**Belmont Primary School**

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# Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Parent Full Copy

**Date ratified by Board of Governors: January 2022**

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**Child Protection - Ethos**

In Belmont Primary School we all have responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection of the children in our care. We carry out this duty in a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and where they can learn and develop to their full potential. Our school ethos, practices and procedures are such that developing children’s self-esteem is of great importance. At Belmont, children are listened to and relationships are strong so that each child feels secure, valued and positive. Our pupils are encouraged to speak confidently about any issue. In addition, work in PDMU, circle time and in play/activity based learning is planned to cover topics such as keeping healthy and keeping safe at an age-appropriate level.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should 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

**Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, “Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” (DENI Circular 2017/04, amended September 2019 and updated June 2020) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

**The following Principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy:**

* the child’s welfare is paramount;
* the voice of the child should be heard;
* partnership;
* prevention;
* responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
* protection; and
* evidence based and informed decision making.

**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 harm[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Other Related Policies**

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

Anti-Bullying Policy

Attendance Policy

Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy

Code of Conduct

Complaints policy

Data protection Policy

Educational Visits

E-Safety Policy, including Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras

First Aid and Administration of Medicines

Health and Safety Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Privacy Notice

Records Management policy

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Special Educational Needs

Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling

Whistleblowing policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the School office or visit the school website at www.belmontprimary.org

**School Safeguarding Team and its Roles & Responsibilities**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chair of the Board of Governors | Mr Paul McIlwaine |
| Designated Governor for Child Protection | Mr Jonathan Waterworth |
| Principal / Designated Teacher | Mrs Olwen McIlroy |
| Vice Principal/ Deputy Designated Teacher | Mrs Joy Campbell |

**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:

* attend training at least every 3 years or more regularly when training is available
* the induction and training of all school staff including support staff;
* being available to discuss safeguarding/child protection concerns of any staff member;
* responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns;
* audit all areas of safeguarding and child protection in school and update procedures as necessary
* 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;
* liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection;
* lead responsibility for the development of the school’s child protection policy;
* promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school; and
* compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

**Principal**

* attend Principal refresher training as available and at least every 3 years
* as secretary to the Board of Governors, assist in fulfilling its safeguarding and child protection duties;
* ensure the Board of Governors are 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;
* to manage allegations / complaints against school staff;
* to establish and manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection;
* to appoint and manage designated teacher/deputy designated teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities;
* to ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection including awareness of safeguarding and child protection for new staff and volunteers;
* ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy or summary of the child protection policy at intake and at a minimum every 2 years; and
* to maintain the schools record of child abuse complaints.

**Board of Governors**

**The Governors must ensure that:**

* a designated governor for child protection is appointed;
* a designated and deputy designated teacher are appointed in their schools;
* they have a full understanding of the roles of the designated and deputy designated teachers for child protection;
* safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training;
* the school has a child protection policy which is reviewed annually and parents of pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
* the school has 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.
* there is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school;
* all school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19;
* they receive a full annual report on all child protection matters, which includes details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
* receive a half termly update of child protection activities within the school
* the school maintains the following 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.

**Chair of Board of Governors**

The chair of the board of governors:

* has a pivotal role in creating and maintaining a safeguarding ethos;
* receives training from CPSS and HR;
* assumes lead responsibility in the event of a CP complaint or concern about the principal; and
* ensures compliance with legislation, Child Protection record keeping and policies.
* Signs and dates annually the Record of Child Abuse Complaints against staff, even if there are no entries.

**Designated Governor for Child Protection**

Advises 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; and
* recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

**Other members of school staff**

* members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the designated teacher for child protection or to the deputy designated teacher if she is not available. In the event of both being absent from school, concerns should be shared with the Designated Teacher (Mrs Mcilroy) / Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Campbell) by email or phone.
* 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 pupil 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, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions.

**Support Staff**

* if any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member they should report these concerns to the designated teacher or deputy designated teacherif she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made and any further necessary action will be taken.

**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 and should 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](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection)

**It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.**

**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 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**.

**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 or non-penetrative acts. It may also 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).

**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.

**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.

**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

The signs and symptoms of the above types of abuse are included as **Appendix 1**. In addition to the above there are also some other specific types of abuse that we in Belmont Primary School are aware of and have therefore included in our policy- please see [**Appendix 2**](#appendix1).

