

# CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL OMAGH



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**Designated Teacher:** Mr. Anthony White

**Deputy Designated Teachers:** Mrs Sonya Darcy and Mr Ciaran McBride

November 2024

## **School Details**

Name of School: Christian Brothers' Grammar School

Description of School: Catholic Voluntary Grammar School for boys.

Age Group: 11-18 years

Enrolment: 938 Students

Designated Teacher: Mr Anthony White

Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Sonya Darcy 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 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.

1.3 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".

1.4 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 Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 – the Department of Education (NI) guidance;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order (2007)
- Sexual Offences (NI) ) Order 2008
- Safeguarding Board Act Northern Ireland (2011);
- Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016;
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016);
- Safeguarding and Child Protection: A Guide for Schools (Updated September 2019)

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:

- We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity. They have the right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously, taking account of their age and understanding, irrespective of their race, religion/belief, political views, gender and sexual orientation.
- 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.

- Child Protection arrangements should be accessible in the school and understood by children so that they know what to do and who to go to.

#### **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 fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance. In fulfilling this role the Board of governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed;
- A Designated Teacher (DT) and Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) are appointed;
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the DT and DDT for Child Protection;
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training;**
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually, and that parents and pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedure every year;
- There is a timetabled review of all other safeguarding policies and that they are presented to the Board of Governors for approval;
- 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;
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted in line with DE Circular 2012/19;
- The school maintains child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools

##### **4.1.1 The Chair of the Board of Governors – Mrs Dympna Kelly**

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment;
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal;
- Ensure child protection records are kept;
- Sign and Date the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries.

##### **4.1.2 The Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mr Paul McGarvey**

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 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 – Dympna Kelly
- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Paul McGarvey
- The Principal (as Chair) – Foncy McConnell
- Designated Teacher – Anthony White
- Deputy Designated Teachers – Ciaran McBride and Sonya Darcy

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;
- Ensure attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training – including refresher training – in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.

#### **4.3 The Role of the Principal: Mr Foncy 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;
- Take the lead role in managing 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;

#### **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;
- 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 knowledge of the Principal, contact the relevant Social Services or PSNI where appropriate;

- Liaise with the Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected child abuse;
- To provide an annual report to the Board of Governors on Child Protection activity in the school;
- 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;
- Liaise with relevant external agencies;
- To attend Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group and Case Planning Meetings;
- Be available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.

#### **4.5 The Role of the Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Sonya Darcy / 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;
- To work in partnership with the DT in order to develop sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required.
- Deputise for the Designated Teacher in the case of the absence or unavailability of the Designated Teacher.

### **5. Definitions of Child Abuse / Harm:**

Child Abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in communities, agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Child Abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse.

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organization, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm.

'Harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development.

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

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals (*Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017*)

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 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. (*Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017*)

## 5.2 **Physical Abuse** is defined as

- 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. (*Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017*)

## 5.3 **Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. It 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. (*Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017*)

## 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 is sometimes called psychological abuse.

It may involve:

- deliberately telling a child that he is worthless, unloved or inadequate;
- causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger;
- not giving a child opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate;
- bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers. (*Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017*)

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.

## 5.5 **Exploitation**

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse (*Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016*)

## 5.6 **Child Abuse in Other Specific Circumstances**



## **Grooming**

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person doing the grooming. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world., by a stranger or by someone they know – for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has taken place is abuse.

If a member of staff in the Christian Brothers' Grammar School becomes aware of signs that may indicate grooming, they will take early action and follow the guidance set out in this policy.

## **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 under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

The potential indicators of CSE can include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc without plausible explanation;
- Leaving home/care without permission;
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving;
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care;
- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances;
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return;
- Truanting from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Concerning use of the internet;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis;
- New peer groups;
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend';
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Low self-esteem;

- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less);
- Self harm and other expressions of despair;
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse.

Whilst these indicators can be usefully used to identify potential risk, it is important to note that their presence does not necessarily mean that CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence, mean that it is not.

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring should follow the school child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

Domestic Violence and Abuse is defined as ‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.’ (Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016)

Sexual Violence and Abuse is defined as ‘any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).’

A child may live in a family where there is domestic abuse or a young person may be in a relationship where they become the subject of domestic abuse. In high risk cases involving domestic abuse Social Services and/or the Education Authority’s Designated Officer for Child Protection will contact the school in order to help assess the child/young person’s needs and to ensure that he/she is receives appropriate support.

