

Clounagh Junior High School



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Date Ratified by Board of Governors:
Date Reviewed:
Date Updated:

February 2018
September 2023
September 2026

1. Child Protection Ethos

We in Clounagh Junior High have a responsibility for the pastoral, general welfare and safety of the children in our care. We will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. 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 our school

2. 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, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance 2017/04.

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy.

- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.

3. Other Relevant Policies

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

- Behaviour/Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones/Portable Devices, 'E' Safety
- ICT
- Relationships and Sexuality Education

These policies are available to parents by contacting the school office.

4. School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the Clounagh Junior High Safeguarding Team

▪ Designated Teacher	Mrs J Sutton
▪ Deputy Designated Teacher	Mrs K Patterson
▪ Deputy Designated Teacher	Mrs J Bled
▪ Principal	Mr P Elliott
▪ Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mrs E Gillanders
▪ Chair of the Board of Governors	Mrs H Burke

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers

The designated teachers and deputy designated teacher 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 and delivery of the school's Child Protection Policy;
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents;
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection 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 child protection concerns;
- Keep the School Principal informed;
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding child protection

5.2 The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:

- DENI 2017/04 is implemented within the school;
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed;
- Principal Safeguarding training is availed off
- That all staff receive child protection training
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates and an annual report are provided
- That the school child protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy or summary 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.

5.3 The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Designated Governor should avail of child protection awareness training delivered by CPSSS and will take the lead in child protection issues in order to advise the Governors on:

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

5.4 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 Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment and selection training provided by the Education Authority Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the Education Authority Governor Support and Human Resource departments;
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection 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 child protection activity

5.5 Other Members of School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and are in a position to notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse.

Remember the 5 R's: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer!

The member of staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection;
- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- support the child;
- act promptly;
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (**Appendix 1**) note of concern
- Avail of whole school and other relevant training regarding safeguarding children

The member of staff MUST NOT:

- give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures;
- investigate;
- 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 including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self-harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts. The Designated/Deputy Designated teacher will immediately follow the school's child protection procedures.

Domestic Violence

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence includes psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial and isolation abuse. Symptoms which young people may display and which are indicators only include: nervousness, low self-worth, disturbed sleep patterns, nightmares / flashbacks, stress, nervous tension, stomach pain, bed wetting, immature or 'needy' behaviour, temper tantrums/aggression, internalising distress or withdrawal, truancy, alcohol and drugs, bullying. These symptoms can lead to young person being misdiagnosed as having learning difficulties, being disruptive or an illness.

Where school staff become aware of a child living in a home where Domestic Abuse is evident this must be passed to the Designated Teacher who has an obligation to pass this information to Social Services.

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 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](#).

5.6 Parents

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, 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, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school;
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school as soon as possible;
- providing up to date and accurate contact information e.g. names, addresses and phone numbers

5.7 The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure that:

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

6. What Is Child Abuse?

6.1 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 one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

6.2 Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning,

burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They 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.

Bullying although not formally recognised as a separate category of abuse it is important to note that it can cause serious harm and distress to children. Such behaviour will not be tolerated in this school!

Child Sexual Exploitation 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.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

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

6.3 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

Physical Abuse

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing – grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions;	Self-destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn/aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults;

untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday	improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; come to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories
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Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self- mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).	Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.

Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Looks very 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 eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.

6.3 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections;	What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; self-devaluation;

avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material.
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6.4 Being Aware of Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Teachers at Clounagh should be aware of the DENI advice to schools and other education settings on the identification and management of children and young people who display harmful sexualised behaviour. Inappropriate sexualised behaviour should be reported to the Designated teacher for child protection. The Designated Teacher will consult with the Principal and decide on an appropriate course of action.

