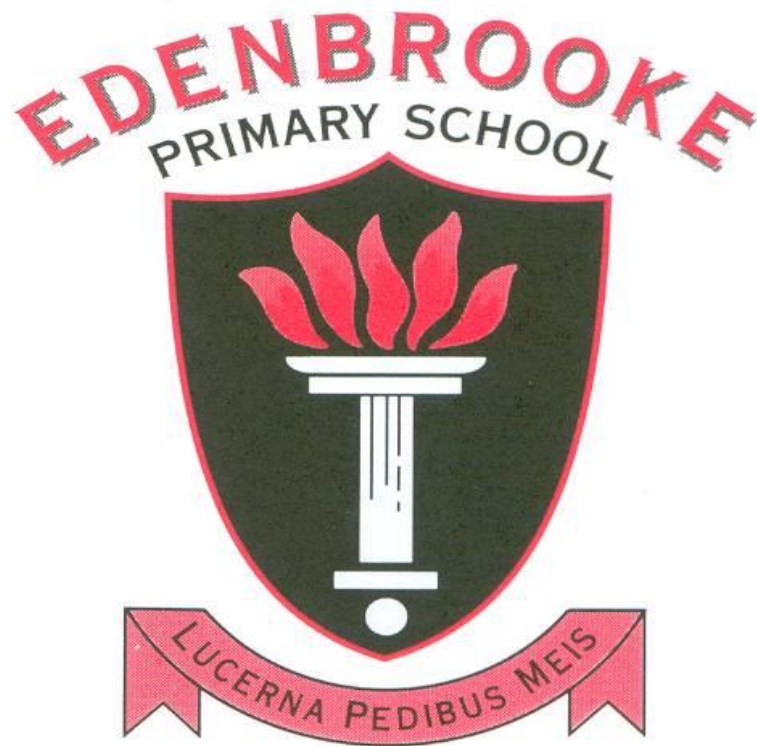




Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

June 2025

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This policy is informed by the guidance, procedures and information set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, DE Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools (2024); Cooperating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland (DHSSPSNI; 2024); the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (SBNI 2017) and ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures Manual (2005)

Safeguarding Children: Introduction

Safeguarding: Effective safeguarding begins with *preventing* harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention. A safeguarding school culture is a child –centred one that *promotes* the welfare of all pupils. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to *protecting* children from harm when this is required.

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect *specific* children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

‘Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence, they must be kept safe from harm, and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.’ (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19.)

‘When adults or organisations make decisions which affect children, they must always think first about what would be best for the child.’ (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3.)

In Edenbrooke we recognise that it is every child’s right to be heard, listened to, and taken seriously. We are also mindful that every child should be protected from harm and that children cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that ***the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration*** in all decision concerning the child. The welfare and safety of our pupils is paramount and reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that welfare is guarded, and safety preserved. We will carry out our responsibilities by providing a caring and supportive environment in which everyone may develop their full potential. Through the curriculum we will encourage the development of high levels of self esteem and confidence because we believe that this lays the foundation for the child to be able to keep **safe**.

The purpose of the following procedures on safeguarding/child protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school, teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers, has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. All staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks.

The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare, and safety of the child. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school. We know that some forms of child abuse are a criminal offence. The school has a duty to refer issues regarding children's welfare and child protection on to the relevant bodies.

The school has a safeguarding team as outlined below:

Safeguarding Team:

Chair of the Board of Governors:	Ms D. Fallis
Designated Governor for Child Protection:	Mrs E. Ebrahim
School Principal:	Miss L. Grimason
Designated Teacher for Child Protection:	Mrs M. Gilmore
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection:	Mrs C. Campbell/Mrs S. Bell

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
3. Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES:

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

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Drugs
- Positive Behaviour
- Complaints
- Educational Visits
- E-Safety
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Intimate Care
- Relationships and Sexuality Education

- Special Educational Needs
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Pastoral Care
- Code of Conduct for Staff

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the school office.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MUST ENSURE THAT:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and **impact on roles and responsibilities**.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually, and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19.

- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

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

DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The BoG delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to advise the governors on: -

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

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION

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

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- The promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the BoG regarding child protection

PARENTS:

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

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- informing the school if a child has a medical condition or educational need.
 - informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves or named collectors, intends to pick up the child after school.
 - informing the school if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety and wellbeing of a parent or child.
 - informing the school if a child is absent.
 - if there are any changes in a child's circumstances, for example, change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- Information on parental responsibility can be found at:

www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION (DT):

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

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.

- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- The promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the BoG regarding child protection.

DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION (DDT)

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

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

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

The Principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of DT and DDT posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.

