

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL OMAGH



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Designated Teacher: Mr. Anthony White

Deputy Designated Teachers: Miss Mary Devlin and Mr Ciaran McBride

December 2016

School Details

Name of school: Christian Brothers' Grammar School

Date of Policy: September 2001, updated December 2003, September 2005, September 2010, November 2012, January 2015, December 2016

Description of School: Catholic Voluntary Grammar School for boys.

Age Group: 11-18 years

Enrolment: 970 Students

Designated Teacher: Mr Anthony White

Deputy Designated Teacher: Miss Mary Devlin and Mr Ciaran McBride

School Mission

As a member of the Edmund Rice network of schools, Omagh Christian Brothers Grammar School subscribes to the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter. The Charter sets out the vision and mission of the network as follows:

- Vision: Promoting full personal and social development in a caring Christian community of learning and teaching.
- Mission: To provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition.

The Charter sets out the five key elements of an Edmund Rice school:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values.
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership

It is against these five elements that we measure ourselves as fulfilling the vision of an Edmund Rice school. All members of our school community have a duty to ensure that all five elements are embedded in every part of our work. It is within this framework of values that we have developed our policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education.

1. Context

1.1 The Children (NI) Order became law on 15th March, 1995 and its main provisions came into operation on 4th November 1996. The Order, which is jointly promoted by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Office of Law Reform, follows the introduction of the Children Act (1989) in England and Wales and broadly replicates it.

1.2 The United Kingdom agreed to be bound by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. That Convention lists a number of statements, setting out the rights which all children and young people up to the age of 18 should have, no matter where they live or what their circumstances. The Convention provides that, “children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept free from harm; and must be given proper care by those looking after them”. (Article 19). Moreover, Article 3 provides that "when adults or organisations make decisions which affect children, they must always think first about what would be best for the child".

1.3 The central thrust of the Children Order is that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration, and it is this essential principle which underpins the school policy outlined in this document.

1.4 The policy statement of Christian Brothers’ Grammar School, Omagh should be read, interpreted, and acted upon in conjunction with:

- "Child Protection Guidelines" published by the Western Education and Library Board (1997);
- "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" DENI Circular 99/10;
- the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005);
- Safeguarding Board Act Northern Ireland (2011);
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016);

1.5 This policy statement applies to all members of staff who work in this school.

2. Introduction

2.1 Child protection is concerned with the provision of a suitable environment for children to develop and mature, safe, as much as possible, from psychological or physical harm. Children have the right to receive from society all the reasonable assistance they need to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

2.2 In upholding this right, it is the policy of this school to respect the dignity of the young people it serves, and to help create a caring, supportive environment where each child is valued for his own unique talents and where they can learn and develop to their full potential.

2.3 In all matters relating to the issue of child protection, this school commits itself to co-operate with all relevant agencies in the development and implementation of policies for Child Protection, and in the provision of services to victims.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 The following principles underpin the guidance in this policy:

- Children have the right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the welfare of the child is paramount and overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families but where there is a conflict the child's interest must always come first;
- In so far as legal requirements permit, the right to confidentiality for parents, carers, members of staff and students will be respected, and information will only be shared in the interest of the student's welfare.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff in the Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh have a duty to help protect children from abuse, or the risk of abuse. Members of staff with their day-to-day contact and knowledge of students in their care are in a unique position to identify abuse and to help students who are abused. All members of staff should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. Members of staff therefore need ongoing training to enable them to know:

- a) How to recognise signs of abuse
- b) How to respond sensitively and appropriately to children who have been abused.
- c) What actions to take in order to ensure that the issue is addressed.

4.1 The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Approve the school's Child Protection Policy at least once every two years;
- Ensure that there is a timetabled review of all other safeguarding policies and that they are presented to the Board of Governors for approval;
- Ensure that there is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school;
- Receive annual child protection reports;
- Attend relevant child protection/safeguarding training for Governors;

4.1.1 The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment;
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training; Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal;
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive regular updates in relation to child protection activity including a full written annual report.

4.1.2 The Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mr Jim Sheerin

The Designated Governor will provide the child protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

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

4.2 The School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors – Paddy McMahon
- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Jim Sheerin
- Designated Teacher – Anthony White
- Deputy Designated Teachers – Ciaran McBride and Mary Devlin

The role of the School Safeguarding Team is to:

- Monitor and periodically audit the safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school;
- Identify any actions required to address audit findings or ETI inspection of its safeguarding/child protection arrangements;
- Provide support for the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities.

