St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

'Achieving Excellence Together'

2026 - 2027

Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Ethos

We in St Patrick's Academy have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential, and, at the same time, be valued for their unique talents and abilities.

All of our staff have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff have adopted a Professional Conduct Policy for our behaviour towards our pupils and have completed appropriate training during Term Two 2026.

This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within St Patrick's Academy.

Principles

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, "Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DHSSPSNI 2017 and 2024), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" (Sept 2023), DENI Circular 2026/17 'Safeguarding and Child Protection: A Guide for Schools (Revised in 2024) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2024). In particular, the principle we support is that every young person has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and to be shown proper care of their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, by those looking after them.

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection activity and underpin the guidance we follow:

- The young person's welfare must always be paramount; this overrides all other considerations. Where a young person has a disability or has special needs these must be taken into consideration;

- A proper balance must be struck between protecting young people and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict, the young person's interests must always come first;

- Young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. Where a young person has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this;

- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family;

- Action taken to protect the young person (including investigation) should not in itself be abusive by causing the young person unnecessary distress or further harm;

- Intervention should not deal with the young person in isolation; the young person's needs should be considered in the context of the family. Agencies' actions must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to, and take account of, the young person's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture, race and any special needs;

- Where it is necessary to protect a young person from further abuse, alternatives which do not involve moving the young person and which minimise disruption of the family should be explored.

School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

Principal - Mr Colin Holmes
Designated Teacher – Mr Ronan Campbell
Deputy Designated Teacher - Mrs Kiera Boyle
Deputy Designated Teacher – Mrs Katharine Mullin
Designated Governor for Child Protection - Mrs Geraldine Sally
Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs Lisa Toner
Chair of the Board of Governors – Mr John Mitchell

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 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 contact 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 (Updated Sept 2023)

'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.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers

The designated teacher and deputy designated teachers must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role;
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training);
- Lead in the development of the school's Safeguarding Policy;
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents;
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our safeguarding arrangements for parents;
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate;
- Liaise with the Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection;
- Maintain records of all safeguarding concerns;
- Keep the School Principal informed;
- Provide regular, anonymised written reports and an annual review to the Board of Governors regarding Safeguarding.

The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:

- DENI Circular 2026/17 and 'Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools' (Revised 2024) are implemented within the school;
- A designated teacher and deputy designated teachers are appointed;
- All staff receive safeguarding training;
- All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner;
- The Chairperson of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed;
- Safeguarding activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided;
- That the school's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy at least once every 2 years;

- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

The Designated Governor for Safeguarding

The Designated Governor will be responsible for updating the Governors on:

- The role of the designated teachers;
- The content of safeguarding policies;
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school;
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report;
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff.

The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment;
- Ensure that the school has a Safeguarding Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Recruitment and Selection & Safeguarding training provided by the Education Authority's Safeguarding Support Service for Schools, the Education Authority Governor Support and Human Resource departments;
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Safeguarding is appointed;
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal;
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to safeguarding activity.

Other Members of School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural, emotional, educational and nutritional indicators and hear allegations of abuse. Remember the 6 Rs: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Report, Record and Respect.

The member of staff must:

- Familiarise themselves with the school's Professional Conduct Policy for Staff (Appendix 2) and complete relevant safeguarding training;
- Refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Safeguarding using the 'note of concern', where possible (Appendix 3);

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child;
- Act promptly;
- Make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child;
- Avail of whole school training and other relevant training regarding safeguarding children;
- Not give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures;
- Not investigate;
- Not ask leading questions.

In addition, the Class Teacher should:

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or bullying concerns, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

Parents/Carers

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents/carers who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.

Parents/carers should play their part in safeguarding and child protection by:

- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, replying to Truancy Call or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than someone nominated as a priority contact, intends to pick up the child after school;
- Letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, E-Safety, Addressing Bullying, Behaviour for Learning, E-Safety and Safeguarding Policies (on school website);
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school;
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school immediately.

It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer. A copy of our data capture form can be requested from reception by contacting Mrs Shona Holmes.

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors must ensure that:

- The school has a Safeguarding Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Relevant safeguarding training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same;

- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

Aims

- To introduce procedures in the school to deal with Child Protection concerns as directed by the Education Authority's Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 1999/10 Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 Guidance, DENI 2013/16 Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools, Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff DENI 2015/13, DENI guidance Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools-A Guide for Schools (Revised Sept 2024), Circular 2026/17 (Updated Sept 2023) and Circular Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures.
- To make staff and parents aware of the referral procedure within the school.
- To help our pupils learn about the risks of possible abuse, to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and to acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

St Patrick's Academy recognises the five main responsibilities in the areas of child protection and safeguarding. These are in the areas of:

1. Prevention
2. Recognition
3. Response
4. Referral
5. Confidentiality and Record Keeping.

Parents will be made aware of St Patrick's Academy's responsibilities and procedures, and we hope that they will support us in our practice.

1. Prevention of Child Abuse

In St Patrick's Academy we offer a supportive environment to our pupils who **are** being abused, **have been** abused and **may** be abused in the future. All young people are vulnerable.

St Patrick's Academy has developed and provides a 'safeguarding ethos' and a preventive curriculum. We offer our pupils an alternative model to violent or abusive behaviour and alternative methods of responding. We aim to involve the whole school in creating a 'listening school'.

St Patrick's Academy offers protection on two levels:

- Immediate protection – creating a listening environment that makes it easier for young people to share their concerns;

- Long term protection, enhancing self-esteem and encouraging social skills, breaking the cycle of abusive behaviour.

