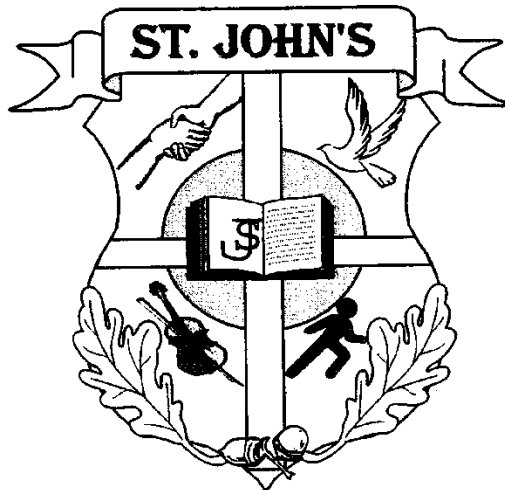


**St. John's Primary School
Bligh's Lane
Derry**

A Policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection



2025

"Learning Together Growing Together"

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1. Mission Statement

At St. John's Catholic, Primary School (PS), we provide a happy, nurturing, inclusive, learning, environment which delivers high quality outcomes and life-enriching experiences. We embrace diversity and encourage all to respect the environment and develop the confidence and digital skillset required to contribute to society and the local and global economy. We work collaboratively with parents/carers and community partners to promote the social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of each individual, thereby enabling our school family to 'Learn Together' and 'Grow Together.'

2. Introduction

We have a responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection of the children in our care. We will undertake this duty by providing a nurturing environment, where each child is valued for his/her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and nonteaching will be alert to the signs of abuse and will know the procedures to be followed. This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy: -

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount.
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard.
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility.
- Families are helped to stay together.
- We work in partnership.
- Prevention and protection are our priorities.
- Responses are proportionate to the circumstances.
- Our decision making is informed by an evidence base.

3. Legislation and Information

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in: -

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008
- The Safeguarding Board (NI) Act 2011
- The Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016
- The Public Services Ombudsman (NI) Act 2016
- The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021
- The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (NI) 2022
- "Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DOH, 2017)
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) Regional Core Policies and Procedures (2017).

DE Circulars and Letters

- 2012/19 and 2013/01: Use of Volunteers/External Providers
- 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Staff Member
- 2017/04 Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools
- 2020/07 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools
- 2021/13 Interim Guidance on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings
- 2022/02 Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

- 2023/02 Parental Responsibility: Updated Guidance for Schools
- 02 May and 28 June 2023 The Preventative Curriculum in Schools
- 07 August 2023 Relationships and Sexuality Education – False Information Campaign
- 2024/01 Guidance on Amendments to Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Educational Trips EA educational Visits Interim Guidance to Schools 2017
- Pastoral Care Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force to Restrain or Control Pupils 1999/9.

Child and Parent Resources

- Department of Health - Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031
- Department of Education - Children and Young Peoples Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework
- Department of Education - Helping Protect Against Suicide by Supporting Children Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Northern Ireland Executive - Keeping Children and Young People Safe: An online safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2020-2025.

4. Other Related Policies/Activities

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. The Child Protection Policy complements and supports a range of other school policies including: -

- E-Safety
- Safe Handling
- Intimate Care
- Attendance
- Whistleblowing
- Staff Code of Conduct (Appendix 6)
- Addressing Bullying
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (Included in this Policy)
- Shared Education
- Pastoral Care
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Accessibility
- Nurture
- After-Schools Care
- Special Educational Needs & Inclusion
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Drugs
- Educational Visits
- Managing Critical Incidents
- Health and Safety
- Safe Environment
- Data Protection & GDPR
- Complaints
- Record Retention and Destruction – Disposal of Records Schedule.

Policies are available to parents from the school office or on the school website at: www.stjohnspsderry.co.uk

Nurture

We have a designated DE Funded Nurture suite, and a nurturing approach permeates the culture of our school. This approach provides children with the social and emotional skills

to enjoy success at school and with peers. It develops their resilience and their capacity to confidently deal with the tribulations of life, for life.

The Six Principles of Nurture underpin our work in Child Protection and Safeguarding.

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
4. Language is a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transition in children's lives.

