



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Botanic Primary School and Nursery
Unit

Designated Teacher for Child Protection
Mrs G Lonyai

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
Miss E Murray, Miss R Dickson

Date ratified by BOG:

December 2009
Revised 2012 and 2014, 2018,
2021, 2023

Contents

Introduction	4
The Safeguarding Team	5
What is Child Abuse/Symptoms of Child Abuse	6
Bullying	9
Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse	11
How to respond to a child who makes a disclosure	13
Operation Encompass	14
Supporting vulnerable children	15
Complaint against a staff member	16
Role of Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT)	18
How a parent can raise a concern	22
School vetting procedures	23
Code of conduct for all staff	23
The Preventative Curriculum	23
Physical Restraint	24
Health and Safety	24
The Internet and Digital Technologies	24
Photography & Images of Children	25
Educational Trips / visits	25
Intimate Care	25
Extended Schools Programme	26

Reviewing our Child Protection Policy	26
Appendix 1. Guidance for Volunteers	27
Appendix 2. Code of Conduct for all Staff	31
Appendix 3 Intimate Care Not and Intimate Care Permission	35
Appendix 4 Permission for photographs, ICT, Botanic Gardens and the PEC	37
Appendix 5 Recording a safeguarding concern (Staff internal use only)	38

INTRODUCTION

The governors and staff of Botanic Primary School fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children and work in the knowledge that this begins with preventative education. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999); Cooperating to Safeguard children and young people. (DHSSPSNI, revised 2017) and the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005), Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools; a guide for schools, (2017).

Key Principals of Safeguarding and Child Protection:

The central thrust of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decision concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration*. The 'paramountcy' of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

The safeguarding and Child Protection guide for schools (DoE 2017) notes the following as key principals:

The child or young person's welfare is paramount

The voice of the child or young person should be heard

Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together

Partnership – safeguarding is a shared responsibility.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse (including bullying both on and offline) or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
3. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

This policy may be translated as required.

THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT BOTANIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chair of Governors: Mrs Helen McHugh

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Miss Jayne Stewart

Principal: Mr Paul Bell

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Gemma Lonyai

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection: Miss E Murray and Miss Rebecca Dickson

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995. This policy also applies to vulnerable adults who are registered in the school to the end of their 19th year.)

Child Abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in communities, agencies and organisations. Child abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve the combination of the forms of abuse. (Managing safeguarding and child protection in schools; 5.1)

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 child protection.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse – is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. (DoE safe guarding and child protection in schools; 2017)

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractions or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

Emotional Abuse – is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called a 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 opportunity 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. DoE safeguarding and child protection in schools 2017; 5.2)

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

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. (DoE safeguarding and child protection in schools, 2017: 5.2)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes

Fear of going home

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.

Child Sexual Exploitation – Child sexual exploitation is 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 into sexual activity: a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Safeguarding and child protection in schools 2017).

Possible signs or symptoms of Child Sexual Exploitation include:

Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation

Truancy/leaving school without permission

Persistently going missing or returning home late

Change in mood

Receiving a lot of texts/phone calls prior to leaving

Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age

Physical symptoms e.g. bruising, bite marks

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 also suffer from other types of abuse. (DoE safeguarding and child protection in schools; 2017)

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing / begging

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.

Specific forms of abuse:

Domestic Abuse - includes threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial)

or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by current or former intimate partner or family member'

Female Genital Mutilation - FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

Forced Marriage - A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in N. Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person they should contact PSNI IMMEDIATELY. (Safeguarding and child protection in schools 2017; 6.5).

Warning signs within the school environment:

- **Absence or persistent absence**
- **Request for extended leave/failure to return from country of origin**
- **Surveillance by siblings/cousins**
- **Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality**
- **Poor exam results**
- **Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home**
- **Not allowed to attend extracurricular activities**
- **Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger**
- **Prevented from going on to further education.**

Bullying including cyber bullying

Bullying can be defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself.

