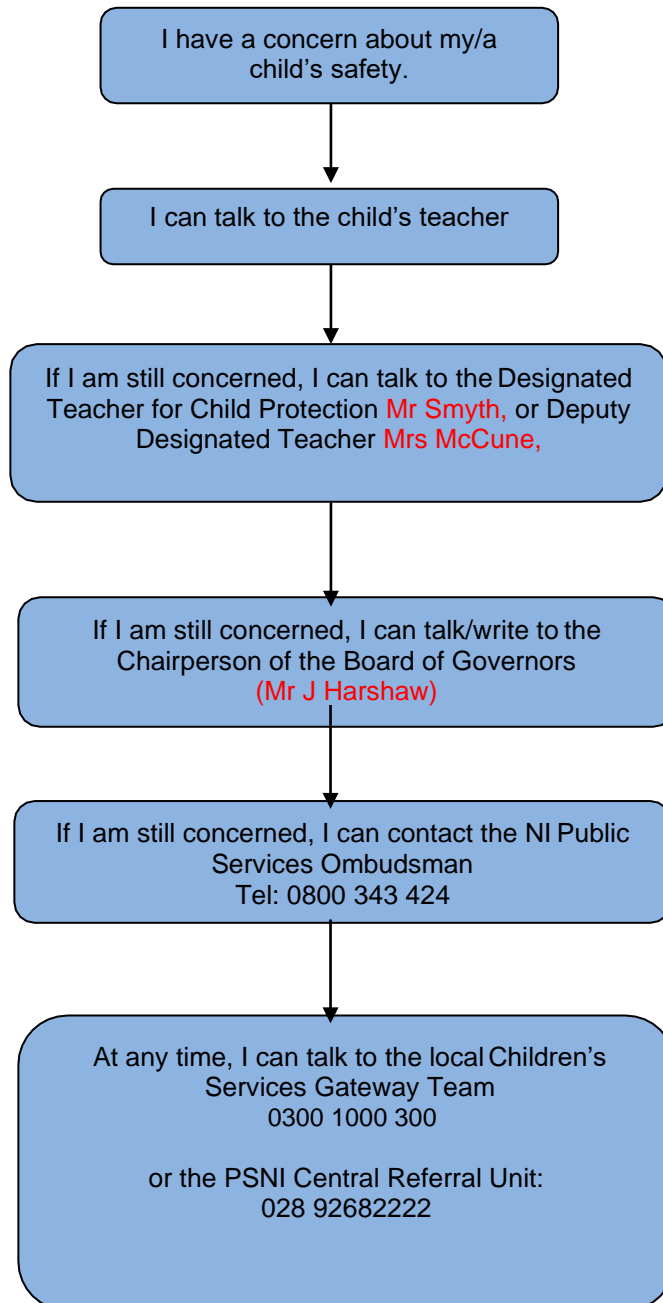
Signature of Designated Teacher: _____

Date: _____



CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

How a parent/carer can raise a concern about Child Protection.





CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff

Refer to the Department of Education N.I.'s Circular 2015/13

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.

Precautionary suspension is not appropriate, and the matter is concluded.

Circular 2015/13:
7.1

Allegation addressed through relevant Disciplinary Procedures.

Circular 2015/13
7.2

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection Procedures imposed

Circular 2015/13
7.3

Alternatives to Precautionary Suspension imposed

Circular 2015/13
7.4

Our Child Protection Safeguarding Team is as follows:

Designated Teacher:

Mr A Smyth

Deputy Designated Teacher:

Mrs A McCune

Governor with Child Protection Responsibilities:

