



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Reviewed: March 2023

To be Reviewed: March 2026

Chair of Board of Governors	Date
Principal	Date

We care ~ We share ~ We learn

Record of Review/ Update

Review Date	Next Update Due
January 2020	January 2021
March 2022	March 2025
February 2023	March 2026

Reviewing the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

The Safeguarding Team at New Row Primary School will review this Policy annually, or in the event of a change of legislation or following an incident, when the Policy's effectiveness will be evaluated. Any necessary changes will be made in light of any lessons learnt.

Signed:

_____ Chairperson of Governors

_____ Designated Teacher

_____ Principal

Consent for all child-protection related policies and procedures are all under review as we aim to streamline the process of obtaining consent.

Links to consent forms are listed below:

<i>Whole school Consent Forms</i>
Start of year consent https://forms.office.com/r/jy4dZS22U1
Safeguarding Children Parental awareness: consent & receipt https://forms.office.com/r/ecYBqUtdES
Seesaw agreement https://forms.office.com/r/dSrKYWAY2t
Consent: intimate care for new year 1 intake https://forms.office.com/r/VEG0T5Dcye
Y6 & 7 end of day consent https://forms.office.com/r/pY1mDFHAhB

We care – We share – We learn

Our vision is to enable independent and happy pupils to acquire a capacity for lifelong learning

in

a Christian atmosphere that translates into daily life

by

promoting a learning environment which motivates creativity and achievement in an atmosphere of respect and responsibility

while

highlighting and nurturing strengths and celebrating successes

through

fostering successful, productive and enjoyable partnerships:

within school,

between home and school,

and

with the community in which our school belongs

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School Safeguarding and Child Protection Ethos

All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. This should be free of impediment, obstruction or discrimination. At New Row PS we recognise that every child has the right to:

- be healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution; and
- achieve economic wellbeing.

(Every Child Matters)

We in New Row PS, believe that the health, safety and well-being of all the children in our care is of paramount importance to us as a school and will work as a staff team, to carry out this duty. In New Row Primary School, we recognise our responsibility to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and where each young person is encouraged and supported in reaching their full potential.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. The Governors and staff of New Row Primary School fully recognise the contribution they make to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part in protecting our pupils from harm.

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 Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, "Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland" (DHSSPSNI, 2017), The Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" Circular 2017/04 (amended September 2019; updated June 2020) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

This Policy is also informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999), the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and the amendments to the ACPC Policy and Guidelines (2008).

We have consulted with pupils, parents, teachers and Governors when deriving this policy.

The central thrust of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995) is that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration*. This “paramountcy of the child” principle underpins our Child Protection Policy and procedures.

Our Policy applies to all staff, Governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this Policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school- teachers, non- teaching staff and volunteers have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence. We also recognise that domestic violence may be a cause of a range of physical, emotional and behavioural difficulties for children.

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 and families helped stay together;
- Partnership;
- Prevention;
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- Protection; and
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

Aims and Objectives

This Policy ensures that all staff in our school are clear about the actions necessary where a safeguarding Child Protection issue arises. In putting the Policy into practice, our aims are to:

- establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- ensure effective communication among all staff when dealing with safeguarding issues
- ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- raise awareness of Child Protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe
- raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse
- support pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed Child Protection plan.

The purpose of the following procedures on Safeguarding is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in New Row Primary School - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. We believe that children cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. This document lays out the procedures, roles and responsibilities relevant to addressing allegations of child abuse.

Safeguarding Team

Principal & Chair of Safeguarding Team	Mrs Deirdre Graffin
Designated teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Claire Shivers
Deputy designated teacher for Child Protection	Miss Oonagh Gribbon
Deputy designated teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Emer Scullion
Chairperson of Governors	Mrs Mary White
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mr Maurice Diamond

In the event of a longer-term absence/unavailability of a member of the Safeguarding team, responsibilities will be reassigned as appropriate by the principal/Designated Teacher to ensure continuity of provision. Members can be contacted during unexpected closures via email.

Mrs Deirdre Graffin	dgraffin653@c2ken.net
Mrs Claire Shivers	cshivers336@c2ken.net

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

If any teacher suspects that a child in his/her class may be a victim of abuse, they immediately inform the Designated Teacher (DT) about their concerns. If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff it must be recorded immediately and passed on to Designated Teachers. Abuse may be sexual, emotional or physical in nature. It may also be the result of neglect, and we recognise that domestic violence has a safeguarding impact on children also.

