



ST. PATRICKS'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, LEGAMADDY

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY



Name/Signed	Date
Principal:	
Chair:	

Revised: August 2023

OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM 2023/ 24

The Designated Teacher (DT) for Child Protection is Mrs Sarah McDowell

The Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection is Miss Nicola Annett

The School Principal is Mrs Sarah Mc Dowell

Chairperson of Board of Governors Hugh Venney

Designated Governor for Child Protection Emma McMullan

Introduction

In St. Patrick's we have a pastoral responsibility towards the young children in our care and by law (The Children's Order 1995) must take all reasonable steps to safeguard and promote the children's safety and well-being.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action that is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected.

The over-riding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare, and safety of the child. The welfare of each child is of paramount consideration.

Operation Encompass: Sample update for school Child Protection Policy



Operation Encompass – updated June 2021 for academic year 2021-2022

* OE will continue across schools in NI from Sept 2022 *

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.

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 safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It 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 the online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

Child Abuse

Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in communities, agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Child abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse. Those working with children and young people must have an awareness and understanding of the nature and prevalence of different manifestations within their practice area.

Through their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff, especially teachers, but also non-teaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child the opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say and how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment in a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation

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

All the above definitions are from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016)

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.

Concerns about any of the above categories will be referred immediately to the Social Services.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016)' defines domestic 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)

Any concerns about instances of domestic and sexual violence and abuse will be referred immediately to Social services.

Identifying Signs of Possible Abuse

All staff - teaching and non-teaching, especially lunch-time supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff - should be alert to any outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. These symptoms may be due to a variety of causes including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse, and accidental injuries such as bruising to the legs.

Sometimes however, outward symptoms or changes may be due to child abuse. While no list of symptoms can be exhaustive, the following may be noticeable:

- Bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks or burns, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities, or when very young children or children with special educational needs are helped with toileting;
- Possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition;
- Possible indicators of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence, or attention-seeking;
- Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- Any combination of the above may be accompanied by or solely manifested in marked deterioration in performance and/or increased absenteeism.

The Responsibility of Staff

Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

All Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals.

Appendix 1 outlines the procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse by someone other than a member of the School's Staff.

- When teachers see signs that cause concern they should as a first step seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's ancillary or auxiliary staff sees such signs, he/she should immediately bring them to the attention of either the class teacher, Miss Nugent as the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or in her absence Miss Annett as the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Staff must take care in asking and interpreting children's responses to questions about indications of abuse. Staff should not ask leading questions or questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?"
- If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, the member of staff must act promptly and follow the "5R" Principles.

How to Respond to a Disclosure – The '5 R' Principles

Receive

- Stay calm.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Be discreet.

Reassure

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable, for example, do **not** make promises you may not be able to keep, such as 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be all right now'.
- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to report. Explain that you will need to get some **help** to deal with what you have been told.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it.

Respond

- Respond only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details or make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- **Do not ask leading questions** for example, 'What did s/he do next?' or 'Did s/he touch you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence and the child's in any later investigation or prosecution.
- **Do not ask open questions like** 'Anything else to tell me?' 'Yes?' 'And?'
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator, as the child or young person may love her / him.
- Do explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

Record

- Make some notes at the time on any paper that comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes – give these to the DT and these will be stored properly.
- Using the '**Note of Concern**' form (**Appendix 5**), record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour observations, and the words used. If the child uses 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words. Any injuries or bruises noticed

- may be recorded on a diagram showing position and extent.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.
- Note down when the suspicions were reported and to whom.

