



Child Protection / Safe Guarding Policy

Policy

2014-2016



Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Safe Guarding: Mr P Maxwell

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection/Safe Guarding: Mr G Boal; Mrs M Johnston.

Designated Governor for Child Protection/Safe Guarding Governance: Mrs S Mackie

Updated: 2014 (Version 1)

To be revised: 2016

Approved:

Principal

Board of Governors

Note: All policies are annually updated with minor reviews, but most updated bi-annually for major changes unless extraordinary circumstances dictate.

Inspire Achieve Excel

INTRODUCTION

The Governors and Staff of Strangford College fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part in protecting our students from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999) and the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states 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 'paramountcy' of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the School. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our students by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
3. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
5. Supporting students who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection / safe guarding plan

THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT STRANGFORD COLLEGE

Designated Governor for Child Protection - Governance: Mrs S Mackie

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mr P Maxwell

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection: Mr G Boal; Mrs M Johnston.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

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

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.’ (ACPC, 2005)

Types of Abuse

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. (ACPC, 2005)

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

Emotional Abuse – is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. (ACPC, 2005)

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

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. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem / chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

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. (ACPC, 2005)

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

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.

Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in Strangford College.

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 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 initially by the Form Tutor, Year Head and if necessary the DT for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT) is Mr P Maxwell.

In his absence, **the Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection (DDT)** Mr G Boal, or Mrs M Johnston, will assume responsibility for Child Protection. On the occasion that neither DT, nor DDTs, are in the school, the **Principal, Mr Weir** will assume responsibility for child protection.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly.**

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for the Gateway team – but he/she should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with him/her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.

The DT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to the Gateway Team. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection at the SEELB, or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the DT will inform:

- Gateway, and, or, the PSNI.
- SEELB Designated Officer for Child Protection .

(This will be done in an envelope marked ‘CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION’).

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal, (or the DT if the Principal is unavailable), must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply, (unless the complaint is about the DT, or the Principal). Where the matter is referred to social services, the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with students, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. He/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

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 or 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’. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT) AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHERS (DDT)

The DT:

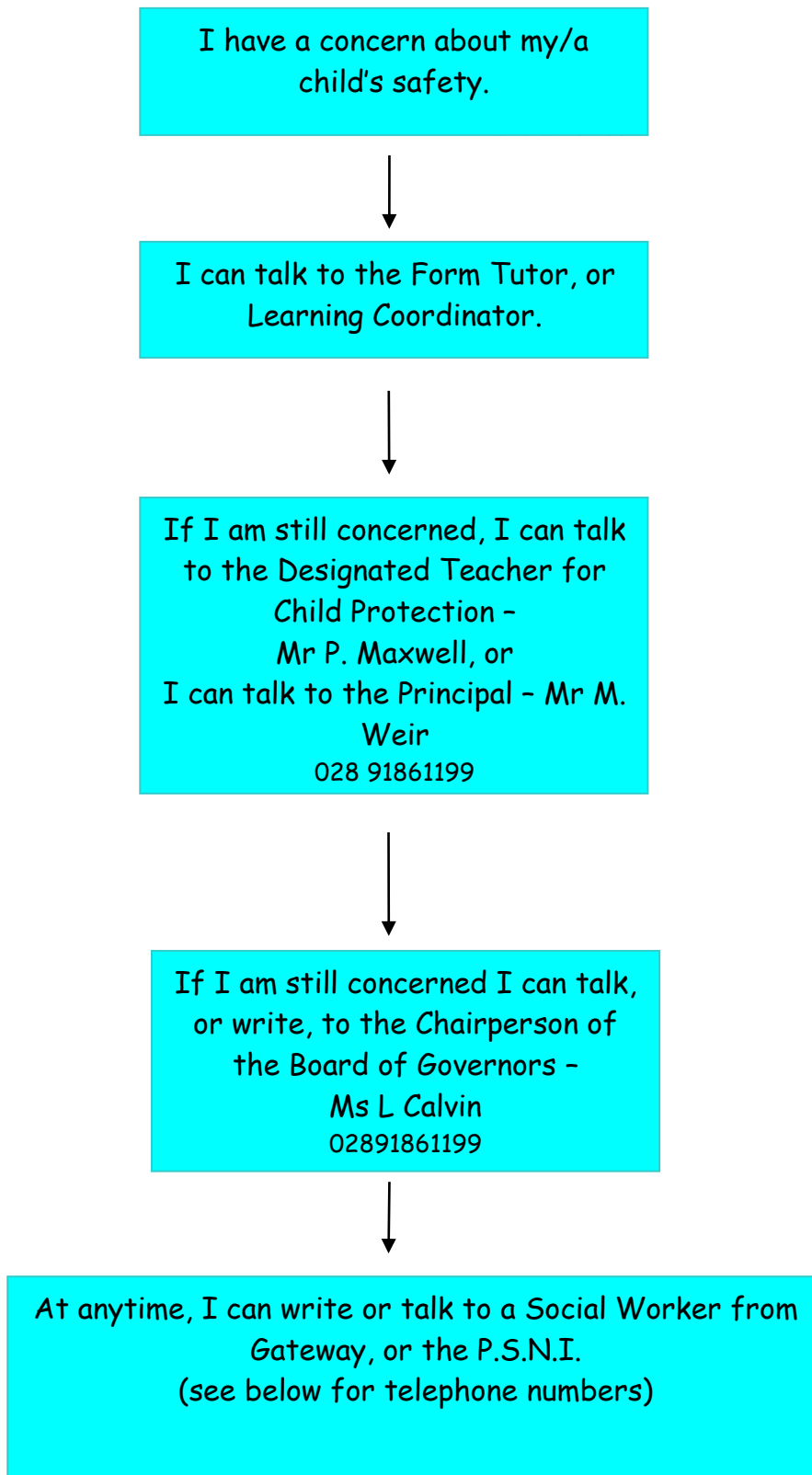
- To provide training to all school staff, including support staff.
- Being available to discuss the Child Protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for recordkeeping of all Child Protection concerns.
- Making referrals to Gateway, or PSNI Public Protection Units.
- Liaising with SEELB Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the School Principal informed.
- The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school’s Child Protection Policy.
- Ensures parents receive a copy of the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy every 2 years, which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made to Gateway, and the Role of the School regarding this.
- Promotion of a Child Protection Ethos in the School.
- Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection
- Maintains all records pertaining to Child Protection in a secure location, (accessed only by the Designated Teacher and the School Principal as appropriate).

DDTs:

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, as required.