4.3 The Role of the Principal: Mr Foncey McConnell

The Principal's role in child protection is of central importance, and while day-to-day child protection matters may be delegated to the designated teacher, the Principal still retains responsibility. The Principal should act decisively and promptly when notified by the designated teacher about a case of child abuse. The Designated Teacher and Principal will together decide, taking advice as necessary, if the information is such that the matter should be referred to Social Services. The final decision must be made by the Principal.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to:

- Ensure that all relevant DENI guidance in relation to child protection and safeguarding is implemented within the school;
- Enable the Board of Governors to fulfil their Child Protection duties by keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to child protection and ensuring the inclusion of child protection activities on their agenda;
- Ensure that the school has a named designated teacher and deputy designated teacher and that all staff know who these teachers are;
- Ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedures at least every two years;
- Manage child protection concerns relating to staff;
- Maintain and secure the *School Record of Child Abuse Complaints* and to make it available annually to the Board of Governors;
- Ensure that the school has a written policy for child protection;
- Regularly meet with the designated teacher;
- Discuss child protection at staff meetings;
- Make time available for in-service training on child protection matters;
- Be familiar with this policy;

4.4 The Role of the Designated Teacher: Mr Anthony White

The designated teacher has responsibility to:

- Take a lead role in the development and review of the school's Child Protection Policy;
- Attend training courses in child protection;
- Organise and lead child protection training for all staff at least every two years;
- Make new staff, on appointment, aware of the policy and the procedures therein;
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents in relation to child abuse concerns;
- Liaise with the Principal when a case of child abuse, or a suspected case, occurs; with the consent of the Principal, contact the relevant Social Services personnel about a case or suspected case of child abuse;
- Liaise with the Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected child abuse;
- Maintain and securely store appropriate child protection records;
- Keep the Principal up to date on developments in each case;
- Ensure that any written material relating to Child Protection Cases is kept securely;
- Be thoroughly familiar with this policy;
- Liaise with relevant external agencies;
- To attend Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group and Case Planning Meetings.

4.5 The Role of the Deputy Designated Teacher: Miss Mary Devlin / Mr Ciaran McBride

- To assist the Designated Teacher in the implementation of the school's Child Protection Policy;

- To attend training courses in Child Protection and to assist the Designated Teacher in the training of colleagues on Child Protection issues;
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher and Principal in all cases of child abuse, and/or in cases where abuse is suspected;
- To meet regularly with the designated teacher to review and evaluate Child protection procedures;
- Deputise for the Designated Teacher in the case of the absence or unavailability of the Designated Teacher.

5. Definitions of Harm/Abuse:

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside the family environment. Child Abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. There are different types of abuse, outlined below, and a child may suffer more or one of them.

5.1 Neglect is defined as

- The persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm.

It may involve a parent or carer

- failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing;
- failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger;
- failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision.

It may also include non-organic failure to thrive.

5.2 Physical Abuse is defined as

- The deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child. This may include:
Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

5.3 **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. These activities may include:

- Physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts;
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

5.4 Emotional Abuse is defined as:

- The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve:

- Conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person
- Causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance abuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

6. Recognising Abuse

6.1 As stated in Section 4 of this policy, all members of a school staff with their day-to-day contact and knowledge of students in their care are in a unique position to observe outward symptoms or changes in behaviour which may indicate that a child is a victim of child abuse.

6.2 All members of staff need to be aware of the indicators of child abuse. Appendix 2 provides a list of signs and symptoms which may indicate that a child is being abused.

7. Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

7.1 The regular daily contact teachers and other members of staff in this school have with children, and their extensive knowledge of the children in their care places them in a unique position to identify and help abused children

7.2 Child abuse can come to attention of members of staff in the following ways:

- A member of staff may have concerns about a child's appearance, behaviour or physical condition.
- A child may volunteer information.
- A child may tell a member of staff about what has happened to a friend.
- A source outside the school may bring something to the attention of a member of staff.

7.3 What members of staff should do:

- In all cases, act promptly.
- In cases where members of staff have concerns from their own observations or from information given by an outside source, they should bring their concerns immediately to the attention of the Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher.