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

OTHER MEMBERS OF SCHOOL STAFF:

- The principal and staff of a school are in a position to take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for the pupils either on the premises or on educational outings.
- Staff will endeavour to create an atmosphere in which pupils can feel confident and able to discuss matters relating to abuse.

- In all cases where abuse is suspected, or where an allegation has been made about a pupil or a third party or where there are concerns about the welfare of a child, teachers and other members of staff should report the information to the designated teachers.
- Class teachers should complete 'the note of concern' or make a CPOMS referral if there are safeguarding concerns.
- Staff should act quickly and responsibly in any instance that comes to their attention.
- Communication and the sharing of information with the designated teachers is vital when there are child protection concerns.
- Confidentiality should be clearly understood by all staff.
- Staff recognise the duty that they must safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils in their charge. Implicit in this is the assumption that the conduct of school staff towards pupils must be beyond reproach.
- Staff should regularly reflect upon every aspect of their contact with children that might give rise to perceptions or allegations of abuse.

ALL STAFF SHOULD KNOW:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse.
- The school's procedures for reporting child protection concerns.
- How to talk to the children and how to record information.
- The names of the designated and deputy designated teachers.
- What constitutes 'appropriate physical contact' with pupils?
- The importance of the prevention curriculum in the safeguarding of children.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

The following is an extract from the ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures Manual (2005: paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4)

'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 child abuse, and a child may suffer more or one of them... abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.'

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995)

TYPES OF ABUSE (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, 2024)

- Exploitation
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional abuse

EXPLOITATION (Co-operating to Safeguard, 2024, p.15)

- Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain.
- It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation.

- Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

NB// Abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within existing categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or a combination of these forms of abuse.

SEXUAL ABUSE (Co-operating to Safeguard, 2024, p.14)

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Possible signs encountered by teachers which MIGHT indicate sexual abuse:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Inappropriate language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

NEGLECT (Co-operating to Safeguard, 2024, p.14)

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Possible signs and symptoms encountered by teachers which MIGHT indicate neglect:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger/lack of adequate supervision.
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing/begging

PHYSICAL ABUSE (Co-operating to Safeguard, 2024, p.14)

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating a child.

Possible signs and symptoms encountered by teachers which MIGHT indicate physical abuse:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts, or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures, or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

EMOTIONAL ABUSE (Co-operating to Safeguard, 2024, p.14)

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games, or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Possible signs and symptoms encountered by teachers which MIGHT indicate emotional abuse:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn.
- Difficulty in forming/maintaining relationships with others.
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

SPECIFIC TYPES OF ABUSE

In addition to the types of abuse described above, there are some specific types of abuse that we in Edenbrooke are aware of. We have included these in [Appendix 1](#).

CHILDREN WITH INCREASED VULNERABILITIES

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English or sexual orientation. We have included information on children with increased vulnerabilities in [Appendix 2](#).

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED CHILD ABUSE:

HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CONCERN:

In Edenbrooke Primary School, we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their 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, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the 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 Central Referral Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in [Appendix 3](#).

WHERE SCHOOL HAS CONCERNS OR HAS BEEN GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF STAFF:

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly.

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT (or DDT if DT is not available), complete a ‘note of concern’ ([see appendix 1](#)) or make a CPOMS referral.

The DT/DDT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in line with their legal responsibilities under the Children (NI) Order 1995, the matter needs to be referred to social services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.

Unless there are concerns that a parent/guardian may be the possible abuser, the parents/guardians will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Designated Officer for Child Protection at the Education Authority’s Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSS) or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our priority.

If a child protection referral is required, the designated teacher will seek consent from the parent/carers and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.

The Designated Teacher will phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form.

If a child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting, or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person’s consent.

WHERE A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL STAFF OR A VOLUNTEER:

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal then the Designated Teacher should be informed and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in [Appendix 4](#) will be followed.

CONSENT:

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person has been sought and is withheld we will consider and where possible respect their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

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. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will consider what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children, information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

RECORD KEEPING

In accordance with DE guidance, we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in Edenbrooke are stored securely in a locked cabinet and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher(s) and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

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/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

In Edenbrooke Primary School we use the 'Child Protection Online Management System' (CPOMS) software as a means of record keeping for Child Protection and Safeguarding information and incidents. This software uses intelligent role-based access with 2-step authentication.

SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system. Schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted, and supervised as appropriate. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Edenbrooke Primary School are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

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. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors.

THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM:

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

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for Personal and Social Development which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.