Shared Education

During Shared Education activities the teachers in charge follow the procedures appertaining to their own school. If an incident/concern occurs with a child from the partner school, the teachers in charge will inform the child's class teacher who will then deal with the incident/concern. If this is not immediately possible, the teachers in charge will deal with the incident, according to their individual school's policy and report it as soon as they can to the child's class teacher in the partner school. The overall aim is to adhere to the core principles underpinning the delivery of Shared Education, as stated in our joint Shared Education Policy.

"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration."

Article 3 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED)

The CRED policy complements what St. John's PS is striving to achieve for children. It aims to improve outcomes for children by '*educating children to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination, and by providing formal and non-formal educational opportunities for them to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions within the resources available.*' CRED aims and principles are very much the same as the aims of the NI Curriculum, namely the curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. At St. John's PS, we are sensitive to and welcoming of the diverse identities of all members of the school community. Within the school ethos it is obvious that there is an acceptance of difference and a valuing of diversity, whether that be race, religious belief, political views, gender, or sexual orientation.

Extended Schools/Wrap Around Care

The school operates from 8.00am – 4.55pm. There is a Breakfast Club and After-schools Club as well as a range of enrichment activities for the children. A member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) remains present in the school during these operational hours. There is also a fully trained First Aider on site.

5. School Safeguarding Team

The following are the members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors – Mrs K McCallion
- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Ms S Doherty
- Principal – Mrs G O'Connor
- Designated Teacher – Mrs G O'Connor
- Deputy Designated E Safety Child Protection Teacher- Mrs R Doherty
- Deputy Designated Teachers – Miss A Murphy, Mr N Carlin, and Mr S Mullan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for child protection. They must also appoint a Deputy Designated Teacher who, as a member of the Safeguarding Team, will actively support the Designated Teacher in carrying out the following duties: -

- Induction and training of all school staff including support staff
- Availability to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate
- Liaising with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Liaising and making referrals to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Taking lead responsibility for the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection Ethos in the school
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Processing Operation Encompass calls and informing relevant staff of need to be pastorally supportive.

Principal

As secretary to the Board of Governors, assist in fulfilling safeguarding and child protection duties: -

- Ensuring the Board of Governors is kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding including changes to legislation, policy, procedures, DE circulars, inclusion of child protection on the termly meeting agenda
- Managing allegations / complaints against school staff
- Establishing and managing the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection
- Appointing and managing Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- Ensuring safe and effective recruitment and selection including awareness of safeguarding and child protection for new staff and volunteers
- Ensuring that parents and children receive a copy or summary of the child protection policy at intake and at a minimum every 2 years
- Maintaining the schools record of child abuse complaints
- Working with external agencies such as Operation Encompass to ensure a triage approach takes place.

Board of Governors

- Appointing a Designated Governor for child protection
- Appointing a Designated and Deputy Designated teachers
- Fully understanding of the roles of the designated and deputy designated teachers for child protection
- Safeguarding and child Protection training given to all staff and governors including refresher training
- Maintaining a Child Protection policy reviewed annually. Ensuring parents and children receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedure every two years
- Maintaining an Anti-bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying on SIMS if investigation shows bullying behaviour. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016
- Maintaining a code of conduct for all adults working/volunteering in the school

- Ensuring all school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19
- Ensuring governors receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the Preventative Curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff
- Maintaining Child Protection Records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

Chairperson of Board of Governors

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors:-

- Maintains a pivotal role in creating and maintaining a safeguarding ethos
- Receives training from CPSS and HR
- Assumes lead responsibility for a child protection complaint or concern about the Principal
- Ensures compliance with legislation, child protection record keeping and policies.

Designated Governor for Child Protection

Advise the Board of Governors on:-

- The role of the designated teachers
- The content of child protection policies
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school
- The content of the termly updates and full annual designated teachers report
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

Other Members of School Staff

Teachers, Learning Support Assistants, and other staff in school see children on a daily basis over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural, and emotional indicators and a child may choose to disclose to them allegations of abuse.

- Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Deputy Designated Teachers if he/she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made, and any further necessary action will be taken using the Note of Concern proforma (**Appendix 1**).
- Class teachers should complete the note of concern if there are safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about child abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.
- **Staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures as information will be passed on. Neither should staff investigate or ask leading questions.

Parents

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school:-

- If the child has a medical condition or educational need
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child

- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility
- If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school
- If their child is absent, they should telephone the school and/or send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection
- If a parent reports a safeguarding concern it is dealt with by the safeguarding team and further outcomes is treated with the strictest of confidentiality.

It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for parents/carers.

