

# Child Protection Policy and Procedures

"We all have a legal duty to protect children from abuse or risk of abuse."

Extract from 'Co-operating to Protect Children' (Children (NI) Order 1995 Volume 6)

## Rationale

Tonagh Primary School promotes learning in a safe, caring and sensitive environment where each child will be encouraged to reach his or her full potential.

Our primary responsibility is the safeguarding of individual children and any concerns about their emotional or physical well-being must be addressed appropriately. Having responsibility for children during a large part of every day, we are well placed to notice changes in appearance, behaviour and achievement; to confirm their welfare or to raise concerns.

## Principles

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 pupils 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.

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.

## Other Relevant Policies

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines

- Health and Safety Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- ICT and access to the internet/cyber bullying
- Intimate Care and Toileting Policy
- Code of Conduct for All Staff
- Bereavement Policy
- Safe Use of Children's Photographs
- Drug Education Policy
- Parental Complaints Procedure

These policies are available from the school office

## **School Safeguarding Team**

In Tonagh Primary School our Safeguarding Team includes:

Designated Teacher - Mrs S Curran

Deputy Designated Teacher - Miss L Mackin

Designated Governor for Child Protection - Dr R Fisher

Principal - Mrs A Stevenson

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governors**

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate child protection measures and procedures are in place rests with the Board of Governors.

Dr R Fisher (Chairperson) is part of the school's Safeguarding Team.

### **The Role of the Governors**

#### **Chair**

- Pivotal role in creating and maintaining a safeguarding ethos within the school environment
- Receives training from CPSSS - Child Protection Support Service for Schools
- Assumes lead responsibility in the event of a Child Protection complaint or concern about the Principal
- Ensures staff compliance and adherence with legislation and policy
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive an annual written report in relation to Child Protection activity.

## **Designated Governor for Child Protection**

- Receives training from CPSSS and Human Resources
- Takes the lead in child protection governance arrangements
- Connects with DT/DDT re governance issues
- Keeps the Governors informed and updated on Child Protection issues.

## **Governors**

- Ratify the schools' Child Protection Policy and review this every 2 years
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are followed in school.
- Ensure all members of staff employed in school are fully vetted.

## **The Role of the School Principal**

- To manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection
- To appoint a Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- To have an understanding of current assessment and referral processes through UNOCINI
- To manage allegations/complaints against school staff
- To ensure your Board of Governors are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding
- To ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection
- To ensure that the Child Protection Policy is reviewed and that parents receive a copy every two years.

## **The Role of Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher**

- To raise awareness in child protection with all school staff including new staff, volunteers and all other adults who work in school.
- Responsible for discussing Child Protection concerns of any members of school/support staff and keeping all records
- Responsible for making the referrals to Social Services or PSNI (Child Abuse Investigation Unit)
- Responsible for notifying the EA designated officer or any Child Protection Referrals made to Social Services/PSNI
- Responsible for keeping the school Principal informed
- Undertake training to maintain their professional understanding of Child Protection
- Responsible for notifying the Chair of Board of Governors in the event of an allegation against the principal
- Taking lead in the development of the school's child protection policy, and ensure that parents receive a copy every 2 years
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Team has identified key safeguarding lessons from the PDMU curriculum to be delivered (Helping Hands Programme)

- Responsible for promoting a child protection/safeguarding ethos within the school
- Responsible for written report to *Governors* re child protection issues.

## **The Role of Teaching/Non-Teaching Staff**

All staff have a duty to:-

- Be alert for signs of actual or suspected abuse or neglect
- Report concerns to Designated Teacher (or Deputy)
- Complete a brief written record of details using the 'Staff Concern' Sheet
- Ensure their professional conduct is prudent and leaves no grounds for misinterpretation in relation to child protection.

In addition the Class Teacher should:

Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

## **The Role of Parents**

The Child Protection Policy will be available to all parents from the school office and will be distributed every two years. Advice will be given on procedures for reporting child abuse and a synopsis of the policy will be included in the school prospectus.