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse – 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.

### **Children Who Sexually Abuse Others or Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour**

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in section 7 of this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful.

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- there is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce threaten or intimidate the victim.

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

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

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies.

### **Indecent Photographs**

The offence of taking indecent pictures of children under 18 years can apply in a situation where a pupil has taken an indecent picture using a mobile phone of others under 18 years of age. It is also an offence to distribute, possess with intent to distribute or show such photographs to others. In such circumstances the PSNI and Social Services will be contacted. The school also has an E-Safety and Electronic Devices Policy which has/have been circulated to parents and pupils and which is available from the school.

## **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 as this can be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's head;
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept.
- Do not give the student a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding the disclosure although you can reassure them that the information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.
- 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.
- Do not photograph the child or remove the child's clothing

- Do not ask the child to write an account of their disclosure

## 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**

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.

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 if there are any court orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child;
- Informing the school if there is any change in a child's circumstances such as – change of address, change of contact details, change of name etc..
- Informing the school if the child has a medical condition or educational need;
- 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. The process for doing this is set out in Appendix 3 of this policy

## **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. It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interactions with staff.

10.3 This code of conduct extends to all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Adherence to the code will reduce the risk of allegations being made.

## **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. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle

## **13. Preventative Curriculum**

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours.(2017/04).

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects.

## **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. Visitors to the School**

All visitors to the school should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require'

Visitors should be:

- Met and directed by school staff;
- Signed in and out of the school;
- If appropriate, be given access to only specific areas of the school;
- Where appropriate, escorted by a member of staff
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes;
- Access to pupils should be restricted to the purpose of their visit.

## **17. Indemnity for Teachers acting within the scope of their employment as teachers.**

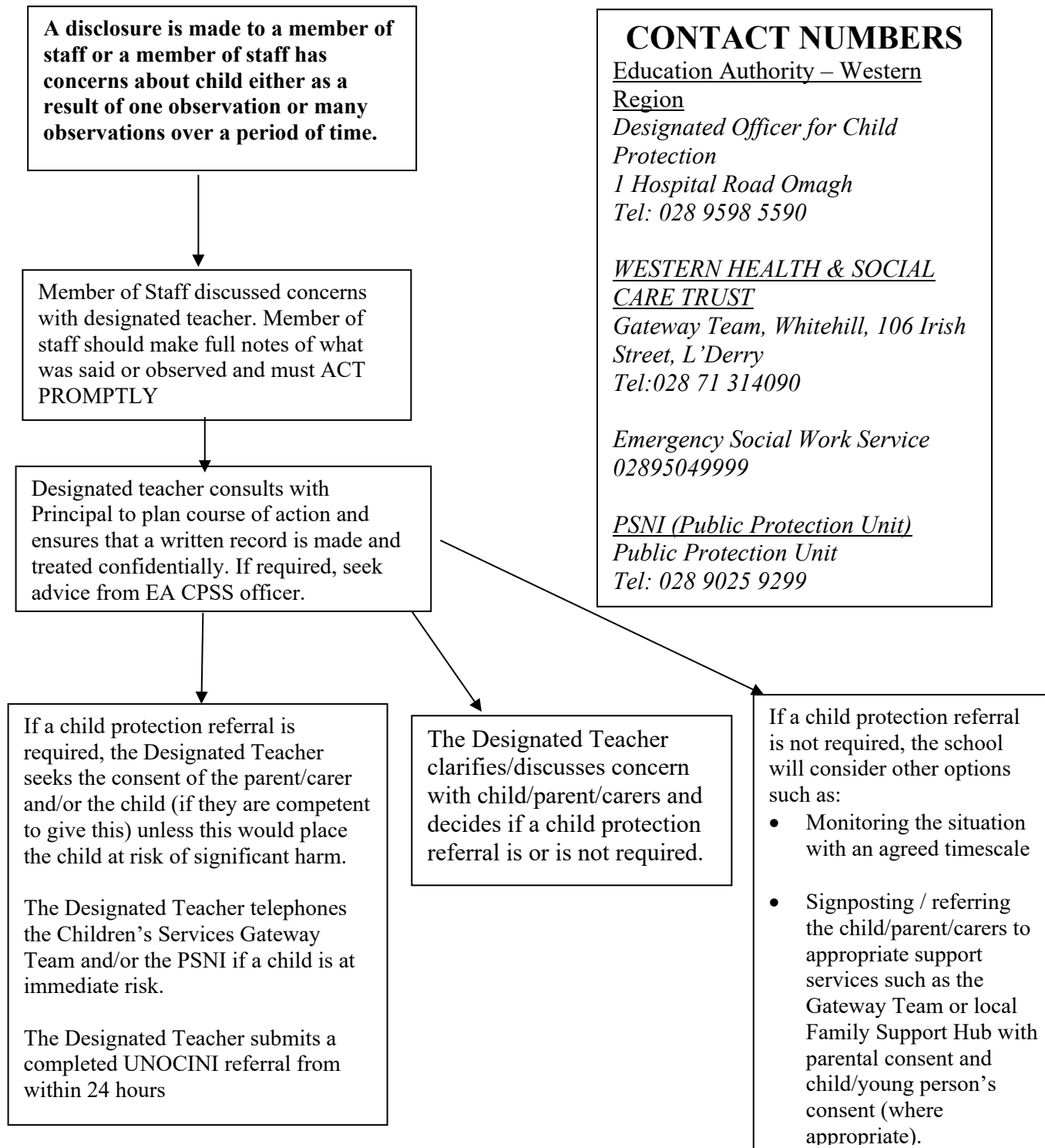
The Board of Governors of the Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh, indemnifies its employees in civil liability that act diligently and in good faith in accordance with these procedures in reporting any incident of child abuse or suspected child abuse.