As all our pupils are below 7 years of age, their developing communication skills may make them more vulnerable. However, in Belmont, every step is taken to develop strong relationships with our pupils, take an interest in what they tell us and encourage them to talk to adults about any worries they may have. All staff are aware that children with disabilities or a special educational need, with limited English or communication difficulties, Looked After Children or children with gender issues may need extra support or supervision. See **Appendix 7** for further details.

**Looked After Children**

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child’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. In these circumstances, a member of school staff will attend LAC meetings and 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.

**ACEs**

Adverse childhood experiences are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. They may also involve household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have substance abuse disorders. Staff will be mindful of the effects of ACEs on pupils and seek advice from the designated/ deputy designated teacher to support those involved.

**How a Parent Can Raise a Concern**

In Belmont Primary School we aim to work closely with parents/guardians 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,the designated or deputy designated teacher for child protection. (Mrs McIlroy or Mrs Campbell)

If they are still concerned they may talk to the chair 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 who to contact are shown in the flowchart in [**Appendix 3**](#appendix3)**.**

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

In Belmont Primary School 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 (see [**Appendix 6**](#appendix6)) 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 she is not available.

The designated teacher will consult with other relevant staff always taking care to avoid due delay. 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 child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent.

If a child protection referral is required, the designated teacher will seek consent from the parent/carer 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.

For further detail please see [**Appendix 4**](#appendix4)**.**

**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 deputy designated teacher if the principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the principal then the Chairperson of the board of governors should be informed, who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in [**Appendix 5**](#appendix5) will be followed.

**Consent**

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 and 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 pupil who transfers to another school we 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 school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

**Record Keeping**

In accordance with DE guidance we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns. In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in Belmont Primary School are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal 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 place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person reporting the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

**Safe Recruitment Procedures**

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals’ access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Belmont Primary School are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

**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 child and young people 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 Volunteerswhich has been approved by the Board of Governors. The school’s Code of Conduct is available on request

**The Preventative Curriculum**

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils’ 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. We seek to promote pupils’ awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its 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 can make more positive choices in a range of situations. Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor and relevant information in each classroom.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the safeguarding team and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the school’s staff induction and training programme and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the designated teacher for child protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team. 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.

**Covid**

During periods of lockdown or when a pupil is unable to attend school due to self-isolation or Covid- related illnesses, pastoral calls will form a part of our safeguarding procedures and reflect the caring ethos of the school. Emails for Designated and/or Deputy Designated teachers are always monitored and staff and parents should continue to notify the school of any safeguarding concerns in the normal way.

**Date Policy Reviewed:**

**Signed:**

**(Designated Teacher/ Principal)**

**(Deputy Designated Teacher)**

**(Chair of Board of Governor)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Designated Governor)**

**Appendix 1**

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

The information below is a summary from the APCP file Regional Policy and Procedures Appendix 2. We have included some examples of common signs and symptoms which might indicate some form of abuse. However, this is not a checklist and other innocent explanations may be possible. The first indication may not necessarily come from a severe injury but could come from:

* bruises or marks on the child’s body
* by remarks made by a child or his parents
* by overhearing a conversation
* by observing a poor bond with parents and child
* by a child having sexual knowledge or exhibiting sexual behaviour unusual for age
* by a child not thriving or developing as expected
* by observation of a child’s behaviour and/ or changes in behaviour
* by indications that a family is under stress

Suspicions may also be raised when there is a discrepancy between injury and explanation, where there is a history of injuries or incidents or where there is knowledge or suspicion of dysfunction at home.

**Physical Abuse** **Sexual Abuse**

Scratches or bite marks Sexually explicit behaviour

Bruises or burns Running away

Untreated injuries Self mutilation

Unwillingness to undress Inappropriate language

Flinching at sudden movements Sexualised play

Improbable explanations for bruises Sexual themes in writing or art

**Neglect** **Emotional Abuse**

Hunger, tiredness etc Fearful or unhappy

Poor personal hygiene Sudden speech disorders

Lack of supervision at home Neurotic behaviour (rocking etc)

Untreated illnesses Over-reaction to mistakes

Over passivity or hyperactivity Excessive dependence

Deficient nutrition Attention seeking

Poor growth

Erratic attendance

**Appendix 2 Other Specific Types of Abuse**

**Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse**

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:-

**Domestic Violence and Abuse:**

‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.’

**Sexual Violence and Abuse**

‘any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).’ Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual’s incapacity to give informed consent.

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.