Parents are asked to supply the school with the names of all persons who have permission to collect their child from school. They are asked to inform the school of any change in this routine.

Parents are asked to brief school about arrangements following any separation or divorce. Members of staff need to be aware of legal responsibilities, agreed access or exclusion and any involvement of social services. Parents are encouraged to keep the school informed as necessary.

Parents will be made aware that staff may on occasions have to help change pupils' clothes when administering first aid, after toilet accidents, for PE and on other such occasions. The school's Intimate Care Policy applies.

## Definitions and Categories of Abuse

### Types of Abuse (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland March 2016 – Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety)

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

**Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.** Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

**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 of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

### Neglect

Physical indicators	Behavioural indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Constant hunger</li><li>• Exposed to danger, lack of supervision</li><li>• Inadequate/inappropriate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listlessness</li><li>• Lack of peer relationships</li><li>• Low self-esteem</li><li>• Compulsive stealing/begging</li></ul>

clothing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Untreated illnesses</li> <li>• Persistent tiredness</li> </ul>	
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**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers.

## Emotional Abuse

Physical indicators	Behavioural indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• Wetting and soiling</li> <li>• Signs of mutilation</li> <li>• Frequent vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocking, thumb sucking</li> <li>• Fear of change</li> <li>• Chronic runaway</li> <li>• Poor peer relationships</li> <li>• Attention seeking behaviour</li> </ul>

## Definition of Physical Abuse

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

## Physical Abuse

Physical indicators	Behavioural indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scratches</li> <li>• Bite marks or welts</li> <li>• Bruises in places difficult to mark (behind ears, groin)</li> <li>• Burns</li> <li>• Untreated injuries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-mutilation tendencies</li> <li>• Chronic runaway</li> <li>• Aggressive or withdrawn</li> <li>• Fear of returning home</li> <li>• Undue fear of adults</li> <li>• Fearful watchfulness</li> </ul>

## Definition of 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.

Staff are aware of Circular 2016/05 in relation to inappropriate/problematic/harmful sexualised behaviour.

## Sexual Abuse

Physical indicators	Behavioural indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soreness, bleeding in genital or anal areas</li><li>• Itching in genital areas</li><li>• Stained or bloody underwear</li><li>• Stomach pains or headaches</li><li>• Pain on urination</li><li>• Difficulty in walking or sitting</li><li>• Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks</li><li>• Anorexic/bulimic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chronic depression</li><li>• Inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group</li><li>• Making sexual advances to adults or other children</li><li>• Low self esteem</li><li>• Afraid of the dark</li><li>• Wariness of being approached by anyone</li><li>• Evidence of substance misuse</li><li>• Acquisition of money, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation</li><li>• Association with other people, particularly men, outside the usual range of contacts</li><li>• Phone calls/messages from adults outside the normal range of contacts</li></ul>

**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, 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.

## **Domestic Violence**

Domestic abuse is:

"threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation." (DHSSPS/N10 Tackling Violence at Home, 2005, p10)

If we become aware of Domestic Violence, we will make a referral to Social Services. Our main concern is the safety and wellbeing of individual children.

## **Procedures for raising concerns about Child Protection**

### **Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Suspected or Disclosed Abuse**

In line with advice from EA, the school will ensure that specific procedures are followed in the event of a member of staff becoming concerned about the abuse of a child. Emphasis will be placed on both early detection and swift intervention, but no member of the school's staff will investigate directly and signs of possible abuse will not be considered by the school as proof.

### **Detection/Disclosure**

Members of staff may be informed by a child about abuse or become concerned as a result of observation or disclosure. 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 Designated Teacher.

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<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.

## Referral to Designated Teacher

Staff will act promptly in referring the concern to the Designated Teacher. Together they will discuss the concern and complete a 'Staff Concern Sheet.' The record should be factual, objective and include what was seen, heard etc. Staff should not investigate.