6. Child Protection Definitions

Definition of Harm

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 able 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. See Appendix 2 for Signs and Symptoms of Abuse.

Harm can be caused by: -

Sexual abuse
Emotional abuse
Physical abuse
Neglect
Exploitation.

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.

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 opportunity 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.

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

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.

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, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

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.

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English and sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy.

7. Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm¹.

¹ Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017) <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

Operation Encompass

The Operation Encompass procedures are followed within the school. The Designated Teacher takes the call from the PSNI, records the information, and shares essential information with the relevant teacher. Pastoral support is then put in place for the child.

How a Parent can Raise a Concern

We aim to work closely with parents/carers in supporting all aspects of their child’s development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern, they can talk to the Class Teacher/Vice-principal/the Designated or Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection or the Principal. If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chairperson of the Board

of Governors. If after this a parent still has concerns, they can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman.

At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway Team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Details of how a parent can make a complaint are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 3**.

Where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff the school will follow the steps in Appendix 4.

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 will complete a Note of Concern (Appendix 1) and act promptly. **They will not investigate - this is a matter for Social Services - but will discuss these concerns with the Designated Teacher or with the Deputy Designated Teacher.**

If the Principal/Designated Teacher is not available, the Deputy Designated Teacher will contact the Designated Governor for Child Protection/Chairperson of the Board of Governors. If required, advice may be sought from an Education Authority Child Protection Officer. The designated teacher may also seek clarification from the child or young person, their parent/carer.

If a referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting, or referring to other support agencies e.g., Westbank Family Services, Youth First, School Counselling Services, Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent. If a child protection referral is required, the Designated Teacher will seek consent from 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.

The Designated Teacher will phone the Gateway Team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form. Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff or a volunteer

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal, then the Deputy Designated Teacher should inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. **The procedure, as outlined in Appendix 5 will be followed.**

N.B. The alleged offender of physical abuse must not be contacted.

8. Consent, Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Record Keeping

Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child/young person, should, where practicable, be discussed with the parent and consent sought for a referral to children's social services in the local HSC Trust, unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child/young person at further risk through delay or undermine any criminal investigative process (for example in circumstances where there are concerns or suspicions that a crime has taken place) or there is concern raised about the parent's actions or reactions. The communication/language needs of the parents/carers should be established for example in relation to disability/ethnicity and the parent's/carer's capacity to understand should be

ascertained. These should be addressed through the provision of appropriate communication methods, including, where necessary, translators, signers, intermediaries, or advocacy services.

Effective protection for children/young people may, on occasions, require the sharing of information without prior parental/carer consent in advance of that information being shared.

Where staff decide not to seek parental consent before making a referral to children's social services in the local Health and Social Care Trust or the police, the reason for this decision must be clearly noted in the child/young person's records and included within the verbal and written/UNOCINI referral.

When a referral is deemed to be necessary in the interests of the child/young person, and the parents/carers have been consulted and do not consent, the following action should be taken:

- The reason for proceeding without parental consent must be recorded.
- The withholding of permission by the parent/carer must be included in the verbal and written referral to children's social services.
- The parent/carer should be contacted to inform them that, after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

Staff making a referral may ask for their anonymity to be protected as far as possible because of a genuine threat to self/family. In such instances this anonymity should be protected with an explanation to the staff member that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information may become the subject of court processes.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence." In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a child who transfers to another school, the Safeguarding Team will consider what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children, information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the Data Protection policy, and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Record Keeping

In accordance with DE guidance, there are clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention, and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

To meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning children in St. John's PS are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records, these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

9. Safe Recruitment Procedures

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system. The schools ensures that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted, and supervised as appropriate. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed are vetted/ supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and departmental guidance.

10. Code of Conduct For all Staff - Paid or Unpaid

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 children in their charge must be above reproach. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers, which has been approved by the Board of Governors. (**See Appendix 6**)

11. The Preventative Curriculum

The statutory Personal Development and Mutual Understanding curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to children's emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours (2017/04).

