



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Abridged Parent Version

June 2025

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

Every child in Bangor Central Integrated Primary School has the right to feel safe and secure in a caring and disciplined pastoral system, with protection from physical, mental and sexual abuse irrespective of ability, race, religion and culture. At Bangor Central integration and empowerment are values central to our Child Protection policy and procedures.

Mr Richard Lawther	Principal and Chair
Mrs Laura Walker	Designated Teacher
Mrs Kirsty Arbuthnot	Deputy Designated Teacher
Mrs Jenni Elliott	Deputy Designated Teacher
Mrs Betty Holland	Chair of Board of Governors
Mrs Lee Thomson	Designated Governor for Child Protection
Mrs Judith Stewart	Health & Safety coordinator

Contextual Information

Our school policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection has been written in the context of current legislation and guidance which relates to the care, welfare and safety of pupils.

The general principles which underpin our work are those set out in legislation and in guidance from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Education. The following legislation and documents are relevant:

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), 1990
- Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS): Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016
- Department of Education, NI: Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection, 1999
- Area Child Protection Committees' - Regional Policy and Procedures, 2005
- Circular 2020/07: Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools

Policy & Procedures on Child Protection

We in Bangor Central Integrated Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare, and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. As defined in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) policy on *'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland'* (March 2016)

"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."

Through our preventative curriculum we aim to help our children develop the confidence, knowledge, and skills they need to keep themselves safe. A structured programme for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) is taught in each year group. This is supported by visits from agencies such as: PSNI, RNLI, Action Mental Health, Childline, Love for Life & Extern.

"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."

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. The staff of our school have also adopted a Code of Conduct for our behaviour towards pupils. This is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. Staff, at all times are directed to the guidelines for self-protection (both documents are included in the Appendixes). All our staff and volunteers have been subject to Access NI checks. The responsibilities and processes to be followed are set out in:

DE Circular 2013/01 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools'.

DE Circular 2012/19 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Schools

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone 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 or disclosed. 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.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Education Authority considers that the ultimate responsibility lies with the Board of Governors and the Principal to ensure that all staff are aware of the Education Authority's procedures.

Role of the Principal

- To ensure Child Protection is on the agenda of Board of Governor meetings annually.
- To inform Governors of any new DE guidance related to child protection & safeguarding.
- To take the lead in the Safeguarding Team in school.
- To ensure the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy is reviewed every 2 years.

Role of the Designated & Deputy Designated Teachers

A teacher shall be designated in each school with responsibility for:

- To raise awareness in child protection with all school staff including new staff and volunteers.
- Responsible for discussing the child protection concerns of any member of any teaching or non-teaching staff and keeping all records.
- Responsible for Operation Encompass in BCIPS - Training staff and governors, informing parents, taking calls, and completing all relevant paperwork associated with this new initiative.
- Responsible for making the referrals to social services or PSNI Central referral unit.
- Responsible for notifying the Education Authority's designated officer as appropriate.
- Responsible for keeping the school Principal informed.
- Responsible for notifying the Chair of Board of Governors of the school if there is a complaint against the Principal.
- Taking lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy and ensure that the parents receive a copy every two years.
- Ensure that the safeguarding team has identified key safeguarding lessons from the curriculum to be delivered at each key stage.
- Responsible for promoting a child protection/safeguarding ethos within the school.
- Responsible for providing an annual written report to Governors.

Types of abuse

- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

Specific types of abuse

- Grooming
- Child Sexual exploitation
- Domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Children who display harmful sexualised behaviours
- E-Safety/Internet abuse

Operation Encompass

As of September 2022, BCIPS is 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 mitigate 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](#).

Reporting a Disclosure

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or a staff member has a concern about possible abuse or risk of abuse, they should report this immediately to the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection or one of the Deputy Designated Teachers.

He/she should not investigate - this is a matter for relevant authorities such as Social Services.

Disclosures made to a member of staff about possible child abuse cannot be kept confidential. **No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.** In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals on a need-to-know basis.

The staff member will record on the school's Safeguarding Concern proforma and give immediately to the DDT/DT/Principal.