The school's DT works closely with Social Services and any other relevant and authorised agency when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive and confidential manner, but the well-being of the child is of paramount importance. The following principles will apply:

- the Designated Teacher and/or Principal will liaise with Child Protection Services/ Education Authority (EA) and Social Services to determine if a referral is necessary
- the complainant will be informed of the outcome, if appropriate
- if the parent is not the alleged abuser, then he/she will be informed
- if the parent is the alleged abuser, then discussions will follow with Child Protection Services/Education Authority (EA), Social Services and PSNI (if necessary) to determine if and how the parent will be informed.

If a child alleges abuse in the form of a disclosure, then the DT will contact Social Services. **Social Services will investigate the disclosure – this is not within the remit of the school.**

Staff will work closely with statutory agencies and will attend case conferences as required. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action to safeguard the child. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held under statutory guidelines.

Our teaching of PDMU (Personal Understanding and Mutual Understanding) helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations and how to respond to

unhealthy and unsafe behaviours from others. School staff will continue to remind children regularly about their own personal safety and what to do if they feel unsafe. Flowcharts about how to talk to someone will be displayed around the school, as will posters of Safeguarding Team.

All Adults

It is the responsibility of **ALL** adults working in the school to record and report possible/disclosed abuse to the DT. It is the responsibility of all adults to:

- adopt safeguarding guidelines, including the staff Code of Conduct
- act upon any concern, no matter how small it may seem, in accordance with the school's procedures
- promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe behaviour
- ensure all health and safety procedures are adhered to
- ensure they are aware of safeguarding procedures and are appropriately trained.

Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed
- 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
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities
- The school has a Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and 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. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance

- 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). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff
- 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 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

Chairperson of the Board of Governors

The Chairperson of the BoG plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department, employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the Record of Child Abuse Complaints against staff members even if there have been no entries.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will:

- ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- ensure that the school has a current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the Policy
- ensure that appropriate Governors undertake appropriate training in Child Protection and Recruitment & Selection
- assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the school Principal.

The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The BoG delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to advise the 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/ full Annual Designated Teachers Report;
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

Principal

The Principal, as the Secretary to the BoG, will assist the BoG to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from DE are shared promptly, and termly inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. In addition, the Principal takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of DT and DDT posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme. It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the DTs to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role.

The Principal must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

The Principal takes the lead in managing safeguarding and Child Protection concerns relating to adults in the school. The role of the Principal is to ensure that:

- a Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) are appointed

- this Policy is adopted and followed in the school
- the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Governors are kept informed where appropriate
- the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils have access to this (or a summary)
- confidentiality is paramount.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- Every school is required to have a DT and DDT with responsibility for child protection. These are highly skilled roles developed and supported through a structured training programme, requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues.

Designated Teacher

The role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding Child Protection matters, including attendance at case conferences.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's safeguarding/ child protection policy.
- Ensuring parents receive a copy of the Policy at least every two years.
- The promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the BoG regarding child protection.
- Maintaining all records pertinent to Child Protection, keeping them in a secure location (accessed only by The Safeguarding Team as appropriate)
- When a child changes school, ensuring that the Designated Teacher in the receiving school is informed of the child's circumstances and the name of their Social Worker

- Ensuring that when a child on the Child Protection Register has been absent from school for two consecutive days, that the child's Social Worker is informed of the situation (following regionally agreed protocols).

Deputy Designated Teacher

The role of the DDT is to work co-operatively with the DT in fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

It is important that the DDT works in partnership with the DT so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

It should be noted that safeguarding takes precedence over collegiate loyalty or management structure.

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 Teacher if he/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 phone the office to let school know.

More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at:
www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

It is important that school has an up to date contact number for parents and carers.

Definitions

Definition of Harm

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and young People in Northern Ireland August 2017)

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 (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 the 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 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.

Specific Types of Abuse

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in New Row P.S, are aware of and have therefore

included them in our 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 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.

Adults may misuse online settings e.g. chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms of digital communications, to try and establish contact with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared. Those working or volunteering with children or young people should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming, and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs. Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given to any punitive approach or 'criminalising' young people who may, themselves, still be victims and/or acting under duress, control, threat, the fear of, or actual violence. In consultation with the PSNI and where necessary the PPS, HSC professionals must consider whether children used to groom others should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm

If the staff in New Row P.S become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures. The HSCT and PSNI should be involved as early as possible to ensure any evidence that may assist prosecution is not lost and to enable a disruption plan to reduce the victim's contact with the perpetrator(s) and reduce the perpetrator(s) control over the victim to be put in place without delay.