In cases where a child makes a disclosure, staff should:

- Listen to what the child says.
- Allow the pupil to tell what happened in his own words.
- Reassure the child that what he has said is understood, that their interests are paramount and that they have done the right thing by reporting it.
- Respond to the child only in so far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter. Use open questions.
- Explain that there is an obligation to refer the matter in order to seek help for the child.
- Make written notes at the earliest opportunity after the meeting. Where possible write down the actual words used.
- Notes should be factual and should be filed in a secure location.
- Refer the matter to the designated teacher.

7.4 What members of staff should not do:

- Try not let the child see a shocked reaction. The reaction of a member of staff is of great importance to the child and may prevent them making a revelation.
- Try not to interrupt the student. After they have spoken you can ask them to repeat certain parts if you need to clarify exactly what they have told you.
- Do not interrogate the student or ask leading questions.
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept.
- Do not give the student a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding the disclosure.

- Do not investigate. It is not the school's or teacher's role to ascertain conclusively whether abuse has taken place.
- Do not dwell too much on the alleged perpetrator or appear judgemental as the child may have a close relationship with this person.
- Do not make notes as the student talks.

8. Responsibility to Report

8.1 Any member of staff who knows or suspects that a student is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed has a duty to convey his/her concern to the designated teacher or Principal.

8.2 All members of staff should realise that in order to protect children from harm, cases may arise where confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action, by involving others, in the student's best interests. **No promise of confidentiality should ever be given where abuse is alleged.**

8.3 There are no perfect solutions when dealing with child abuse. Inevitably some suspicions will prove, upon investigation, to be unfounded but it is important to remember that members of staff have responsibility to act in the **best interest of the student**, even when this is difficult.

8.4 The consequences of not reporting suspicions that a student has been abused can be serious. A member of staff's concerns/observations may play a vital part in protecting the student by contributing to the pool of information about the family, and by initiating a professional response which can establish whether or not the student is at risk and, if necessary, take action to protect the student. Failure to report concerns may mean this does not happen, and the student may be further abused.

8.5 The consequences of not reporting suspicions if a student has been abused could be far more serious than making a report that proves to be unfounded.

8.6 The Designated Teacher, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to the social services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

8.7 The Designated Teacher may seek clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information or from others who may have relevant information.

8.8 A referral to Social Services will only be made after the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. To this end the Designated Teacher will consult with the Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection and the Gateway Team before a referral is made. At all times the welfare of the child will be the paramount consideration

8.9 In the event that a referral needs to be made the Designated Teacher will telephone the Western Health and Social Services Gateway Team and notify the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI referral form will be completed and forwarded to the Gateway Team with a copy sent to the Education Authority's designated officer. (See Appendix 1)

8.10 How a Parent Can Report A Complaint of Child Abuse

The Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh, works closely with the parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken

seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can contact the relevant Head of School, Head of Year, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal. If they are still concerned they may contact the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway Team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. (See Appendix 3)

9. Role of Parents

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
- Making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child;
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school;
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

10. Staff – Code of Conduct – See appendix 4

10.1 Staff must be always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and their behaviour towards the students in their charge must be above reproach. From time to time, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with students and their manner and approach to students, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, students or of their parents/guardians.

10.2 The Code of Conduct appended to this policy 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. (See Appendix 4)

11. Allegations Against a Member of Staff (See appendix 5)

11.1 If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, it must be reported to the Principal or, if he is not available, to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, immediately.

11.2 If the Principal is satisfied that a child protection complaint has been made he should:

- inform the designated teacher;
- consult the child protection adviser at the Education Authority to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action;
- consult the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

11.3 Deciding what to do when such an allegation is made is a difficult and sensitive matter. The need to protect children must be paramount, but the need to protect members of staff against unfounded, but nevertheless, potentially damaging, allegations must also be considered. The advice of the child protection advisers at the Education Authority may be sought in coming to this decision.

11.4 In the light of any advice taken, the Principal, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors will decide that:

- a. the allegation is apparently without substance and no further action is necessary;
- or**
- b. an immediate referral to Social Services or the PSNI is warranted;
- or**
- c. the allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the school's disciplinary procedures.

11.5 Precautionary suspension with pay of the member of staff who is the subject of a complaint or allegation should not be automatic. Depending on the circumstances of the case, some preliminary investigation by Social Services and/or police may be necessary before a decision can properly be taken. Where, however, a formal referral is warranted the member of staff should be removed from direct contact with children and should undertake non-contact duties.