Refer

- Concerns about possible abuse must be referred as set out above **within the working day**. It is **never** suitable for staff to carry out any investigation. Remember to follow our guidelines and consult as appropriate.
- ***The chief task is to listen to the child and as soon as possible make a note of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.*** The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed. Any subsequent comments by the child, a parent, carer or adult about how the injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used. A written record of disclosure or concerns must be kept at all times. Any issues or concerns should be logged in the Class Record of Concern book. If these issues of concern are persistent then the information must be recorded in the '**Note of Concern**' form (Appendix 5) and passed to the DT/DDT.
- Staff should not give a child any undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should reassure the child that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know. No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.
- A parent or other carer may also give information to a member of Staff which gives rise to concern about possible child abuse. The member of Staff should listen, take notes and advise the person making the complaint that the matter will be brought to the attention of Miss Nugent, the DT for Child Protection or Miss Annett the DDT for Child Protection.
- Concerns should be reported immediately to the DT/DDT. The child protection issue will be discussed with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

The Role of the Principal

- The Principal, DT and DDT will decide whether in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
- The Principal, DT and DDT may seek clarification or advice and consult with EA (SER) and CCMS's Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.
- The DT or DDT for Child Protection will contact Social Services regarding any referral and complete the UNOCINI Initial Assessment Referral Form.

Appendix 2 provides background Information on the UNOCINI – Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland

All written correspondence will be marked 'Private and Confidential'.

- The Principal/DT or DDT for Child Protection will attend any Case Conferences organised by Social Services and will supply any relevant documentation or reports that are requested. Information from Case Conferences will be communicated to the Governors and appropriate staff on a need to know basis.
- The Principal/DT/DDT for Child Protection will be involved in the training and in-service work necessary for the effective implementation of Child Protection Procedures by all staff, including new members of staff.

Complaints Against Members of Staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. Any complaints will be recorded in the “Allegations Against a member of Staff” book located and locked in the DT private cupboard.

Appendix 3 outlines the procedures to follow when a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school’s staff.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

How a Parent Can Report a Concern

Parents are all notified about where to locate the Code of Conduct leaflet at the beginning of each year. If a parent is concerned about their child or another child’s safety or wellbeing they should follow the steps outlined in **Appendix 4**.

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 the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the Designated Teacher or in her absence the Deputy Designated Teacher.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible abuse cannot be held in confidence. In the best interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However only those who need to know will be told

RECRUITMENT OF STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND SPORTS COACHES

In accordance with the procedures for checking on possible criminal backgrounds of Persons with Access to Children (Appendix 12 DENI Child Protection Document), St Patrick’s PS, Legamaddy, has agreed that all persons working in close proximity with children, in either paid or unpaid capacity will have to agree to the vetting procedures as employed by the South Eastern Education & Library Board. As well as school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and board staff such as Peripatetic teachers, Curriculum Advisory and Support Staff, EWOs and Educational Psychologists, this will include, for example, school bus drivers, staff working in training schemes or educational provision.

Applications for courses of initial teacher education must be vetted by the institution to which they have applied before they can be admitted to the course (these new arrangements have been instituted since the issue of Circular 1990/28). Social Workers and Health professionals working in schools, such as speech therapists or physiotherapists, are vetted by the Department of Health and Social Services. All such staff and others such as sports coaches and volunteer parents must provide evidence to the school of having completed criminal background checks.

VISITORS TO SCHOOL

The school maintains a record of visitors in its Approved Visitor Registration Book which is kept in the main school office. Visitors must sign in upon arrival and sign out when leaving the premises. They will be issued with a visitor's pass. This pass must be worn visibly during the whole duration of the school visit and returned when the person signs out upon departure.

All parents coming into school to help out in a voluntary capacity over a reasonably longer period will be required to complete an application form, consenting to an Access NI criminal records check to be carried out. The EA will be forwarded completed forms and will request criminal records checks on our behalf.

This policy will be revised annually and updated appropriately.