The safeguarding team will decide what action needs to be taken. The Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) /senior social worker before a formal referral is made. This can be discussed with complete confidentiality.

Please note: Even when a disclosure has not occurred, staff must be alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and can document these on the Record of Concern.

NO DECISION WILL BE MADE ALONE

Maintaining Records

Following on from above, it is important that we as a school are diligent in keeping records of concerns and incidents. Guidelines on this can be found in the DE Circular 2007 'Child Protection-Record Keeping in Schools.'

If a school receives a complaint about possible child abuse which is not referred to Social Services - or if it is referred, and the Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register - the school should maintain the record on the child's file and send a confidential copy to any school to which the child subsequently transfers.

If the Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, the school should maintain a record of this fact, and associated documentation from Social Services, on the child's file while he/she continues to attend.

When a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school, the school which the child is leaving should inform the receiving school immediately that his/her name is on the Register. The school to which the child is transferring should contact social Services for relevant information.

All records relating to child protection matters should be retained until the child has reached the age of 30. All child protection records, including case conference records are stored in a secure filing cabinet along with information on staff training records and a record of children on the child protection register.

Data Protection

As outlined in the Department of Education Circular 2020/07:

The Data Protection Act 1998 establishes a framework of rights and duties which are designed to safeguard personal data. In all cases the information should be adequate, relevant, and not excessive. Child Protection information is confidential and often highly sensitive and decisions to share, or not to share, must always be made in the interest of protecting the child if at risk of significant harm. Staff must always consider the safety and welfare of the child when making decisions about whether to share confidential information. Subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 the disclosure of confidential information is allowed when necessary to protect or safeguard a child.

Record of Child Abuse Complaints against Staff

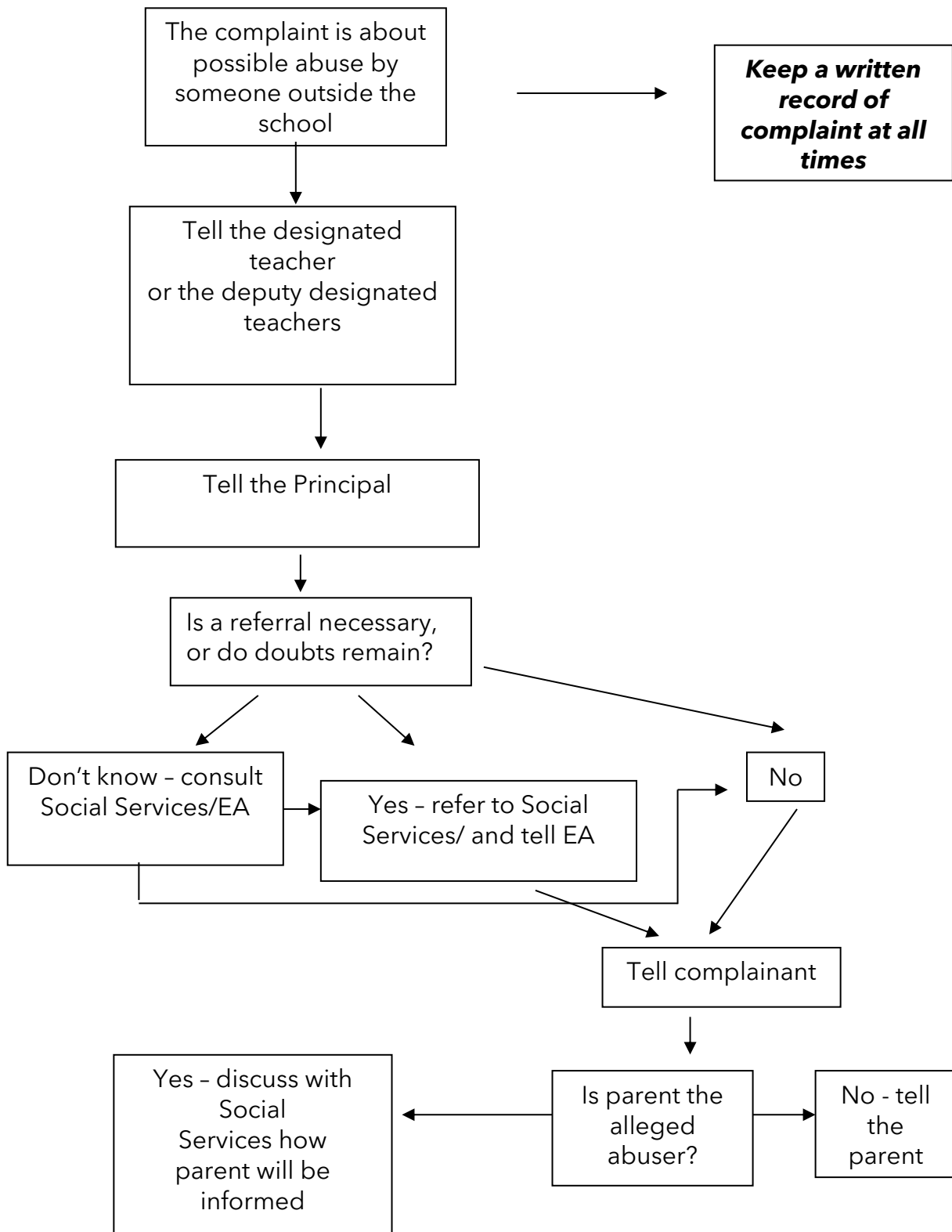
Where a complaint is made about a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record should also be entered by the Principal on a Record of Child Abuse Complaints, maintained for the purpose and kept in a secure place.

