

# Belfast Model School for Girls



*Achievement for All*

## *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

*Agreed by Board of Governors Dec 2010*

*To be reviewed Dec 2013*

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## **Rationale**

All staff<sup>1</sup> of the Belfast Model School for Girls has a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all pupils and we carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive community and a safe environment for all our pupils. We value our pupils as individuals with their own unique talents and abilities and aim to ensure that they all can achieve their potential through positive and rewarding experiences within a safe, nurturing school community. Our overriding concern is the care, welfare and safety of our pupils and every concern about the welfare of children in this school will be responded to. Every member of the school staff has a duty of care over the pupils and, as our school aims state, “Everyone has a part to play in building the caring community.”

## **Purpose**

Our child protection policy and procedures are developed in accordance with the Department of Education’s guidelines and the Area Child Protection Committees’ Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). They are reviewed annually and amended response to new legislation, policy change, or in response to the learning from an adverse event in the school. We seek to ensure that our pupils are safeguarded and protected by ensuring that all adults in the school are appropriately recruited, that they are alert to possible signs and symptoms of child abuse and familiar with internal school procedures around reporting arrangements. As part of the curriculum – personal Development for Mutual Understanding - pupils are helped to learn about the risks of possible significant harm and to develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The issue of possible child abuse is not ignored by any member of staff and necessary action is taken to report suspicions or disclosures of this to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in the school. Staff are made aware of types of possible abuse and how to identify the signs/symptoms in pupils. Effective staff training in recognising the signs/symptoms of possible significant harm is delivered in school to enhance staff confidence in responding to pupils and reporting to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

We recognise the impact on children of living in an abusive family setting

This policy is informed by the following legislation, guidance and procedures:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- DE ‘Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection’ (1999).
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order (2003).
- The Area Child Protection Committees’ (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- The Sexual offences (N I ) Order 2008

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Staff’ includes all adults working in the school whether teaching or non-teaching, paid or unpaid.

The central thrust of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decision concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration*. The code is based on a hierarchy of principles when dealing with a young person, that states, “the fundamental principle in child care law and practice is that the welfare of the child must always be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her.” The ‘paramountcy’ of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

## **The Safeguarding Team at Belfast Model School For Girls**

**(Chair) Principal: Mr J Graham**

**Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT) : Mrs J Duncan, School Counsellor.**

**Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DDT): Mrs H Mairs, Vice Principal**

**The Deputy Designated Teacher for Full Service Extended School Activities (DDT FSES): Mrs Janice Clarke**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs J Weir**

**Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance :Mrs P Leitch.**

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The Designated Teacher for Child protection:**

- **is appropriately trained by B.E.L.B and provides training for all school staff including support staff**
- **acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community**
- **has an understanding of Department of Education (DE) and ACPC procedures**
- **keeps written records of all concerns, stored securely, but kept separately from the pupils general file**
- **refers cases of suspected abuse to Social Services Gateway Team or PSNI Public protection Units where appropriate.**
- **notifies the child’s social worker if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation**

- ensures that when a child with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information is passed to their new school and the pupils social worker is informed
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy
- ensures that the child protection policy is updated annually
- liaises with the nominated governor and principal as appropriate
- provides written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- makes the child protection policy available to parents.

The deputy designated teachers are appropriately trained and in the absence of the designated teacher, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils within the school and for all FSES activities. In the event of the long term absence of the designated teacher, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The governing body ensures that the school has:

- a DT for child protection who has undertaken training in child protection and inter-agency working
- a child protection policy and procedures that are consistent with DE guidance and Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (ACPC) requirements, reviewed annually and made available to parents on request.
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the principal
- Safe recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks
- A training strategy that ensures all staff, including the principal, receive child protection training, with refresher training at three- yearly intervals. The DT should receive refresher training at 3 yearly intervals from the BELB

- **Arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff and volunteers are inducted in the schools policy and procedures for child protection**
- **Nominates the chair to be responsible for liaising with the BELB and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Principal.**

The safeguarding governor has a key role in keeping a focus on safeguarding. He/ she is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding matters are kept on the agenda at governors' meetings and that governors are kept informed about new legislation and the effectiveness of school practice.