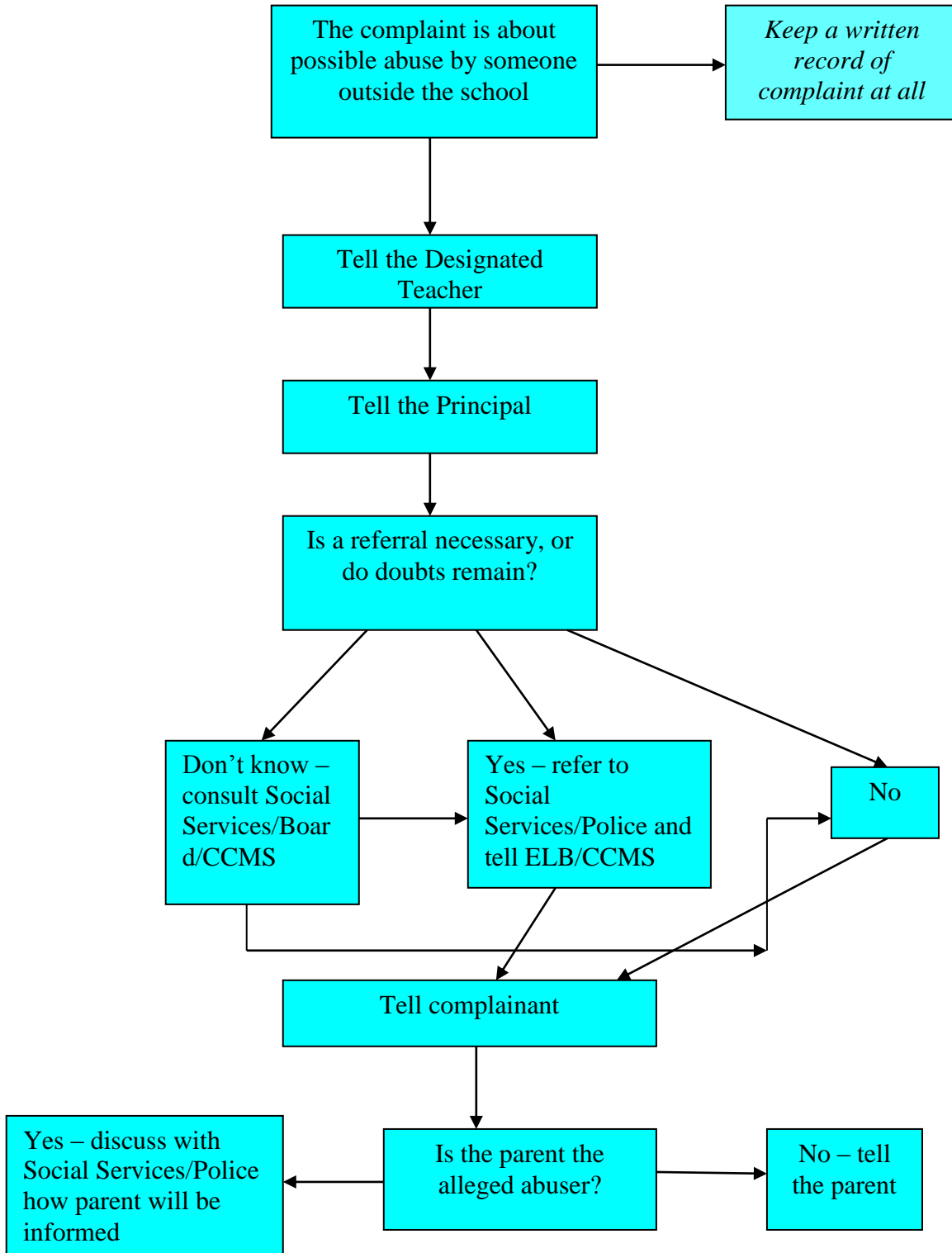
HOW A PARENT/GUARDIAN CAN MAKE OR RAISE A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

If a parent/guardian has a child protection/safeguarding concern they can follow the guide below:



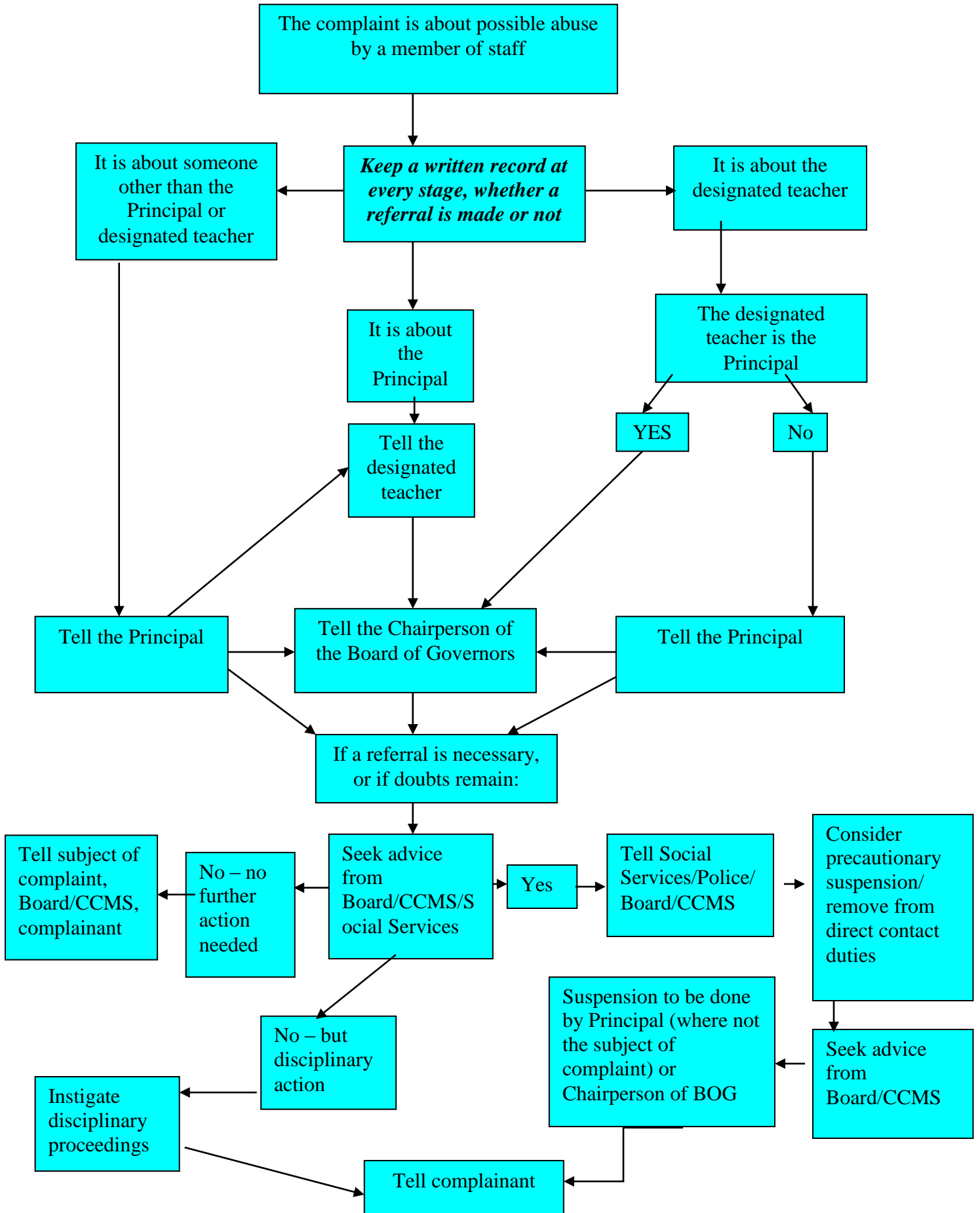
Child Protection

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



CHILD PROTECTION

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



STRANGFORD COLLEGE'S VETTING PROCEDURES

The School's vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in DE circulars 2006/06, 2006/07, 2006/08, 2006/09, and 2008/03. Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF

The code of conduct is known to all staff – permanent and non-permanent and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is set out in Appendix 2

THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

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

The School Community will therefore:

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

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

THE INTERNET, STUDENT SOCIAL NETWORKING, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Our policies on the internet, social networking and digital technologies are set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically, it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

Appendix 1

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other support staff in Strangford College and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the School.