The summary should include:

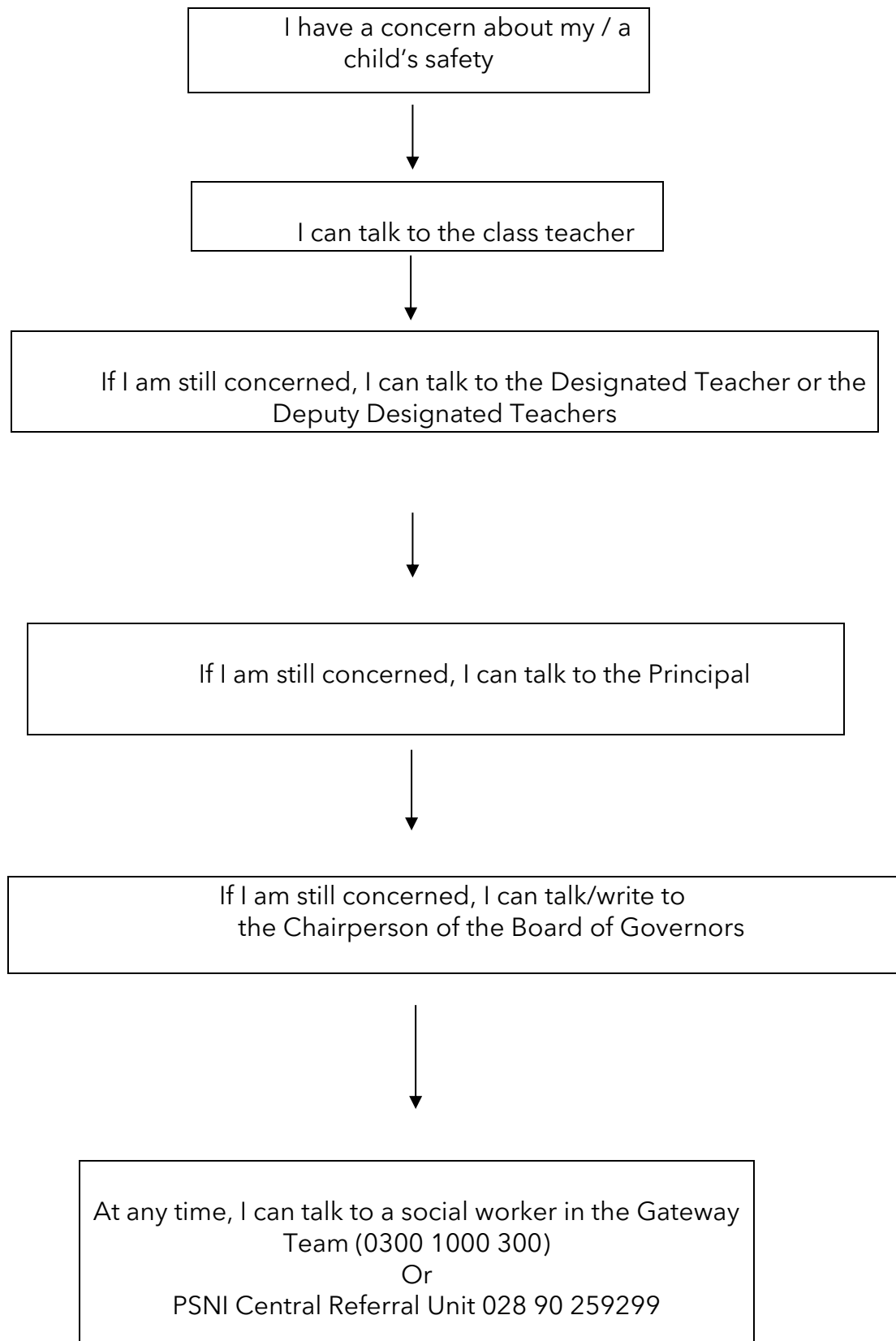
- the date and brief details of the nature of the complaint;
- by whom and against who it was made;
- if the complaint was formally referred, to whom it was referred, and the date of referral.
- if the complaint was dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.

