



*Lisnagarvey High School  
Circular No 2015/07*

## **CHILD PROTECTION IN LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL**

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# LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Child Protection is Everybody's Business

Child Protection procedures aim to protect a child who is suspected or known to have been ill-treated and in some manner and who may require protection. The purpose of this document is to ensure that teachers, and others, have guidance on the detection and inter-agency management of situations where abuse or neglect is evident or suspected. Lisnagarvey High School's Child protection Policy is drawn up in the context and guidance of:

- The Lisnagarvey High School Pastoral Care Policy
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools DENI
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) DHSS

## Aims of the Child Protection Policy

In Lisnagarvey High, we give a high priority to the safety and welfare of our pupils. We aim 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 full potential.

We seek to create a positive learning environment where pupils, staff and families feel valued. Child Protection is an important issue for all of us and we must ensure that pupils are protected from any form of abuse from any source whatsoever.

We also seek to fulfil our statutory duties in the protection of pupils from harm as stated in Child Protection legislation and in guidance provided by the Department of Education. This states that we must do whatever is reasonable, in all circumstances, to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare. In light of this, we reserve the right to make a referral to an outside agency if concerns exist about the welfare of a child.

All schools are requested by law to have a Child Protection Policy and to communicate this to parents. If a parent has a concern of any nature regarding their child or any other child they are asked follow the guidelines in this policy. The aims of the Child Protection Policy are:

- To seek to provide a safe, pleasant and regulated environment for all pupils
- To ensure the safety and welfare of pupils
- To provide a secure framework in relation to Child Protection
- To develop an awareness amongst all school staff of potential signs and symptoms of possible Child Abuse
- To establish clear procedures to be followed when a disclosure or suspected Child Abuse incident occurs
- To define the roles and responsibilities of persons involved
- To comply with relevant legal requirements and implement relevant DE guidance
- To provide a Code of Conduct for staff (separate document)

## Partnership with Parents

We place a high value on the close working relationship we enjoy with the parents/carers of our pupils. We would encourage any parent or carer to help us identify any areas of concern as early as possible, so that any problems, or potential problems, can be dealt with quickly and effectively.

The school takes all complaints/concerns seriously and they will be treated with the utmost appropriate confidentiality.

Lisnagarvey High School values and seeks to promote open communication and good relationships with pupils and parents, responding readily and consistently to any concerns raised. The school's structure for Pastoral Care offers a co-ordinated support system in which pupils can approach Subject Teachers, Year Heads, Heads of School, the Vice Principal, Principal or School Counsellor.

## Making a Complaint Regarding Child Protection

Making a complaint in this context is passing on your concerns about someone's behaviour, attitude of treatment to a child or your concerns about a child's emotional, physical or sexual safety. The following steps give advice on how to make such a complaint:

- I have a concern about my or another child's safety
- I can talk to the child's Class Tutor or Head of Year
- If I am still concerned I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection - Miss C Johnston or to the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection - Mrs G Curran
- If I am still concerned I can talk to the Principal - Mr J Sheerin
- If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors

At anytime stage during this process you may wish to avail of the following external services:

Social Services -	02892 665181
The Gateway Team -	02890 602705
PSNI Care Unit -	02892 605222 (Ex. 25757)
SEELB Child Protection Officer -	02890 566274

## Child Abuse: A Definition

"Child Abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them..." ACPC Regional Policy & Procedures - Chapter 2

There are four categories of child abuse:

- **Physical Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Emotional Abuse**

A child may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a foster parent, a teacher), an acquaintance or a stranger. However, the statistics show that in at least 80% of child abuse cases the offender is known to the victim. Also, the offender would appear 'normal' to the outside observer. The abuse may take a number of forms. These categories are not exhaustive; abuse seldom falls neatly into one category.

**Physical Abuse:** The actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

**Sexual Abuse:** The actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles. These activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may include non contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect:** The actual failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to cause significant harm. It is the inability to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to ensure access to medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision.

**Emotional Abuse:** The actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may cause a child to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic Violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional harm.

If you are certain that **Domestic Violence** is occurring in a child's home (Father and Mother/Guardians/Carers) this must be referred immediately.

