

**Pond Park**  
**Primary School**



Ut Omnes Curemus - We Care For All

**SAFEGUARDING AND  
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

OCTOBER 2022

## **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **Policy Statement and Procedures for Child Protection**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This document is drawn up from and is intended to be in full compliance with EA Circular 2017/04 Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, and DHSS&PS 'Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI'.

The school recognises that it has a pastoral responsibility towards the children in its charge and will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare and safety.

The school lays a strong emphasis on pupils' personal and social development. Within the curriculum the school will try to develop pupils' understanding of appropriate and non-appropriate behaviour and physical contact and their confidence to resist the latter as far as possible.

Staff Members (teaching and non-teaching) should adhere to all DENI and EA guidelines in respect of physical contact with pupils. Moreover, teachers should be sensitive to each individual child's reaction to physical contact and act appropriately. All staff (teaching and non-teaching) should be as positive as possible in their dealings with pupils and avoid **persistent** sarcasm, negative comment, or action.

#### **ETHOS**

In Pond Park we recognise the contribution that ALL staff and volunteers make in helping to make our school a safe environment. We promote a child-centred ethos where children are listened to by adults and taken seriously. We also recognise that everyone in our school community has a role to play and is committed to safeguarding the children in our care by ensuring that all:

- children are safe and protected in our school
- members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, and all adults who have contact with the children in our school, have been subject to appropriate vetting procedures and have been provided with Child Protection training.

In Pond Park our Safeguarding Team includes:

Mr G T Cherry (Principal/Deputy Designated Teacher and Chair)  
Mrs R Williams (Designated Teacher)  
Mr E McCleery (Vice-Principal)  
Rev A Thompson (Board of Governors)  
Mr S McCrea (Designated Governor)

## **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.

## **TRAINING**

All teaching and non-teaching staff receive annual Safeguarding and Child Protection training from the Designated Teacher. This is included in our Staff Handbook and is made available to all substitute staff. Teaching staff also receive training in on-line safety in accordance with our E-Safety Policy. All stakeholders are made aware of the acceptable use of mobile phones in line with our Mobile Phone Policy.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

The following is an extract from "Co-Operating to Protect Children" (Children (NI) Order 1995 Volume 6) and defines the categories of abuse.

"Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (ie a person who has actual custody of a child, such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms including:

**Neglect:** The actual, or likely persistent, or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

**Physical Injury:** The actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

**Sexual Abuse:** The actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

**Emotional Abuse:** The actual or likely persistent, or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.

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

Set out on the following pages are some of the main physical and behavioural indicators of abuse. On one hand these are not exhaustive lists and on the other it must always be remembered that alternative reasons of a medical, social or psychological nature may exist for these indicators. They do not necessarily denote child abuse.

## NEGLECT

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 foods, 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.

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## NEGLECT

### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- CONSTANT HUNGER
- EXPOSED TO DANGER: LACK OF SUPERVISION
- INADEQUATE/INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING
- POOR PERSONAL HYGIENE
- UNTREATED MEDICAL PROBLEMS
- EMACIATION

## NEGLECT

### BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS:

- TIREDNESS, LISTLESSNESS, LACK OF CONCENTRATION.
- LACK OF PEER RELATIONSHIPS
- LOW SELF-ESTEEM
- DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES
- COMPULSIVE STEALING/BEGGING
- FREQUENT LATENESS/NON ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL
- CHRONIC RUNNING AWAY
- SCAVENGING FOR FOOD OR CLOTHES

## PHYSICAL INJURY

The deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or 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.