- We seek to promote children's awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through our curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Through the Preventative Curriculum, we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem, and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and make positive choices in a range of situations.
- Throughout the school year Safeguarding issues are addressed through class assemblies. There are four permanent Child Protection notice boards in the school which provide advice and display child helpline numbers.
- The school promotes PANTS NSPCC fortnight, Anti Bullying Week and Children's Mental Health Week. Resources are provided for all year groups.
- We are a PATHs Registered school with a DE Nurture Hub.
- We are currently engaged in the EA Being Well Doing Well initiative.
- Counselling is provided two days per week and is funded through Extended Schools.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team and approved every two years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, children, and staff. This policy is implemented through the school's staff induction and training programme and is

embedded in daily practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Safeguarding Team and staff. The Board of Governors will also monitor Child Protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

Date Policy Reviewed:_____

Signed:_____ **(Designated Teacher)**

_____ **(Principal)**

_____ **(Chair of Board of Governors)**

Appendix 1

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF CONCERN

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER

Name of Child:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:
Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:

Any further action taken:		
Written report passed to Designated Teacher: If 'No' state reason:	Yes:	No:
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:		
Written note from staff member placed on the child's Child Protection file. Yes No If 'No' state reason:		

Name of Staff Member Making the Report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2

Types, Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Types of Abuse and Physical/Behavioural Indicators

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. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI 2016)

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.	Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that there is no carer at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos and age inappropriate social media.

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. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday.	Self-destructive tendencies; aggression to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in artwork, role play or stories.

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. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Well below average in height and weight; "failing to thrive"; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self-mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental, and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).	Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; solitary play; attention seeking/needing behaviour poor peer relationships.

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. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; self-devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work, role play or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material.

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.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or a combination of these forms of abuse. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People 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.

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation, or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

If the staff in St. John's PS become aware of signs that may indicate grooming, they will take early action and follow the school's Child Protection Policies and procedures.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017).

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity **in return for something** they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

Online exploitation via nude images amongst young people can include texting, video calls, messaging and PSNI involvement when it comes to blackmailing for economic gains.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. A child does not have to witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children.

Domestic violence and abuse is defined as 'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.' Sexual Violence and Abuse is defined as '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), ' (Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016).

If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy.

Forced Marriage A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and if in St John's PS, we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. As a school we support children and young people, through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention. However, consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off

incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2016/05 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:-

- There is no informed consent by the victim
- The perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim
- Harmful sexualised behaviour can include: Using age inappropriate, sexually, explicit, words and phrases
- Inappropriate touching
- Using sexual violence or threats
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the school's Positive Behaviour Policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and in our school, we will refer to our Child Protection Policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

ESafety/Internet Abuse

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments, and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

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

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

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

The school's actions and governance of online safety are reflected clearly in our safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare around digital

technology is the responsibility of everyone who encounters the children in the school or on school-organised activities.

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

Sexting Between Individuals in a Relationship

Children need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. We may also seek advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and all circumstances considered. It is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of a sexual image.

Sharing an Inappropriate Image with Intent to Cause Distress

If a child has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is **not forwarded to anyone else**. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent. If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the Child Protection procedures of the school will be followed.

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Children with a Disability

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e., any child or young person who has a physical, sensory, or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and those working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues.

Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

Children with Limited Fluency in English

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

Designated Teachers should work with their SEN Co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for Newcomer Children, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any communication needs that a child may have. All

schools should try to create an atmosphere in which children with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or children for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

Children Looked After (CLA)

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then plan for the child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily. It is important that the views of children, young people, and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the Looked After Child are considered when decisions are made.

A member of school staff will attend CLA meetings and will provide a written report. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

Children/Young People who go Missing

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may not be involved with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and young people may have been abused.

School staff will work in partnership with those who look after the child or young person who goes missing and, if appropriate, will complete a risk assessment. Current school policies will apply e.g. Attendance, Safeguarding, Relationships, and Sexuality Education.

Young People in Supported Accommodation

Staff will work in partnership with those agencies involved with young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation and will provide pastoral support as necessary.

Young People who are Homeless

If we become aware that a young person in our school is homeless, we will share this information with Social Services whose role is to carry out a comprehensive needs and risk assessment. We will contribute to the assessment and attend multi-disciplinary meetings.

Separated, Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children and Young People

Separated Children and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver. **Unaccompanied children** and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.

Child Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation. If we become aware of a child or young person who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking we in St. John's PS will immediately follow our Safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Children of Parents with Additional Support Needs

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers, or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action school staff take to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances, encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children's social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist us in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will consider the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

Gender Identity Issues and Sexual Orientation

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times, young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community, we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

Boarding Schools and Residential Settings

Children in the above settings are particularly vulnerable to abuse. We will ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and trained in accordance with DE guidance.

