



**Belfast Model School for Girls**  
*Achievement for All*  
*Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

**Agreed by Board of Governors February 2024**

**To be reviewed as required**

**DT training held December 2023.**

## Rationale

All staff<sup>1</sup> of the Belfast Model School for Girls has a primary responsibility for the wellbeing, care and safety of all students and staff and we carry out this duty through our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive community and a safe environment for all our students. We value our students 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 wellbeing, care and safety of our students and every concern about the wellbeing of children in this school will be responded to. Every member of the school staff has a duty of care over the student. The wellbeing of the student and the school community is paramount.

## Purpose

Our Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are developed in accordance with:

- Department of Education's guidelines and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and amendments (2008).
- Safeguarding and Child Protection – A guide for schools DE 2017/04 and **Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools Update No 3 – September 2023**. This update provides some important revisions to the DE guidance document '*Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools*', which was issued in September 2019. (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/safeguarding-and-child-protection-schools-guide-schools>).
- Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030 is a requirement of the Children's Services Cooperation Act (NI) 2015. It is the overarching strategic framework for government to improve the health and wellbeing of all children in Northern Ireland.

These are reviewed annually and amended in response to new legislation, policy change, or in response to the learning from an adverse event in the school. Any policy revisions are approved by CPSSS before being passed to Governors for approval. We seek to ensure that our students 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 – Learning for Life and Work and Pastoral programme of Character, Culture and Care - students are helped to learn about the risks of possible significant harm and to develop the skills they need to keep themselves and others 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 students. Effective staff training in recognising the signs/symptoms of possible significant harm is delivered in school to enhance staff confidence in responding to students 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)
- Co- Operating to safeguard Children (2003), (2016)
- Gender recognition Act 2004

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<sup>1</sup> 'Staff' includes all adults working in the school whether teaching or non-teaching or volunteers, paid or unpaid, permanent or temporary

- Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and prevention in partnership with Education and Libraries (NI) order 2003
- The Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and amendments (2008)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/contents/enacted)
- The Sexual offences (NI) Order 2008
- Safeguarding Board Act NI 2011 [www.safeguardingni.org](http://www.safeguardingni.org)
- SBNI Online Core Policy and Procedures. [www.proceduresonline/sbni/contents.htmlcore](http://www.proceduresonline/sbni/contents.htmlcore)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- DE 'E Safety Guidance' 2013
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020
- FGM Protection Orders July 2015.
- Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016 [www.legislation.gov.uk/rua/2016/4/schedule/1](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/rua/2016/4/schedule/1)
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 – legislation still to be fully implemented
- Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools DE Circular 2017/04 Sept 2023
- Justice Act 2016
- Online Safety Act 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act NI 2021
- Adoption and Children Act NI 2022

**DE Circulars** Available on DE and EA websites [www.eani.org.uk/school-management/safeguarding-and-child-protection/resources/de-circulars](http://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/safeguarding-and-child-protection/resources/de-circulars).

- 2018/07 self assessment audit tools for emotional health and wellbeing
- 2020/07 Recordkeeping
- 2021/08 School Development days
- 2021/13 Interim Guidance on the use of restraint and seclusion
- 2022/02 Children who display harmful sexual behaviour
- 2023/02 Parental Responsibility – updated guidance

The central thrust of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions 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 and this is detailed in the Safeguarding in Schools document. Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A guide for schools – 2017/04 (amended September 2023).

Key Principals of DE Circular 2017/04 (amended September 2023) (which should be read in conjunction with DE Circular 2015/13 ‘Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff’).

The following principles should underpin all strategies, policies, procedures, practice and services relating to safeguarding children and young people.

- The child or young person’s welfare is paramount.
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard.
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together.
- Partnership.
- Prevention.
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances.

- Protection.
- Evidence-based and informed decision making.

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

(Chair) Principal: Ms Paula Stuart, Principal  
 Designated Teacher: Mrs Janice Clarke, Acting Vice- Principal  
 Senior Deputy Designated Teachers: Mrs Julie Graham Vice-Principal  
 Deputy Designated Teachers:  
 Mrs Patricia Boyd, Assistant Principal

The Chair of Governors: Mrs J Weir  
 Designated Teacher Governor: Mrs Valerie Ingram  
 Designated Teacher Team (See appendix 7 for model of referral):

EA now have support teams in relation to Governance, Online Safety, Addressing Bullying in Schools, Behavioural support team, Intercultural Service, AccessNI team and E-relations for managing allegations against staff.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Mrs Clarke as is Designated Teacher and lead for safeguarding:

- is appropriately trained by Education Authority – Belfast Region.
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Liaises with the Education Authority-Belfast Region designated officers for Child protection. DE Circular 2017/04 states *Contact should be made with CPSS for advice and support as soon as concerns of a safeguarding and/or child protection nature arise.*
- 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 Central Referral Unit where appropriate.
- ensures that when a child with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information is passed to their new school and the student’s social worker is informed
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school’s contribution to child protection plans
- Overviews the provision made for identified vulnerable, SEN, LAC and SAMS students
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- has lead responsibility for the development of the school’s child protection policy and other related policies which are reviewed annually/as required
- Specific responsibility for Addressing bullying in schools legislation
- liaises with the nominated Governor and Principal as appropriate
- oversees written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- attends Safeguarding meetings as required.
- makes the child protection policy available to parents – short version posted , full version on the school website
- Leads whole school CP and induction training to the school community

Mrs Graham is Senior Designated Teacher for Child protection:

- is appropriately trained by Education Authority – Belfast Region.
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Liaises with the Education Authority-Belfast Region designated officers for Child protection
- refers cases of suspected abuse to Social Services Gateway Team or PSNI Central Referral Unit where appropriate.
- Specific responsibility for e-safety and gender
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- attends Safeguarding meetings as required.

Trained Deputy Designated Teachers

- Deal with Child Protection referrals in the unavailability of the DT/DDT

Board of Governors

- Appointing a DT and DDT for child protection who has undertaken training in child protection and inter-agency working
- The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 places as statutory duty on BoG to Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered students
- 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
- an anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed annually
- a code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Principal
- The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the Record of Child Abuse Complaints against staff members even if there have been no entries
- Safe recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks
- A training strategy that ensures all staff, receive child protection training, with refresher training at three- yearly intervals. The DT's should receive refresher training at 3 yearly intervals from the Education Authority – Belfast Region.
- 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 Education Authority – Belfast region and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Principal.
- Statutory guidance issued under Article 18(1C) of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 places a duty on the Board of Governors of a grant-aided school, to protect pupils from physical or mental abuse, whether at school or elsewhere

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, feeds back to the chair of the safeguarding team 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's to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of students 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 students' safety and wellbeing is addressed through the curriculum.
- ensures the Board of Governors fulfil their child protection duties, informs them of any changes to guidance, child protection procedures or legislation.

## Volunteers

- Schools must ensure that volunteers, eg coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc, who are employed by others, have the necessary clearances in place and a record of these should be maintained by the Principal.

## **Useful contacts for advice and support:**

[Cru@psni.police.uk](mailto:Cru@psni.police.uk)

PSNI Central Referral Unit

Regional Emergency services 08001979995

## **Risk assessments/RRAPS**

Risk assessments are written for students where there are Safeguarding and Child Protection additional measures are required to be put in place. These are completed by the school in liaison with the student, parent and other relevant statutory or voluntary organisations. These are reviewed on a regular basis and shared on a need to know basis. Relevant circulars include:

- Educational Trips and visits 2017
- Complaints against staff 2015/13

## **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. When a child is identified as 'in need' social services can provide for them up to age 21 if they were looked after by social services or were in certain other types of care when age 16 or 17 or a vulnerable adult (18+).

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". Staff during August 2020 training received a booklet on types of abuse and signs/symptoms.

In all cases where symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or about the welfare of the child, the member of staff should report these concerns to the DT.

A parent or carer may also give information to a member of staff of the school which gives rise to concern about possible child abuse by someone outside the school, or by a person working in the school in a volunteer capacity.

The person making the complaint should be advised of their responsibility to refer to the local Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team. It must also be referred to the DT to follow up.

## **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

## **Domestic Violence**

Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

‘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.’

## Sexual Violence and Abuse:

‘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).’

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual’s incapacity to give informed consent.

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy can be found at: [www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy)

## Operation Encompass

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children’s exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them. Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse. As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns. This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 ‘Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools’ and a note will be made in the child’s child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team. Further information see The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

**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.

## Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual Exploitation is defined as:

‘A form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates



a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse'

*SBNI 2014, adapted from CSE Knowledge Transfer Partnership NI*

Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking. All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the Designated Teacher.

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual exploitation include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders

### **Inappropriate sexual behaviour**

"Concerns regarding inappropriate sexual behaviour must be notified to the DT's. The DT in turn notifies the Principal and together they decide, taking advice as necessary (CPSSS), on the most appropriate course of action.

An assessment checklist is used by the DT's in order to provide a prompt for the information that needs to be gathered to assess a child who displays harmful sexualised behaviours. (DE Circular 2022/02)

**Exploitation**<sup>1</sup> 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, and 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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 2016

#### **Female Genital Mutilation**

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM

FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.

The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

It is illegal in the UK to subject a girl or a woman to FGM

FGM constitutes a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and has severe short-term and long-term physical and psychological consequences

#### **Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening**

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut', to prepare for marriage or 'becoming a woman'

#### **Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:**

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinary tract infection
- Disclosure of FGM

#### **The 'One Chance' rule**

It is essential that settings /schools/colleges take action without delay as there is often only 'one chance' to take action.