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## PHYSICAL INJURY

### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- SCRATCHES
- BITE MARKS OR WELTS
- BRUISES IN PLACES DIFFICULT TO SEE / MARK, eg. BEHIND EARS, GROIN.
- BURNS, ESPECIALLY CIGARETTE BURNS
- UNTREATED INJURIES

## PHYSICAL INJURY

### BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- SELF-MUTILATION TENDENCIES
- CHRONIC RUNAWAY
- BULLYING
- AGGRESSIVE OR WITHDRAWN
- ADMISSION OF PUNISHMENT WHICH SEEMS EXCESSIVE
- FEAR OF RETURNING HOME/OR PARENTS BEING CONTACTED
- UNDUE FEAR OF ADULTS
- FLINCHING AT SUDDEN MOVEMENTS/WITHDRAWAL FROM PHYSICAL CONTACT
- FEARFUL WATCHFULNESS
- IMPROBABLE EXCUSES GIVEN TO EXPLAIN INJURIES
- REFUSAL TO DISCUSS INJURIES

## 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 in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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## SEXUAL ABUSE

### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- SORENESS, BLEEDING IN GENITAL OR ANAL AREA
- ITCHING IN GENITAL AREA
- STAINED OR BLOODY UNDERWEAR
- STOMACH PAINS OR HEADACHES
- PAIN ON URINATION
- DIFFICULTY IN WALKING OR SITTING
- BRUISES ON INNER THIGHS OR BUTTOCKS
- ANOREXIC/BULIMIC
- PREGNANCY/ABORTION

## SEXUAL ABUSE

### BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- CHRONIC DEPRESSION
- SELF-MUTILATION
- INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE, SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE FOR AGE GROUP
- SEXUALISED PLAY WITH EXPLICIT ACTS
- MAKING SEXUAL ADVANCES TO ADULTS OR OTHER CHILDREN
- OBSSIVE WASHING
- LOW SELF-ESTEEM
- AFRAID OF DARK
- WARINESS OF BEING APPROACHED BY ANYONE
- SUBSTANCE/DRUG ABUSE
- UNEXPLAINED LARGE SUMS OF MONEY/GIFTS
- TRUANTING/RUNNING AWAY

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person.

It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or the corruption of children.

(Co-operating to Safeguard, May 2003)

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## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- SUDDEN SPEECH DISORDERS
- WETTING AND SOILING
- SIGNS OF MUTILATION
- FREQUENT VOMITING

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

### BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- ROCKING, THUMB SUCKING, HAIR TWISTING
- CHRONIC RUNNING AWAY
- POOR PEER RELATIONSHIPS
- OVER-REACTION TO MISTAKES
- INAPPROPRIATE EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO STRESSFUL SITUATIONS
- SELF-MUTILATION
- EXTREMES OF PASSIVITY OR AGGRESSION
- SUBSTANCE/DRUG ABUSE

### **EXPLOITATION**

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

### **EXPLOITATION**

#### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

- Bruising
- Bite Marks
- Infections

### **EXPLOITATION**

#### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, without explanation
- Truancy from school
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour/language
- Concerning use of the internet
- Low self-esteem
- Change in personal hygiene
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Indicators such as those already described can only give rise for concern – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. However teachers and non-teaching staff should be alert to all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated. If a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he or she must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher who has responsibility for child protection. (In the case of Pond Park this is Mrs R Williams or, in her absence, Mr G Cherry, Deputy Designated Teacher).

The relationship which teachers and other staff in the education service have with the children in their charge is based on trust and, often, on confidentiality. Such relationships are an integral feature of a secure and caring environment which fosters learning and personal development. Some forms of child abuse are however a criminal offence and staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies. All staff should recognise, therefore, that in order to protect children from harm, cases may arise where confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action, by involving others, in the child's best interests. **No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.**

## **GOVERNORS**

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate child protection measures and procedures are in place, rests with the Board of Governors. Child Protection matters are on an agenda for each full Board Meeting and Mr G T Cherry has specific responsibility in relation to Child Protection. Rev A Thompson (Chairperson) is part of the school's Safeguarding Team. Child Protection vetting procedures are applied in relation to all appointments to the school.

## **NON-TEACHING STAFF**

If any member of the non-teaching staff has concerns about a child or staff member, they should report these concerns to the **Designated Teacher** who will keep a detailed written record of the concerns and take any further necessary action.

## **TEACHING STAFF**

If any member of the teaching staff has concerns about a child or staff member, they should report their concerns to the **Designated Teacher** who will keep a detailed written record of the concerns and take any further necessary action.