11.6 If the allegation is made against the Principal, all aspects of the procedures outlined in this section will be followed, save that the role set out for the Principal should be exercised by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, in whom the power to suspend is vested.

11.7 The School's record of Child Abuse complaints against staff will be made available to the Board of Governors annually.

12. Case Conferences

The Designated Teacher will attend Initial and Review Child Protection Case Conferences, Core Group Meetings, LAC Reviews and Case Planning Meetings and provide a report on the relevant child which will be compiled after discussion with relevant staff. This school is fully committed to attending all such meetings.

13. Preventative Curriculum

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class work, year group assemblies and year group workshops.

There are also child protection notices and child helpline numbers on display in each year group noticeboard.

14. Record Keeping

All Child Protection records are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Designated Teacher's office. These records are kept separate from all other records held on the pupil. In accordance with DE policy on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored until the child is 30 years old.

15. Vetting Procedures

All staff, paid or unpaid, who are appointed to positions within the school are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

16. Indemnity for Teachers acting within the scope of their employment as teachers.

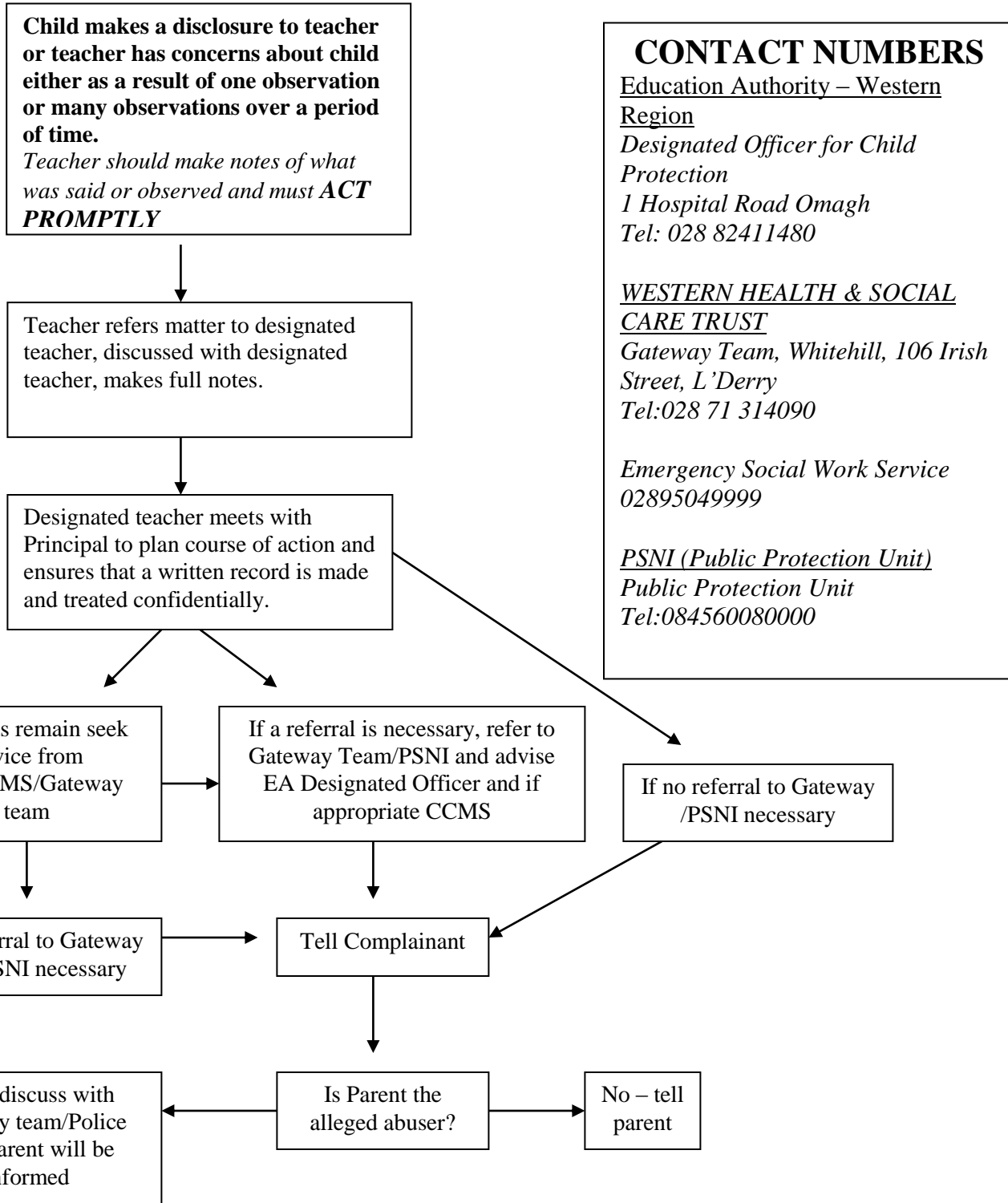
The Board of Governors of the Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh, indemnifies its employees in civil liability that act diligently and in good faith in accordance with these procedures in reporting any incident of child abuse or suspected child abuse.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy and procedures will be updated in light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and will be reviewed annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Child Protection Policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the school's safeguarding team.