Work Experience, School Trips and Educational Visits

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE guidance

on educational visits, school trips and work experience to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

Children/Young People's Behaviours

Peer Abuse

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual, and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all school staff should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and, where necessary, should contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

Self-Harm

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however, this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

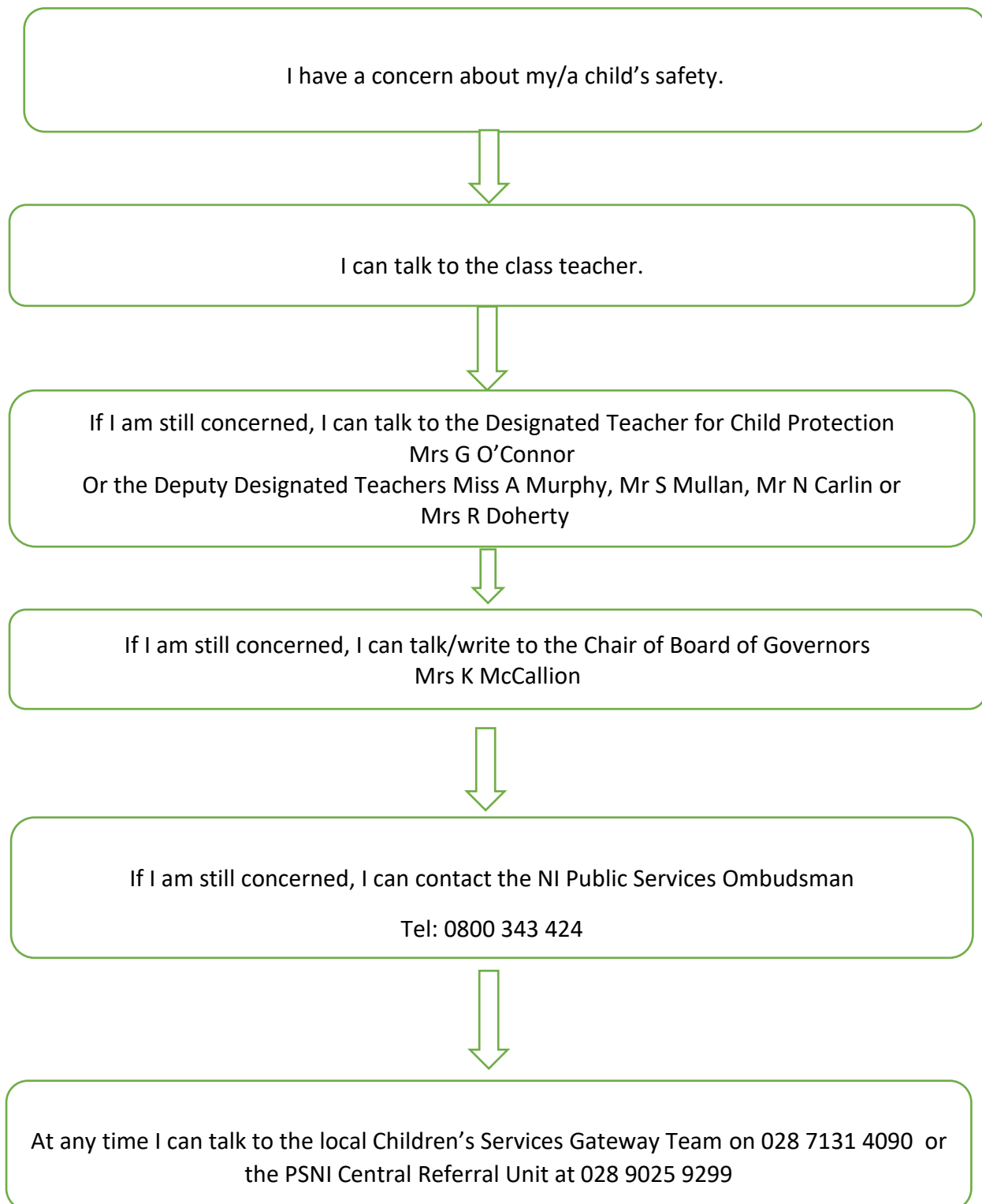
Suicidal Ideation

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child or young person who presents as being suicidal. It is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