It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, spitting, theft or damage to belongings), verbal (e.g. threats or name calling, including sectarian, homophobic or racist

name calling), online or indirect (e.g. spreading rumours, or excluding someone from social groups. DENI 1999:41)

Our anti- bullying and eSafety policies are set out in a separately and acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Staff aim to be vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both the bully and the victim will be personally contacted when bullying has been identified.

Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the DT for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or a group of small children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the DT or the class teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of privileges in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures.

E- safety/ internet abuse:

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.

The SBNI published a report in 2014 outlining the following risks;

- Content risks – the child/ young person is exposed to harmful material
- Contact risks- the child/young person participates in adult initiated online activity
- Conduct risks- the child/young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer to peer exchange
- Commercial risks – the child/young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

In Botanic Primary School, online risks have been assessed and filters have been applied by EA/C2K. In addition, all pupils receive e-safety lessons within school as part of our ICT curriculum and whole school assemblies are held as form of preventative education.

Children with limited fluency in English (Safeguarding and Child Protection in schools, 2017; 7.2)

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the opportunity to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred. The Designated Teacher will work with the SEN coordinator and EAL teacher to ensure that children feel confident to discuss matters which may be concerning them.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

The designated teacher for child protection (DT) is Mrs Gemma Lonyai. In her absence **the deputy designated teachers for child protection (DDT)** Miss Emma Murray or Miss Rebecca Dickson will assume responsibility for child protection. On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDT is in the school the Principal Mr. Paul Bell will assume responsibility for child protection.

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

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.

The DT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in line with their legal responsibilities under the Children (NI) Order 1995, the matter needs to be referred to social services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to**

make a referral to social services. Unless there are concerns that a parent/guardian may be the possible abuser, the parents/guardians will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection at the EA, or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse of a child, the DT will inform:

- Social Services - using the regional UNOCINI template (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) *
- EA Designated Officer for Child Protection

* The UNOCINI referral will be made within 24 hours of the initial telephone referral to social services.

(The referral will be placed in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL _ CHILD PROTECTION').

UNOCINI may be emailed within the secure C2K network to referrals department at the Health Trust.

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 signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

How to respond to a child who makes a disclosure

1. Receive

- Stay calm
- Listen to what the child is saying without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what the child is saying
- Be discreet

2. Reassure

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to you, **do not make promises that you cannot keep** (e.g. everything will be alright now, I'll stay with you)
- Do not promise confidentiality, staff have a duty to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection. Explain that you will need to talk to Miss Bacon who will know what to do next
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it

3. Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection
- Do ask open questions (can you tell me what happened? Anything else you wish to tell me? Yes ...)
- Do not ask closed questions (those that will evoke a yes/no response, e.g. Did _____ do this to you?). Such questions invalidate evidence where a subsequent court action is necessary.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love that person
- Do explain what you will do next (talk with the designated teacher who will know how to get help)

4. Record

- Make notes as soon as possible after hearing what the child has said and write them up
- Do not destroy these original notes
- Record the date, time place, people present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour. Record the words the child used as much as possible. – if the child uses 'pet' words record those rather than translating them into 'proper' words. Any injuries or marks noticed can be depicted on a diagram showing position and extent

- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations and assumptions.
- Sign the record and hand it to the designated teacher

(All written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately, are securely maintained, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location.)

5. Refer

- **Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the designated teacher as soon as possible within the working day.** She will liaise with the Principal in the decision making process regarding referral to statutory services.
- The DT should make the referral to social services within 24 hours (SBNI Child Protection policies and procedures 2017))
- If acknowledgement of the referral is not received from social services within 5 working days, then the DT should follow this up.
- After referral the school will cooperate with the social services investigation which can involve the provision of factual information and attendance at case conferences. (SBNI Child Protection policy and procedures 2017)

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.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, 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 school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police 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 online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

Supporting Vulnerable Children

The staff of Botanic Primary School recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn.

Botanic Primary School will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such pupils in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan. Recognising the sudden changes which have arisen due to the COVID 19 pandemic may have negative impacts on our pupils and our families, we endeavour to maintain links with our local community through online assemblies and share multi agency support information on our school website. Teachers will maintain contact with pupils and families through school closures via the seesaw app and pass any concerns to the DT or Principal. Parents are given the info@ email address to make contact with teaching staff as necessary. All contacts between staff and pupils/parents are monitored by the Principal.