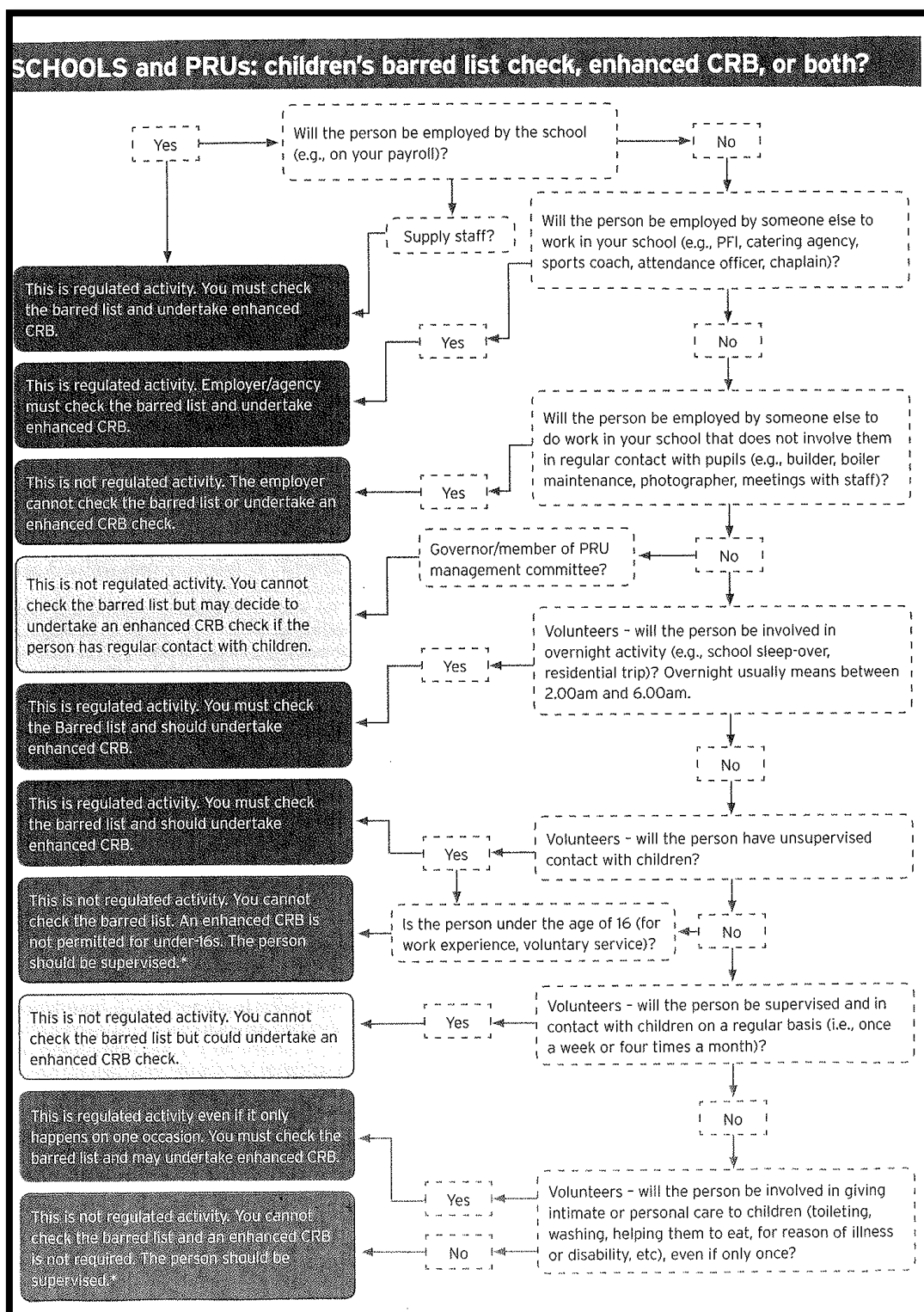
It is essential, however, that appropriate steps are taken, through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, either

1. Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or
2. Is engaged by the School to accompany or assist in school visits or trips; residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Flowchart Used to Determine Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Strangford College



Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to pre-employment vetting checks for volunteers working in schools.

Scaling back of Regulated Activity

From 10 September 2012 changes to the definition of “Regulated Activity” will result in volunteers working in schools no longer being viewed as in “Regulated Activity”, providing a school can ensure reasonable supervision on a regular basis. In these circumstances it is no longer mandatory for a school to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate and it will be unlawful to check if a volunteer is on a barred list.

Strangford College has adopted this Flow Chart as a method to determine who needs an Access NI Check and whether an enhanced check is necessary. We have also created a file documenting when each member of staff has been checked.