Activities that the safeguarding governor might be involved in include: the role of the safeguarding governor is primarily one of governance – i.e. going through the checklist at the back of the governor's handbook and assuring him/herself and the governor group that the safeguarding procedures are robust in the school – if not robust then agreeing a plan of action with the Principal

### **The Principal:**

- **ensures that the child protection policies and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff**
- **allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the DT and DDT to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings**
- **ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures**
- **ensures that pupils' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.**
- **Keeps the governors as a whole informed, consulted and up to date.**

## **DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND POSSIBLE INDICATORS**

### **Who is a Child?**

A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995.

**The following definitions are taken from the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005):**

### **What Is Child Abuse?**

Child Abuse occurs when “a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger”.

### **Types of Abuse**

**Neglect** – is 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.

Possible signs or **symptoms of neglect** include:

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

**Physical Abuse** – is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. 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.

Possible signs or **symptoms of physical abuse** include:

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

**Sexual Abuse** – involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Possible signs or **symptoms of sexual abuse** include:

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

**Emotional Abuse-** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such 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. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Possible signs or **symptoms of emotional abuse** include:

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

### **Young person who Behaviour places them at Risk of Significant Harm:**

Behaviour such as alcohol consumption or consumption of illegal drugs, whilst placing the child at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse. If the child has achieved sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up their own mind then the decision to initiate child protection action in such cases is a matter of professional judgement and each case should be considered individually. The criminal aspects of the case will be dealt with by the PSNI.

### **Confidentiality**

Where a child confides in a member of staff or a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret it is important that the child is told sensitively that it may be necessary to share the information with those who need to know about it, and explain that this is important to ensure the child's safekeeping.

All staff and volunteers who receive sensitive information about children or parents in the course of their professional duties should be aware that such information is confidential, and is not to be made the subject of general conversation, or disclosed to others outside the school other than statutory officials, as required by this policy.

All records of a safeguarding / child protection nature are held securely within the school. Access to such records is restricted to the Principal and the Designated Teacher (DT) /Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection.

## **GUIDELINES**

- Child protection procedures are co-ordinated in school by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT), Mrs Janet Duncan and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DDT) Mrs Heather Mairs. Mrs Janice Clarke will be Deputy Designated Teacher for any Full-Service Extended School Activities. Mr Peter Dornan has been appointed by Amey (Social Enterprise Manager) as Designated Person for all community based projects organised within the school.
- Parents/guardians receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy every two years including a copy of the school's Child Protection Complaints Procedures.
- Information leaflets are posted around the school buildings to make pupils aware of the support structures which help to protect them both inside and outside school e.g. names of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher, Childline number etc
- Every pupil has a Form Tutor who has responsibility for their general well-being in school and is their link to the school's pastoral structures.
- All volunteers visiting the school, in contact with pupils on a regular basis, must have had a criminal record check completed (Access N.I Enhanced Disclosure Certificate), in accordance with DE guidelines, as a starting point in our measures to safeguard children.
- Names and date of attendance of visiting speakers should be given to the Designated Teacher in advance (if the speaker is to be a regular visitor they too would need to be vetted).
- All substitute teachers must be employed through the NI substitute teachers register (vetting is integral to the registration process).
- Any new governors appointed to the school will be vetted in compliance with the DE 2006/25 circulars prior to appointment.

**Procedure to be followed if possible child abuse is disclosed/suspected / reported:**

- A member of staff receiving a complaint or information about possible child abuse to a pupil or noticing signs of possible abuse **must notify the DT as soon as possible (or the DDT in her absence)**. On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDT is in the school the Principal will assume responsibility for child protection. Every member of staff **has a duty** to report their concerns of possible abuse to pupils. The DT must notify the Principal and together they will decide, taking advice as necessary from BELB's Child Protection Support Service(CPSSS), or from Social Services Gateway Team, if the information is such that the matter should be immediately referred to Social Services.
- **Parents will be informed of any referral to be made to social services immediately unless there are concerns that a parent may be a source of the possible abuse [ACPC Policy and Procedures: 3.98(5)].**
- Where a decision to refer to social services has been made, The DT completes a UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland ) form and sends it to Social Services Gateway Team (within 24 hours), retaining a copy in a secure place in school.
- If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs and symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT. It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'
- If a complaint is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately.
- If a complaint is made against the DT, the member of staff immediately informs the Principal who will instigate the normal reporting procedures. If the Principal is the subject of an allegation, the matter must be reported to the DT immediately. The DT informs BELB and the Chair of Governors, and the Chair co-ordinates the response (in collaboration with the DT and key members of BELB staff).
- A Child Protection Referral Form should be completed when notifying the DT about possible child abuse. Copies of these forms are located in the staffroom and included in Appendix 3 of this policy

## How to respond to a child who makes a disclosure

### 1. Receive

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

### 2. Reassure

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

### 3. Respond

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

### 4. Record

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

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

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

## 5. Refer

- **Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the designated teacher as soon as possible within the working day.** S/he will liaise with the Principal in the decision making process regarding possible referral to statutory services.