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).

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited.

CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males. While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, **the majority of CSE victims are living at home.**

Statutory Responsibilities

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.

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:-

'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', that may have been seen or heard by a child.

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.

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 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 must also be borne in mind that 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.

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. The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is 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; and/or
- 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 schools positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and we will follow the procedures in the child protection policy and, seek support from the EA CPSS.

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 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 in New Row PS have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and will be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils 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 pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- untreated injuries
- self-destructive tendencies
- chronic running away
- fear of going home.

Emotional Abuse

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- bullying of others or low self-esteem
- change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- difficulty in forming or maintaining relationships with others
- depression
- signs of mutilation
- attention-seeking behaviour
- chronic running away
- wetting and soiling
- sudden speech disorders.

Sexual Abuse

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- bruised or sore genitals
- genital infection
- difficulty in walking or sitting
- inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- low self-esteem
- chronic depression
- substance abuse
- personality changes
- fear of going home.

Neglect

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- poor hygiene
- constant hunger/cramming food
- inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- constant tiredness
- exposed to danger/lack of adequate supervision
- untreated illness
- lack of peer relationships
- compulsive stealing/begging.

Domestic Abuse

Possible signs or symptoms of witnessing domestic abuse include:

- anxiety and depression
- temper tantrums
- truanting
- aggression
- becoming withdrawn
- lowered sense of self worth
- self-harm
- eating disorders

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.

Any combination of the above may be accompanied by marked deterioration in school performance and/or increased absenteeism.

Operation Encompass

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to prevent this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

Confidentiality

Where a child confides in a member of staff or a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the child is told sensitively that it may be necessary to share the information with those who need to know about it, in order to ensure the child's safekeeping.

All staff and volunteers who receive sensitive information about children or parents in the course of their professional duties should be aware that such information is confidential, and is not to be made the subject of general conversation or disclosed to others outside the school other than statutory officials, as required by this Policy.

All records of a safeguarding/Child Protection nature are held securely within the school. Access to such records is restricted to the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

How to Respond to a Child who makes a Disclosure

Receive

- Stay calm.
- Listen to what the child is saying without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what the child is saying.
- Be discreet.

Reassure

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to you, but **do not make promises that you cannot keep** (such as, “Everything will be all right now”).
- Do not promise confidentiality. Staff have a duty to refer the matter to the Designated Teacher. Explain that you will need to talk to Mrs Shivers(DT) or Mrs Scullion/ Miss Gribbin (DDTs), who will know what to do next.
- Reassure and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it.

Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter to the DT.
- Ask open questions (such as, “Can you tell me what happened?” “Is there anything else you wish to tell me?”)
- Do not ask closed questions (those that will evoke a yes/no response, such as, “Did _____ do this to you?”) Such questions invalidate evidence where a subsequent court action is necessary.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love that person.
- Explain what you will do next (talk with the DT, who will know how to get help).

Record

- Make notes as soon as possible after hearing what the child has said and write them up (New Row Incident Report form.)
- Do not destroy these original notes.
- Record the date, time, place, people present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour. Record the words the child used as much as possible (if the child uses ‘pet’ words, record those rather than translating them into ‘proper’ words). Any injuries or marks noticed can be depicted on a diagram showing position and extent.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your

interpretations and assumptions.

- Sign the record and hand it to the DT.
- All written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately, are securely maintained, separate from the main pupil file and in a locked location.

Refer

Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the DT as soon as possible within the working day.

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional Child Protection agencies, following a referral from the DT.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Abuse

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT) is Mrs Shivers. In her absence, the Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection (DDTs), Mrs Scullion/Miss Gribbin, or Mrs Graffin, will assume responsibility for Child Protection.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly. **He/she should not investigate** - this is a matter for Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with her, make full notes (signing and dating them) and hand the notes (New Row Incident Report Form) to the DT.

The DT will plan a course of action and ensure that a written record of decisions is made. She will complete a 'Note of Concern' if necessary. She will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to Social Services. Unless there are concerns that a parent/guardian may be the possible abuser, the parents/guardians will be informed immediately.