Problematic Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Not age appropriate
- One off incident of low key touching over clothes
- Result of peer pressure
- Spontaneous rather than planned
- Lacking in other balancing factors e.g. no intent to cause harm, level of understanding, acceptance of responsibility
- Targeting other children, to irritate and make feel uncomfortable. Often the children are not scared and can feel free to tell someone
- Concerning to parents / carers, supportive
- Sometimes involving substances which disinhibit behaviours

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Lacks the consent of the victim
- When the perpetrator uses threats or violence (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce or intimidate the victim
- Uses age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
- Involves inappropriate touching
- Involves sexual behaviour between children – it is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older – particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- Involves a younger child abusing an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful Sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and Clounagh Junior High School will seek advice from CPSS as required.

7. Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse

7.1 How a Parent can make a Complaint

At Clounagh we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or any member of the Safeguarding Team, Designated/Deputy teacher for child protection or the school Principal. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2**.

7.2 Where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff including volunteers

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate – this is a matter for Social Services/ PSNI. but should report these concerns immediately to a member of the Safeguarding Team and full notes should be made. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the designated teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

The Designated Teacher may consult with the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made a member of the Safeguarding Team will make a referral (UNOCINI) Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) to the duty Social Services Gateway team. If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately. (See **Appendix 3** for further information)

7.3 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or Designated teacher if he/she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated teacher)

If a complaint is made against the Principal the Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately. Child protection procedures as outlined in **Appendix 4** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a child protection nature.

Do	Do not
❖ Listen to what the child says ❖ Assure the child they are not at fault ❖ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret ❖ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words ❖ Not promise the child confidentiality ❖ Stay calm ❖ Listen ❖ Accept ❖ Reassure ❖ Explain what you are going to do ❖ Record accurately ❖ Seek support for yourself	❖ Ask leading questions ❖ Put words into the child's mouth ❖ Ignore the child's behaviour ❖ Remove any clothing ❖ Panic ❖ Promise to keep secrets ❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily ❖ Delay ❖ Start to investigate ❖ Do nothing!

8. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

A member of the Safeguarding Team may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

9. Confidentiality And Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the

investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

10. Record Keeping

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by members of the school Safeguarding Team

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

11. Vetting Procedures

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

12. Code of Conduct For all Staff Paid or Unpaid

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. The school's Staff Code of Conduct is available on request.

13. Staff Training

Clounagh Junior High School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and bi-annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies.

14. The Preventative Curriculum

Throughout the school year child protection/safeguarding issues may be addressed through class teaching, as well as school/year assemblies. There is a permanent Safeguarding notice board which provides information, advice and child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display.

Other initiatives which address child protection and safeguarding issues may include:

- visits from officers representing the PSNI or other such bodies;

- issues relevant to child protection/safeguarding may be delivered through the Personal Development curriculum.
- presentations delivered by dedicated officers from the Education Authority (N.I)
- information evenings arranged for parents to highlight aspects of online safety e.g. 'Face to Facebook' presentation.
- the services of Links Independent School Counselling is also available.
- direct contact with parents as and when required.

We shall continue to avail of advice and support from various agencies and organisations in order to promote child protection wherever such opportunities arise.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Safeguarding Team in Clounagh Junior High School 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 child protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

Signed	Mrs J Sutton	Designated Teacher
	Mr P Elliott	Principal
	Mrs H Burke	Chair of Board of Governors

Date Policy reviewed	19 September 2023
Date Policy updated	1 September 2026



Appendix 1

Clounagh Junior High School

**Note of Concern
Report to Designated Teacher**

Name of Pupil:
Class/ Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including and witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:
Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:

Any further action taken:		
Written report passed to Designated Teacher:	Yes	No
If 'No' state reason:		
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:		
Written note from member of staff placed on pupil's Child Protection file		
Yes		
No		
If 'No' state reason:		