The school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints should be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually. The Education and Training Inspectorate will ask if the Record is being maintained.

Flowchart 1 : Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff



Flowchart 2: How a parent can raise a concern about a child's safety



Conduct of Staff

The school must safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils in its charge. This duty rests with all members of staff, teaching, and nonteaching, and implicit in it, is the assumption that the conduct of school staff towards their pupils must be above reproach. The younger the pupil, the less likely it will be that he or she will be able to recognise and respond appropriately to an abuse by any member of staff. Any abuse of that position of trust, by any member of staff, must be regarded with the utmost gravity.

As well as the more obvious physical or sexual abuse, members of staff should be alert to the risk of emotional abuse, such as

- Persistent sarcasm
- Verbal bullying, or
- Severe and persistent negative comment or actions.

Members of staff should reflect on every aspect of their contact with children which may give rise to perceptions or allegations of this form of abuse.

Staff can refer to the 'Code of Conduct' for further guidance

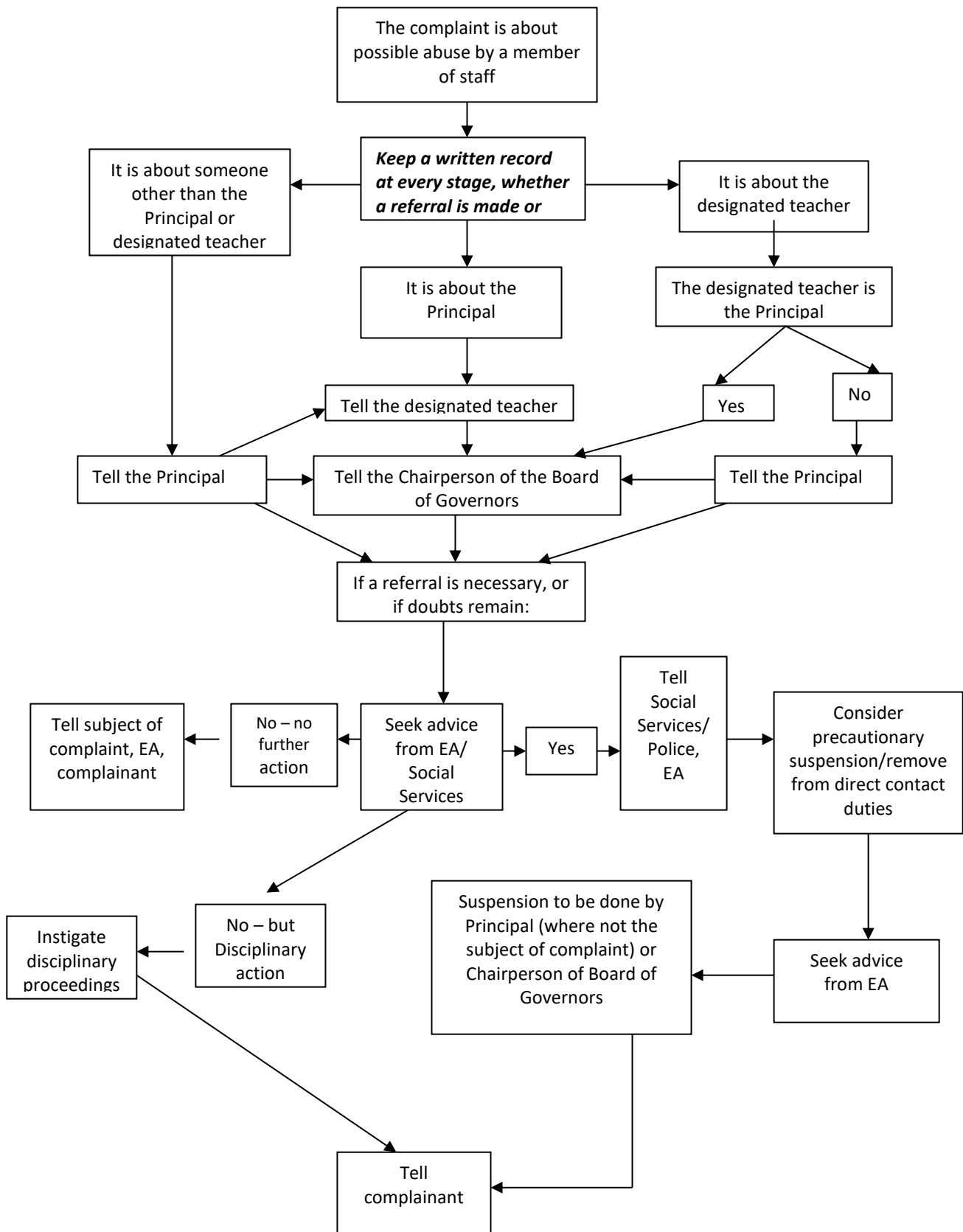
Allegations against staff

In the light of the schools' duty of care, it is the responsibility of the school Principal (or, where the complaint is against the Principal, the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board of Governors) to ensure that any complaint made, that a member of staff has abused a pupil is thoroughly investigated, by instigation of the normal child protection procedures.