Before a referral is made, the DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Designated Officer for Child Protection at EA's Child Protection Support Service for Schools or a senior Social Worker. No decisions to refer a child to Social Services will be made without full consideration and appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

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

- EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection.
- Social Services - using the regional UNOCINI framework (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland). The UNOCINI referral will be made within 24 hours of the initial telephone referral to Social Services' Gateway Team. This will be sent in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION' or sent electronically by encrypted email.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk to the DT. It should be noted that

the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held in confidence.

The procedures for the reporting suspected or disclosed abuse are made clear within the diagrams mentioned below:

FIGURE 1 - The procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff.

FIGURE 2 – The procedure where a safeguarding concern has been raised about possible abuse by a member of the school’s staff.

FIGURE 3 – How a parent can raise a safeguarding concern about their child/another child.

Figure 1: Procedure Where the School Has Concerns, or Has Been Given Information, about Possible Abuse by Someone Other Than a Member of Staff



Figure 2: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff

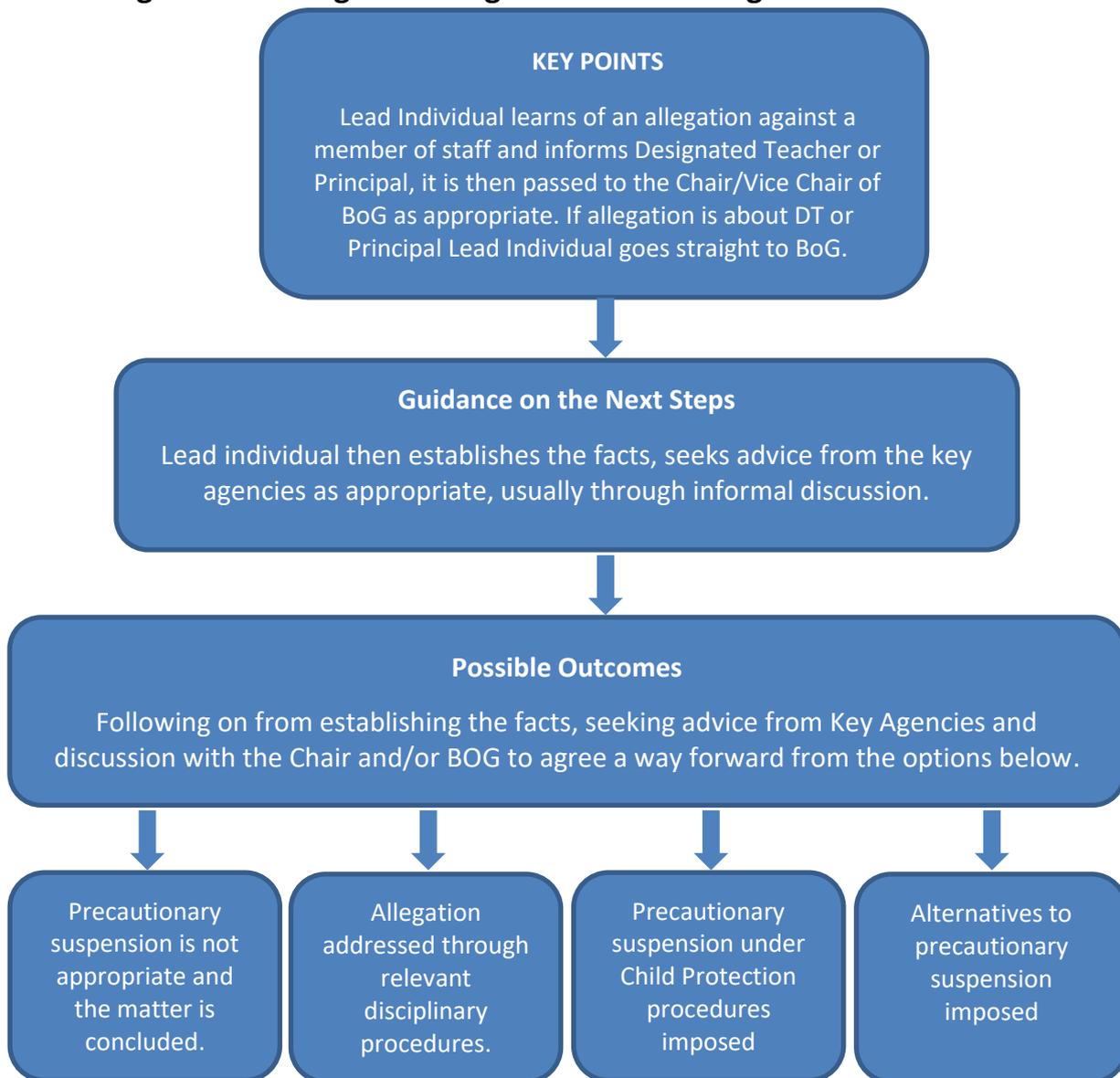
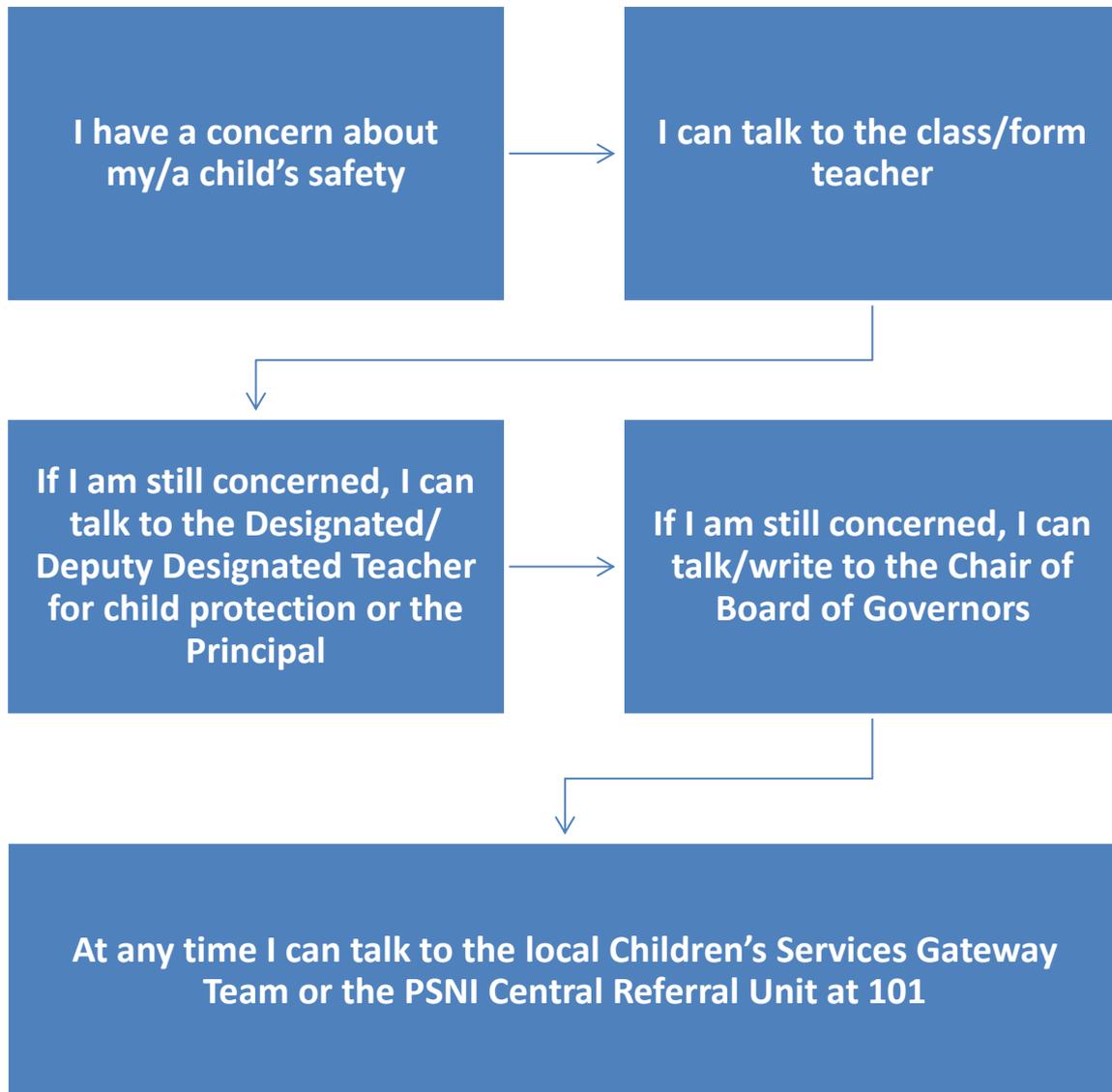


Figure 3: How a parent can raise a safeguarding concern about their child/another child.



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) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

If a parent has a concern about a child's safety or suspect child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.