Appendix 1

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



Appendix 2

Recognising Abuse – Possible Indicators

As a teacher you see children over long periods and can notice physical and behavioural indicators which may be evidence of abuse. It is important that you can recognise these signs and symptoms. **None of the indicators, either singly, or in any combination prove conclusively that a child has been abused.**

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

Unexplained bruises - in various stages of healing - grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns, cigarette burns or immersion burns (glove like), lacerations or abrasions; untreated injuries; both sides of the ear should be treated with suspicion: in a time pattern e.g. every Monday.

Behavioural Indicators

Self destructive tendencies, aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive) appears frightened or cowed in especially presence of adults., improbable excuses to explain unexplained fractures/ injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; bruising on comes to school early or stays symmetrical bruising late as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather injuries occurring to hide part of body; violent themes in an work or stories.

Neglect

Physical Indicators

Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy., untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress., poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly-, repeated accidents especially burns.

Behavioural Indicators –

Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive stealing; begging, from class friends; withdrawn., lacks concentration; misses school medicals-, . reports that no carer is at home; low self esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators

Well below average in height and weight; "failing to thrive"; poor hair and skin; alopecia, swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhea, wetting and soiling.. sudden speech disorders;

Behavioural Indicators

Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family

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).

indiscriminate attachment.,
reluctance for parental liaison;
fear of new situation;
chronic runaway; attention-seeking
behaviour; poor peer relationships

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

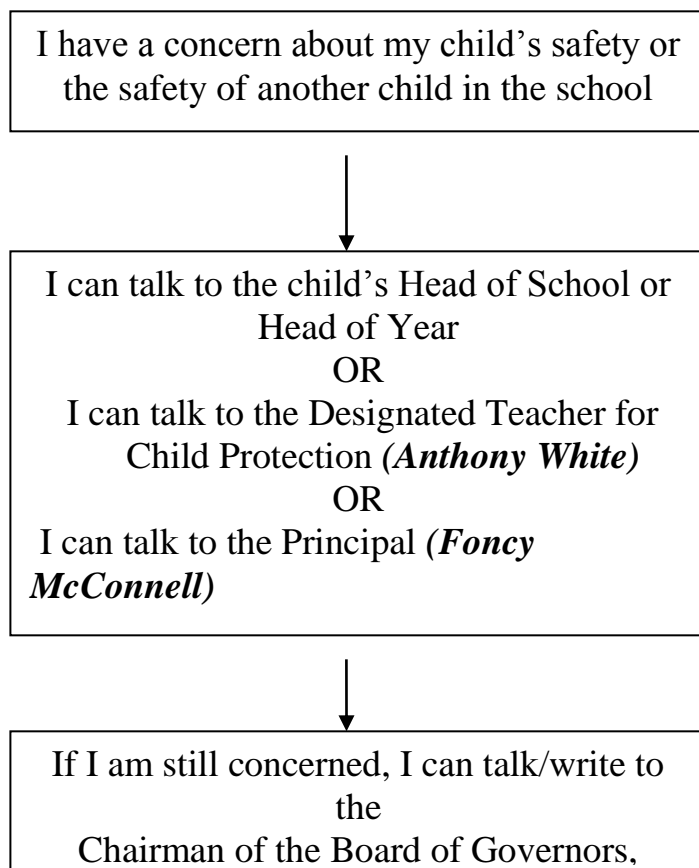
Bruises, scratches, bite marks
or other injuries to breasts, buttocks,
lower abdomen or thighs;
bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas.,
torn, stained or bloody underclothes;
chronic ailments such as recurrent
abdominal pains or headaches;
difficulty in walking or sitting.;
frequent urinary infections;
avoidance of lessons especially PE,
games, showers;
unexplained pregnancies where the
identity of the father is vague;
anorexia/gross over-eating.