### Recognising Signs of Abuse

Staff in Lisnagarvey High School are well placed to observe symptoms in pupils' appearance, behaviour, learning progress, attendance or language which may indicate incidents of actual or possible Child Abuse. It is important to remember that such symptoms may be due to other reasons, e.g. medical, psychological etc. However, the best interests of our pupils require that concerns about the possibility of abuse or neglect should not go unreported.

**ALL CONCERNS AND REPORTS MUST BE REPORTED**

### Staff Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse

The following guidelines provide staff with a framework for action in the event of a disclosure of Child Abuse from a pupil. It is important to note that it is not a member of staff's responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has/is taking place. It is a member of staff's responsibility to act upon any concerns they may have. Reporting such matters should never be delayed.

Lisnagarvey High School recognises that it takes courage and determination for a pupil to inform an adult that he/she is being abused and issues around disclosures are usually very sensitive and complex.

Staff can often feel vulnerable in this situation and the following points are designed to reassure staff and provide support for them in this situation.

If a child informs a teacher of abuse the following guidelines should be adhered to:

#### **Receive**

- Listen to what is being said
- Accept what is said
- Take notes
- Stay calm

#### **Reassure**

- Reassure the child but be honest and reliable
- Do not promise confidentiality; no promise of confidentiality can, or should ever be given
- Reassure and alleviate guilt; any of the following comments would be suitable:
  - “I believe you”
  - “I am glad you have told me this”
  - “I am sorry this has happened to you”
  - “It is not, nor ever was your fault”
  - “We are going to do something together about this”

#### **Respond**

- Do not interrogate the child; teachers do not have an investigative role; be a passive listener, not an active investigator
- Do not ask leading questions, e.g. ‘What happened next?’
- Do not criticise the perpetrator; the child may be very close to him/her
- Explain what happens next and to whom you have to talk

## **Record**

- Take notes at the time and write them up as soon as possible; do not destroy original notes
- Record the date, time, place, non-verbal behaviour of the child
- Record exact words used by the child, e.g. 'pet' words
- Record any injuries or bruises noticed
- Record statements or observable things rather than assumptions or interpretations
- Write down when the concerns were reported and to whom
- You are not being asked to unearth or investigate Child Abuse as this can jeopardise investigation

## **Refer**

- To the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher.
- Complete the Child Protection Incident Record Form (Appendix 1)
- Get appropriate support for self

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Board of Governors** - They are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the appropriate Child Protection Policy and procedures are in place. **Mrs Helen McRoberts** is the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection.

**Principal** - in the event of an allegation, suspicion or instance of child abuse, the Principal will:

- Consider the report received from the Designated Teacher (or the Deputy Designated Teacher)
- Ensure that the appropriate procedures are implemented, including the immediate safeguarding of a pupil considered at risk
- Decide on the need for a referral, either informal or formal, to Social Services, The Gateway Team, to the Designated Officer of SEELB and to other agencies, as appropriate
- Maintain records of disclosures of abuse, suspicions of abuse and complaints against staff
- Inform parents, as and when appropriate
- Initiate vetting procedures for all new staff and volunteers (with assistance from the Designated Teacher)
- Respond to concerns under the School's Complaints Procedure

## **Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Miss Carolyn Johnston (Head of Pastoral Care) and in her absence Mrs G Curran. Should both Miss Johnston and Mrs Curran be absent the matter should then be referred to the Principal, Vice Principal or another member of the Senior Management Team. The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher will:

- Promote a Child Protection ethos within the school
- Lead the planning, implementation and development of procedures for Child Protection in Lisnagarvey High School ensuring all staff are aware
- Review the Child Protection Policy and procedures annually
- Raise awareness in Child Protection with all school staff in particular with new staff and volunteers
- Deliver Child Protection Training to all staff including Auxiliary Staff and the Board of Governors (new DVD format)
- Receive concerns and reports from staff on suspected or actual instances of Child Abuse
- Report incidents or suspicions of Child Abuse happening inside or outside of school to SEELB Duty Officer/Social Services/The Gateway Team/PSNI using the common format UNOCINI
- Keep effective records - child related Child Protection Records
- Support pupil(s) concerned
- Keep the school Principal informed
- Formulate written reports to Governors (annually) e.g. Child Protection issues, number of referrals, UNOCINI's etc.
- Liaise with outside agencies
- Liaise with parents concerned as appropriate
- Liaise with and share policy with all parents re. Child Protection Leaflet