*It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated teacher for child protection in the school.*

- When a teacher notices signs/symptoms which give cause for concern, he/she should as a first step seek some preliminary clarification from the child with tact, sensitivity and understanding. When seeking preliminary clarification care must be taken when asking questions and interpreting pupils' responses. The way in which we talk to pupils can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings. Questioning should be kept to a minimum
- When a member of the school's ancillary or support staff notices signs/symptoms which give cause for concern, he/she should immediately bring them to the attention of the DT. It may be more appropriate for preliminary clarification to be carried out by the DT.
- A member of staff may be alerted to possible significant harm to a pupil either directly by the pupil involved or indirectly e.g. through the pupil's work, by another pupil, by another adult.
- Initial clarification should focus on **listening** to the pupil. As soon as possible afterwards the member of staff involved should make a note of the discussion and pass their notes to the DT. Notes must record the **time, date, place and people** who were present, as well as **what was said**. Signs of any visible physical injury should be described but **under**

***no circumstances should a pupil's clothing be removed or photographs taken.***

- Staff will record in writing any comments from the pupil or subsequently by a parent, carer or other adult about how an injury occurred. ***Under no circumstances should a pupil be asked to write down or sign information: it is NOT the member of staff's responsibility to carry out investigations into cases of suspected significant harm or to make extensive enquiries of the members of the pupil's family or other carers.***
- We must not give a pupil any undertaking of confidentiality although we should reassure her that information will be disclosed only to those adults who need to know. The school has a policy to pass on information to a pupil's parent/guardian if they feel the pupil is at risk to themselves or others. The school may give the pupil concerned an opportunity to tell their parents/guardians/ themselves or with the support of a member of staff (e.g. pregnancy).

**Parents will be informed of any referral to be made to social services immediately unless there are concerns that a parent may be a source of the possible abuse.**

## **EXTENDED SCHOOLS PROGRAMME AND OFF SITE ARRANGEMENTS**

- Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply.
- Where other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safe recruitment and vetting procedures in accordance with DE guidelines. We will also ensure that they understand their responsibilities in reporting child protection concerns to the Deputy Designated Teacher for Full Service Extended School Activities – Janice Clarke – where the concern relates to a registered pupil of the school.
- When our pupils attend off-site activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place and that the Designated Person off-site communicates directly with our DT where a concern has arisen involving one of our pupils. The DT would co-ordinate the response in such circumstances.
- Extended school provision provides increased levels of access to school premises by adults. Where services are provided by another organisation in school, the Board of Governors will seek assurance that

appropriate policies and procedures are in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection. Standard vetting arrangements will apply to any staff recruited or appointed to provide services for pupils. Where adults and children are jointly involved in activities, the school will ensure that there are adequate staffing arrangements in place so pupils and young children are appropriately supervised and safeguarded.

- All visitors to the school during the school day must report to reception, sign in and receive a visitor's pass for the duration of their visit. This pass must be returned to the reception on leaving and they will sign out. All staff have a swipe card to enter the community wing and pupils may enter with permission and will be met at the door if an arrangement has been made. Pupils must not be left unsupervised in this area. The community wing is separated from the teaching wing and is only accessed by security passes which are held by members of staff.

#### Mini-Model Day Care arrangements

- If a concern/disclosure/allegation is made in relation to a school age mother who is a registered pupil at the school and whose child attends the Mini Model day care nursery Social Services must be informed by Mini-Model Manager. Social Services will decide if the Designated Person at the Mini Model needs to be informed.
- If a concern/disclosure/allegation is made in relation to a member of staff of Girls' Model whose child is registered at the nursery the Principal and DT at the school must be informed by the Designated Person at the nursery. The Child protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) BELB, will be informed immediately by the DT. CPSSS will include Human Resources at the BELB in co-ordinating a response with the Principal.
- If a concern/disclosure/allegation is made in relation to a registered pupil on placement at the Nursery the Designated Teacher must be informed by the Designated Person at the Nursery. It is the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to co-ordinate the response.