## **18. 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



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

## 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

##### Behavioural Indicators

Well below average in height and weight;  
 "failing to thrive"; poor hair and skin;  
 alopecia, swollen extremities  
 i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet;  
 recurrent diarrhea, wetting and soiling..  
 sudden speech disorders;  
 signs of self mutilation; signs of solvent abuse  
 (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness);  
 extremes of physical, mental and emotional  
 development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting,  
 stooping).

Apathy and dejection;  
 inappropriate emotional responses  
 to painful situations;  
 rocking/head banging;  
 inability to play;  
 indifference to separation from family  
 indiscriminate attachment.,  
 reluctance for parental liaison;  
 fear of new situation;  
 chronic runaway; attention-seeking  
 behaviour; poor peer relationships

## **Sexual Abuse**

### **Physical Indicators**

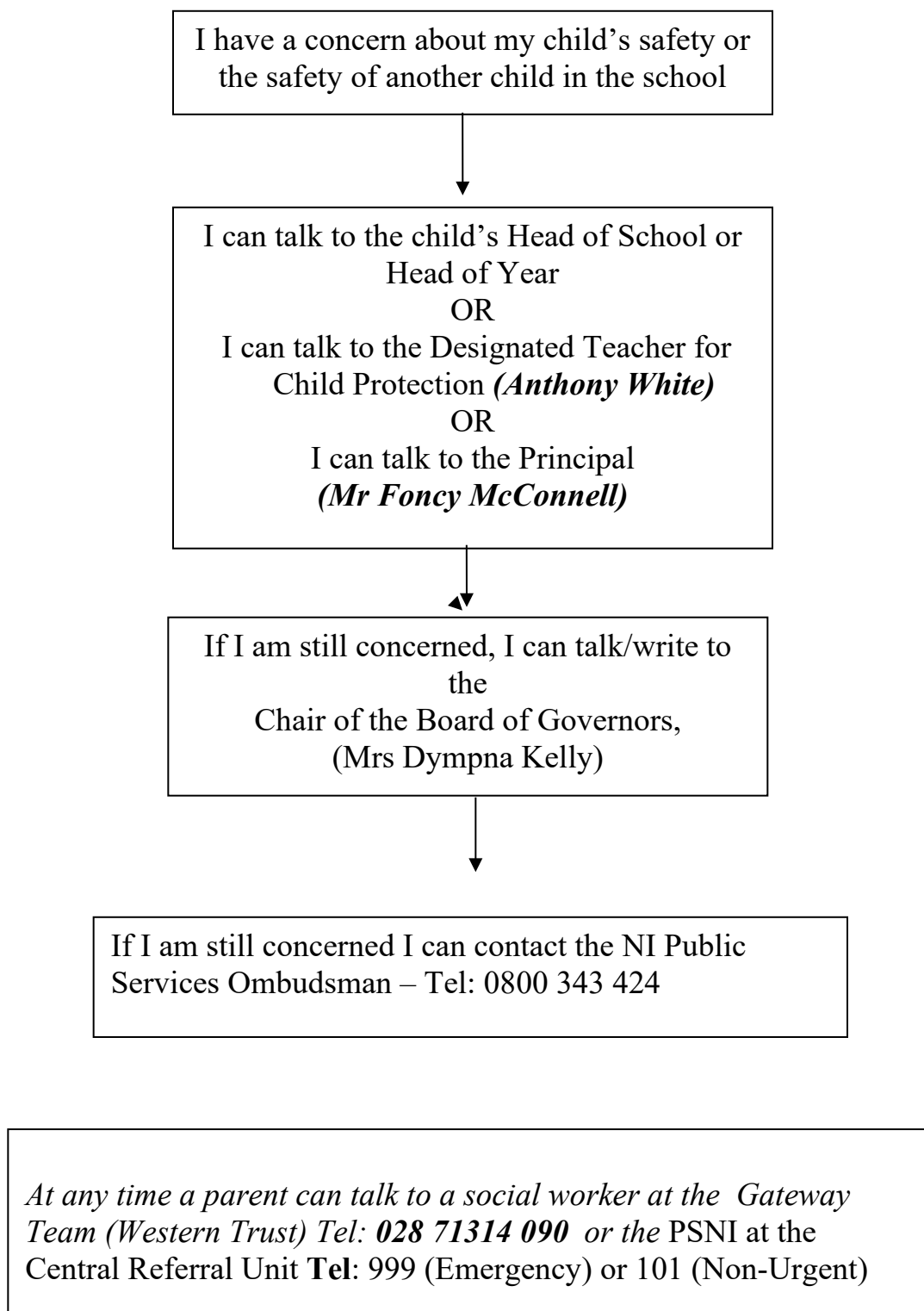
Bruises, scratches, bite marks  
 or other injuries to breasts, buttocks,  
 lower abdomen or thighs;  
 bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas.,  
 torn, stained or bloody underclothes;  
 chronic ailments such as recurrent  
 abdominal pains or headaches;  
 difficulty in walking or sitting.;  
 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