Appendix 3

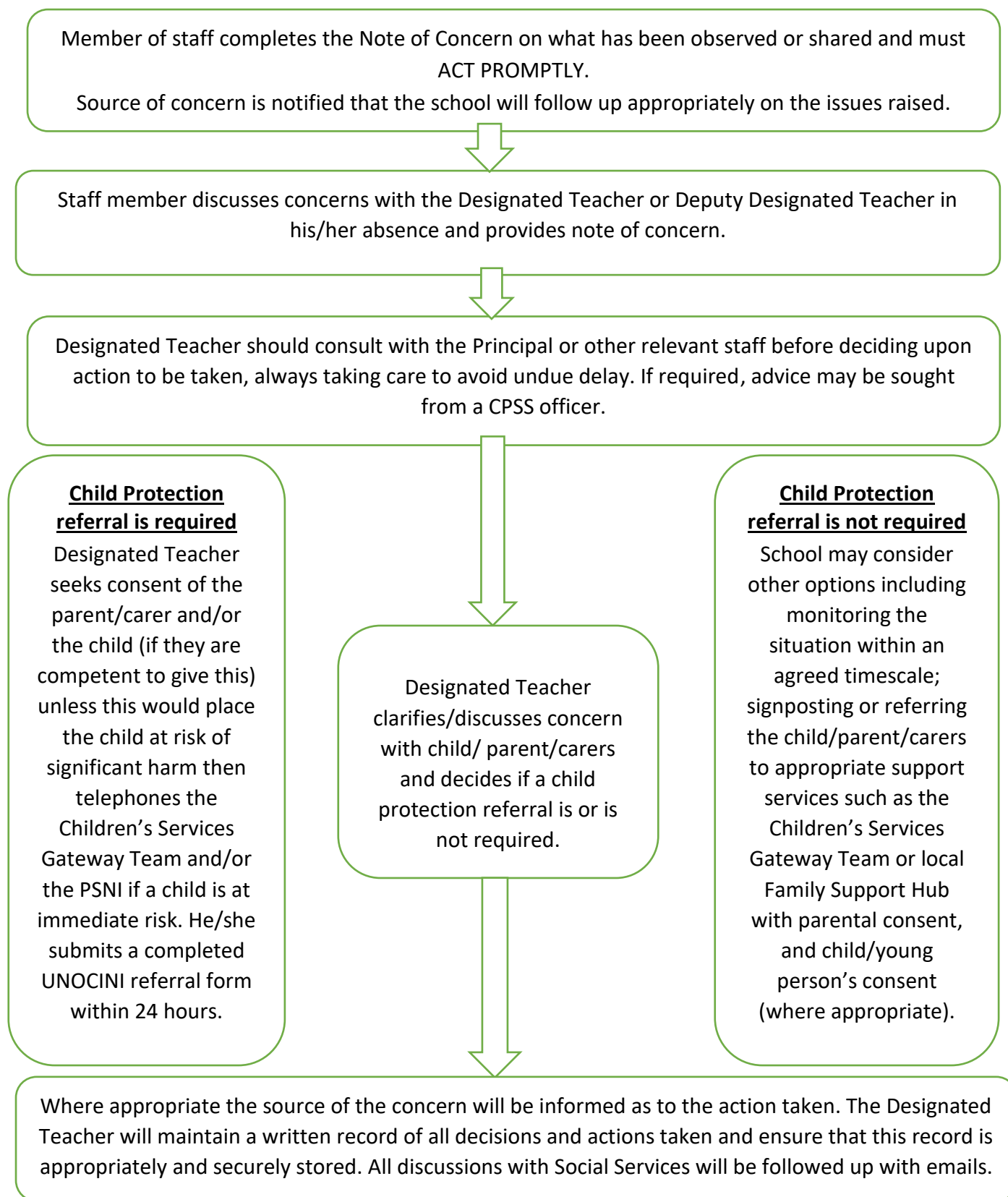
How a Parent can make a Complaint

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:



Appendix 4

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



Appendix 5

Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

Key Points

Lead individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of Board of Governors as appropriate.



Guidance on the Next Steps

Lead individual then establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.



Possible Outcomes

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or BoG to agree a way forward from the options below.



Precautionary suspension is not appropriate, and the matter is concluded.



Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.



Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed.



Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed.

Appendix 6 - Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers

At St. John's PS, we want all our children to feel happy, safe, and secure so that they can benefit fully from their time in school and avail of the educational experiences offered. We always aim to behave appropriately and warmly towards every member of our school community. We understand that we set an example with our own behaviour, and this encourages our children to do the same.