The Board of Governors ensures that the curriculum includes a programme for young people on personal protection. When it is appropriate to deliver sex education, management will ensure that the programme is consistent with guidance from the Department of Education and the school's RSE Policy.

The Board of Governors ensures that St Patrick's Academy has, and follows, the Staff Code of Conduct for Safeguarding (Appendix 2) and the Professional Conduct Policy for Staff, both of which are drawn up for all members of staff, towards the young people in our school. These also cover all activities organised in and by the school, whether on the premises or elsewhere.

We ensure that persons, other than our school staff, who are invited as leaders/helpers on educational visits, residential visits, trips or other out-of-school educational activities are subject to vetting procedures in keeping with the current arrangements for the care and protection of our young people.

We will ensure that we will provide effective management for our staff through adequate training and supervision.

2. Recognition of Child Abuse

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

Definition of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings; in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than any one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at the risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

Types of Abuse

- **Neglect:** the persistent or severe neglect of a young person, or the failure to protect a young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

- **Physical abuse:** physical injury to a young person, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

- **Sexual abuse:** the sexual exploitation of a young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.
- **Sexual exploitation of children:** Is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.

- **Emotional abuse**: Persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a young person.

- **Domestic abuse**: Threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. Ill treatment of another person or abusive behaviour directed at another person, regardless of whether the child has seen, heard or been present during the ill-treatment or behaviour is also considered to be an impairment to a young person's health. St Patrick's Academy is an Operation Encompass compliant school and we will continue to work in partnership with the PSNI to best support our pupils.

- **Female genital mutilation**: Involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

- **Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour:** Will always require intervention. Harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children is damaging to both the victim and the child who engages in the abusive behaviour. A child who engages in such abuse may be suffering, or be at risk of, significant harm and may also be in need of protection. The needs of the victim must be given priority, and nothing should be done which causes the victim further harm.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse. Abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. A child protection record might be commenced if there is evidence of a safeguarding risk of, for example, self-harm, suicidal ideation or other behaviours that cause concern.

When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity or where we have concerns about a 16/17-year-old in a sexual relationship, the Designated Teacher has a duty of care to share this information with Social Services.

Bullying-type behaviour is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St Patrick's Academy. Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying

behaviour occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and to support and discipline the pupil displaying bullying behaviour. See Addressing Bullying Policy.

Adult Safeguarding

For further information see: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document
Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives.

We are committed to:
- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount;
- Maximising the student's choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights;
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy (pages 11 & 15) when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over. Types of abuse against an adult in a school setting can be found in **appendix 4**.

3. Response to Abuse

In the event of an allegation of child abuse, the member of staff will:
- Listen to the young person and accept what is said;
- Record in child's own words;
- Explain what has to be done next and to whom the member of staff will have to talk;
- Reassure the young person he/she has done the right thing to talk about it;
- Refer information to the designated teacher using a note of concern, if possible.

4. Referral about Abuse

Mr Ronan Campbell is the designated member of staff for safeguarding. In his absence, Mrs Kiera Boyle and Mrs Katharine Mullin will assume responsibility for safeguarding matters.

If a young person makes a disclosure to a member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a young person, **the member of staff must act promptly by completing a 'note of concern' and passing this to a member of the Safeguarding Team.**

The **member of staff should not investigate** – this is a matter for Social Services – but should report immediately to the designated member of staff to discuss the matter with them and make full notes.

The designated member of staff will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made in the safeguarding book.

The Principal, in consultation with the designated member of staff, will decide whether, in the best interests of the young person, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the young person may be at risk, the Principal (or Designated Teacher in the absence of the Principal) is obliged to make a referral**. Unless there are concerns that a parent/carer may be the possible abuser, the parents(s)/carer(s) will be informed immediately.

The Principal/Designated Teacher may seek advice from the Gateway Team and/or the Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the young person is our first priority**. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway Team and a copy sent to the Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection.

Adult Safeguarding - Pupils
While it is acknowledged that the majority of our pupils are under the age of 18, at times, the school may need to seek support for our pupils who are over the age of 18, and therefore, considered to be adults. There is a difficult balance between gaining consent for a referral into Adult Protection Gateway services and also ensuring a vulnerable adult is protected from harm. Consent will always be sought from the person for a referral to statutory agencies.

Where appropriate, the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

If consent is withheld, then a referral will not be made into the Adult Protection Gateway unless there is reasonable doubt regarding the capacity of the adult to give/withhold consent. In this case, contact will be made with the local Adult Protection Gateway team to seek further advice 02837564423.

In situations where there is reasonable doubt regarding an individual's capacity, they will be informed of the referral, unless to do so would put them at any further risk.