Code of Conduct for Visitors to **St. Patrick's Primary School, Legamaddy** ***"Safeguarding Pupils and Yourselfs"*** **Golden Rules**

- Please ensure that the main door has closed behind you.
- Only 1 visitor to be allowed access to the office at one time.
- Visitors to the school must stop at the sign in desk: sign in the book (using their own pen) sanitise their hands on arrival and wear a mask when in our school.
- All visitors must wear a visitor badge when in our school and must sign in and out on arrival and when leaving
- Any equipment used by visitors of the school (i.e. photocopier machine, comms cupboard, computers etc.... must be effectively wiped down after they have finished using them.
- For visitors who need to work 1-1- with a child, they can use the SEN / MUSIC room and a member of staff is to bring the child to/from their classroom to the room.
- Please remain in the entrance hall of school foyer until directed or taken to your destination by a member of staff.
- Always meet and greet pupils in a socially acceptable manner.
- A pupil may chat to you in passing, please respond courteously but avoid engaging a pupil in prolonged conversation.
- If pupils come into your work area and no staff are present, please leave immediately and advise a member of school staff.
- The use of any form of camera / iPad / mobile phone is prohibited whilst on school premises.
- Smoking is prohibited on school grounds and near the school gates.

Appendix 1

Procedures for Reporting an Incident of Child Abuse

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

The Designated Teacher (DT) for Child Protection is Miss Nugent.

Miss Annett is the Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection.

**Designated teachers should be contacted for all child protection matters.*

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must

ACT PROMPTLY.

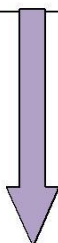
Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.



Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in her absence and provides a 'Note of Concern'.



Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.



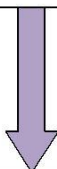
Child Protection referral is required

Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

Child Protection referral is not required

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children's Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person's consent (where appropriate).

Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher clarifies/ discusses concern with child/parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.



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

*It is imperative that any disclosure by a child, or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk, is reported immediately to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is risk to the child at home.

'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (Mar 2016) 5-10

Appendix 2

UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland)

UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland)

Initial Referral Assessment Forms will be used to make referrals to the Social Services Gateway Teams.

The UNOCINI has been introduced in response to a number of key developments, recommendations from inspections and audits, developing best practice in response to these, lessons learned from local and regional Case Management Reviews. There is a need to have a common language and understanding about all aspects of assessing children's needs. There is also a need to develop a consistent method of gathering information, understanding and analysing the data and accessing the appropriate services to meet the child's needs.