Where the school carries out preliminary enquiries, these should have regard:

- First and foremost, to the welfare of the pupil concerned and that of other pupils at the school
- To the efficient functioning of the school; and
- To the rights of the individual against whom the complaint has been made, especially his or her right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Flowchart 3: Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff



Links to other School Policies

This policy exists alongside the following policies and should be read in conjunction with:

- Anti-bullying
- Pastoral Care & Well-Being
- Positive Behaviour
- Relationships and Sexual Education
- Use of Internet and Digital Technology
- Health and Safety

Appendix

- 1) Parental permission letter
- 2) Welfare Checklist
- 3) Various Types of Orders
- 4) Family Support
- 5) Operation Encompass - Parental Information

Appendix 1

Parental Permission Letter



BANGOR CENTRAL INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

PERMISSION SLIP

Please tick to indicate your consent, sign and return the permission slip as soon as possible. Your agreement will apply for your child's duration at the school and should you wish to withdraw your consent at any time, please do so in writing. Electronic copies of the documents referred to are located on the school's website www.bangorcentral.com (Home/Key Information). Should you require a printed copy, please contact the school office.

CHILD'S NAME: CLASS:

PERMISSION SLIP: ALL SCHOOL VISITS

Tick

I give permission for my child to go on any activity which requires leaving the school premises.