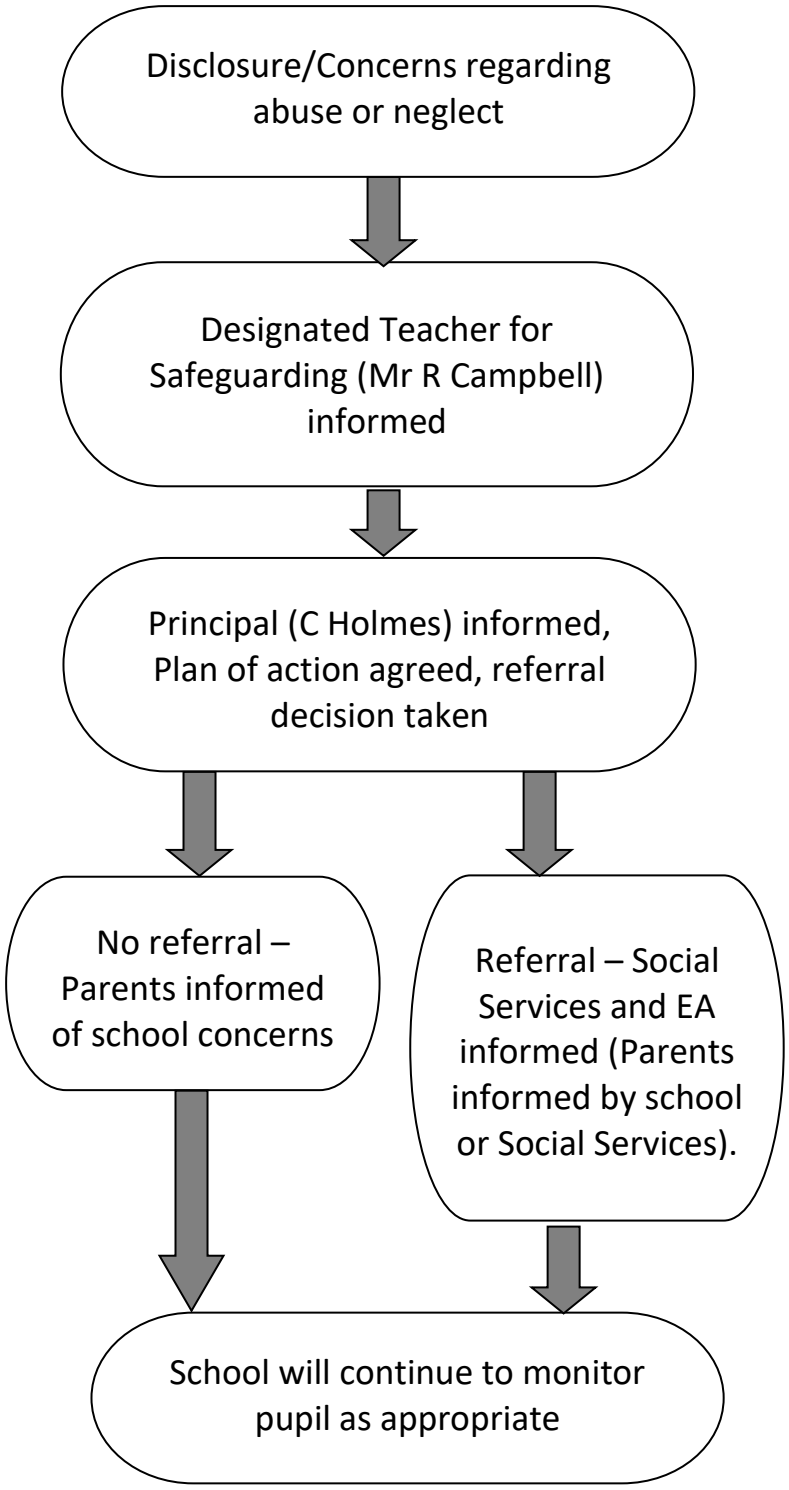
The principle of consent may be overridden if there is an overriding public interest, for example in the following circumstances:

- the person causing the harm is a member of staff, a volunteer or someone who only has contact with the adult at risk because they both use the service; or
- consent has been provided under undue influence, coercion or duress;
- other people are at risk from the person causing harm;
- or a crime is alleged or suspected.

Adult Safeguarding – Young staff including student teachers

We are mindful that certain members of staff, such as student teachers, are of a similar age to our senior pupils. As such, an induction programme will be provided for these staff, ideally on their first morning, to make them aware of our procedures in relation to child protection and safeguarding. Further information is available in our Professional Conduct for Staff and Student-Teacher policies.

Safeguarding and Child Protection - Summary for Parents/Carers



It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff members need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

Provision of intimate care

While it is recommended that much of the care should be administered by one staff member/carer with one child, the school must have explicit permission from the parent/carer, and the guidance of relevant agencies, in advance. When appropriate permission and guidance is obtained, the practice of providing one-to-one intimate care of a child alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the child and staff member, or if the child prefers two persons present. An additional adult will be located within a short distance during the administration of intimate care but out of the sight of the pupil.

At any time, a parent can talk to a social worker at:

- ***The Gateway Team: Telephone number 08007837745 or 02837567100***
- ***PSNI Central Referral Unit: Email: cru@psni.police.uk***

Telephone number 028 90259299 [weekdays 08.00-21.00 & weekends 09.00-17.00] OR 101 extension 30299

- ***Duty Social Work Gateway Team: Telephone number 028 37565345***
- ***Regional Emergency Social Work Service (outside normal working hours): Telephone 028 9504 9999***
- ***Family Support Hub - Support for parents and children: 02837522380.***
- ***Vulnerable Adults [for overs 18s]: Telephone 028 37564423 or email: adultsafeguard.team@southerntrust.hscni.net***
- ***Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline: 0800 389 1701 (NSPCC)***

Allegations against a member of staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or designated member of staff, if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. St Patrick's Academy will observe the procedures outlined in Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff DENI 2015/13 apply. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr John Mitchell, will also be informed immediately.