**E safety/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 Belmont we take our e-safety responsibilities very seriously and e-safety lessons form a regular part of our teaching.

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.

In Belmont Primary School any work involving internet access is done under close adult supervision or on the interactive whiteboards/ active panels. Firewalls are in place and I pads are locked when in use. Pupils are informed of the need for adult supervision if homework requires internet research. Further details are available in the E Safety and Acceptable Use policy.

**Grooming** of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. 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. If the staff in Belmont Primary School become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school’s child protection policies and procedures.

**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’. Staff have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy.

**Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour** As a school we support children, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality. 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.

**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 Belmont Primary School we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

**The main forms of abuse are:**

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical injury. This may include hitting, pushing, rough handling, exposure to heat or cold, force feeding, improper administration of medication, denial of treatment, misuse or illegal use of restraint and deprivation of liberty.

**Sexual Violence and Abuse**

Sexual abuse is any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted or takes place without consent or understanding6. Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non-penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, irrelevant of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation.

**Psychological/Emotional Abuse**

Psychological/emotional abuse is behaviour that is psychologically harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/non-verbal conduct. This may include threats, humiliation or ridicule, provoking fear of violence, shouting, yelling and swearing, blaming, Controlling, Intimidation and Coercion.

**Financial Abuse**

Financial abuse is actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It is the misappropriation or misuse of money, property, benefits, material goods or other asset transactions which the person did not or could not consent to, or which were invalidated by intimidation, coercion or deception. This may include exploitation, embezzlement, withholding pension or benefits or pressure exerted around wills, property or inheritance.

**Institutional Abuse**

Institutional abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult by a regime or individuals in settings which adults who may be at risk reside in or use. This can occur in any organisation, within and outside the HSC sector. Institutional abuse may occur when the routines, systems and regimes result in poor standards of care, poor practice and behaviours, inflexible regimes and rigid routines which violate the dignity and human rights of the adults and place them at risk of harm. Institutional abuse may occur within a culture that denies, restricts or curtails privacy, dignity, choice and independence. It involves the collective failure of a service provider or an organisation to provide safe and appropriate services, and includes a failure to ensure that the necessary preventative and/or protective measures are in place.

**Neglect** occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, appropriate and adequate care and support which is required by another adult. It may be through a lack of knowledge or awareness, or through a failure to take reasonable action given the information and facts available to them at the time. It may include physical neglect to the extent that health or well-being is impaired, administering too much or too little medication, failure to provide access to appropriate health or social care, withholding the necessities of life, such as adequate nutrition, heating or clothing, or failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others particularly when the person lacks the capacity to assess risk.

**Appendix 3**

**If a Parent Has a Potential Child Protection Concern Within the School**

If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart, and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school’s complaints policy. This policy should culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) (08003 343 424) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

**Appendix 4**

**Procedure Where the School Has Concerns, or Has Been Given Information, about Possible Abuse by Someone Other Than a Member of Staff**

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

ACT PROMPTLY.

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

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

Child Protection Referral Is Not Required

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

Child Protection Referral Is Required

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

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

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

Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.

**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 BoG as appropriate.

Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.

Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed

Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.

**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.

**Guidance on the Next Steps**

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

**Appendix 6**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**NOTE OF CONCERN**

**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

|  |
| --- |
| Name of Pupil: |
| 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: Yes: No:  If ‘No’ state reason: |
| Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher: |
| Written note from staff member placed on pupil’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 7 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**

Children whose first language is not English/Newcomer pupils should be given the opportunity 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 and other relevant school staff should seek advice and support from the EA’s Intercultural Education Service if necessary. All schools should create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

* **Pre-School Provision**

Many of the issues in the preceding paragraphs will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedures in consultation with the child’s parent[s]/carer[s]. Teachers, nursery assistants and other adults will come into contact with children while helping them with toileting, washing and changing their clothing. Staff in pre-school settings should consider whether the Code of Conduct meets the needs of their particular responsibilities and should make clear the boundaries of appropriate physical contact, and their Code to staff and parents.

* **Gender Identity Issues and Sexual Orientation**

Schools should strive to provide a happy environment where all young people feel safe and secure. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. DE requires all grant-aided schools to develop their own policy on how they will address Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) within the curriculum. It is via this policy that schools are expected to cover issues relating to relationships and sexuality, including those affecting LGB&T children and young people. As a staff we will support all pupils to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships.

. **School Trips**

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 and EA 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.

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> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)