During periods of sustained school closure, the Principal and DT will make contact with all vulnerable and 'looked after' children in conjunction with our community partners, e.g. social services.

Support for all pupils in the school in developing skills in self protection and developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

- The content of the curriculum, particularly Personal Development.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse

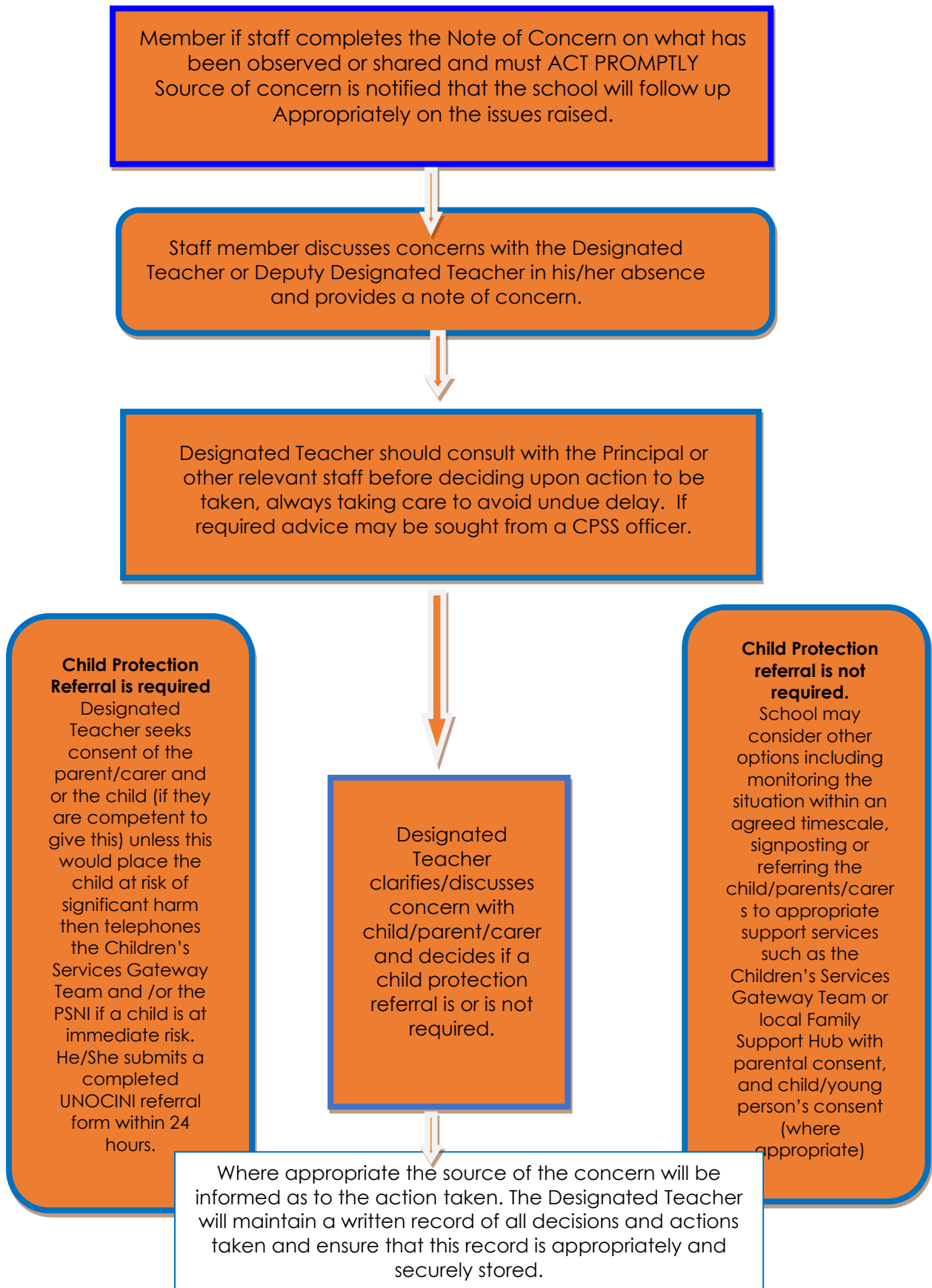
Complaint against a staff member

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the DT if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher or the Principal). Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