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is not tolerated in Belfast Model School For Girls. The DE publication 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection' (1999) defines bullying as 'deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself'.

Our **Anti- Bullying Policy** is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

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

Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Form tutor, Year Head and DDT for Child Protection (Vice Principal Mrs H. Mairs), and team action will be taken to protect the victim. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

The Data Protection Act (DPA) and Human Rights Legislation require that the school take care in the use of photographs, videos and web cams in the school environment.

All photographs held on file (both electronic and paper) of the pupils exist in accordance with the DPA.

Photographs and videos of the pupils taken during the year to promote the school for publicity use in the prospectus or in other printed materials will be subject to consent by the parents.

Digital video recordings may be made at various functions or of class activities. These can help encourage creativity, motivate and enthuse pupils and improve communication, team-working skills and may be used for assessment purposes.

. When taking or using images, staff

- will not include details or full names of any child in an image
- will not include personal e-mail, postal addresses, or telephone details alongside the photographs or images.
- will only use images of children who are suitably dressed, to reduce the risk of such images being used inappropriately.

Pupils on placement and Volunteers are **not permitted** to take photographs, videos or digital images of any Mini-Model children at any time. Staff personal mobile phones should not be used to take images of pupils or make contact with pupils.

Photographs of school staff will only be used with the consent of that staff member.

Photographs taken for the purpose of journalism are exempt from the DPA and on all occasions the pupils will be aware that their photograph may be used.

Photographs or film footage by parents or guardians of their children at school events is permitted under an exemption in the DPA.

Images will be destroyed (when the young person leaves the school) or the school will establish if the image will be retained for future use. In such instances, images will be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

## **INTIMATE CARE**

All pupils have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required. In such instances, identified staff follow the policy and procedure as set out in the Regional Area Child Protection Areas' Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines (2007)

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual pupil. Parents/carers have a responsibility to inform staff of the intimate care needs of their child and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents. A care plan will be drawn up and agreed with parents for any pupil who requires intimate care. The Intimate care Plan will be agreed by the SENCO, parent/carers and child (if appropriate) and recorded in the child's personal file and consent forms signed by the parent/carer. Staff will be trained in the specific type of intimate care they carry out.

## **THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

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

The school community will therefore:

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

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL ADULTS IN THE SCHOOL**

The code of conduct is known to all adults – permanent and non-permanent members of staff, and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is set out in Appendix 5

## LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

### PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

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

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

### EDUCATIONAL TRIPS / VISITS

Our **Residential /Day Visits Policy** is informed by the 'Educational Visits Best Practice 2009' document which provides guidance in planning and carrying out educational visits in accordance with Health and Safety and Child Protection requirements.

### E-SAFETY

Our **ICT Policy** on e-safety is set out in two separate documents **Policy for the Acceptable Use of The Internet and The School Computer Network** and **Acceptable use of The School's Virtual Learning Environment** and are informed by DE guidance (DE Circular 2007/01). It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies for both staff and pupils.

In school we take the following precautions:

- All computer systems are protected by username & password
- Access to the Internet is passed through a filtering system that blocks inappropriate websites
- Our VLE is protected by usernames & passwords and access is controlled by the school

E-safety education is provided to pupils at appropriate places across the curriculum to help pupils understand what safe and responsible online behaviour means and how to

report any concerns they may have. The school website has a direct link with CEOP (Child Exploitation and on-line Protection) to help pupils, staff and parents report possible on-line abuse. All staff have a good understanding of e-safety, receive training and updates, know when and to whom to pass on an issue of concern, and have copies of the acceptable user policies named above. (if this is not the case then it probably needs to be addressed urgently by the Chair of Govs/Principal)

## **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (IT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

Although rare, staff can also be subjected to 'cyberbullying' by pupils.

School staff, parents and pupils aim to work together to prevent such behaviour and to act appropriately and effectively when it occurs.

Deliberate abuses which happen outside school, but which impinge upon or affect school pupils and staff will be dealt with through appropriate disciplinary, and where appropriate, police action.