**DFP NI published Multi-Agency Guidelines July 2014, FGM Protection Orders July 2015.**

#### **Forced Marriage**

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party.

Signs that may indicate forced marriage include:

- Absence and persistent absence
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins
- Change in behaviour, performance or punctuality
- Being withdrawn from school for 'home schooling' and not receiving suitable education at home
- Not allowed to attend extra - curricular activities
- Sudden announcement of engagement

The Right to Choose: Statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage. DFPNI 2012

### **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.

### **E-Safety/Internet Abuse**

E-Safety Co-ordinator in place who works alongside the DT/DDT if there is an issue. Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

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

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and should be energetic in teaching students how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like.

The school's actions and governance of online safety must be reflected clearly in its safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

It is recommended that rather than having a stand-alone online safety policy, schools should integrate their online safety policy (and, where applicable, their mobile learning policy) into existing safeguarding, behaviour, code of practice and anti-bullying policies.

The online safety policy should incorporate agreements on the acceptable use of (i) the internet and school-based digital technology and (ii) personal mobile technology.

### Sharing an Inappropriate Image with an intent to cause distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that you **do not forward it to anyone else**. Please remember that schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33.enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33.enacted)) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent – see articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail. By contacting the police, you could help prevent further such incidents.

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress', the child protection procedures should be followed.

Online Safety Act 2023 now includes upskirting, downblousing, and sending indirect images

**The UK Safer Internet Centre (contact details below) may be able to assist in having the image blocked or removed to prevent further distribution.**

It is also vital to ensure that the victim of abuse gets the correct support. They are likely to be ashamed and embarrassed and worried about parental reaction – some may wish to speak to the school independent counsellor. A list of organisations offering advice and support is included below:

### **Departmental Guidance**

DE Circular 2007/1 – guidance on Internet Use Policy

DE Circular 2011/22 – advice on the safe use of the internet and digital technologies

DE Circular 2013/25 – guidance on e-Safety policy and Acceptable Use Policy

DE Circular 2016/27 – guidance on online safety

DE Circular 2017/04 – Safe guarding and Child Protection in schools Sections 6.7 and 6.9 Online Safety includes additional signposts for online safety resources, including the Safer schools Northern Ireland App, which is funded by the Department, and the Safeguarding Board NI (SBNI) online safety hub.

DHSSPS Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016) – Section 7.2.9 offers advice on Risks of Misuse of Digital Technologies.

The SBNI recommend the SWGFL (South West Grid for Learning) '360 degree safe' online safety self-assessment tool for use across schools and colleges. The tool is free to use and is intended to help schools review their online safety policy and practice.

The tool can be found at [www.360safe.org.uk/](http://www.360safe.org.uk/) or visit the C2K Online Safety area on Fronter.

### **Sexting**

'Sexting' is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video on their mobile phone, computer or tablet. It can include sexual chat or requests for pictures/ images of a sexual nature.

Safeguarding Board NI, 2015 leaflet Sexting And The Law

Flow chart on Sexting- response process for professionals. (Appendix 3 How to respond and take action)

**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 they are 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 abuse and violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones.

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

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 whose 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. School has a Drugs Policy in place.

**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 Teachers (DT's) for Child Protection.

**GUIDELINES**

- Child protection procedures are co-ordinated in school by the Lead Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT) Mrs Janice Clarke and the CP team of Senior Deputy Designated Teachers.
- Parents/guardians of incoming Year 8 pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy including a copy of the school's Child Protection Complaints Procedures. The Child Protection Policy is also available on the school website and hard copies are available from the school office on request.

- Information is posted around the school buildings and on the school's media platforms to make pupils aware of the support structures which help to protect them both inside and outside school e.g. names of the Designated Teachers, 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 school staff have been issued with and must wear identification badges while on school premises.
- 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. If a speaker is to be a regular visitor they would need an Access N.I check. Guidelines on who requires an Access N.I. are in appendix 8 Ms C McLaren is responsible for maintaining this document.
- Names and date of attendance of all visitors must be recorded on arrival at the school office and a record kept by C McLarnon. Mrs Janice Clarke DT is to be informed of any new members of staff or visitors coming in to school so that child protection induction training can take place first.
- A single central register of safeguarding checks will be kept in the school office and AccessNI reference numbers recorded.
- 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 designated teacher (see Appendix 7) as soon as possible**. If a DDT is not available they should find the DDT or other trained staff. They should never be left 'until later'. 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 from EA – Belfast Region'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 a UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) form is completed and sent to Social Services Gateway Team (within 24 hours,48 hours if Child in need referral), retaining a copy in the pupils child protection file and a copy to CPSSS.
- In the case of a vulnerable adult (18+) a referral will be made to the local Care and Protection Gateway Team within 24 hours.