Process for referral are set out in the flow charts below:

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



ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT) AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER (DDT)

The DT:

- To provide training to all school staff including support staff
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for managing and keeping of all child protection concerns
- Making referrals to Social services
- Developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Liaising with EA Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Keeping the school Principal informed
- The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school's child protection policy
- Ensures parents receive a copy of the child protection policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the school on this
- Promotion of a child protection ethos in the school
- Written reports to the Board of Governors annually regarding child protection
- Maintains all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by The Safeguarding Team as appropriate)

DDT:

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

Child Protection Record Keeping:

A child protection record may be commenced if there is evidence of a safeguarding or child protection risk. The commencement of such records will be based on professional judgement of the safeguarding team. Botanic Primary recognises its duty and responsibility to record concerns and actions in relation to child protection and safeguarding in a secure and accurate manner. This file will be accessible to the DT, DDT and Principal only.

Contents of a Child Protection File:

- Chronology of events/action taken
- All records of concern
- Any notes initially recorded which should be kept securely with the child protection file
- Records of discussions and telephone calls (with colleagues, parents, children, and other agencies or services)
- Correspondence with other organisations – sent and received
- Referral form- both for support and/or specialist services (irrespective of outcome)
- Formal plans linked to the child e.g. child protection plan, child in need plan
- Risk assessments
- Risk Management Plans/Individual Safety and Support Plans
- School Reports to interagency meetings and conferences
- Minutes of interagency meetings, e.g. child in need. Strategy, child protection conference
- Any other relevant notes/papers

Storage of Child Protection Information:

Child Protection information is confidential. Records will be held in a secure, confidential filing system. This filing system is accessible only by the DT, DDT or Principal. Physical Child Protection Records will not be removed from school premises except when taken to a case planning meeting in respect of a child or as a result of a court order. Should information be taken out of school, it will be transported securely and a record kept of when it was removed, by whom, for what purpose and when it was returned. Any computing devices or data storage used to transport electronic Child Protection Records in the circumstances outlined above will be encrypted and password protected.

Botanic Primary school will comply with the DPA 2018 and GDPR regulations.

Closure, Retention and Disposal of Child Protection Records:

When a pupil leaves Botanic Primary or a child protection concern ceases to be current ongoing, the child's individual Child Protection File will be closed.

GDPR principals will guide the retention of records.

Retention Periods for Child Protection Records

Record	Retention Period
Pupil Child Protection Case Files	D.O.B + 30 years
The school's confidential Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been place on the Child Protection Register	Maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's file while he/she continues to attned. On transfer, the school should inform the new school and destroy all social services records. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B +30 years
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register	On transfer to a new school, the school should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social services including records of case conferences. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B +30years
Complaint against a member of staff Staff members file Child's child protection file Record of child Abuse complaints	Indefinitely unless totally exonerated D.O.B +30years Indefinitley

Disposal:

At the end of the agreed retention period, records will be securely disposed of, e.g. incinerated or shredded in the presence of a member of SLT, or entrusted to a firm specialising in the destruction of confidential material. Any electronically held information either within private folders or on the C2K system will be deleted in the identified timescales. Following deteion, no evidence will remain on the C2K system.