Behavioural Indicators

What the child tells you;
withdrawn; chronic depression.,
excessive sexual precociousness;
seductiveness; children having
knowledge beyond their usual frame
of reference e.g. young child who
can describe details of adult sexuality;
parent/child role reversal;
overly concerned for siblings;
poor self esteem; self devaluation;
lack of confidence;
peer problems;
lack of involvement;
massive weight change; suicide
attempts (especially adolescents);
hysterical/angry outbursts;
lack of emotional control,
sudden school difficulties
e.g. deterioration in school work or
behaviour; inappropriate sex play;
repeated attempts to run away from home.
unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art
work or stories, vulnerability to sexual and emotional
exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic
material.

Appendix 3

How a Parent can make a Complaint



At any time a parent can talk to a social worker at the Gateway Team (Western Trust) Tel: 028 71314 090 or the PSNI at the Public Protection Unit Tel : 0845 600 80000

Appendix 4

Code of Conduct

School staff must always be mindful that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct confirms good professional practice and is intended to help staff to reduce the risk of any vulnerability to false or malicious allegations of misconduct or abuse towards the pupils with whom they work by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. It confirms good professional practice.

Relationships with Pupils

All staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their dealings with pupils. They should ensure that their manner and approach to individual pupils 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.

In particular, intimate or sexual relationships between staff and a pupil under the age of 18 is regarded as a breach of trust and a criminal offence.

Communication With Pupils / E-Safety and Internet Use

Teachers should never send personal e-mails to individual pupils. Where teachers use e-mail as a medium for submitting work, both teacher and pupil should use an email address provided as part of an official school system, even if they are sending messages when working at home.

The popularity and prominence of on-line chat-rooms and social networking sites pose particular risks for school staff and pupils. Staff should ensure that they do not leave themselves open to personal or inappropriate communication with a pupil on any of these sources. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they might have. Teacher should also ensure that they do not give pupils their personal mobile telephone numbers.

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 has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school's procedures on school equipment.

In providing feedback to pupils, teachers should also avoid the use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments which may be damaging to a pupil's self-esteem

Private Meetings With Pupils

Staff need to be aware of the potential dangers that can arise from private interviews with individual pupils. When conducting confidential interviews with pupils, staff can minimise these risks by:

- Holding the meeting in a room where visual contact with others is maintained through either a window in the door or by leaving the door open;
- Letting another adult know that the meeting is taking place;
- Ensuring that another adult or pupil is either present or near-by during the interview.

Staff should **never** arrange meetings with individual pupils off the school premises unless they have been given prior authority to do so by the Principal

An individual member of staff should **never** transport an individual pupil in his/her private car.

Physical Contact With Pupils

As a general principle, staff should not make unnecessary physical contact with pupils.

- Any form of physical punishment is prohibited by law.
- Any physical contact that would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or casual observer should be avoided.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in approved out of school activities where more informal relationships tend to be usual.
- Staff should never touch a child who has indicated that he would be uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect others or property.

Physical contact may be acceptable in the following circumstances:

- To prevent harm or injury to the pupil or others – in this case the physical contact used should be within the limits set out in the school's policy on Reasonable Force. Such an incident should be immediately reported to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal
- To demonstrate a particular skill in a sporting activity – in this case teachers should be alert to the possibilities of such contact being misinterpreted. Where possible alternative methods of demonstrating a particular technique should be used.
- To administer first aid to a pupil – in this case staff should ensure, wherever possible, that this is done in the presence of another child or adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.

NB Following an incident where a member of staff may feel that his/her actions may be misinterpreted and written report of the incident should be sent to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Teaching Materials

Teachers should ensure that all teaching materials are appropriate for the age of the pupils and their level of maturity.

Other Relevant Policies

Be familiar with and observe the school policies on Bullying, Educational Visits, Reasonable Force and the Use of Mobile Phones

Appendix 5

Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff.