- 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 safeguarding complaint is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately.
- If a safeguarding complaint is made against the DT or DDT, 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 Education Authority – Belfast Region and the Chair of Governors, and the Chair co-ordinates the response (in collaboration with the DT and key members of Education Authority- Belfast Region 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 one of the safeguarding team eg: Mrs Clarke
- 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.
- All staff are issued with a ‘card’ that summarises this information for reference.

*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.**

## **Vulnerable Children**

Vulnerable children include those with:

- Children with a Disability
- Children with limited fluency in English – SENDO, Newcomer co-ordinator
- Gender Identity Issues/Sexual Orientation

As a school we hold a vulnerable student list for all year groups. This is reviewed on a regular basis.

### Statutory Responsibilities

The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (NI) 2007 does **not** specifically refer to 'gender, race, political opinion, faith' but instead states that students should have opportunities to, 'Investigate how and why conflict, including prejudice, stereotyping, sectarianism and racism may arise in the community'. The terms prejudice and stereotyping can cover a wide range of scenarios – including disability, gender, and sexual orientation.

Children whose first language is not English/Newcomer pupils should be given the opportunity to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred. An interpreter can be accessed through EA.

DT's and other relevant school staff should seek advice and support from the EA's Intercultural Education Service if necessary. All schools should create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or students for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

EA guidance on supporting transgender young people is to be followed:

[www.eani.org.uk/school-management/policies-and-guidance/supporting-transgender-young-people](http://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/policies-and-guidance/supporting-transgender-young-people)

## **Reasonable Force/Restraint**

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Article 4, outlines the powers a member of school staff can use in restraining pupils. However, schools are reminded that reasonable force/restraint should only be used as a measure of last resort. Staff of a grant-aided school may only use reasonable force/restraint: • to prevent a pupil from committing an offence; • to prevent a pupil causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil themselves); • to prevent a pupil from engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils. The legislation extends to the premises of the school and when a member of school staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned.

*Please see our separate policy on Reasonable force. This works along our schools Positive Behaviour Policy.*

## 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 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 one of the DDT's where a concern has arisen involving one of our pupils. The DDT would co-ordinate the response in such circumstances.
- Extended school provision provides increased levels of access to school premises by adults. All external providers of activity should be Access N.I. cleared and submit their certificate and/or number to the school reception on arrival. 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. 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.
- AMEY hold responsibility for ensuring safeguarding procedures for other visitors/contractors they employ. They must be made familiar with the system of authorized controlled access and visitor passes that is in place. Adults on school premises who are not employees/ volunteers of the school should have visitor passes and carry identification. Staff should ask those who do not have such identification to proceed to reception or escort them to reception. If the individual refuses to co-operate a member of the senior leadership team/Amey staff must be informed immediately. Staff who are working with visitors in school should ensure that their visitors have passes.
- If a safeguarding complaint is made against Facilities Management (AMEY) staff member the Designated Teacher informs GATEWAY, the registered Body Rep EANI and AMEY GTV/BSP point of contact Person-General manager telephone contact number 90689835.

### Pupils on Work Experience

Health and Social Care Programmes will require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate for pupils on long term placement and may be required for pupils on work experience/shadowing placements. Schools should apply through their AccessNI Registered Body in advance. (See DE Circular 2013/01 and 2012/19 for more information).

Pupils coming into the school on work experience do not require AccessNI clearance if they are fully supervised by school staff. The normal child protection induction processes should apply.

Useful guidance is found on: [www.eani.org.uk/school-management/educational-visits](http://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/educational-visits)  
School also has a residential policy in place.

## Addressing Bullying in Schools

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 LoL Pastoral and DT. Team action will be taken to protect the victim and a bullying log will be opened. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. This will be in keeping with the schools' Positive Behaviour Policy.

## 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 GDPR Policy.

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. Permission is sought through the Data Capture form and recorded on SIMS.

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, but will be strongly discouraged at the start of the event.

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 a culture 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 Learning for Life and work, Personal Success and Wellbeing and CCC - 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.
- Ensure the students follow the EA guidance on a R.S.E programme. RSE Hub <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rtse>

## **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

## **SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICE**

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

## **THE KEEPING OF CHILD PROTECTION RECORDS**

Child protection records are kept in line with guidance in DE circular 2020/07. Schools must ensure that all processing of personal data for safeguarding and child protection purposes complies with GDPR. Information in relation to GDPR is found on the EA website Data protection School Resource Hub.

## **REVIEWING OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The Safeguarding Team at Belfast Model School for Girls school will review this policy annually in line with GDPR policies, 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.