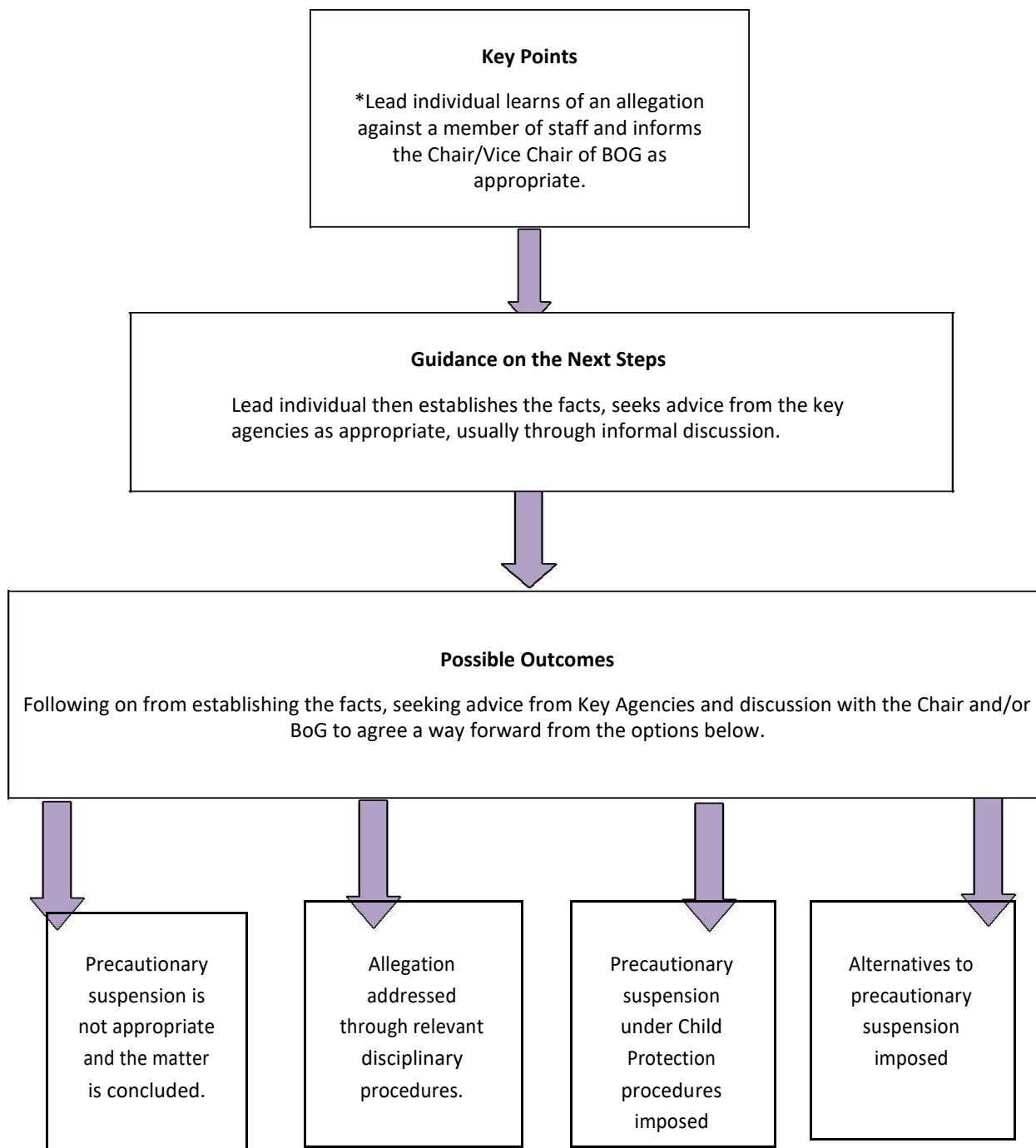
UNOCINI provides an assessment and planning framework to assist professionals in identifying children and their family's needs. The framework offers a logical framework within which children and their family's circumstances can be considered, analysed and understood in order to develop robust plans that aim to improve outcomes for the child.

The UNOCINI framework can also be used to make referrals to Social Services and access children's services. Using UNOCINI will ensure that children being referred come with the wealth of information that has already been collected by professionals working with them. Each level of the UNOCINI assessment framework builds on the previous one, ensuring a continuity of assessment. This will mean that children and their families will not need to go through the same questions with new professionals that others have already asked.

It is hoped that the UNOCINI assessment framework will be used by all professionals working with children as a tool to help them identify the needs of children at an earlier stage so their needs do not unnecessarily escalate to a point where they subsequently require further intervention, including referral to statutory services.