We value greatly the friendly, caring relationships which exist between staff, volunteers, parents, and children and seek to ensure that these relationships are always appropriate and professional and that the compassionate and caring ethos within our school community continues to flourish.

We recognise that all actions concerning children must uphold the best interests of the child 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 children in their care must be above reproach.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff and volunteers. It is intended as a guide to all school staff. It sets out standards of conduct which staff and volunteers are expected to follow. It has been drafted to comply with school policies and procedures and is also 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.

All the staff of St. John's PS have been consulted and subscribe to the following Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct covers all activities organised in and by the school, whether on the premises or elsewhere.

1. Setting an Example

All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by children. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times and demonstrate high standards of conduct to encourage our children to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and comply with these so as to set a good example. **Staff and volunteers must comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.**

Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner which, within the context of this Code of Conduct, includes such aspects as: -

- Acting in a fair, courteous, and mature manner to children, colleagues, and other stakeholders
- Co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure children receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service
- Respect for school property
- Taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of children in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises
- Being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both children and staff and volunteers
- Respect for the rights and opinions of others.

Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with children outside of school, perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.

Conduct Outside of School

Staff conduct outside work should be beyond reproach in relation to the reputation of the school and staff. Staff and volunteers should note that any behaviour which warrants statutory agency involvement may affect their Access NI Record.

Staff members may undertake work outside of the school as long as it does not interfere with work performance in school. Further advice may be sought from the Principal.

2. Private Meetings with Children

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual children. It is recognised that there may be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access or with the door open or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use. Signs prohibiting entry to the room must not be used.
- Where possible another child or preferably another adult should be present or nearby during the interview/meeting. Active measures will be taken to facilitate this.

Individual Teaching Support for Children

- Every day in school, staff are involved in individual teaching and support sessions. These include classes throughout the school e.g., in resource areas etc. and are not considered private meetings with children. All staff should provide this support in an appropriate and professional manner.

3. Physical Contact with Children

- Staff and volunteers should be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force (Circular 2021/13 Interim Guidance on the use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings) and be familiar with the school's policy on Safe Handling and Use of Reasonable Force.
- To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a child. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch children only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would give. Staff and volunteers should use their discretion to ensure that what is, and what is seen by others present, to be normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.
- Staff and volunteers 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 student, 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 children), (DENI Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Children). In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury to the child, another child or adult, a member of staff may need to take necessary action. Reasonable Force and restraint may only be used as follows: -
 - To prevent a child from committing an offence
 - To prevent a child causing personal injury to or damage to the property of any person, including him/herself

- To prevent a child from engaging in any behaviour prejudiced to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its children.
- The use of reasonable force/restraint should only be used as a measure of last resort. All instances should be recorded, and parents/carers must be informed. Follow up support will be given to staff and children concerned.
- Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of a child or others around them, that safety must take precedence over all other considerations.
- **Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, whatever the provocation.**
- Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with children from time to time in the course of their teaching, for example when showing a child how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during PE Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the child.
- Staff required to administer First Aid to a child should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, the welfare of the child is paramount, and no member of staff should hesitate to provide First Aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the child, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. 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/ Deputy Designated Teacher.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising children in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to children in circumstances very different from normal school/work environment.
- **In relation to seclusion, a child should never be placed in an environment in which they are alone and/or physically prevented from leaving, as a form of punishment. This may constitute an act of Deprivation of Liberty without the appropriate authority to do so.**

4. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- It is inevitable that some of our teaching will involve the use of sensitive materials and it is very difficult to anticipate when these might impact negatively on our children. If the material to be used is contentious, and if there are concerns about any children in a class in relation to it, it is good practice to consult with the Principal and/or the Designated Teacher. All INTERNET sites should be checked before use.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature, a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by children or by the teacher, might be criticised after the event. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Designated Teacher and or Deputy Designated Teachers as to the suitability of the resource **before use**.
- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

5. Relationships and Attitudes

- All staff and volunteers should treat children with dignity and respect and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents/carers, or colleagues. Sarcastic, threatening, or demeaning verbal interaction is not acceptable. Jokes at the expense of children, discriminating or favouring individuals is not acceptable. Furthermore, verbally humiliating, or frightening children as a means of punishment is forbidden.
- Staff and volunteers should ensure that all verbal exchanges are conducted in a calm and professional manner. Only in unusual circumstances, for example in

emergency situations or when attracting attention in large areas, should voices be raised.