## **Staff/Non-Teaching Staff**

- Know who is the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher
- Be familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy (read and sign receipt)
- Know and follow the Child Protection Procedures
- Take steps to ensure that pupils in their care are protected from harm
- Be alert for signs and symptoms of possible Child Abuse
- Report disclosures or concerns (to Designated/Deputy Teacher)
- Keep a written record of details (copy to be given to Designated/Deputy Teacher)
- Ensure that their own professional conduct is prudent

In the event of suspected cases of child abuse involving a member of staff in the school, the Designated Teacher should be informed immediately. This information will then be passed on to the Principal who will then lead an investigation into the alleged abuse.

Any person who suspects the Designated Teacher of being involved in child abuse should immediately inform the Principal.

Any person who suspects the Principal may be involved in child abuse should inform the Designated Teacher who will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

## **Designated Officer of the Board**

(SEELB - Colum Boal/Alison Casey)

- Ensures the effective operation of locally established procedures, including the arrangements for Designated Teachers
- Provides advice, guidance and support for all Designated Teachers on the handling of Child Protection issues
- Establishes liaison and co-ordination arrangements with Social Services/The Gateway Team
- Formulates a training programme for all Board staff including Teachers and Youth Workers
- Maintains a Register of Schools' Designated Teachers
- To be the Education and Library Board's representative on the Area Child Protection Committee
- Provide training to all Designated Teacher's and Deputy Designated Teacher's
- Represent SEELB on MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)
- Represent SEELB on DOCPEG (DENI)
- Assist in dealing with Child Protection complaints against Board Officers

## **Social Services/Gateway Team - The Child Protection Process**

Social Services have a statutory duty to investigate any case where they receive information suggesting that a child or young person may be in need of care, protection or control. Their objective is to ensure the safety and welfare of the child. They have a lead role in co-ordinating the work of all the agencies and professionals concerned with the child's family.

The investigative agencies (usually The Gateway Team) will decide:

- What action, if any, is necessary, immediately to protect the child or other children in the household and who will be responsible for this
- Whom to interview
- Who will conduct each of the interviews
- The timing of the interviews
- Where the interviews will be conducted
- Whether a medical examination is appropriate at this stage

## **PSNI**

- Police focus will be to determine whether a criminal offence has taken place, to identify those responsible and to secure the best possible evidence (prosecution of an offender).
- The PSNI will be consulted by the Social Worker regarding the referral and a decision will be taken as to how the initial investigation will be carried out.
- They will normally carry out their investigation in accordance with the Protocol for Joint Investigation of Alleged and Suspected Child Abuse (Joint Protocol).

**The Case Conference** - A Case Conference is a multi-disciplinary meeting convened to share information on a possible or confirmed case of child abuse, to assess risk and where appropriate to formulate an inter-agency child protection plan. The School is usually represented by the Designated Teacher. The objectives of the Case Conference are to:

- Share and exchange relevant information on a confidential basis
- Determine the nature and degree of abuse or risk of abuse and whether to place the child's name on the Child Protection Register
- Devise a Child Protection Plan which identifies the contribution that individual agencies and professionals will make
- Identify a Case Co-ordinator (normally from the Social Services Department) and to arrange for the review of the plan on at least six monthly basis

The Child Protection Register is a central index system which records the names of children who meet the criteria for registration and are currently the subject of an Inter-Agency Protection Plan.

### **Guidelines for Self-Protection**

- In the event of injury to a child, ensure that it is witnessed and recorded by another adult.
- Keep records of any false allegations a child makes against you or another staff including "you're always picking on me" to "you hit me", or comments such as "don't touch me".
- If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be totally innocent, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable position. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage and then say the child instigated it.
- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open. Inform another member of staff if you are going to see a child on your own.
- If you are in a holiday or residential setting, never under any circumstances, take pupils into your room.
- Do not make any sexually suggestive comments about a pupil even in jest.
- Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempted cover-up, you could be implicated in the silence.
- Ensure that you have the opportunity to discuss your own feelings, if possible, with other members of staff.
- It is not deemed wise to possess pupils' personal contact details (e.g. mobile phone numbers) on your own device, nor should you provide your own contact details to any pupil.