## **Grooming and images of child abuse**

If school staff or pupils suspect or are made aware of the following illegal acts it must be reported to the Designated Teacher immediately.

- A child under 16 enticed or coerced to engage in sexually explicit conduct on-line.
- Importing or transporting obscenity using telecommunications public networks.
- Knowingly receiving images of child abuse whether via the internet or other digital device (eg mobile phone)
- Images which appear to be photographs whether made by computer graphics or otherwise are also covered under Sexual Offences legislation.

Staff and pupils should make the Designated Teacher aware immediately of any such instances.

## **RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY**

Relationships and Sexuality Education is set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance (DE Circular 2010/01) The school is committed in its aims to

provide” a secure moral framework where pupils can acquire the values which form the basis of a civilised society”. The delivery of the programme is within a framework of mutual trust, respect and confidentiality, while allowing pupils the opportunity to discuss concerns with their teacher.

## **SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICE**

The school counselling service is set out in a separate document. The school counsellor is available to offer therapy for a pupil-client’s emotional, social, behavioural or spiritual difficulties that may restrict their learning or that may impede their progress in developing as a whole person.

The counselling offered is based on two principles

- That insight brings about change, as emphasised in humanistic and psychodynamic therapy.
- By altering one’s thinking, or behaviour, improvement will come, whether in relieving stress or in better functioning, as emphasised in cognitive-behavioural and solution focused therapy.
- The counsellor’s role is to enable pupils to bring about their own progress through personal empowerment, through taking responsibility for personal choices, through exploring possibilities and options.

The counselling support provided conforms to the current best practice and professional standards for school based counselling, specifically in respect of counsellor qualifications, continuous professional development, supervision policy and safe working practices

## **REVIEWING OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The Safeguarding Team at Belfast model School For Girls school will review this policy annually, or in the event of a change of legislation, or following an incident when the policy will be evaluated as to its effectiveness. Any necessary changes will be made in light of any lessons learnt.

A copy of this policy is available from the school office telephone **02890 718111** or our **website**

# Appendix 1: Complaints Procedure: How a parent can raise a child protection concern

## CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

### Rationale

This complaints procedure relates to issues pertaining to child protection issues only.

1. All service providers have 'blind spots' and direct staff may not be aware of concerns therefore parents are encouraged to share the responsibility of creating a safe environment.
2. Help identify areas of concern early on so that proactive steps can be taken rather than reactive measures.
3. Assure parents of the schools' positive approach to safeguarding.
4. Increase the credibility of the school with other sectors and promote the professionalism of school staff.

The school operates an "Open Door" policy whereby the school welcomes parents to advise of all concerns and queries regarding their child's experiences at the school. It is unlikely this procedure will be applied frequently, but the school wishes to comply with best practice requirements. The school will take all complaints/concerns seriously and they will be treated with the utmost appropriate confidentiality – such confidentiality also being expected from the complainant and relatives.

### Key Areas

A complaint in terms of child protection might be about someone's behaviours, attitudes or treatment to a child/children; concerns about a child's safety (emotionally, physically, sexually).

### Complaint process

See accompanying flow chart. This will be circulated to all parents every two years with the **schools Child Protection Policy**. A further copy can be requested from the school at other times.

Aspects of the procedure will be orally explained at parents' information evenings/afternoons.

# Belfast Model School for Girls

## *Achievement for All*

### How a parent can raise a safeguarding / child protection concern

#### If you have a concern / complaint

You can talk to your daughter's **Form Tutor, Head of Year** by telephoning the school, in writing or by arranging an appointment to meet with the relevant person.

The matter will be discussed with you by telephone and if necessary the relevant person will report back to you within one day

A meeting will be arranged to discuss your concerns and hopefully find a satisfactory outcome which resolves the issue. If necessary the relevant person will contact you again within one day.

**If you are still concerned:**  
Contact the **Designated Teacher of Vice Principal for Pastoral Care** either by telephone, in writing or by making an appointment

**If you are still concerned:**  
Contact the **Principal**, either by telephone, in writing or by making an appointment to meet with him.