Allegations against the Principal

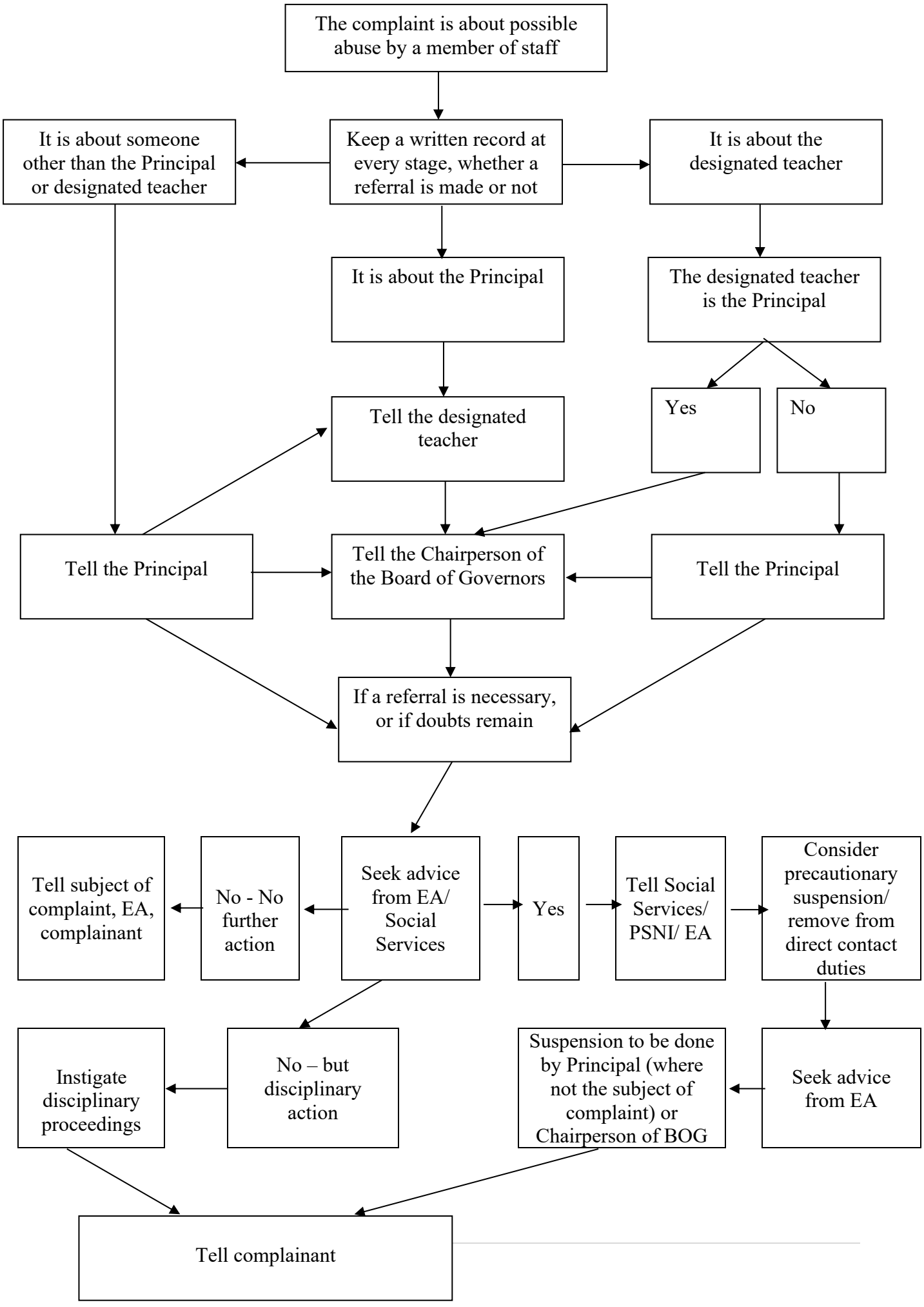
If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated member of staff must be informed immediately. They will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

Allegations against the designated or deputy designated teacher

Any complaints must be referred to the Principal who will record such in the 'Safeguarding Book'.

Suspension from duties

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure, pending investigation by Social Services.


The complaint is about possible abuse by a member of staff
Keep a written record at every stage, whether a referral is made or not
It is about someone other than the Principal or designated teacher
It is about the designated teacher
It is about the Principal
The designated teacher is the Principal
Yes
No
Tell the designated teacher
Tell the Principal
Tell the Chairperson of the Board of Governors
Tell the Principal
If a referral is necessary, or if doubts remain
Tell subject of complaint, EA, complainant
No - No further action
Seek advice from EA/ Social Services
Yes
Tell Social Services/ PSNI/ EA
Consider precautionary suspension/ remove from direct contact duties
Instigate disciplinary proceedings
No – but disciplinary action
Suspension to be done by Principal (where not the subject of complaint) or Chairperson of BOG
Seek advice from EA
Tell complainant

1. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Confidentiality
For reasons of confidentiality the only members of staff who need to know are;
Mr C Holmes (Principal)
Mr R Campbell (Designated member of staff)
Mrs K Boyle (Deputy Designated member of staff)
Mrs K Mullin (Deputy Designated member of staff)
Relevant Head of Year
Relevant Form Teacher.

The Designated Governors and/or Chairperson of the Board of Governors may be provided with information, if required.

Record Keeping
All records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked filing cabinet. These only identify the young person by initials and date of birth. These records are kept separate from any other file which is held on the young person.

Where an allegation of a child protection nature is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral, or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a summary is entered in the Staff Safeguarding Book (held by Principal) under 'Record of Child Abuse Complaints'. This entry, which will contain details of the complaint, will be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually.