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect their child, others or property from harm.
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

## **Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal, or Vice Principal, for confirmation of its suitability.

## **Relationships and Attitudes**

- Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and gender of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.
- Persistent sarcasm, verbal bullying or severe and persistent negative comments or inappropriate physical actions by staff will be viewed as abuse.
- Restraint may be used in situations where the safety of a child, others or property may be at risk, but care must be taken to use a minimum of force as it could be misinterpreted as assault.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal or Vice Principal.
- A complaint relating to inappropriate conduct on the part of a member of staff will be dealt with under the school's procedures. A concern for fairness and for the welfare, dignity and protection of staff and pupils will be paramount.
- In accordance with the Child Protection Policy, all members of staff whose work gives them substantial access to children are subject to criminal record checks.

## **Vetting Procedures**

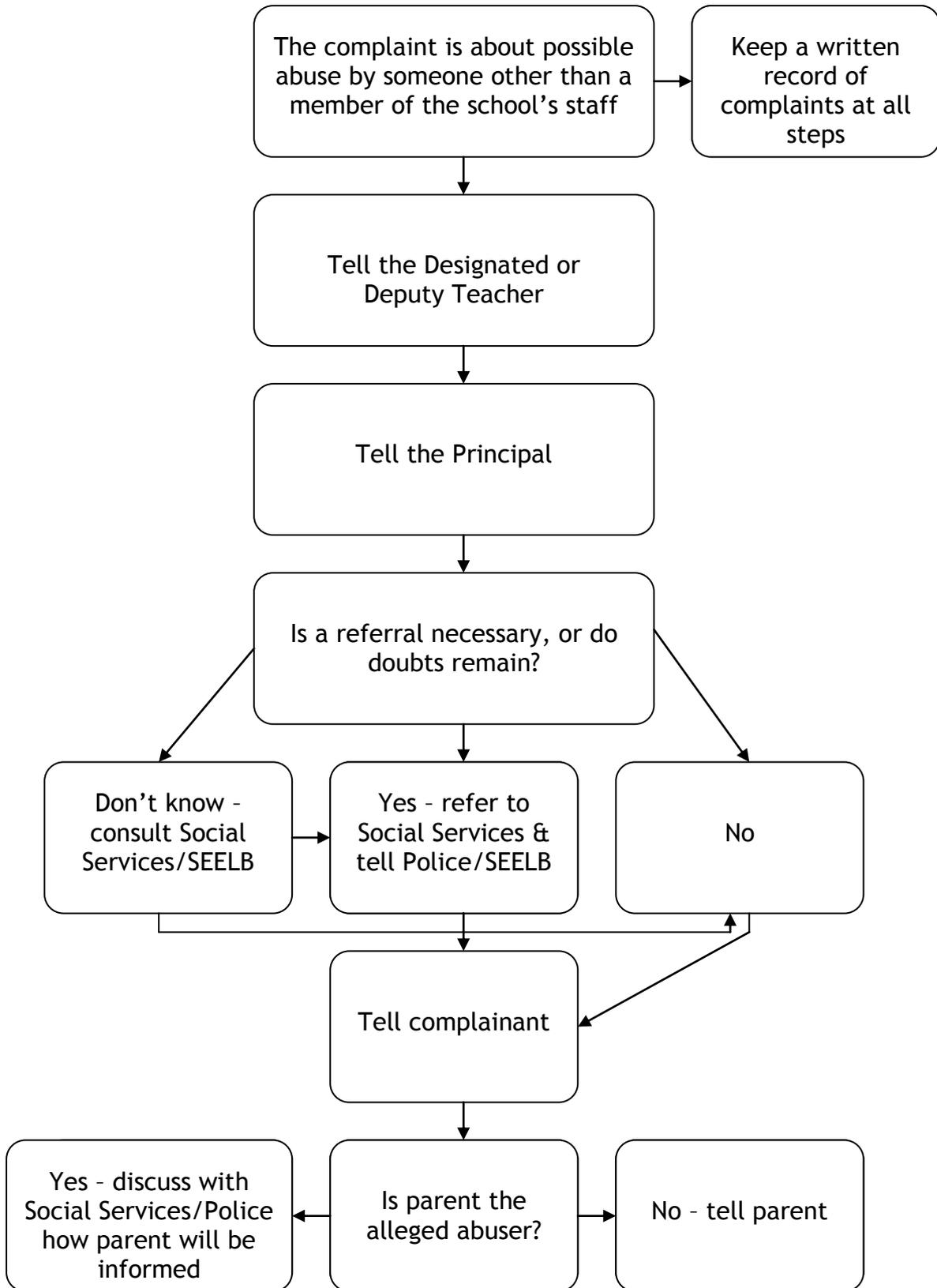
The vetting and barring scheme in Northern Ireland is operated by the Independent Safeguarding Authority which was established on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2008. It applies to all employers and employees (including volunteers) working in specified positions with children and vulnerable adults. All relevant members of the workforce are required by law to join the Scheme and after initial vetting will be subject to continuous monitoring to ensure that they are suitable persons.