Appendix 3

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

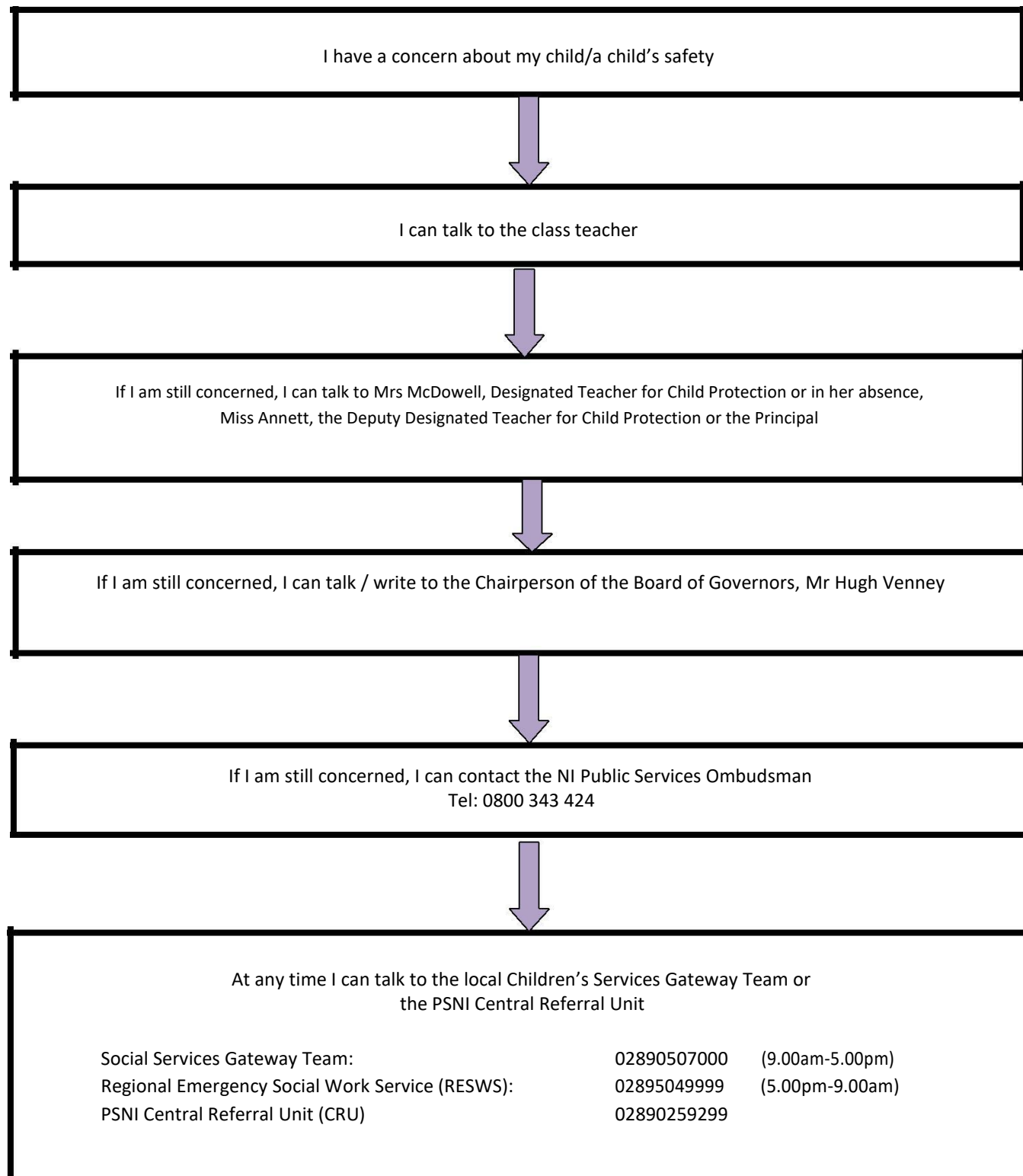


*As noted previously a Lead Individual to manage the handling of an allegation should be identified from the outset, normally the Principal or a designated senior member of staff.

Appendix 4

The process for a parent who has a potential safeguarding or child protection concern is set out below.

HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CONCERN



CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF CONCERN

CHILD PROTECTION REPORT - REPORTS TO DT/DDT

Name of Pupil: _____ Year Group: _____ Date: _____		
Concern: <input type="checkbox"/>	Disclosure: <input type="checkbox"/>	Time: _____ Date: _____
<div>Description of Concern/Disclosure</div>		
<div>Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:</div>		

Action taken at the time:	
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:	
Any further action taken:	
Written report passed to Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If 'No' state reason:	
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:	
Date: _____ Time: _____	
Written note from staff member placed in Child Protection file: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If 'No' state reason:	

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____

Date: _____

Signature of DT/DDT: _____

Date: _____