Staff In-Service

St Patrick's Academy is committed to in-service training for all staff. Each member of staff (teaching and non-teaching) will receive Safeguarding and Child Protection training on Policy and Procedures.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Safeguarding Team in St Patrick's Academy will update this policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

Signed:_____

Chairperson of Board of Governors September 2026

To be reviewed June 2027

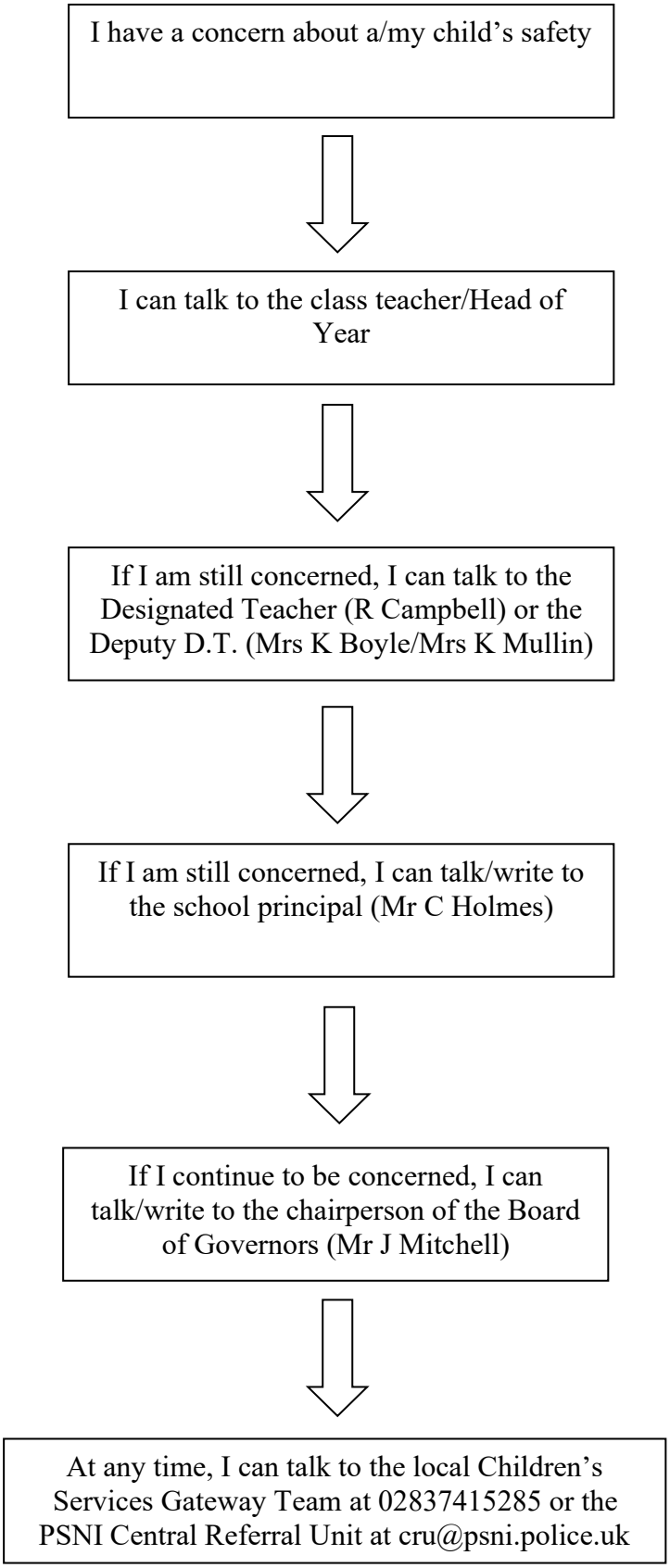
This policy complements and supports a range of school policies including;

- Acceptable use of CCTV Policy
- Acceptable use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen. AI) Policy
- Addressing Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Bereavement Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- E-Safety/Mobile Phone Policy
- Gen AI Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Health and Safety Policy (including risk assessments)
- I.C.T. Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Positive Behaviour For Learning Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy for Staff
- Punctuality Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy
- School Trips Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Storage and Administration of Medication Policy
- Student Teacher Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force & Safe Handling Policy
- Visitors' Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

The school welcomes any comments from parents regarding this and all school policies. Parents are reminded that they can view school policies on the school website (www.stpatricksacademy.org.uk). Several policies are currently being updated and we welcome parental comment on them. Policy updates will be sent via the school app, when necessary. The school website also has a section dedicated to parental concerns. Suggestions and comments are also welcomed in relation to this part of the site.