## **Conclusion**

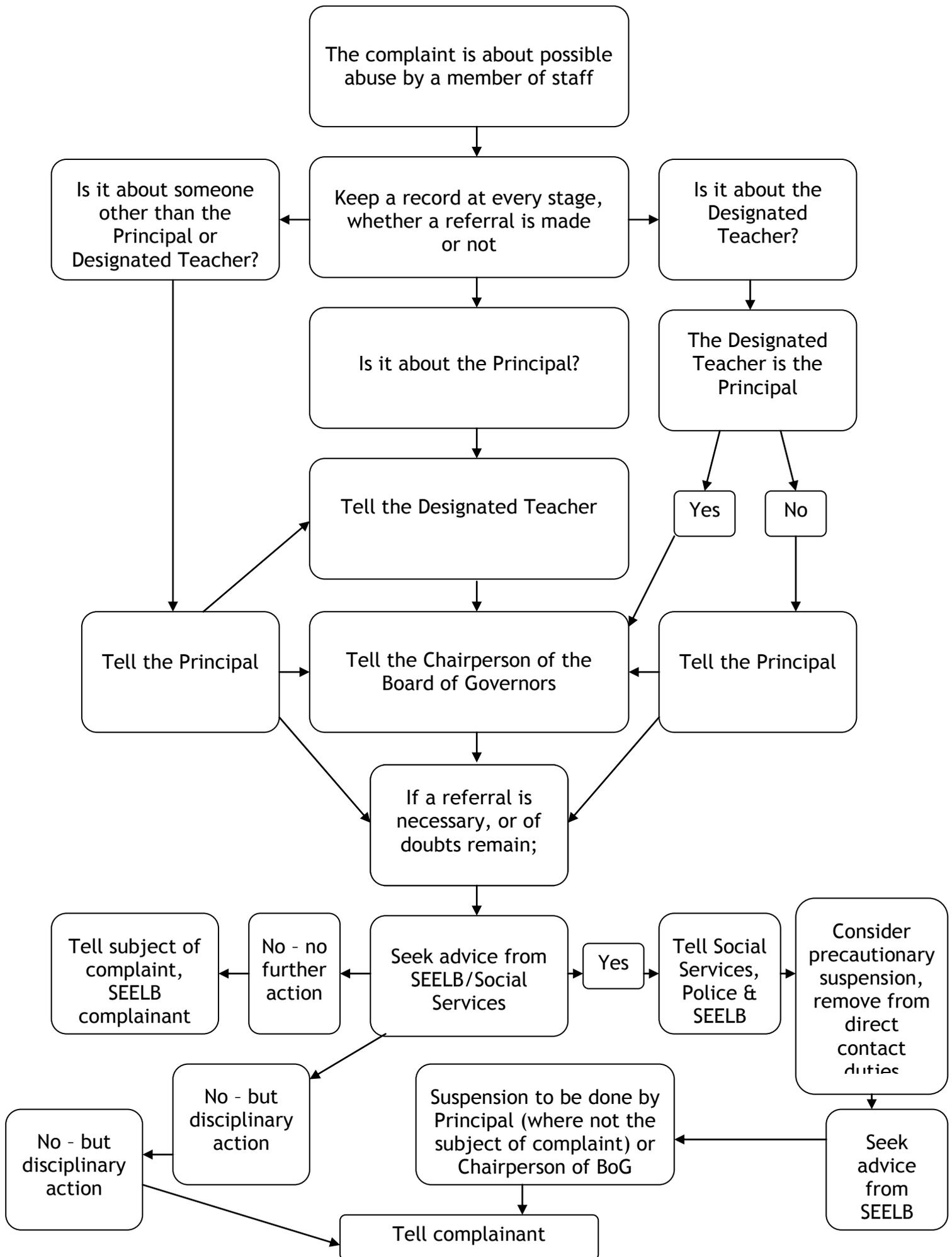
The area of Child Abuse is sensitive and challenging and it is hoped that this policy offers clarity into the procedures for action, highlighting areas of potential risk and provides guidance to staff. In Lisnagarvey High School, we respect the rights of the child, ensuring their safety at all times. We pride ourselves on effective communication and as a result good relationships are fostered between staff and pupils.