PERMISSION SLIP: PHOTOGRAPHS/IMAGES/VIDEO RECORDINGS

Use of digital images/photography and video

I agree to the school using photographs of my child or including them in video material. I have read and understand the guidelines for use of the Internet and Digital Technology. I understand that images will only be used to support learning activities or in publicity that reasonably promotes the work of the school, and for no other purpose.

PERMISSION SLIP: ACCEPTABLE INTERNET USE

I grant permission for my child to be involved in Internet based lessons and online activities as indicated within the Internet and Digital Technologies Policy.

SCHOOL POLICIES

I have read the Pastoral Care Policy including – Child Protection, Positive Behaviour, Reasonable Force/Safe Handling, Intimate Care, Use of Internet and Digital Technologies, Anti Bullying, Care & Welfare and Drug Education.

I fully agree to and understand the content of each Policy.

Appendix 2 & 3

Welfare Checklist

What is the Welfare Checklist?

Sometimes the court has the unfortunate task of deciding the best interests for a child. Before they decide if they should make an order and what that order will be; the Family Court Reporter must prepare a report considering a variety of factors surrounding the child's interests. This report called the Welfare Report prepared by the CAFCASS (Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) officer; must include information from seven key elements of a checklist. This list is known as the Welfare Checklist.

The wording of the Welfare Checklist is as follows:

The ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child concerned (considered in light of his age and understanding);

His physical, emotional and or educational needs;

The likely effect on him of any change in his circumstances;

His age, sex, background and any characteristics of his, which the court considers relevant;

Any harm which he has suffered or is at risk of suffering.

How capable each of his parents and any other person in relation to whom the court considers the question to be relevant, is of meeting his needs;

The range of powers available to the court (under the Children Act of 1989) in the proceedings in question.

1. Various Types of Orders

RESIDENCE ORDERS

The court decides where the child will live, with whom, and for how long. Shared residence is quite common.

CONTACT ORDERS

The court may state that the child may have contact with the parent with whom they are not in residence. (telephone call, overnight stay etc.)

PROHIBITED STEPS ORDER

An order that no step which could be taken by a parent in meeting his/her parental responsibility for a child and which is of a kind specified in the order, shall be taken by any person without the consent of the court.

SPECIFIC ISSUE ORDER

If former partners disagree about a specific aspect of the child's upbringing - e.g. what school the child attends or certain medical treatment, the matter can be settled by a Specific Issue Order.

OTHER CHILD PROTECTION ORDERS

Emergency Protection Order

Where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant harm if he is not removed to alternative accommodation.

Child Assessment Order

This is used when the child needs a particular form of assessment e.g. medical testing/ The parent must comply with this order.

Care Order

The child is taken into care.

Supervision Order

This puts the child under the supervision of a designated trust. A Social Worker is appointed to befriend the child and meet regularly with him in order to monitor the situation.

Education Supervision Order

An E.W.O. works with the child when school attendance is a problem.

Appendix 4

Family Support

Family Support is available through the Family Support Hub and The Early Intervention Support Service. Referrals can be made by the school with parental consent in order to access these services. Family Support is also available from: <http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk/>



Appendix 5

Operation Encompass Parent Information

Operation Encompass is a national scheme that operates jointly between schools and all police forces.

“ Children who live in homes where there is domestic abuse, or who experience domestic abuse in their own teenage relationships, can be negatively impacted by this experience. ”

“ We have ensured that a member of our staff, (Designated Safeguarding Lead) known as a Key Adult, has been trained about Operation Encompass procedures. This allows us to use the information that has been confidentially shared with us by the police, to understand how a child may be impacted by domestic abuse and to then offer support to the child/ren in our care. ”

“ This information means that we can understand a child’s behaviour and support that child in whatever way they may need or want. ”



“ Children who experience domestic abuse are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right¹. ”

“ Operation Encompass means that our school will be told, prior to the start of the next school day, when police have attended an incident of domestic abuse where there is a child or young person who attends our school who is related to any of those involved in the incident. ”

“ We are keen to offer the very best support possible to all our pupils and we believe that being part of Operation Encompass helps us to do this. ”

¹ Domestic Abuse Act 2021

www.operationencompass.org