### Action Planning

The Designated Teacher meets with the Deputy Designated teacher or Principal and an appropriate course of action is planned. A written record of decisions should be made.

### Action

One or more of the following actions will be effected, as appropriate to the specific concerns:

- The teacher or Designated Teacher will talk further with the child in an attempt to reassure him/her and seek discreet preliminary clarification and record what has happened (this will not involve detailed investigation or interpretation and no promise of confidentiality will be given).
- The Designated Teacher, in consultation with the Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. 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 Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection at the EA, 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 Designated Teacher will inform both Social Services & the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection. The process is to phone social services and follow up by completing the UNOCINI.
- The Social Services Gateway Team will be contacted if any suspicion of physical or sexual abuse remains.
- Any abuse that is ultimately confirmed will be followed up with support for the victim and an appropriate combination of discipline and support as advised by the confirming outside agency and agreed by the Principal and Governors.

Figure 1 (appendices) 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 the school's staff. The member of staff must act promptly.

## **Child Abuse Complaints against Staff**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately.

The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Designated Teacher or the Principal). The member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, 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 Designated Teacher 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.

Where a complaint is made about a member of staff, and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures a short summary of the record should also be entered by the Principal in a 'Record of Child Abuse Complaints' book, maintained for the purpose and kept in a secure place. The school's 'Record of Child Abuse Complaints' should be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually.

Figure 2 summaries the procedure to be followed when a complaint is made about possible abuse or neglect by a member of the school staff. Again prompt action is required.

Figure 3 shows how a parent can make a complaint if they have a concern about their child's safety. (Refer to Appendices)

## **Attendance at Case Conferences/Core Group Meetings**

The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher will attend Case Conferences or Core Group Meetings when possible. Written reports will be submitted to the Social Worker with case responsibility. Feedback will be given on a need to know principle on a case by case basis.

## **Confidentiality**

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all staff. Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and where abuse is suspected have a legal duty to report this to the Statutory Agencies. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information be kept secret, it is important that the member of staff should tell the child, sensitively that he or she has a

responsibility to refer cases of alleged child abuse to the appropriate authorities. No promise of confidentiality can be given.

## **Record Keeping**

Detailed records will be kept of all concerns and actions relating to Child Protection. These records will be kept in a separate locked file that are only accessible by the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal. All notes will be written objectively, without speculation and immediately following any incident that they record. When a child moves school any Child Protection concerns will be passed onto the Designated Teacher in the receiving school. If a child transfers to another school, including Post Primary School, information will be transferred appropriately.

## **Vetting Procedures**

All staff including volunteers who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and departmental guidance.

The school's vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in DE Circulars 2013/01.

Substitute Teachers will be employed from the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register (NISTR) who will have been vetted every 2 years as part of their registration with NISTR.

## **Code of Conduct for all Staff**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

The school's code of conduct is available on request.

## **Staff Training**

Tonagh Primary School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of

Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support service for Schools.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies.

## **The Preventative Curriculum**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm of our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse.

An awareness of "stranger danger"; an understanding of how to respond to perceived threats; care in regard to e-safety; and the development of standards of behaviour that are appropriate for primary school children, are all reinforced through the school's work on Personal Development and Mutual Understanding within the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Children will also have the opportunity to complete the 'Helping Hands' Programme. These areas will also be the focus of assemblies, health promotion activities, visits from outside professionals and ongoing guidance as opportunities for such teaching and learning arise.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