- The use of humour can be helpful in diffusing situations, but the humour used must be understood and appropriate. The basic rule of thumb is that we should treat everyone in the way we would expect to be treated ourselves i.e., with respect and dignity in line with our RESPECT Charter.
- Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with children are appropriate to the age, maturity, and sex of the children, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.
- From time to time, it is wise for all staff and volunteers to reappraise their teaching style, relationships with children and their manner and approach to individual children to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions in the minds of colleagues, of children or their parents/ guardians.
- Attitudes, demeanour, and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with older boys and girls. Relationships with children must be professional at all times, and sexual relationships with current children are not permitted and may lead to criminal conviction.

6. Staff Relations

A positive climate should be evident throughout the school and in the staffroom at all times. All staff should feel relaxed and comfortable in their workplace. Negative discussions, comments about members of staff, children, parents or about the organisation of the school should be avoided. Verbal communication and non-verbal behaviour should remain free of misinterpretation. All staff members must be aware of personal space, personal stress levels and the effect of health and fatigue on decision-making and behaviour.

Where a disagreement or concern arises between staff, the Principal must be notified immediately. Staff should not seek to resolve issues between themselves or incite staff to behave disrespectfully towards other staff. Disciplinary action will be taken if the ethos of the school is undermined (Ref. Staff Emotional Health and Well-being Policy).

In the interest of inclusion, the exchange of gifts/tokens should only be those corporately agreed by the Social Committee. Any other small group gift sharing/celebrations must be organised, privately and with discretion, off-site.

7. Dress Code

The school is a professional working environment. We expect the children to dress formally. Therefore, all staff and volunteers should ensure that they are dressed smartly and professionally. Sports' clothes may be worn during PE lessons. Trainers must be worn when staff and volunteers are engaging in physical activities outside of the classroom. Jewellery and piercings should be moderate and safe.

8. E-Safety and Internet Use

We recognise that every adult has a right to use social networking as a means of communicating with other adults. However, social networking sites present difficulties for staff in all schools. Great care must be taken to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained between staff, parents, and children in this arena, as in all others.

A staff member or volunteer's off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's E-Safety and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

Staff and volunteers are discouraged from making links with parents in online platforms. However, if they chose to do so, they must ensure that they follow this policy.

Use of Phones During the School Day

- Mobile phones should be always stored out of sight of children in school. They should be turned off or placed on 'silent' mode during contact time with children and at staff meetings/INSET.
- Apple/Android watches must also be placed on silent mode throughout the teaching day and at meetings/INSET.
- If a member of staff needs to be urgently contacted during contact time the school landline should be used **(028 71264046)**. **In extreme circumstances, staff should speak with the Principal regarding the need for other arrangements.**
- Mobile phone details must never be shared with children – yours or theirs.
- **Only school equipment should be used to photograph or video children.**
- School photographs must not be downloaded to a personal computer or laptop.

It is strongly recommended that all staff using social networking sites use the highest available privacy settings and that staff do not communicate with children via personal social networking sites.

Information directly related to the school community should never be posted on personal social networking sites. Staff and volunteers should also be mindful of content attributable to them, posted on others' sites (e.g., friends and family) and how these communications might be interpreted by others. A simple rule of thumb is not to put any information/image etc. on social media that you would not be happy to place on the school noticeboard.

Staff and volunteers should never: -

- Make communication of a personal nature with children
- Engage in inappropriate dialogue with children through the internet via Facebook, Twitter, online gaming sites etc.
- Post photographs or make references to children or school issues on internet sites other than on the school's official sites/Facebook
- Send emails or text messages to children via personal email addresses or mobile phones.

9. Honesty and Integrity

Token gifts from children or parents e.g. at Christmas, or the end of the school year are acceptable. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual children may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted. All staff and volunteers are expected to hold the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling of money, use of school property and resources. Staff and volunteers should reference the Gifts and Hospitality Policy for further information on what is acceptable as a gift. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (e.g. a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received.

10. Confidentiality

Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about children including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In

such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior management.

Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support children, they must not promise confidentiality or request children to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

St John's PS will update this Code of Conduct in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually in conjunction with our Child Protection /Safeguarding Policy. Consultation with staff will be undertaken on a regular basis.

Appendix 7

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

Social Services	028 9504 9999
(Out of Hours)	028 71865195
CPSS phone number:	028 9598 5590
Looked After Children Advice:	02870511086