Child Potection: Record Keeping in Schools Circular 2020/07 (August 2020)

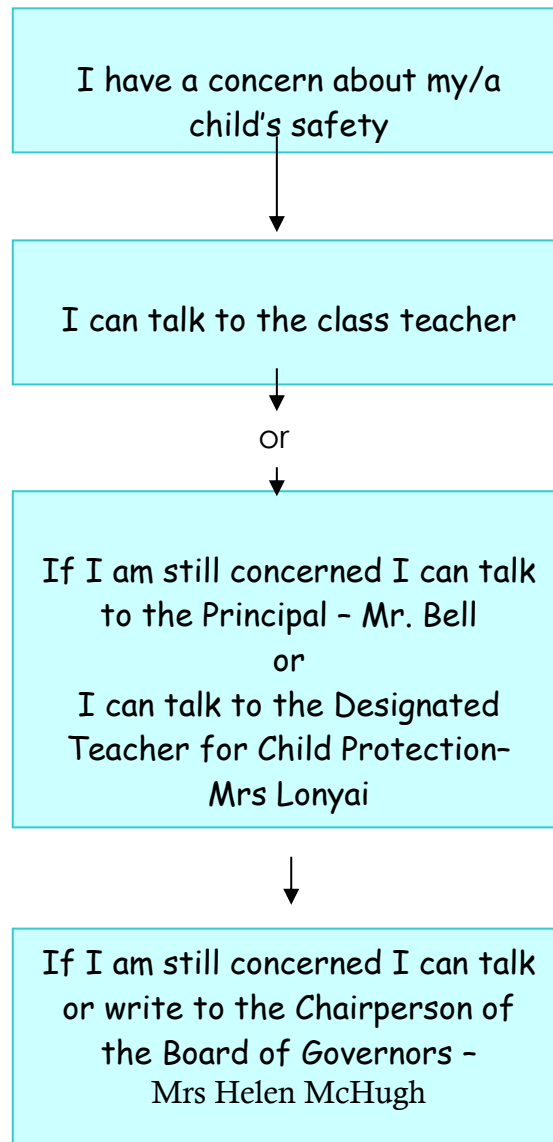
Confidentiality and Information Sharing

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. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will consider what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:



At anytime, I can write or talk to the Gateway Team (tel:90507000)
or
the Police (02890 259299) or 101

Out of hours' duty social worker (Belfast Trust): 02890 565444

BOTANIC PRIMARY SCHOOL'S VETTING PROCEDURES

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

In order that all reasonable steps are taken to employ and engage suitable staff to work with the children in our care we follow the guidance on pre-employment checking and safe recruitment practices provided by the Department of Education and have adopted the new arrangements for vetting and checking of staff prior to appointment or use as volunteers within the school:

- DE Circular 2006/06. Child Protection: Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings
- DE Circular 2006/07. Child Protection: Employment of Substitute Teachers
- DE Circular 2006/08 Child Protection: Training Requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels
- DE Circular 2006/09 Child Protection: Criminal Background Checking of Staff in Schools – Programme to Extend Coverage
- DE Circular 2006/25 Child Protection: Vetting of School Governors
- DE Circular 2008/03 Pre-Employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools – New Arrangements

Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk. Click on 'Circulars'

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF

The code of conduct is known to all staff – permanent and non-permanent and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is set out in Appendix 2

THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for Personal and Social Development which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in a separate policy (Reasonable Force Policy) in accordance with guidelines from EA. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Our policy on the internet and digital technologies (2012) is set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically, it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

Should school be closed due to COVID 19 pandemic, children will be provided with home learning packs and online teaching through the Seesaw application. All communication between staff and pupils will take place through the app alone and this will be monitored by SLT and ICT coordinators.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN

We work in line with EA guidelines. Written permission is gained from parents at the beginning of the school year to allow their children's photographs to be taken for school records, observations on seesaw or school promotion and publicity, to be used on the school website and to be used in video conferencing, video production for school records or school promotion and publicity. (See Appendix 4 for permission form)

Good practice includes the following:

- We avoid using children's names in captions for photographs
- We obtain parental permission for photographs to be taken.
- We only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Some activities - swimming and gymnastics for example – present a much greater risk of potential misuse.
- Images will not be accompanied by personal information eg 'This is X who likes to collect stamps' which could be used by individuals involved in grooming children. This is particularly important on the school website.
- Press photographers do not have unsupervised access to pupils.