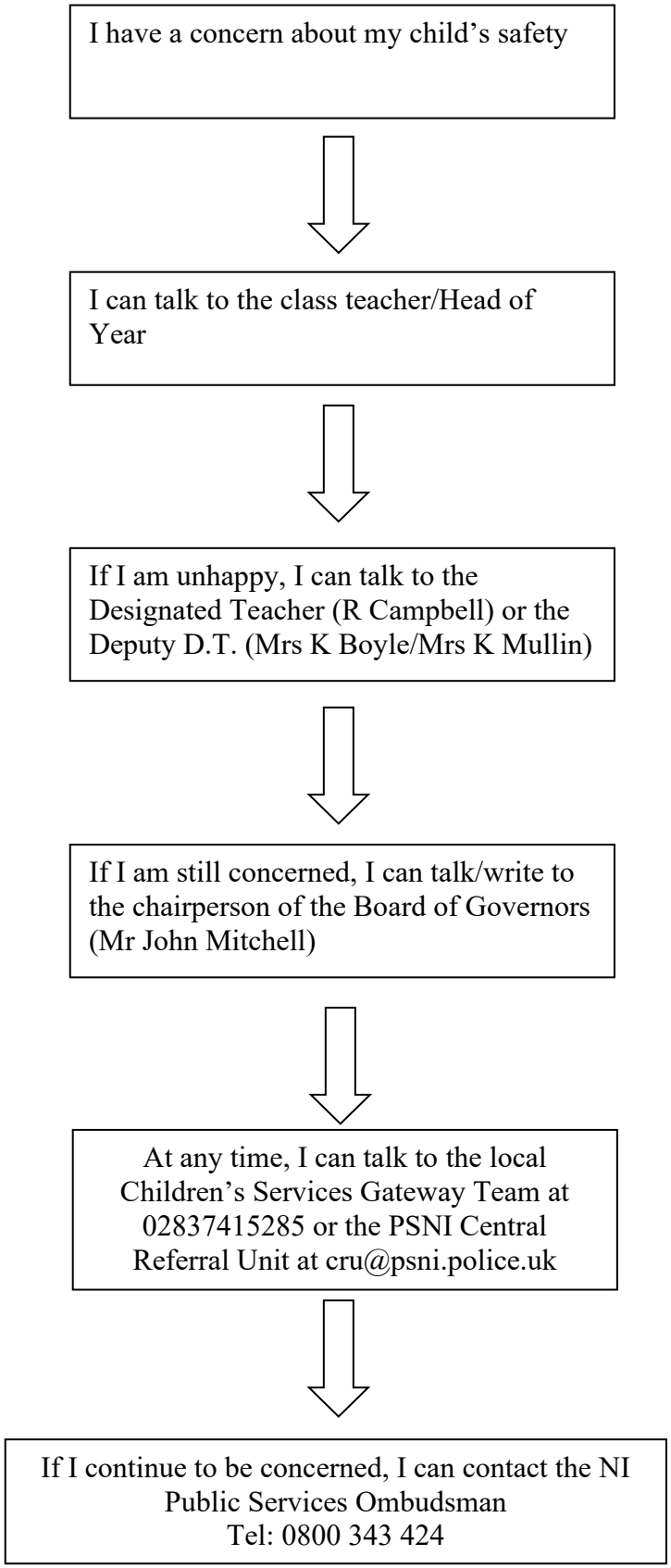
Appendix 1a

How a Parent Can Report a Concern



Appendix 1b

How a Parent Can Make a Complaint



Appendix 2

Professional conduct of staff

As staff in St Patrick's Academy, it is our responsibility:

- To promote the safest learning and working environments for the children in our care;
- To remember that anyone who has contact with children and young people is in a position of trust;
- To act appropriately and professionally;
- To ensure that all members of the school community are treated equally and respectfully;
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Private meetings with pupils

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, but, where possible ensure:

- Where appropriate, another member of staff should be present or nearby during the meeting;
- Such meetings/interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people. A barrier, such as a desk, should be between the member of staff and the pupil. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the meeting/interview is taking place and is available, if necessary;
- A written record is kept of the meeting using the Official Record Book and any issues are passed to the relevant member of staff.

Avoid:

- A pupil receiving special attention or preferential treatment;
- Excessive time spent alone with a pupil outside of the classroom;
- Frequently spending time with a pupil in private or isolated areas;
- Transporting a pupil to or from school without declaring a conflict of interest or having someone else present;
- Making friends with a pupil's parents and visiting their home;
- Acting as a particular pupil's "listening ear";
- Giving small gifts, money, toys, cards, letters to a pupil;
- Using texts, telephone calls, e-mails or social networking sites to communicate with a pupil;
- Affectionate behaviour with a pupil;
- Comments or lesson content of an inappropriate nature such as sexual, political or discriminatory;

Physical Contact with Pupils

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils. The best interests of the pupil will guide all decisions taken by our staff. Restraint will only be used as a last resort in order to prevent a pupil from injuring themselves, other pupils, members of staff, property, or if the pupil is seriously compromising good order and discipline. It must only be used when other behaviour management strategies have failed.
- Physical contact which may be misconstrued by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. Such contact can include well-intentioned, informal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm.
- There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and re-assurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their

discretion in such cases to ensure that any physical contact should be momentary, appropriate to the given situation and done in the presence of others.

- Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching, for example, a whole-class demonstration showing pupils how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during games or P.E. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by pupils.
- Heads of Departments are advised to draw up their own guidelines for the use of areas particular to their subject e.g stores, changing rooms and other adjoining rooms.
- Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure, wherever possible, that others are present.
- 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 as a means of self-reporting. This would apply especially in a case where a member of staff had been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury.

School Trips

- A risk assessment should be completed in advance of the trip and all staff should be clear about their individual role in ensuring the safety of pupils.
- Permission should be sought from parents/carers in advance of any trip. Staff should have an emergency contact number for the young person's parent/carer.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting such as a ski-trip, outdoor education camp or extended visit away from home, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment. Members of staff should remember that they are acting 'in loco parentis' and are responsible for ensuring the safety of the young people in their care.
- A Parent Information Evening should be held prior to any residential outing so that clear guidelines and expectations are communicated to parents.

Communication

As an employee of St Patrick's Academy, staff should always act as an advocate for the school and never criticise any member of the school community, its policies and procedures either online or during face-to face conversations with members of the public. As an educational institution, the school is bound to follow guidance from government bodies such as DENI and the EA and, as such, staff are expected to implement the instructions of the Principal.

Confidentiality

Please note that all pupil and staff information and records are strictly confidential and should not be discussed outside of the school. The school has a duty of care to protect pupils and staff, therefore, any information pertaining to them should not be disclosed to anyone unless authorised to do so by the Principal or appropriate Vice-Principal.