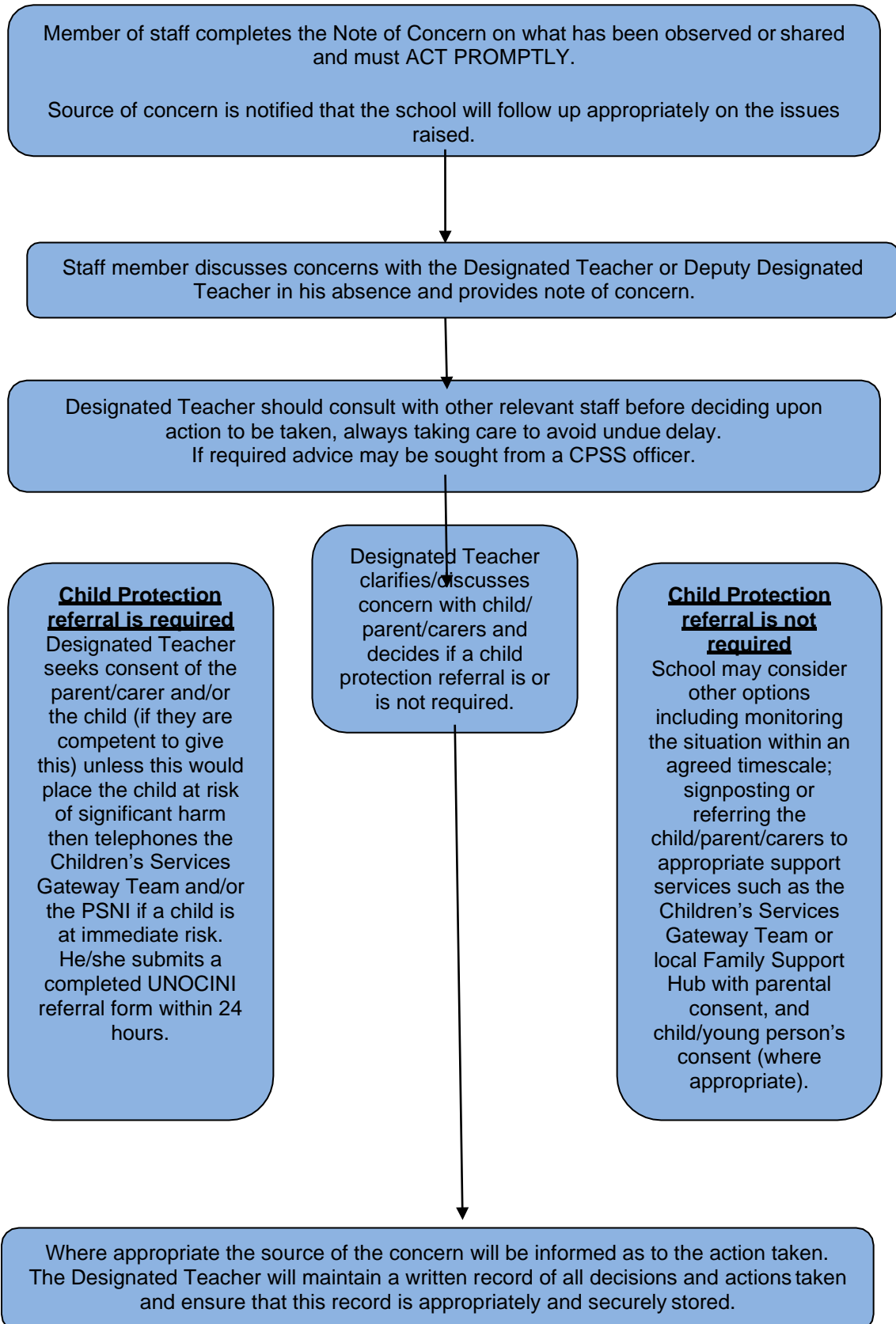
Mr J Harshaw

Deputy Designated Governor for Child Protection:

Mrs H Annett



PROCEDURE WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS CONCERNS OR HAS BEEN GIVEN CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF STAFF



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION CONTACTS

Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)

EA OFFICES	CONTACT
Belfast	028 9056 4289
Antrim	028 9448 2223
Dundonald	028 9056 6216
Armagh	028 3834 1975
Omagh	028 8241 1461

Duty Social Worker Gateway Team (Health & Social Care Trusts)

GATEWAY TEAMS	CONTACT NUMBER
Belfast	028 9050 7000
Northern	0300 1234 333
South-eastern	0300 1000 300
Southern	028 3741 5285
Western	028 8283 5156
Regional Emergency Social Work Service / Out of Hours for All Areas	028 9504 9999

PSNI

The **Central Referral Unit (CRU)** based in Antrim Road PSNI Station is part of the Public Protection Unit and is the central referral point for child sexual and physical abuse allegations.

The office is open Monday to Friday 8 am to 9 pm and weekends and public holidays 9 am to 5 pm.

PSNI Public Protection Unit: Telephone: 028 90 25 92 99
(101 Ext 30299)