Before approaching the **Designated Teacher** with his/her concerns a teacher may seek some clarification from the child, remembering to exercise tact and understanding. Great care must be taken in asking and interpreting children's responses to questions about indicators of abuse. Teachers should be aware that, if their concerns lead to a formal referral, the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings. This is also the case if a child makes an allegation of abuse or voluntarily discloses information which amounts to an allegation. (See Appendix 1).

## **DESIGNATED TEACHER**

The **Designated Teacher** has responsibility for liaising with Social Services and other agencies in cases of suspected or alleged child abuse.

The **Designated Teacher** may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA's **Designated Officer** or appropriate senior social worker before a formal referral is made. Provided that no child is identified by name, the case and its circumstances may be discussed with complete confidentiality and with the full understanding that Social Services cannot be further involved until a formal referral is made.

If a case is to be formally referred, the **Designated Teacher** should complete referral form (UNOCINI) and send this to Social Services with a copy to the Designated Officer of the EA.

In the case of formal referral, the **Designated Teacher** should be aware of the role and the responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them. He/she should keep appropriate written records and be able to make an appropriate contribution to a child protection conference and any subsequent proceedings.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES AND OTHER AGENCIES**

Social Services have a statutory duty to investigate any case where they receive information suggesting that a child may be in need of care, protection or control, unless satisfied that such enquiries are unnecessary. Their objective is to ensure the safety and welfare of the child. They have a lead role in co-ordinating the work of all the agencies and professionals concerned with the child's family. A joint protocol has been established between the Social Services and the police for investigative purposes. This will involve the police in investigating situations where a crime may have been committed.

Where there is suspicion that a child has been abused, Social Services may convene a multi-disciplinary case conference which may involve the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher, depending upon who is best placed to contribute effectively to the discussion of the child's welfare.

## **PROCEDURES**

Appendix 2 summarises the procedure to be followed when the school has concerns or has received a report about possible abuse or neglect by anyone other than a member of school staff.

Appendix 3 summarises the procedure to be followed when a complaint is made about possible abuse or neglect by a member of school staff.

Parents wishing to register concern about their child's welfare in school should choose one of the following courses of action. It will depend upon the nature of the complaint.

- Speak or write to child's class teacher
- Speak or write to the Principal
- Write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors

All concerns will be followed up and, where appropriate, will be investigated under the School's Complaints Procedure.

### **LIABILITY FOR STAFF (EA)**

Any teacher or other member of staff who complies with EA Procedures (See Appendix) in making a report of suspected child abuse is acting within the course of his/her employment and in such circumstances, where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the full support of the Board and will not be legally or financially liable.

### **VOLUNTEERS, TUTORS, SERC/CACHE STUDENTS**

All parent volunteers, tutors, SERC/CACHE students, who are in regular contact with pupils are vetted by Access NI, inducted, and supervised as appropriate.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Individuals who work with children and young people and others with whom they may be in a position of trust, should exercise caution when using social networking sites and avoid inappropriate communication of any kind. People who work with children and young people should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries. They should avoid improper contact or relationships which might include:

- communication of a personal nature
- inappropriate dialogue through the internet
- the sending of e-mails or text messages of an inappropriate nature.

This Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and updated, when necessary, upon receipt of updates from EA/DENI.

**PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOLS**

Child makes a disclosure to teacher or teacher has concerns about child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time. Teacher does not investigate. **MUST ACT PROMPTLY.**



Teacher refers matter to Designated Teacher, discusses with Designated Teacher, makes full notes.



Designated Teacher meets with Principal (in case of Principal's absence Vice-Principal) to plan course of action and ensures that a written record is made.



Principal/Designated Teacher makes referral (UNOCINI) to:

- Social Services. Copy of referral to EA's Designated Officer.

**Indicate** that it is a Child Protection issue in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL'.

If there is any doubt about whether to take further action, advice is available from:

- Schools
- EA Designated Officer
- Social Services

When seeking advice you do not have to give any names. You are making an enquiry.