#### Procedure for Parents who wish to raise a Child Protection Concern



## **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.

All staff should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils. 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

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;
- they do not hold in their possession a pupil's personal telephone number, except under the requirements set out in the school's policy on Educational Visits.

Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. If the photographs are taken by a member of staff using their own camera, the resultant files should be digitally uploaded to school files and then deleted from the staff member's personal device.

### **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 avoid putting themselves in a situation where they may have to 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**

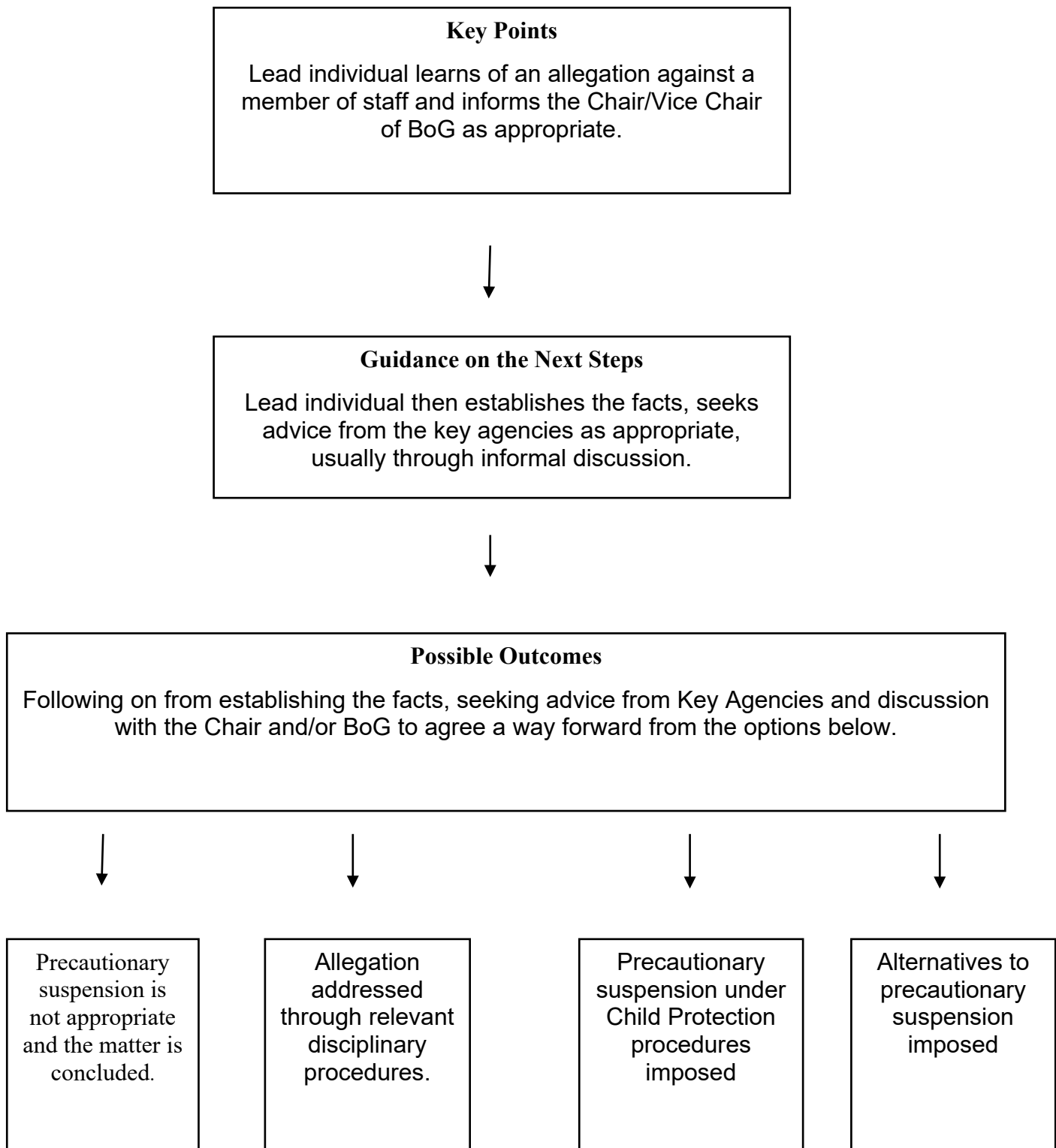
Teachers should ensure that all teaching materials are appropriate for the age of the pupils and their level of maturity.

### **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.**



## **Appendix 6 – Arrangements during COVID-19 Pandemic**

This appendix applies during any period of school closure due to COVID-19

### **Reporting a concern**

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern about a child's wellbeing immediately and without delay. It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to the Gateway Team and, as required, the police. Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection Policy and send an email outlining their concerns to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection without delay.

### **Data Protection**

The Christian Brothers' Grammar School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

### **Code of Conduct for online and blended learning**

**Online teaching** should follow the same principles as set out in the school's Code of Conduct.

When communicating online with parents and pupils, staff should:

- communicate within school hours as much as possible
- communicate through the school channels/platforms approved by the Senior Leadership Team;
- use school email accounts (not personal ones);
- use school devices over personal devices wherever possible;
- never share personal information