Use of Online Communication and Social Media

- Maintaining the public's trust in the individual teacher and in teaching as a profession is at the heart of being fit to teach. This can be undermined not only by behaviour occurring in a teacher's professional life, but also within their private life, including activity online.

- Teachers are individuals with private lives. However, off duty conduct matters and may have a bearing on their professional life. Therefore, sound judgement and due care should be exercised at all times.

- A teacher may be vulnerable to unintended misuse of electronic communication. E-mail, texting and social media encourage casual dialogue and sometimes innocent actions can be misconstrued or manipulated. Staff should, therefore, keep their social media and contact details private.

- Electronic messages are not anonymous. Once information is placed online, the author relinquishes control of it.

A teacher should never share information with pupils in ANY environment that they would not willingly or appropriately share in a school or school-related setting or in the community.

How staff should protect themselves when using electronic communication and social networking
You should:

- Always maintain a formal and courteous, professional tone in communicating with pupils;
- Ensure that professional boundaries are maintained;
- Only use official channels of communication to contact parents e.g. school app, SIMS Parent app, info e-mail account, school landline or formal letter;
- Contact pupils using Google Classroom but only during working hours, typically 9am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday. Please use the 'Schedule Tool' to set work/communicate with pupils if working outside of these hours;
- Only be expected to reply to messages on Google Classroom during normal working hours unless agreed otherwise with the class;
- Comply with St Patrick's Academy policies and guidance such as the Safeguarding and E-Safety Policies;
- Not exchange private texts, phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses or photos of a personal nature with pupils;
- Firmly decline pupil initiated 'friend' requests from pupils and do not instigate any yourself. Use your own discretion when dealing with friend requests from parents. It is acceptable to decline these invitations and remind parents of the formal channels of communication through which they can discuss their child's education;
- Operate online in a professional manner;
- Accept that pupil will be curious about your personal life and may try to find out more about you;
- Manage your privacy settings and keep them under review. These are particularly important in regard to photographs. Accept that no privacy mechanism is 100% guaranteed;
- Ensure your settings prohibit others from tagging you in any photos or updates without your permission. You can ask others to remove any undesirable content related to you;
- Audit and re-evaluate the information about you, and who has access to it if you are beginning a teacher education programme or your EPD;
- Be aware that potential employers may try to view your online social media profiles;
- Consider what conversations held online may not be private;
- Be aware of who may have access to what you post;
- Assume that information you post can be accessed and altered;
- Not discuss pupils, colleagues, parents or carers online;
- Not criticise your employer or others within the school community;
- Respect pupil privacy and confidentiality at all times;
- Use strong passwords and change them regularly;
- Protect your phone/tablet/computer with a PIN, especially when in school to protect access to content and potential misuse;

- Bring the matter to the Principal using the proper procedures, if you are the victim of cyber-bullying or uncomfortable with comments, photos or posts made by pupils of or about you;
- Before posting materials online, you should consider if the material, if accessed by others, would be considered reasonable and appropriate.

Relationships and Attitudes

- Staff should remember that age of consent is overridden by the position of trust which they hold.
- Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are professional and focussed on teaching and learning. Any concerns about pupil well-being should be referred to the form tutor and HoY. Safeguarding issues should be passed on to a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.
- In order to protect themselves, staff should keep a note of any one-to-one meetings with pupils using their Official Record Book.
- Staff should ensure that their social media profiles are kept private and should never be used to contact pupils or parents/carers.

Guidance and procedures for staff dealing with pastoral issues including bullying-type behaviour

You should:

- Listen to the pupil and reassure them that the incident will be investigated;
- Remain calm, neutral and non-judgemental;
- Record the details. The incident will be investigated and discussed by appropriate staff; form teacher, Head of Year, Vice Principal or Senior Teacher responsible for the Key Stage;
- Deal with the incident as quickly as possible. The students experiencing and displaying bullying behaviour may need reassurance and support;
- Meet with each named person separately, to point out the feelings of the pupil experiencing the behaviour and to ask for a full explanation. It is recognised that it is best to avoid a confrontational approach where blame is attributed before the complete facts have been examined. The pupil displaying bullying-type behaviour should also be given time to explain his/her version of the events;
- Discuss means by which the alleged pupil displaying bullying behaviour can suggest ways in which s/he (they) can show his/her (their) remorse, particularly in relation to making the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour happier;
- The matter should be referred to the form tutor and HoY as soon as possible. The HoY will apply the code of conduct, if appropriate;
- Inform parents if the bullying-type incident is **serious**. The pupil experiencing this behaviour may be suffering from insecurity and low self-esteem so parents and school need to work together to restore self-confidence. In some cases, pupils experiencing bullying behaviour may need to be encouraged to examine their own behaviour in order to establish if this may, in any way, be contributing to bullying;
- Monitor the situation closely. The judgements of the form teacher, Head of Year and relevant Vice-Principal/Senior Teacher should be applied to each specific case;
- Report back to parents, if appropriate.

Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- All lessons should be pre-planned and relevant to the curriculum. Any clips/videos/recordings should be viewed in advance and age appropriate.
- Staff should avoid using teaching materials which could be misinterpreted and any resources should be used with the clear purpose of effectively delivering the curriculum.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature, a teacher should be aware that their application could be misconstrued, either by pupils or by the teacher, even after the lesson.