Record Keeping

The school will keep accurate records of concerns expressed and action taken. These records will be maintained in a secure location, separate from general records.

It will be the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to ensure that such records are kept up-to-date and forwarded when a child moves school (in compliance with DE guidance).

Only the DT/DDT will have access to Child Protection records. However, in the case of an emergency where neither the DT/DDT are onsite then the responsibility will fall to a Senior teacher named with the Child Protection Team.

Child Protection Register

Where pupil names are known by the school to be on the Child Protection Register maintained by Social Services, they will also be entered in the Child Protection Register held by the school. All teaching staff will be informed of and will monitor pupils whose names are on the CPR.

The DT or DDT will attend case conferences where practical. If this is not possible, a written report will be provided to the relevant Social Worker. This written report will be provided by the DT/DDT (upon request) on a pastoral care recording sheet.

Supporting Vulnerable Children

The staff of New Row Primary School recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school, their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn. We will endeavour to support pupils who are exposed to risk of harm in accordance with their agreed protection plan.

Support for all pupils in developing confidence and skills of self-protection will be provided through:

- lessons in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- promotion of the school's ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of value
- the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
- liaison with other agencies that support the pupil, such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse.

Safeguarding Concerns about an Adult working in the School

Where a concern is raised about possible child abuse by an adult working in the school, the DT must be informed immediately. These procedures will apply, unless the complaint is about the Designated Teacher.

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

If a concern is raised about possible child abuse by the DT, the DDT must be informed immediately. He/she will will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice from the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (EA) and ensure appropriate action is taken.

New Row Primary School's Vetting Procedures

The selection and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in close proximity with children, in either a paid or unpaid capacity in our school.

In order for all reasonable steps to be taken to employ and engage suitable staff to work with the children in our care, we follow the following guidance on pre-employment checking and safe recruitment practices provided by the Department of Education and have adopted the new arrangements for vetting and checking of staff prior to appointment or volunteering within the school:

- DE Circular 2006/06: Child Protection: Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings
- DE Circular 2006/07: Child Protection: Employment of Substitute Teachers
- DE Circular 2006/08: Child Protection: Training Requirements for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels
- DE Circular 2006/09: Child Protection: Criminal Background Checking of Staff in Schools – Programme to Extend Coverage
- DE Circular 2006/25: Child Protection: Vetting of School Governors
- DE Circular 2008/03: Pre-Employment Checking of Persons to Work in Schools – New Arrangements
- DE Circular 2008/10: Employment of Substitute Teachers.
- DE Circular 2012/19: Disclosure and Barring Arrangements.
- DE Circular 2013/01: Disclosure and Barring Arrangements.

Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk and click on 'Circulars'.

All staff – whether paid or unpaid – are inducted in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

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

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

Who is a Volunteer?

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

- assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis, *or*
- is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips, residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Under the new DBA (Disclosure & Barring Arrangements) the law regarding the vetting of school volunteers has changed. There are now two types of volunteers working in schools:

- Those who work supervised; and
- Those who work under supervision

Volunteers that work unsupervised are defined as persons carrying out Regulated Activities and these activities include:

- teaching
- training
- instructing
- caring for or supervising children
- providing advice/guidance on well-being
- driving a vehicle only for children

In order to be regarded as Regulated Activities such activities must be performed on a regular basis, Regular means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on four or more days in a 30day period (or in some cases, overnight).

ALL VOLUNTEERS CARRYING OUT REGULATED ACTIVITIES THAT ARE NOT SUPERVISED REQUIRE AN ENHANCED DISCOURE CERTIFICATE (EDC) FROM ACCESSNI.

Activities that are not regarded as Regulated activities (under the new DBA) include:

- Activities performed by volunteers that are supervised at a reasonable day to day level, or
- Volunteers work occasionally or temporary by providing a service that assists with maintenance or repairs with the school setting

IF A VOLUNTEER IS SUPERVISED THEN UNDER THE NEW DBA THEY ARE NOT REGARDED AS WORKING IN REGULATED ACTIVITY AND THERE A SCHOOL IS NOT REQUIRED TO OBTAIN AN EDC FROM ACCESSNI.*

*Schools may still require an EDC if they wish but cannot seek a barred list check for volunteers working in unregulated activities that are supervised.

The Department of Education continues to fund all EDC checks for volunteers.

Use of Volunteers

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

- during school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- outside school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- during school hours but not usually involving direct contact with pupils.

Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance. In many cases, potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community.

Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

Initial Appraisal

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

- personal details
- qualifications and previous work with children
- a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for Child Protection
- agreement to a criminal record search being carried out
- the names of two referees who are not family members or members of staff in the school
- agreement to meet the school Principal and provide proof of identity.

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

Accepting Volunteers

Where the previous procedures have been followed as appropriate and the school is satisfied that:

- the volunteer is a suitable person to have contact with the children and has the character, skills and experience to support the work of the school in a voluntary capacity
- well-defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the volunteer to undertake and he/she is competent to undertake them

Once the school has completed the above audit then the school will notify the individual that he/she has been accepted for voluntary duties in the school.

The Use of Volunteers

These are the fundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

- the purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties
- volunteers only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff; these arrangements should minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised access to children
- volunteers are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment
- volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and should receive relevant training
- volunteers are allocated duties only after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers are not to be placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom
- volunteers are not given access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception might be made where a child has a medical condition and where agreement of the parent has been provided.

Health and Safety Insurance

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety legislation. Our school therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favorably than paid employees in terms of the school's obligations under the legislation.

Information and Training

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and, where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

- the school's Policies on Pastoral Care and Safeguarding/Child Protection
- the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Links to other 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
- Attendance
- Drugs
- Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Online Safety
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Intimate Care
- RSE
- SEN
- Whistleblowing

Anti-Bullying and Child Protection

Bullying is not tolerated in New Row Primary School. The DE publication Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999) defines bullying as “deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself”.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy is set out as a separate Policy and we acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying behavior may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures.

Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the person displaying bullying behaviour. Parents of both the person displaying bullying behaviour and the victim will be personally contacted when bullying has been identified.

Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the DT for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or group of

children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the DT within one week of making the complaint, outlining the investigation and the action taken.

The sanctions/ interventions taken against a pupil who displays bullying behaviour will depend on the seriousness of the case. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to consider instigation of the Child Protection procedures.

Intimate Care

Our Policy on Intimate Care is adapted from the regional Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children (ACPC).

Code of Conduct

Our Policy on Conduct of staff outlines the guidelines for employees in relation to child protection and their position as role models.

E-safety

Our ICT Policy is set out in a separate document. It includes acceptable use of the Internet and is informed by DE guidance (DE Circular 2007/01). It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the Internet and digital technologies. In school, we take the following precautions:

- all computer systems are protected by username and password
- access to the Internet is passed through a filtering system that blocks inappropriate websites
- e-safety education is provided to pupils across the curriculum to help them understand what safe and responsible online behaviour means and how to report any concerns they may have.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as using IT, particularly mobile phones and the Internet, to upset someone else. School staff, parents and pupils aim to work together to prevent such behaviour and to act appropriately and effectively when it occurs.

Deliberate abuses which happen outside school, but which impinge upon or affect school pupils and staff, will be dealt with through appropriate disciplinary and, where appropriate, external agency action.

The Preventative Curriculum

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with clear lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of safeguarding and protection. The school community will therefore:

- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- ensure that all children know that there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- follow the curriculum for Personal and Development for Mutual Understanding, which equips children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and teaches who they should turn to for help if the need arises.

Physical Restraint and Safe Handling

Staff guidelines on Physical Restraint by staff are set out in a separate Policy, in accordance with guidelines from EA. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to the child, to another person or to school property.

Grooming and images of child abuse

If school staff, parents or pupils suspect or are made aware of any of the following illegal acts, the matter must be reported to the Designated Teacher immediately:

- a child enticed or coerced to engage in sexually explicit conduct on-line
- importing or transporting obscenity using telecommunications public

networks

- knowingly receiving images of child abuse whether via the Internet or other digital device (such as mobile phone); these include images which appear to be photographs, whether made by computer graphics or otherwise.

Educational Visits

Our Policy on Educational Visits is informed by the Educational Visits Best Practice 2009 document which provides guidance in planning and carrying out educational visits in accordance with Health and Safety and Child Protection requirements.

Emergency Numbers

Should any adult in the school find themselves in the rare position of being the only adult remaining in the school and in need of immediate safeguarding advice, they should use the contacts below (in the given order) to seek help:

ChildLine:	0800 1111
Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline NSPPC :	0800 3891701
PSNI:	0845 600 8000
24 Hour <u>Domestic</u> & Sexual Violence Helpline	08088021414
NSPPC Adult Helpline	08088005000 text 88858