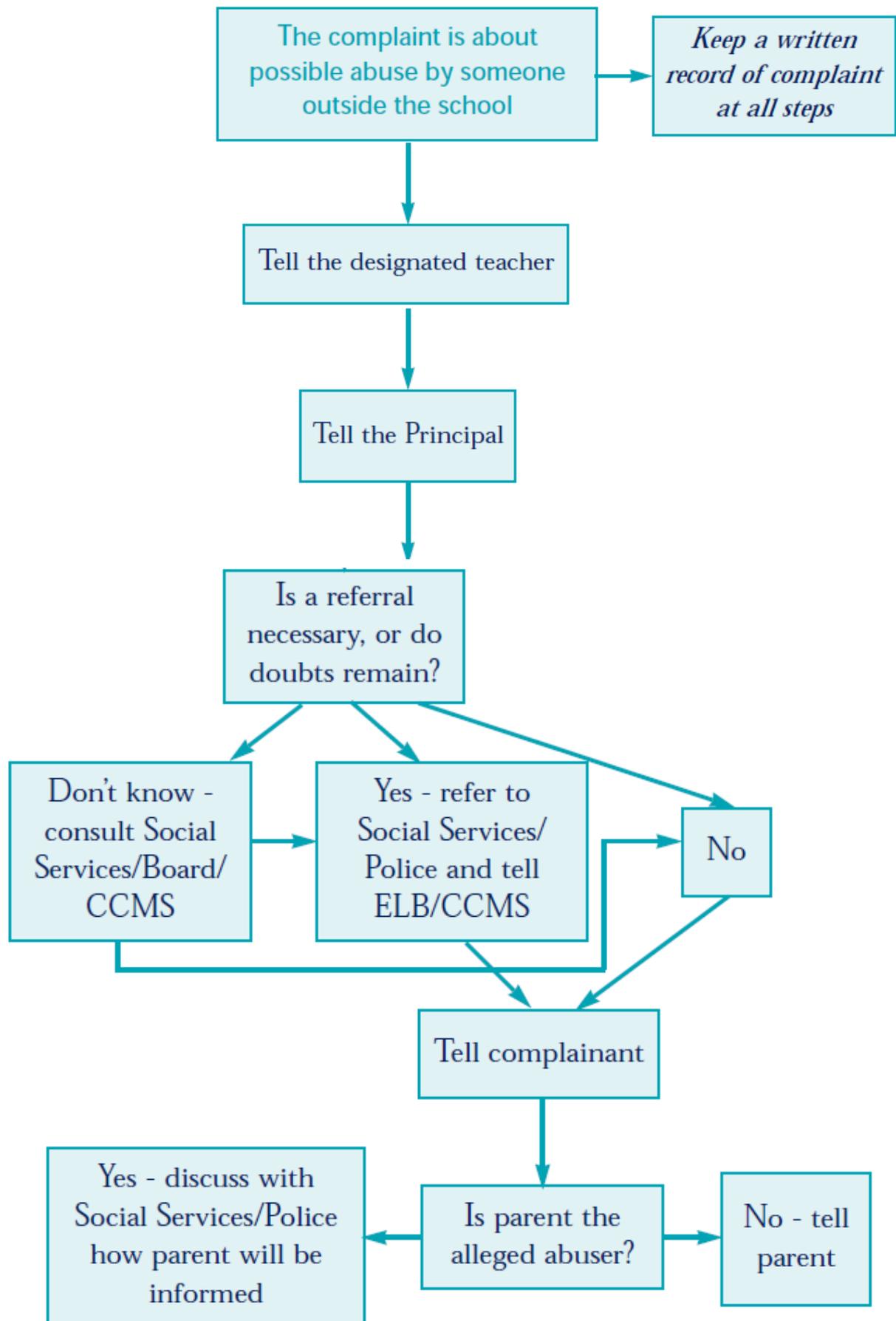
This is a whole school policy which also applies to the Nursery Unit. The Safeguarding Team in Tonagh Primary School will update this Policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the child protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