Use of Volunteers

There are three main categories into which the use of volunteers might be grouped and to which guidance will apply:

- During school hours involving direct contact with students
- Outside school hours involving direct contact with students
- During school hours but not usually involving direct contact with students

Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers

The school may canvass for volunteers, or people may come forward to offer assistance at their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

Initial Appraisal

As a minimum requirement all potential volunteers are asked to provide the following information:

- personal details
- qualifications and previous work with children
- a declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound-over Order
- a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for child protection
- agree to a criminal record being carried out
- provide the name of two referees who are not family members or members of staff in the school
- attend an interview with the school Principal with proof of identity
- Undergo an annual criminal record check through Access NI (via SEELB)

No individual will be admitted to the school as a volunteer until these basic steps have been completed and the results assessed.

School Security

Strangford College has drawn on the advice from the guidance Document “Security and Personal Safety in Schools” 1997 to establish arrangements for the admission and supervision of volunteers on school premises. Particular attention is drawn to:

- The Volunteer registering at the beginning of each visit
- Providing the Volunteer with a readily identifiable name badge or pass giving his/her name and status

The school ensures passes are surrendered at the end of each day and when the volunteers’ involvement with the school comes to an end.

Appendix 2

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF

(Pastoral Care in Schools CHILD PROTECTION 1999)

All staff and volunteers are aware of and have received a copy of our code of conduct. The Code is informed by guidance from DE.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences students at Strangford College gain from positive interaction with staff. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of Child Abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

1. Private Meetings with Students

Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual students. It is recognised that there are 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.

Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult 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.

Where possible another student, or (preferably) another adult, should be present, or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

2. Physical Contact with Students

- a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their students.
- b) It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch students 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 from providing this.
- c) Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain students*)).
- d) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e) Staff who have to administer first-aid to a students 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.*
- f) Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the student, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

- g) 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 designated Co-ordinator for Child Protection.
- h) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising students 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 students in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- a) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b) When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature, a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by students, or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.
- c) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal/Vice Principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies and our Behaviour and Relationship Policy, staff should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the students, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment, or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

5. Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees, this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this Code of Conduct, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult their line manager, or a representative of their professional association.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people, or of their parents/guardians.

THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

The Staff of Strangford College recognises that children who are abused, or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk.

Strangford College will endeavour to support the students who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such students in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

Support for all students in the School in developing skills in self protection and developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

- The content of the Curriculum, particularly Personal Development.
- The School Ethos which promotes a positive supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of being valued.
- The School Behaviour Policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable students in the school. The school will ensure that students understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
- Liaison with other agencies that support the students such as School Counsellor, Gateway, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse.

Monitoring and Review

The Child Protection Policy will be monitored and renewed where appropriate by the designated teacher for Child Protection.

Important Contact Numbers

PSNI:	02890650222 / (101)
Gateway to Children's Social Work Service:	02891818518
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:	0800 800500
Child Protection Support Services S.E.E.L.B	Colum Boal 028 9056 6434 Alison Casey 028 9056 627 Colleen Ellison 02890566947
Lifeline	0800 808 8000
ZEST Self Harm Information	028 71266999

Notification of Suspected/Admitted/Known Abuse of Child or Concern for Student

This information should be completed on the basis of information readily available and should not be delayed on the basis of incomplete information.

Child(ren)'s surname:

Child(ren)'s forename(s):

Child(ren)'s date(s) of birth:

Class:

Parent/Guardian's Surname:

Parent/Guardian's Fornames:

Address:

Parent/Guardian's contact number(s):

GP's name and Contact number:

Professional agencies known to be involved with the family:

Date, time and nature of disclosure:

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Referred to designated officer on _____ (date) _____ (time)

By:

Action taken by designated officer (give details)

Designated Officer's signature:

Date:

Referred in writing/by telephone to:

Parent/Guardians contacted? Yes/No

Child/young person supported? Yes/No