The protection of children is a natural part of the Pastoral Care System and any member of staff who complies with the school's procedures and guidance will receive full support of the Board of Governors and will not be legally or financially liable.

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



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



**Designated Child Protection Personnel**

**Designated Teacher - Miss C Johnston**

**Deputy Designated Teacher - Mrs G Curran**

**Designated Governor - Mrs H McRoberts**

**Designated Officers for the SEELB**

**Mr Colum Boal**

**& Mrs Alison Casey**

**SEELB**

**Grahamsbridge Road**

**Dundonald**

**BT16 0HS**

**Telephone: 028 9056 6200**

**Designated Officer for Lisburn Health**

**& Social Services Trust**

**Mr Kieran Drayne**

**Assistant Principal Social Worker**

**Lisburn Health Centre**

**Linenhall Street**

**Lisburn**

**BT28 1LU**

**Telephone: 028 9266 5181**

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# Lisnagarvey High School

## Child Protection Incident Record Form

### *Details of incident/concern/disclosure*

It is imperative that only factual information is recorded. Give date, time, place; persons involved; observations; physical/behavioural indications; any statements given; factual content of any conversation.

Signed (member of staff) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Designated Teacher) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises (in various stages of healing)
- Grip marks on arms, slap marks, human bite marks, bald spots
- Unexplained/untreated burns especially cigarette burns or immersion burns (glove like)
- Unexplained fractures, lacerations or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Bruising on both sides of the ear - any symmetrical bruising is suspicious
- Injuries occurring in a time pattern (e.g. every Monday morning)

- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggressive towards other children
- Behavioural extremes (withdrawn/aggressive)
- Child appears frightened or cowed in the presence of adults
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Chronic runaway (teenagers)
- Arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home
- Clothing in appropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body

## Neglect

- Looks extra thin, poorly and sad
- Constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems
- Special needs of child not being met
- Constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene - repeatedly unwashed, smelly
- Repeated accidents especially burns

- Tired or listless (falls asleep in class)
- Steals food; compulsive stealing; begging from class members; withdrawn/lacks concentration
- Kept away from school medical examinations; reports that no carer is at home
- Low self-esteem, persistence non-attendance to school
- Exposure to violence, including violent movies

## Sexual Abuse

- Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs
- Bruises or bleeding in genital or anal area
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes
- Signs of sexually transmitted infections
- Chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons in PE, games, showers
- Unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating

- What the child tells you; withdrawn; chronic depression
- Excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness, children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference
- Role reversal; overly concerned for siblings
- Poor self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence
- Peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts, hysterical outbursts; lack of emotional control
- Sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration of school work
- Repeated attempts to run away from home
- Unusual or bizarre sexual themes in child's art work or stories
- Vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation, promiscuity

## Emotional Abuse

- Well below average in height and weight
- Failing to thrive, poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities
- Recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders

- Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Rocking/head banging; inability to play; perverted appetite
- Indifference to separation from family
- Indiscriminate attachment