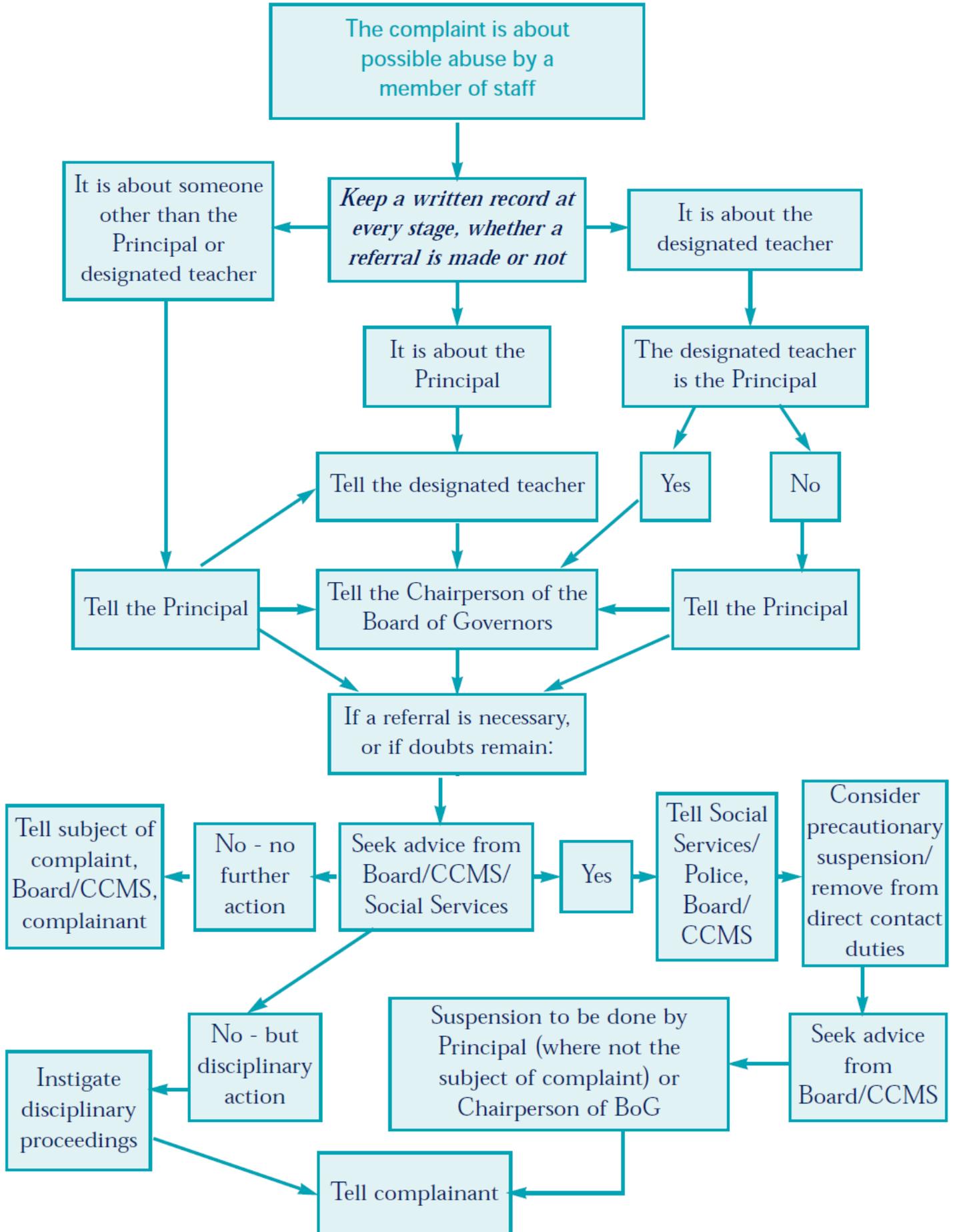
## **Appendices**

Review Date September 2018

**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**



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



# How a parent can make a complaint

I have a concern about my/a child's safety



I can talk to the class/form teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to (the Designated teacher for Child Protection  
Mrs S Curran/Miss L Mackin (Deputy))



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Principal  
Mrs Alison Stevenson



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the  
Chairman of the Board of Governors  
Dr R Fisher



At any time, I can talk to the Social Worker  
(Sarah Farrell - 92666031) or the Police

# TONAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupil's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Case Conference/Family Support Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Attendance</b>	
<b>Punctuality</b>	
<b>Presentation</b>	
<b>Attainment</b>	
<b>Homeworks</b>	
<b>Behaviour</b>	
<b>Home/School Links</b>	
<b>Any concerns</b>	

# TONAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Staff Concern Sheet/Incidents Reported

<b>Pupil Name</b>	
<b>Date of Incident</b>	
<b>Details of Incident/Concern</b>	
<b>To whom Reported</b>	
<b>Action Taken (if necessary)</b>	
<b>Reported By</b>	

# Tonagh Primary School



# Child Protection Policy

September 2016

# TONAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL



A Code of Conduct for All  
Staff

## Introduction

Staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of children. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both challenging and inspiring. This guidance has been produced to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safe-guard children and reduce the risk of staff being accused of improper or unprofessional conduct. They apply to all adults in school, whatever their position, role or responsibility.

Teachers and other education staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

ELBs, school and parents have legitimate expectations about the nature of professional involvement in the lives of pupils. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role. As adults, staff should

- ❖ Always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interest
- ❖ Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- ❖ Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- ❖ Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.

**This code is not "another" new set of requirements and regulations. It is a supportive document which aims to clarify good practice in order to keep both pupils and staff safe. It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff, rather 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.**

It cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about

their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

### **The Aims of this code are:**

- ❖ To keep pupils safe
- ❖ To reduce the risk of allegations against staff so:
  - Staff should always report to the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal
  - All staff have a duty to keep pupils safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm.
  - All staff must be aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures
  - If child abuse is suspected, staff have a duty to pass information without delay to Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal.
  - Staff also have a duty to take care of themselves.

### **Positions of Power and Trust**

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care.

Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour, which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential.

### **Confidentiality**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their every day responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information, some of which may need to be kept confidential to protect the child. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or his/her family for their own, or others advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. This means that staff should:

- ❖ Not share confidential information about a pupil with any person, other than on a professional need-to-know basis.
- ❖ Never promise complete confidentiality to a pupil prior to, during or after a disclosure.
- ❖ Never pass on confidential information to outsiders, press, police, social services etc without first seeking guidance from a senior member of staff.
- ❖ Not share information about other staff with pupils.

## **Propriety and Behaviour**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general.

## **Dress and Appearance**

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. All staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

## **Physical Contact**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Staff have received Team Teach training with regard to physical contact concerning pupils.

### **a) Physical Contact**

As a general rule, do not touch pupils.

- ❖ There are occasions when it is appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but they should only touch when it is appropriate and proper to do so in their professional judgement. Physical contact should be in response to a child's needs at the time, be of limited duration and be appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender and background.
- ❖ Some staff (e.g. PE, Drama, Music and SEN staff) may need to initiate physical contact, e.g. in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate a particular piece of equipment/apparatus/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's understanding of the reason

and their consent, and in an 'open' environment. E.G. "Do you mind if I move your arm?"

- ❖ Do not indulge in horseplay or fun fights.
- ❖ Use extra caution when it is known that a pupil has suffered previous abuse or neglect.

Staff should report immediately to the designated teacher, any physical contact which concerns them, or which they believe may have been misconstrued and may result in a child responding inappropriately.

#### **b) Pupils in distress**

- ❖ There may be rare occasions when a very distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance as a caring parent would provide - staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- ❖ Be self-aware, avoid any contact which may be instructive or open to misinterpretation.
- ❖ Staff should tell a colleague if they have offered comfort to a distressed pupil.

### **Control and Physical Intervention**

Always try to defuse situations without physical intervention. We do not expect staff to put themselves at physical risk, but they may intervene to prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others. They may use only *reasonable* force. There is no legal definition of reasonable force, but they must be sure that any physical intervention is warranted of the circumstances of the particular incident (i.e. not in response to a trivial action), and that the degree of force used is in proportion to the seriousness of the behaviour, or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should be the minimum to achieve the desired result. Further guidance on the use of reasonable force to restrain or control pupils is in the DENI circular 1999/9. Regional Policy Framework on the use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling (2004). Pastoral Care in Schools Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001). Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection: Code of Conduct for Staff (1999/10). Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions involving physical contact, have been, or may be misconstrued, or when a member of staff has had to physically restrain a pupil, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal.

Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of physical restraint.

### **Showers and Changing**

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying behaviour or

teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

## **Behaviour Management**

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Equally, staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. Staff must remember that they should:

- ❖ Not use physical intimidation.
- ❖ Not use force as a form of punishment.
- ❖ They should be alert to the risk of emotional abuse such as the use of vindictive sarcasm, verbal bullying, severe and persistent demeaning or insensitive comments or actions, particularly when directed consistently at a single or small group of pupils.
- ❖ Try to defuse situations before they escalate.
- ❖ Not leave a pupil out of sight and unsupervised in the corridor/room/store, rather send them to another member of staff (accompanied by another pupil) or keep them separate from the other pupils but within your sight.
- ❖ Never try to bar a pupil's 'way' or to physically prevent a pupil from leaving a room or a situation, unless of course they may constitute a threat to themselves or others.

## **One to One Situations**

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

This means that staff should:

- ❖ Not hold meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school
- ❖ Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- ❖ Inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- ❖ It may be necessary to indicate that the room is in use, but staff should not use 'engaged' or equivalent signs. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy.
- ❖ If they have reason to be concerned about a one-to-one meeting in advance, because of a pupil's previous behaviour or vulnerability, arrange for a colleague to be present, especially where there is a gender difference.
- ❖ Best avoid one to one after school detentions/subject support.

## **Transportation of Pupils**

If at all possible, transportation of pupils in staff cars should be avoided. It may however be necessary in some cases. Where this is the case:

- ❖ Staff should not transport pupils in their own vehicle, especially one-to-one, without the consent of the parent and senior teacher.
- ❖ Staff must always have valid insurance for this purpose.
- ❖ Staff must ensure that pupils wear seat belts and that the maximum capacity of the car is not exceeded. Booster seats are available in school if required.
- ❖ When transporting a pupil e.g. to hospital, it is best practice to take 2 additional pupils or another member of staff so that the driver is not left alone with a pupil. If this is unavoidable the pupil should travel in the back seat.

## **Educational Visits and After School Clubs etc**

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. They must remain professional at all times.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements.

Health and safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/Senior staff aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity.

## **First Aid and Administration of Medication**

See First Aid Policy/Prescribed Medication Policy

## **Intimate Care**

See Intimate Care and Toileting Policy

## **Curriculum/Choice and Use of Teaching Material**

Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

### **Internet Use**

See E-Safety Policy

### **Photograph Policy**

See Safe Use of Children's Photographs Policy

### **Responsibilities**

- ❖ Staff should report to a senior member of staff any behaviour by colleagues which gives cause for concern in relation to safeguarding the wellbeing of pupils.
- ❖ If any incident occurs which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, then the relevant information should be recorded promptly and reported to the Designated/Deputy Designated teacher or the Principal.
- ❖ Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

### **Other**

It is important that those working around children should use appropriate language at all times.

School policies relating to Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs should be adhered to.

The school operates a policy on Pupil use of Mobile Phones and staff should adhere to its contents.

### **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 the Code of Conduct, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult the Principal, the

designated teacher for Child Protection 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 and their manner and approach to individual 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.

## **A Code of Conduct for All Pupils**

### **Tonagh Primary School Rules**

- 1 Be friendly and respectful to others and their feelings.
- 2 Try to come to school on time.
- 3 Do what you are told at all times by staff members.
- 4 If you are absent, bring a note or get an adult from home to contact school.
- 5 All food must be eaten inside to keep our school tidy.
- 6 Try not to go to the toilet during class time - use break times.
- 7 Always stay in your seat if staff are out of the classroom.
- 8 Put your hand up to answer in class and listen at all times.
- 9 Walk on the left hand side of the corridor to keep everyone safe.
- 10 Always try your best - the future begins here!