### **Delivering virtual lessons**

Teachers should never arrange a one to one virtual lesson.

Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.

Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.

The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.

Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.

Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.

Staff must only use platforms specified and approved by the Senior Leadership Team

Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

### **Role of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely or in an appropriately socially distanced manner.

### **Supporting children in and out of school**

The Christian Brothers' School, Omagh is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.



We will also be mindful of the potential impact of the coronavirus and lockdown on the health and wellbeing of pupils and we will signpost all pupils, parents and carers to available resources to support good mental health. We will be particularly vigilant in the following areas:

- Pupils who may have difficulty acclimatising to being back in the school environment – pupils will have been out of their typical school routine for the best part of six months by the time they return;
- Pupils who will have found the absence of structure and routine a traumatic experience;
- Pupils who will have experienced anxiety and trauma related to the virus;
- Pupils who may have difficulty comprehending, coping and complying with the new social distancing arrangements;
- Some pupils will have had family members who were ill or died over the period of school closure;
- Pupils will have been separated from important family members such as grandparents or even a parent, depending on their individual circumstances;
- Pupils with pre-existing mental health conditions may have had treatments or therapies interrupted;
- Some pupils may have been subjected to or witnessed incidents of domestic violence;
- Some pupils may be experiencing financial uncertainty depending on the effect of the lockdown on parents' jobs;
- Added difficulty for pupils transitioning from primary sector into an unfamiliar post-primary school.

On our return to school we will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health Agency on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.