In cases where parents wish for their children to be excluded from all photography, they should indicate this on the permission form sent out at the beginning of each school year.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS / VISITS

We work in line with EA 'Educational Visits Best Practice 2009' guidelines. Risk assessments are to be completed and received by the principal before the visit takes place. Risk assessments will pay particular attention to the individual needs of the class, including medical needs and special educational needs.

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

This policy outlines the procedures to be followed by school staff when involved in the intimate care of children. The policy outlines guidelines for good practice and puts in place safeguards for both staff and children. It also contains a form for parents to give their permission for children to receive intimate care in school. (See Appendix 3 for permission form)

EXTENDED SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

This is available in a separate document which is reviewed annually as funding is available.

REVIEWING OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The child protection policy will be reviewed in the autumn term annually and will incorporate guidance that has been circulated in the interim by DE.

Appendix 1

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other support staff in Botanic Primary School and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the school.

It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken, through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, either

1. Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or
2. Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips; residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Formal arrangements as to selection and vetting should not be required for volunteers who are involved outside school hours and who do not have unsupervised contact with pupils. These would include fund raisers, people using school premises for meetings etc.

Use of Volunteers

There are three main categories into which the use of volunteers might be grouped and to which guidance will apply:

- During school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- Outside school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- During school hours but not usually involving direct contact with pupils

Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance at their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

Initial Appraisal

As a minimum requirement all potential volunteers are asked to provide the following information:

- personal details

- qualifications and previous work with children
- a declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound-over Order
- a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for child protection
- agree to a criminal record being carried out
- provide the name of two referees who are not family members or members of staff in the school
- attend an interview with the school Principal with proof of identity
- Undergo an annual criminal record check through Access NI (via EA)

No individual will be admitted to the school as a volunteer until these basic steps have been completed and the results assessed.

Accepting Volunteers

Where the previous procedures have been followed as appropriate and the school is satisfied that:

- the volunteer is a suitable person to have contact with the children and has the character, skills and experience to support the work of the school in a voluntary capacity;
- well defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the volunteer to undertake and he/she is competent to undertake them;

the school will notify the individual that he/she has been accepted for voluntary duties in the school

The use of Volunteers

These are the fundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

- the purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties;
- volunteers only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff and these arrangements should be such as to minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised, access to children;
- volunteers are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment;

- volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and receive appropriate training to enable them to perform these;
- volunteers are only allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers are not being placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom;
- volunteers are not afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception might be made where a child has a medical or other condition of which all those working with the pupil should be made aware, and where agreement of the parent has been sought.

Health and Safety Insurance

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety Legislation. Botanic Primary School therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees in terms of Botanic Primary School's obligations under the legislation.

Duration

Botanic Primary School places a time limit on the period of the volunteer's service. This is done where the work earmarked for the volunteer is likely to be completed within a specific period. Where a volunteer's involvement is likely to be long term, the school advises the volunteer that he/she will be subject to a trial period, during which the Principal monitors the volunteer's effectiveness in contributing to the life and work of the school.

Information and Training

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

- the policy of the school and the management authority in relation to pastoral care and child protection, including its behaviour/discipline
- policy, including rewards and sanctions, and the extent of the volunteer's authority within it; its child protection procedures

Botanic Primary School's Health and Safety Policy

Arrangements are made for the volunteer to have a formal line of communication to S.E.N.C.O. or Vice Principal for reporting issues of concern or the welfare of the children in the school.

School Security

Botanic Primary School has drawn on the advice from the guidance Document "Security and Personal Safety in Schools" 1997 to establish arrangements for the admission and supervision of volunteers on school premises. Particular attention is drawn to:

- The volunteer registering at the beginning of each visit
- Providing the volunteer with a readily identifiable name badge or pass giving his/her name and status

The school ensures passes are surrendered at the end of each day and when the volunteer's involvement with the school comes to an end.

Appendix 2

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF

(Safeguarding and Child Protection in schools 2017)

All staff and volunteers are aware of and have received a copy of our code of conduct. The Code is informed by guidance from DE.