**If you are still concerned:** Contact the **Chair of the Board of Governors** in writing at the school address. You may be invited to meet with the Chair of Governors to discuss your concerns. You will be informed of the outcome within 3 days of the meeting

At any time, you can talk to a Trust Gateway Duty Social Worker (Tel 02890 507000) or the PSNI (Tel 02890 6502322). Out of hours duty social worker (Belfast Trust): 02890 565444

USEFUL ADDRESSES OVERLEAF

## Appendix 2: Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers:

**Belfast Model School for Girls**  
35, Dunowen Gardens Gardens

BELFAST  
BT14 6NQ

Telephone: 028 90 718111  
Fax: 028 90714448

**Chair of the Board of Governors**  
c/o The Principal  
Belfast Model School for Girls  
Address and Telephone as above.

**The Designated Officers for Child Protection**

Belfast Education & Library Board  
40 Academy Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 2NQ  
Tel 02890 564107

**PSNI: Child Abuse Investigation Unit  
A.District (N&W Belfast)**

Detective Inspector [Mark Mehaffey](#)  
Grosvenor Road Police Station  
Telephone 02890 650222 Ext 26725

**The Department of Education**

Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
BANGOR  
BT19 7PR

Telephone: 028 91279279  
Fax: 028 91279100  
Email: [deni@nics.gov.uk](mailto:deni@nics.gov.uk)

**GATEWAY SERVICE – Social Services  
(all referrals)**

110 Saintfield Road  
Belfast BT8 6HD  
Telephone **02890 507000**  
**Out of Hours** Duty Social Worker  
Telephone **02890 565444**

**Carlisle Health and Well Being Centre**

40, Antrim road  
Belfast  
BT 15 2AX  
Telephone 0845 3006650

**Shankill Road Social Services  
Wellbeing and treatment Centre**

83, Shankill Road  
Belfast BT13 1PD  
Telephone: 95040300

**CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING FORM**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PUPILS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FORM: \_\_\_\_\_

***N.B. It is imperative that only factual and neutral information is recorded.***

**Details of your preliminary clarification**

Incidents/concerns/disclosure – day, date, time, place, who dealt with it, observations or circumstances, description of physical/behavioural indicators, child/young person's words.

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Details of anyone else involved, conversations held with anyone else; witnesses e.g. parent, other staff member – date, day, time, place, factual content of conversation.

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- This form must be delivered ASAP to the Designated Teacher, MRS J DUNCAN or Deputy Designated Teachers MR/CL

Referral to which designated teacher in the school, date and time.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Belfast Model School for Girls**

## *Achievement for All*

### **Code of Conduct for Child Protection for all adults in the school**

**Agreed by Board of Governors:**                      **To be reviewed:**

*This code applies to all staff – teaching and non-teaching, paid and unpaid, who work in the school. It is informed by Department of education guidance.*

All adults who come into contact with pupils in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, places a duty on schools to safeguard and promote the well-being of pupils. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of pupils are competent, confident and safe to do so.

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold their best interests. Staff and volunteers must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that behaviour towards pupils must be beyond reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences that children and young people gain from positive interactions with members of staff. It is intended to assist us in dealing with the complex issue of child protection, by drawing attention to areas of risk and offering guidance on prudent conduct and by ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of how to report concerns about possible child abuse.

### **Code of Conduct**

#### **Private meetings with Pupils**

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

- 2) Where such conditions cannot apply, staff members are advised to ensure that a colleague knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- 3) Where possible another pupil, or preferably, another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school will facilitate this if necessary. Staff should keep other members of staff informed of where they are and what they are doing when an individual interview is deemed appropriate.

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

- 1) As a general principle, staff should not make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited about providing this.
- 2) Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- 3) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint. At all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent.
- 4) Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. **However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.**
- 5) Any physical contact which could be misinterpreted by a pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. It should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with senior management and the parent/carer.

- 6) In all circumstances where a pupil initiates inappropriate physical contact it is the responsibility of the member of staff to sensibly deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- 7) Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal.
- 8) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out-of-school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment. Staff code of conduct applies to all out of school activities.
- 9) Pupils with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

### **Intimate Care**

Where staff provide intimate care for pupils with disabilities or in the provision of medical care, the nature, circumstances and context of such contact should comply with ACPC Intimate Policy and Procedures and be part of a formally agreed care plan, which is regularly reviewed. The additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical or learning disability should be taken into account and the emotional responses of any pupil to intimate care should be carefully and sensitively observed and where necessary any concerns passed to the SENCO (Mrs S Logan)

### **Choice of Teaching Materials**

- 1) Teachers should avoid using teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- 2) When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might be criticised after the event.