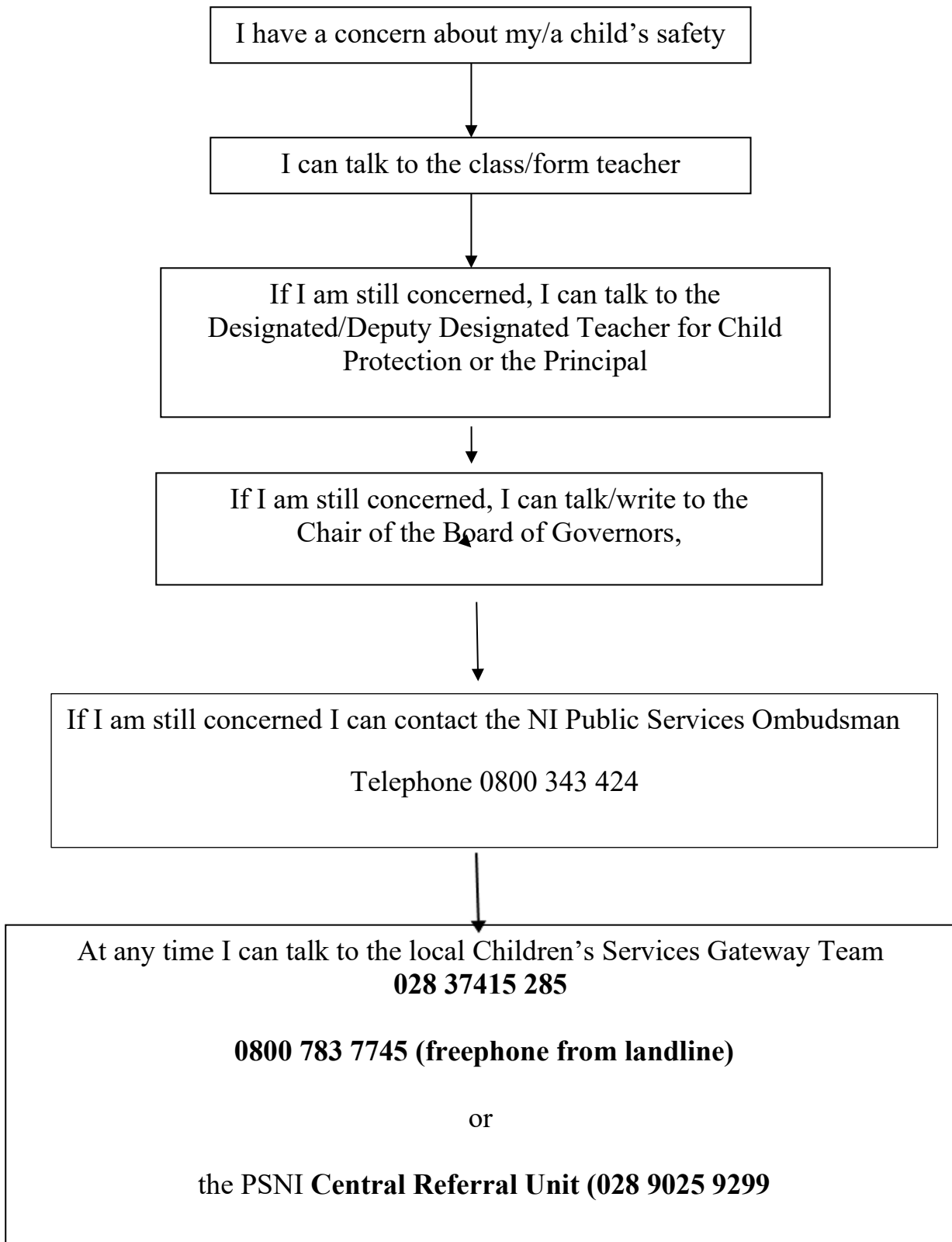
Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ **Date:** _____