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

The protection and promotion of the welfare of children and young people is a responsibility for all staff, teaching and non-teaching. In meeting this, staff should work towards a culture of mutual trust and respect in school through which the best interests of the children and young people entrusted in their care is paramount.

Naturally implicit in this is the assumption that the conduct of school staff towards their pupil group must be above reproach. This holds true, whatever the age, gender or developmental maturity of the pupils, but clearly the younger the child, or the greater the degree of learning difficulties he/she has, the less likely it will be that he/she will be able to recognise and respond appropriately to an abuse by any member of staff or the trust that his/her position confers.

A Code of Conduct which extends to staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and volunteers include;

1. Private Meetings with Pupils

Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there are occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.

Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room. Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils.

It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however to, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child may need reassurance involving physical comforting. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this in an age appropriate way.

Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.

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

Staff who administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure whenever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*

Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or maybe, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal or Vice Principal.

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

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls. Staff are aware that they are in a position of trust in relation to the children and young people at the school.

5. Use of social media

Staff and volunteers must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. They must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers must ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have. Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or other web based presence, including written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by liking certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

All contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students. If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route- staff should inform the Principal immediately.

Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the

school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent is given. The resultant files must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

6. Staff mobile phone policy

Governors are cognisant of the fact that teachers have all agreed to use personal mobile phones to contact the school in an emergency. They recognise that these phones take quality pictures – that can immediately be uploaded to media outlets associated with the school i.e. Website, Facebook etc. Teachers are permitted to use their personal phones for taking pictures of pupils at school related events, provided the photographs are then sent on to a school controlled device as soon as reasonably practicable – normally within 24 hours of the photo being taken, or within 24 hours of the school trip ending. The images, once uploaded within the agreed timeframe will then be deleted by the teacher

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017

Appendix 3



In line with the school's Intimate Care Policy this letter is to inform you that your child received help with intimate care today.

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

Please contact the school if you have any questions (90328346)

Signed _____

Permission form for the Provision of Intimate Care

Sometimes young children need help if they are wet or soil themselves. Staff can help children in a sensitive way, encouraging them to do things for themselves when possible. If you prefer staff can contact you or your emergency contact, who will be asked to attend without delay. Botanic Primary School and Nursery Unit have an Intimate Care Policy which is available to view on our website (www.botanicprimary.com) or ask for a copy from the office.

Please complete the form below stating your preference and return to school.

Please sign as appropriate

*I give consent for _____ (insert child's name) to be changed and cleaned by staff if they wet/soil themselves.

Signature of Parent / Carer _____

*I would prefer the school contact me or my emergency contact and I will organise for my child to be cleaned and changed. I understand that in the event that I (or the emergency contact) cannot be contacted the staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to assist my child.

Signature of Parent / Carer _____

Appendix 4

Botanic Primary School

Each year, throughout the year, our pupils (your children) attend events or make educational visits outside of school. On these occasions you are informed about the trip and are asked to sign a permission slip allowing your child to go.

All classes in school make use of the Botanic Gardens, the Museum and the PEC during the year and it is nice for the teacher to be able to go out when the weather is suitable and not have to plan and provide slips for every such occasion.

It would be helpful if you would fill in the attached slip.

I give permission for my child _____ who is in **P** to pay educational visits to the Gardens/Museum/PEC during the year.

Signed _____ Parent/Guardian September 2017

Also during the year when we attend events, hold events in school (such as concerts) or have visitors (educational or charities perhaps) the local television companies and newspapers are sometimes asked to take and publish photographs or video footage.

We also need your agreement for any such publication to happen.

I give my permission that my child _____ who is in **P** is allowed to be photographed/videoed and to take part in Video Conferences.

Signed _____ Parent/Guardian September 2017

All classes are timetabled to work on computers in our new suite. Some of this work involves accessing the Internet. Our system does have filters, which should screen out undesirable or offensive material. Teachers will obviously do all in their power to stop such materials reaching the children and will guide pupils towards appropriate content as well as offer strategies for dealing with a situation when inappropriate content may happen.

I give permission for my child _____ who is in **P** to have access to the internet.

Signed _____ Parent/Guardian September 20