## **LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES**

- PHYSICAL RESTRAINT
- E-SAFETY
- POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY
- DRUGS POLICY
- ADDRESSING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS
- HEALTH AND SAFETY
- EDUCATIONAL TRIPS / VISITS
- ACCESS NI
- VISITORS INTO SCHOOL
- GDPR – includes storing of CP information and Transfer of information
- COMPLAINTS
- RECORD KEEPING POLICY SUPPORT POLICY
- MEDICAL / HUB POLICIES
- INTIMATE CARE
- COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
- CRITICAL INCIDENT

## PART TWO: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

### **Teacher**

For the purpose of this code of conduct, 'teacher' means a teacher employed in a grant-aided school and includes teachers appointed to posts of Principal and Vice-Principal.

*Disciplinary procedure for teachers including Principals and Vice-Principals in grant-aided schools with fully delegated budgets TNC 2016/2*

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
  - Treating students and colleagues with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
  - Having regard for the need to safeguard students' and colleagues well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
  - Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others. The use of bad language is not acceptable.
  - Not undermining the fundamental values of students and colleagues, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and teachers should show mutual respect in the tolerance of those with differing faiths, gender, race and political beliefs. This should include the use of comments/posts on social media.
  - Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
  
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies, and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
  
- Teachers must at all times display professional conduct to students, staff, parents and visitors. They must not engage in behaviours which bring their professionalism or the school into disrepute. Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.
  
- Teachers must not whether on school premises, in their place of work, or on school trips engage in the taking of or be under the influence of alcohol.
  
- Teachers must not whether on school premises, in their place of work, or on school trips engage in the taking of or be under the influence of proscribed drugs.
  
- Teachers must not consume intoxicants during working hours or bring intoxicants onto the school premises without permission.
  
- Teachers must not be in an unfit mental and/or physical state induced by alcohol/drug misuse.
  
- Teachers must not engage in the consumption of alcohol/drugs – whilst in charge of or driving a school vehicle and/or while in charge of a group of young people.
  
- Teachers must not engage in self-employment activities or in the working for another employer eg: CCEA during hours contracted to work for the school/employing authority.

#### Linked Policies:

- Disciplinary procedure for teachers including Principals and Vice-Principals in grant-aided schools with fully delegated budgets TNC 2016/2
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Child protection; the Department of Education Circular (DE2015/13)
- Belfast Model School for Girls Safeguarding Policy
- Belfast Model School for Girls Drugs Policy
- Dignity in the workplace policy