- 3) If in doubt about the appropriateness of particular teaching materials, the teacher should consult the Principal before using it.

### **Behaviour Management**

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Any sanctions and rewards used should be part of the schools Behaviour Management Policy.

### **Relationships and Attitudes**

Staff should ensure that relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils, taking care that our conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Staff attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought. Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect. Staff should be alert to the risk of emotional abuse, such as persistent and vindictive sarcasm, verbal bullying, or severe and persistent negative comments or actions, particularly when directed consistently at a single pupil or a small number of pupils. Such bullying behaviour is unacceptable and would be subject to disciplinary response. Staff should reflect on every aspect of contact with pupils that may give rise to perceptions or allegations of this form of abuse.

Staff are in a position of trust and must not use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so. Such a relationship could constitute a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences legislation.

### **Confidentiality**

School staff have a responsibility not to give out information about pupils to anyone, except in exceptional circumstances where the staff member feels that the health, safety or welfare of the pupil or other child/ren may be at risk. In such circumstances the staff member has a duty to pass on those concerns without delay to the DT. Staff should inform pupils that they can never agree to

absolute confidentiality and reassure the pupil that only those who need to know will be informed.

Confidential or personal information about a pupil must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.

The school will pass on information to a parent / guardian if they feel that a pupil is a risk to themselves or others. The designated teacher has a duty to report child protection concerns to Social Services; B.E.L.B Designated Board Officers and in some instances the PSNI. Social Services need consent to talk to a pupil on school premises: the decision to allow an interview without parental consent requires the authority of senior management.

### **The use of the internet and digital technologies**

Accessing, making and/or storing indecent images of children is illegal and will lead to a criminal investigation. Staff/volunteers should not use equipment from school to access adult pornography and personal equipment containing these images should not be brought into school. Staff should ensure that pupils are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. School will ensure that internet equipment used by pupils has appropriate controls with regard to access. Personal passwords should be kept confidential.

Communicating with pupils on public social networking sites is professionally inappropriate.

### **Infatuations**

Occasionally, a child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. These adults should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware however that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach and professional boundaries are maintained.

A member of staff who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Principal, senior management and parent/carer so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt,

distress or embarrassment. A record should be kept of any incidents or indications.

Communication with Pupils (including the use of digital technologies)

Staff must ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours and are working to local and national guidelines on acceptable user policies.

Communication between pupils and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Staff should not share any personal information with pupils and should not request or respond to any personal information from pupils, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Staff should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parent/carers. E mail or text communications between an adult and a child outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.

Internet e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the school policy.

### **Home Visits**

All work with pupils and parents should, wherever possible be undertaken in the school. There are however occasions where it is necessary to make one- off or regular home visits. A related risk assessment should be in place to safeguard pupils and the adults who work with them. This should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child/young person, parents and others living in the household. Appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed; visits should not be made alone. Emergency situations should be reported to the PSNI, social services and to the principal/parent as appropriate.

## **Transporting Pupils**

In certain situations staff may agree to transport pupils. A member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that might arise. Wherever possible and practical it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

It is inappropriate for staff to offer lifts to pupils outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the Principal and agreed with the parents/carers.

There may be occasions where a pupil requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a pupil at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Principal and parents/carers.

## **If you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The schools whistle blowing policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

## **Conclusion**

It is impossible and inappropriate to set hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which we interrelate with pupils, or where opportunities for our conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances, our professional judgement should be exercised and for the vast majority of us this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been our practice. From time to time, however, it is prudent for all of us to reflect on our teaching styles, relationships with pupils and our manner and approach to individual pupils, to ensure that we give no grounds for doubt about our intentions in the minds of colleagues, pupils or parents/guardians.

## ***This Code of Conduct for Staff in translated into action through policies such as:***

*Pastoral Care Policy*

*The Use of Reasonable Force*

*Behaviour Management Policy*

*Behaviour Management Policy*

*Complaints Procedure*

*Child Protection Policy*

**Induction in safeguarding policy and arrangements**

**I have completed child protection induction training, received a copy and have read/ will read the Belfast Model School For Girls 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct' and agree to carry out its requirements.**

**Name (printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_