Safer Practice

- Your behaviour should be open and transparent.
- You must adopt high standards of personal conduct.
- Your behaviour in or out of school must not compromise your position within the school.
- Avoid being alone with a student behind a closed, windowless door.
- Never give an individual student a gift that is not part of the 'Positive Behaviour Policy'.
- Never give your personal mobile number or personal e-mail address to a student.
- Adhere to staff code of conduct in relation to social media etc.

The Sexual Offenders Order 2003

'Under the Sexual Offences Order 2003 it is an offence for a person over 18 (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child'.

When you might be vulnerable

- Alone with a child
- Administering first aid
- Restraining a child
- When a child seeks affection
- Providing intimate personal care

Why you might be vulnerable

- Lack of training or support
- When you are unclear about guidance and/ or procedures
- When you fail to report or seek advice / poor lines of communication
- When you fail to record

St Patrick's Academy staff will receive Safeguarding and Child Protection Training biannually and as part of their induction.

Challenging and reporting worrying behaviour and practice by adults.

- Self-report if you think you got it wrong or may be misinterpreted
- Voice your concerns, suspicions, or uneasiness as soon as possible
- Pinpoint what practice is concerning you and why
- Don't think "What if I'm wrong?" think "What if I'm right?"

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff inter-relate with pupils and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances professional judgement should be exercised and for the vast majority of staff this policy confirms what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is wise for all staff to review their teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual pupils, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, pupils or parents.

APPENDIX 3

NOTE OF CONCERN

(should be passed immediately to a member of the Safeguarding Team)

Name of Pupil:	**Class:**	**Date and time of disclosure or incident:**
What led to the disclosure being made today/why was it made to you?		
Nature and description of the concern (using child's own words where applicable):		
List of parties already aware e.g. friends, family or witnesses to the event and what they said/did:		
Any advice given to the child e.g. reassurances given and made child aware that concern would be passed on to the Safeguarding Team:		
Date and time of Note of Concern passed to Safeguarding Team:		**Details of additional materials attached with the Note of Concern:**
TO BE COMPLETED BY SAFEGUARDING TEAM		
Member of Safeguarding Team who received the note:		**Note of concern passed to Designated Teacher on date/time:**
Designated Teacher stored the Note of Concern in a Child Protection folder on:		**Note of Concern not stored in Child Protection folder because:**

Name of staff member: _____ Role: _____

Signature of staff member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Safeguarding Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 4 Adult Safeguarding in a School Setting

All organisations that work with vulnerable adults must have procedures in place to ensure their safety from abuse, exploitation, and neglect 'Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership' (2015).

Types of abuse:

• Physical

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

• Sexual violence and abuse

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

• Psychological/Emotional

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

• Financial

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

• Neglect

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

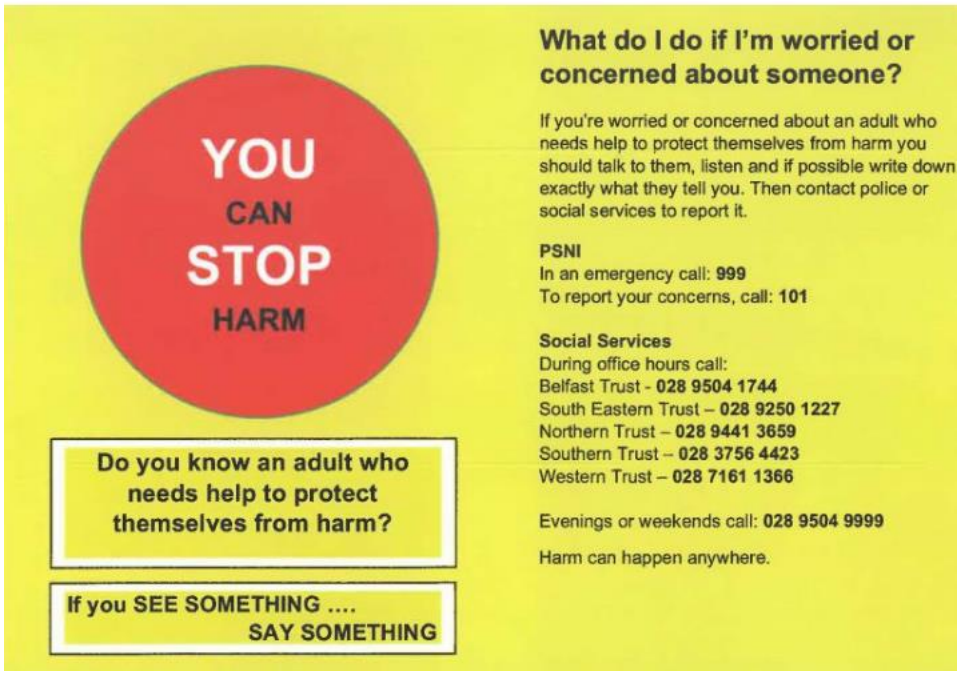
• Exploitation

is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person; to take advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain from using them as a commodity. It may manifest itself in many forms including slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, domestic violence and abuse,

sexual violence and abuse, or human trafficking. This list of types of harmful conduct is not exhaustive, nor listed here in any order of priority. There are other indicators which should not be ignored. It is also possible that if a person is being harmed in one way, he/ she may very well be experiencing harm in other ways.

Should you have a concern about a pupil aged 18, please complete a Note of Concern and report to the DT/DDT/Principal as soon as possible. Concerns can be discussed with the Adult Safeguarding Team in the Southern Trust:

Social Services Southern Trust:

During office hours 9-5pm Monday – Friday: Adult Protection Gateway Service 02837564423

Out of hours (5pm-9am, weekends and bank holidays): Regional Emergency Social Work service – 02895049999