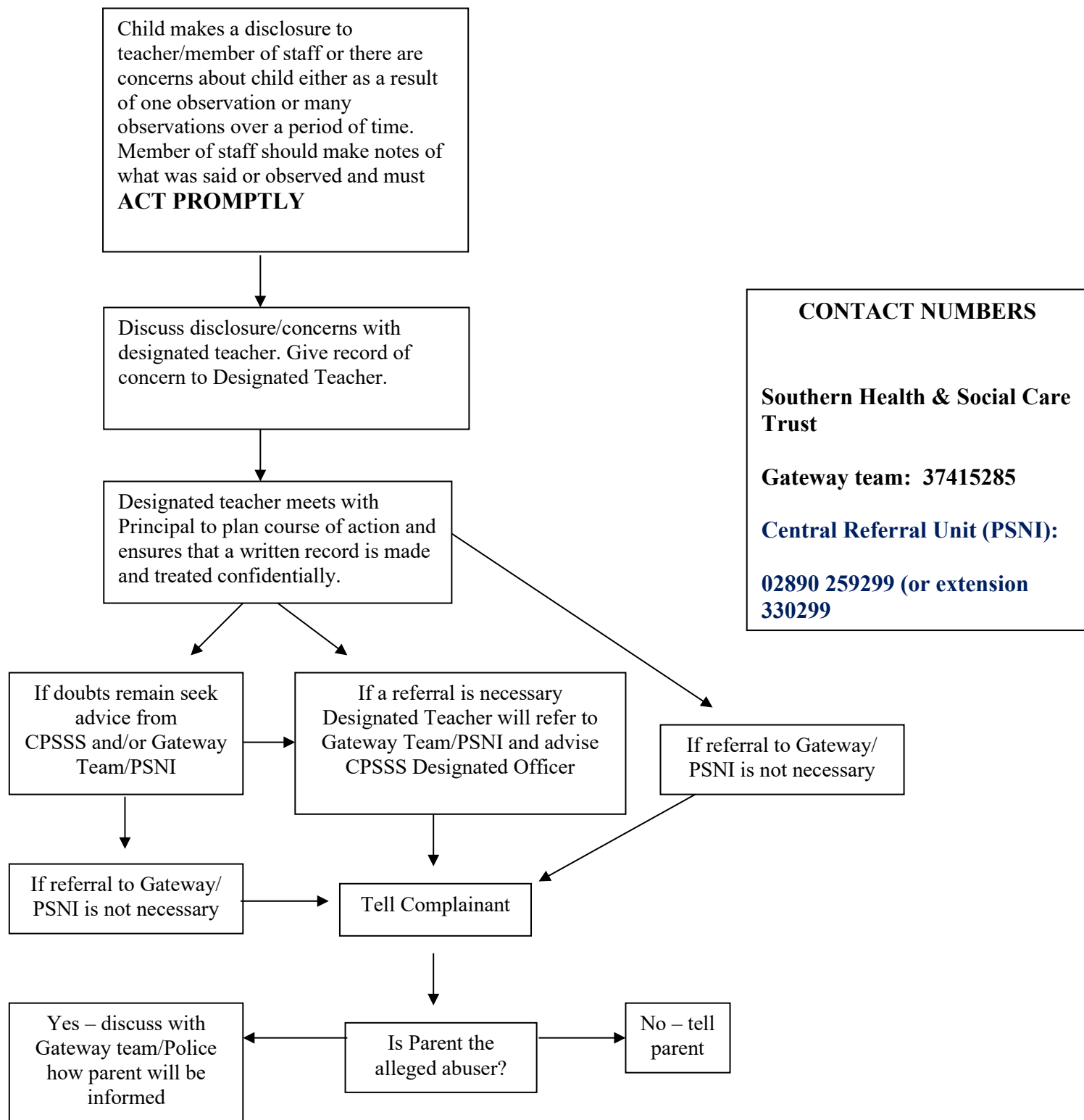
Signature of Designated Teacher _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 2

If a parent has a potential child protection concern



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



Appendix 4

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

Key Points (3)
Lead Individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of the BoG as appropriate

Guidance on next steps(5)
Lead Individual then:
Establishes the facts;
Seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.

Possible Outcomes (7)
Following on from Establishing the facts, Seeking advice from Key Agencies (5) and discussion with the Chair and/or the BoG to agree way forward from the options below

**Precautionary
Suspension not
appropriate &
the matter
is concluded**

**Allegation
addressed
through relevant
Disciplinary
Procedures**

**Precautionary
Suspension
under child
protection
imposed**

**Alternatives to
Precautionary
Suspension
imposed**