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

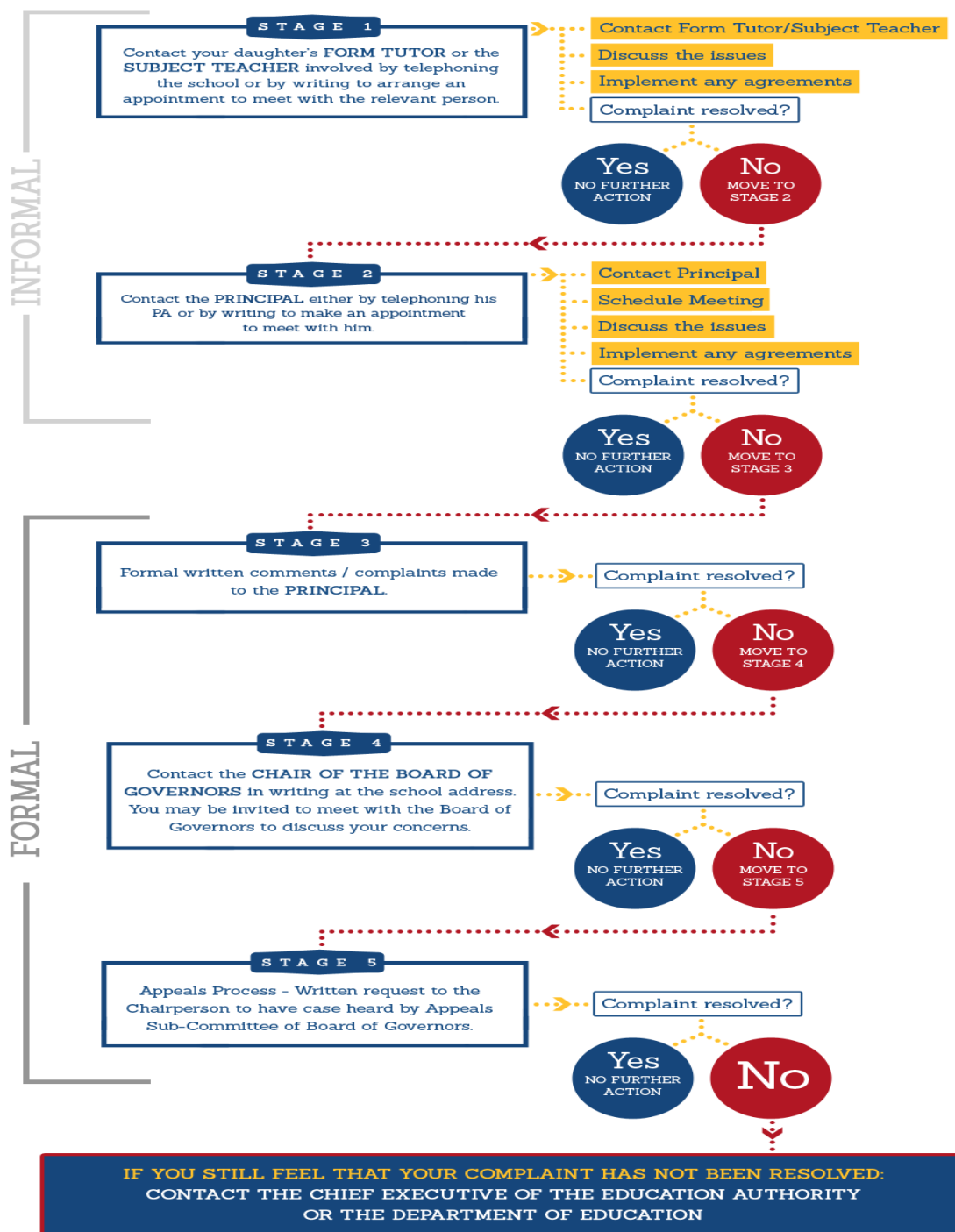
## Belfast Model School for Girls

### *Achievement for All*

Any safeguarding complaints or concerns should move direct to Stage 2. If the Child Protection complaints/concern involve the Principal move straight to Stage 4.

#### COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If you are a parent / guardian and you have a complaint to make to the school then please follow each stage below to try and resolve the issue.



## 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 Belfast Model School for Girls  
Address and Telephone as above.

### **The Designated Officers for Child Protection**

Education Authority Belfast Region  
40 Academy Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 2NQ  
Tel 028 95985590

### **PSNI: CENTRAL REFERRAL UNIT**

Telephone 02890 259299  
(or 101 extension 30299)

They will take referral and allocate  
to child abuse investigation unit  
in whose area the child lives.

### **The Public sector Ombudsman**

Telephone: 0800 34 34 24  
[www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

### **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 (Belfast Trust)**

110 Saintfield Road  
Belfast BT8 6HD  
Telephone **02890 507000**  
**Out of Hours** centralised service  
Telephone **95049999 (5pm-8am Monday to Thursday, Friday 5pm-Monday 8am)**

### **Carlisle Health and Well Being Centre**

40, Antrim road  
Belfast  
BT 15 2AX  
Telephone 02895 042500

### **Shankill Road**

**Wellbeing and Treatment Centre**  
83, Shankill Road  
Belfast BT13 1PD  
Telephone: 95040300



**Part 2 – To be completed by the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher**

Pupil's D.O.B: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Advice sought/conversation with – Board Officer for CP, Social Services, Police CPSA Unit, date, time, place, advice.**

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**Action as a result of advice – who spoken to, day, date, time, what was said and agreed etc.**

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**Decision not to refer and why. Other action taken, feedback to all those involved – how, when.**

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**Decision to refer and why, feedback to all those involved – how, when.**