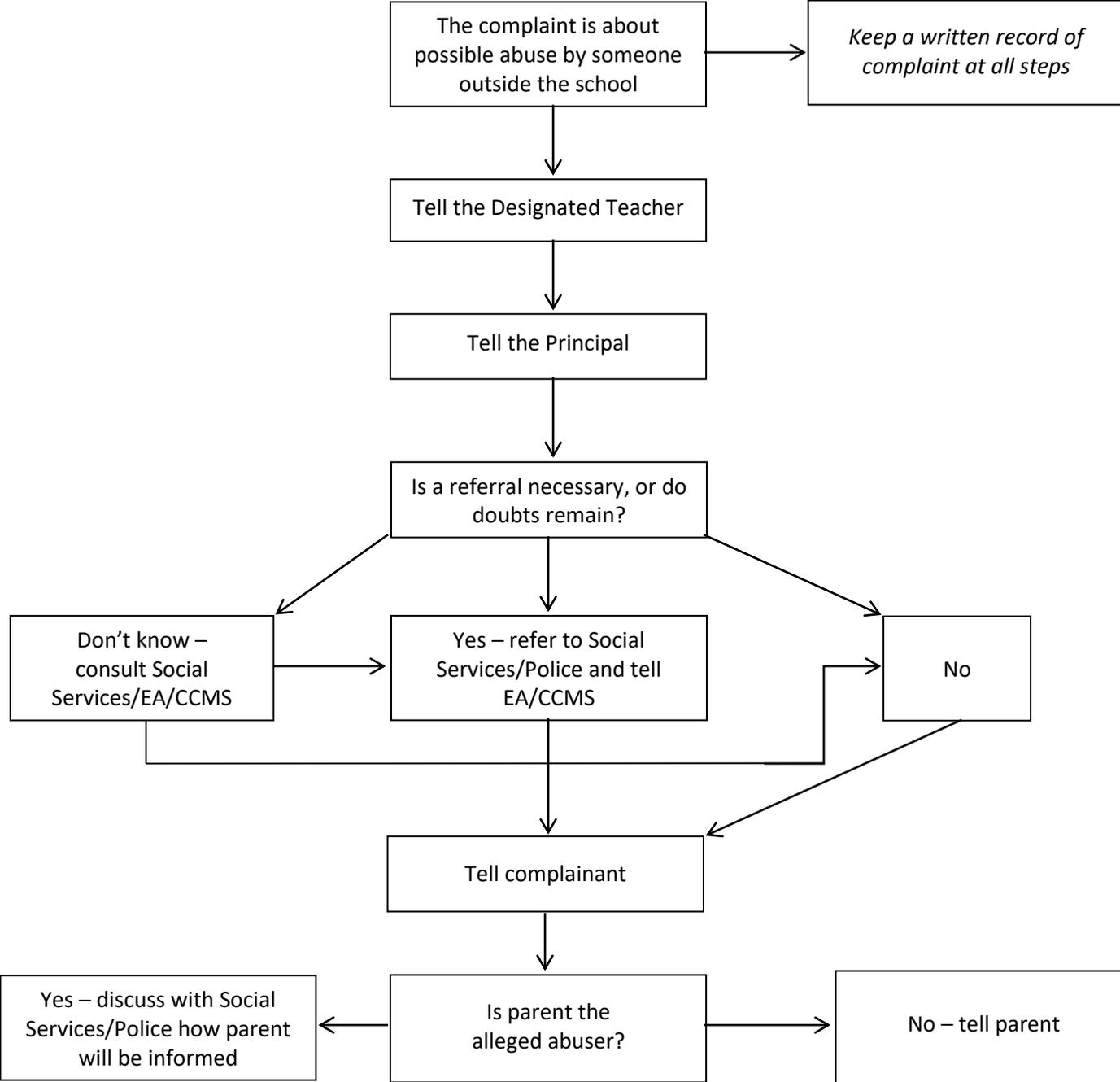
**Other Action:**

- Record advice given
- Monitor
- Review

Pastoral Care in Schools  
CHILD PROTECTION

Figure 1

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



Pastoral Care in Schools  
CHILD PROTECTION

Figure 2

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