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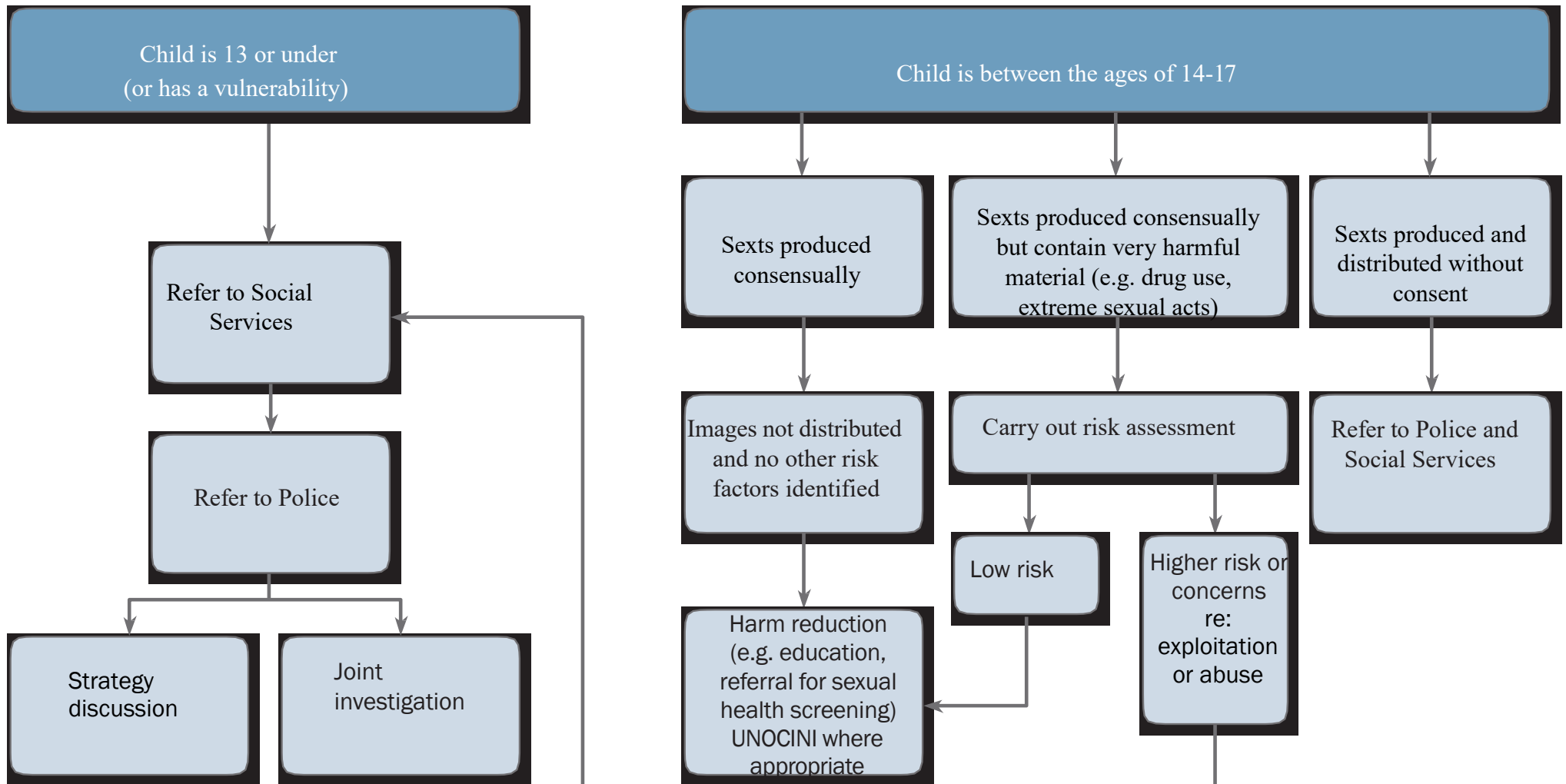
Signed by Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexting in schools

Adapted from Optimus Education for NI by the CPSSS

Sexting – Response process for professionals

If a Sexting incident is reported to a member of staff it should be referred to the DT or DDTs who will make a decision about the any further action required.



**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 September 2020**  
**September 2024**

**Has been 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. All incidents should be reported in writing to the Principal.
- 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.

## **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, verbal abuse, unnecessary raising of voice, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils or invasion of their personal space 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; EA 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. This can often be indicated by inappropriate comments from a student to a member of staff. 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, or SLT mentor so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment. A written record should be kept of any incidents or indications and a copy provided for the Principal.

### **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**

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 or Vice 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. Staff should never do this alone and such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Principal and parents/carers. Staff should ensure their car insurance covers them for the use of their private vehicle in this situation.

### **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.

## **PART TWO: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

### **Teacher**

For the purpose of this code of conduct, 'teacher' means a teacher employed in a grant-aided school and includes teachers appointed to posts of Principal and Vice-Principal.

*Disciplinary procedure for teachers including Principals and Vice-Principals in grant-aided schools with fully delegated budgets TNC 2016/2*

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
  - Treating students and colleagues with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
  - Having regard for the need to safeguard students' and colleagues well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
  - Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others. The use of bad language is not acceptable.
  - Not undermining the fundamental values of students and colleagues, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and teachers should show mutual respect in the tolerance of those with differing faiths, gender, race and political beliefs. This should include the use of comments/posts on social media.
  - Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
  
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies, and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
  
- Teachers must at all times display professional conduct to students, staff, parents and visitors. They must not engage in behaviours which bring their professionalism or the school into disrepute. Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

- Teachers must not whether on school premises, in their place of work, or on school trips engage in the taking of or be under the influence of alcohol.
- Teachers must not whether on school premises, in their place of work, or on school trips engage in the taking of or be under the influence of proscribed drugs.
- Teachers must not consume intoxicants during working hours or bring intoxicants onto the school premises without permission.
- Teachers must not be in an unfit mental and/or physical state induced by alcohol/drug misuse.
- Teachers must not engage in the consumption of alcohol/drugs – whilst in charge of or driving a school vehicle and/or while in charge of a group of young people.
- Teachers must not engage in self-employment activities or in the working for another employer eg: CCEA during hours contracted to work for the school/employing authority.

Linked Policies:

- Disciplinary procedure for teachers including Principals and Vice-Principals in grant-aided schools with fully delegated budgets TNC 2016/2
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Child protection; the Department of Education Circular (DE2015/13)
- Belfast Model School for Girls Safeguarding Policy
- Belfast Model School for Girls Drugs Policy
- Dignity in the workplace policy

## **Appendix 6**

### **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** \_\_\_\_\_

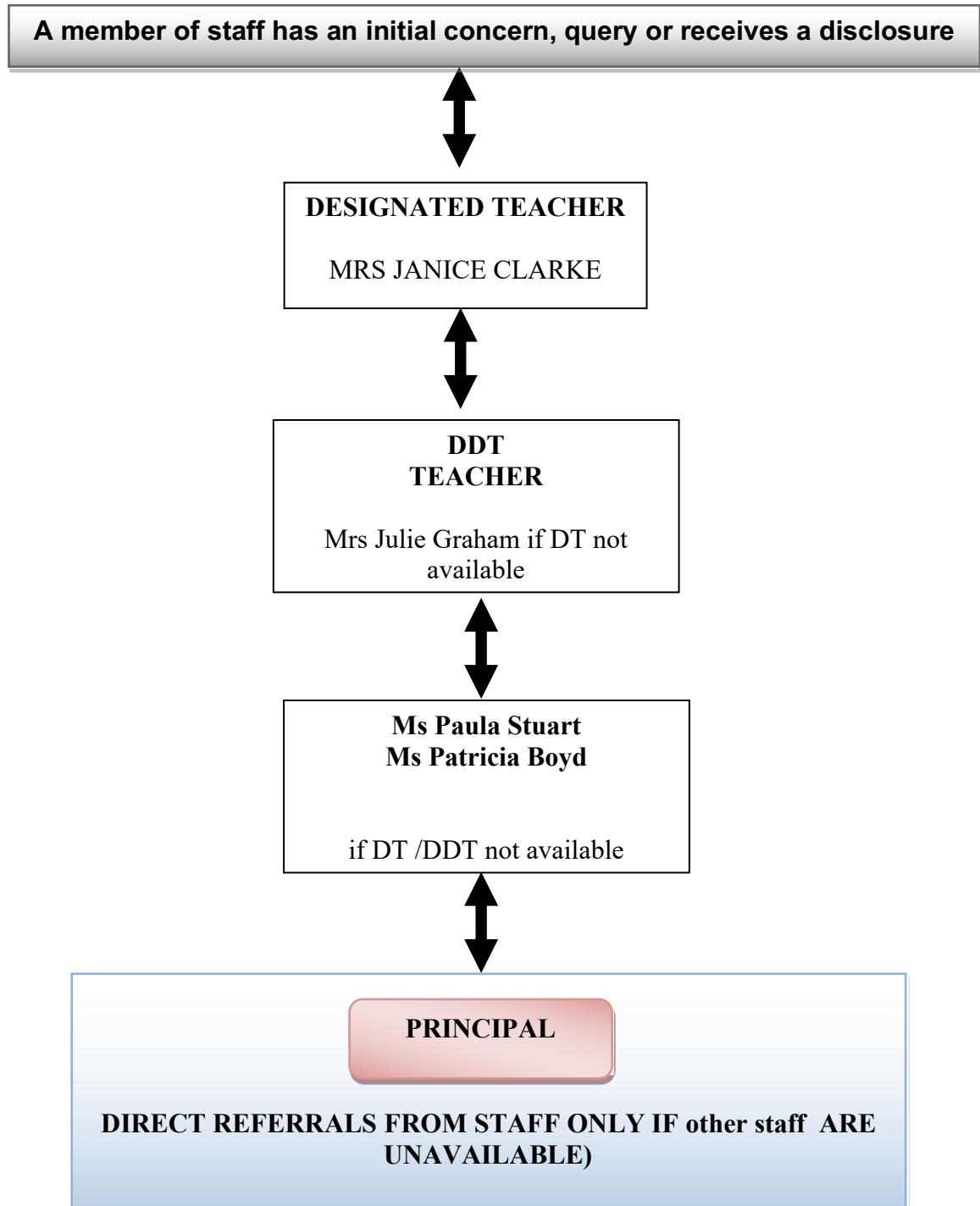
**Received**     **GDPR Card**

**Has access to and will read it**

**DE Card**

Appendix 7

**STRUCTURE OF CHILD PROTECTION REFERRALS**



**Appendix 8**

**Procedures for Paid Staff (teaching & non-teaching) and Visitors & Volunteers (unpa**