Preventative Activities:

- Personal Development for Mutual Understanding (PDMU) covers topics on personal safety and self- protection.
- Activities through school Nurture.
- Safeguarding talks from, for example, PSNI, NSPCC
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service talks on Fire Safety.
- Circle Time
- Safeguarding/e-safety themed Assemblies
- Notice boards around school.
- Liaison with other agencies that support all pupils and in particular vulnerable children such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Counselling Services (Jigsaw, Barnardos and New Life) Educational Psychology, EA Outreach Services for behaviour and learning, RISE Team, Diversity and Inclusion Service, NSPCC, Save the Children, Supporting Families North Belfast, Dental Health, Integrated Services, Family Hub, the School Nurse.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team and approved by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the school's staff induction and training programme and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFIC TYPES OF ABUSE:

GROOMING

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and /or making an emotional connection with the victim to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify. If the staff in Edenbrooke Primary School become aware of signs that may indicate grooming, they will act in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

CSE 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.' (SBNI 2014, p5)

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging. (SBNI 2014, p5)

Factors that heighten vulnerability to CSE include:

- Social isolation.
- Low self- esteem.
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse.
- Being in a state of poverty or financial hardship.
- Living in difficult domestic circumstances.

- Having a disability.
- Substance misuse.
- Prior experience of abuse, particularly sexual abuse.
- Recent bereavement / family breakdown.
- Experiencing bullying.
- Disengagement from education.
- Involvement in crime.
- Online vulnerability and lack of recognition of risk in the online world.
- Links with other young people who are sexually exploited.

Possible signs and symptoms encountered by teachers which MIGHT indicate CSE:

- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Concerning use of the internet.
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis.
- New peer groups.
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'.
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours.
- Low self-esteem.
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less).
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair.
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Domestic violence can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. A child does not have to directly witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive environment is harmful to children. Children can witness domestic violence and abuse directly and indirectly and/or the effects of it; this frequently constitutes emotional abuse and can have profoundly damaging effects on a child's well-being. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, 2024, p64)

Edenbrooke will follow up instances where a disclosure, concern or information is revealed from any source about domestic and sexual violence and abuse which could impact children either directly or indirectly in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

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 '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 about The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 can be found by following the link to:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk>

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

FGM is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM, this will be reported to the PSNI without delay. Where there is concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, advice will be sought from CPSS, and a referral will be made to the relevant Gateway Team.

FORCED MARRIAGE

Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and where there is a concern of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, the PSNI will be contacted.

HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE (HBV)

The term 'honour-based violence' is used to refer to a range of violent practices used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to sustain or promote perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative or another has shamed, or

may shame, the family and/or community by breaking their 'honour code'. The punishment can include assault, abduction, restrictions of liberty, confinement, threats and murder.

Children, young people, and adults can be victims of honour-based violence.

If we believe that there may be an immediate risk of HBV, an immediate report will be made to the PSNI. If the risk is not perceived to be immediate, we will report to the local Gateway team to enable a full assessment to be made in compliance with child protection procedures.

Where HBV is known to have taken place with children or adults, we will pass this information passed to Gateway and/or the PSNI to ensure that other children within the community affected are appropriately safeguarded.

CHILDREN WHO DISPLAY HARMFUL SEXUALISED BEHAVIOUR

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours- these can be identified as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention; however, consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting.

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education.

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- there is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim.
- Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:
 - Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
 - Inappropriate touching.
 - Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and Edenbrooke will seek the advice and support that is available from the EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS). The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

ONLINE SAFETY

Online safety means acting and staying safe when engaging in the online world. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments, and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

The overall strategic direction for child safety online is the Keeping Children and Young People Safe: An Online Safety Strategy, published in February 2021. It sets out the Northern Ireland Executive's ambition that all children and young people enjoy the educational, social, and economic benefits of the online world, and that they are empowered to do this safely, knowledgably and without fear.

The Strategy recognises that the ever-changing and fast-growing online environment presents both extensive educational benefits as well challenges in terms of keeping children and young people safe from the dangers of inappropriate communication and content.

For further information see: Online Safety Hub - Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (safeguardingni.org)

We in Edenbrooke Primary School have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and will be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like.

The school's actions and governance of online safety are reflected clearly in our safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

SEXTING

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

1. Sexting between individuals in a relationship

Children and young people consider this to be normal and often the result of a young person's natural curiosity about sex and their exploration of relationships. As a

consequence, engaging in the taking or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes may not always be in a 'harmful' context. Nonetheless, staff must be aware that an image can be shared non-consensually, or a child can be groomed, tricked or coerced into sending nude and semi-nude images.

Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases we will contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. We may also seek advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of a sexual image.

2. Sharing an Inappropriate Image with an Intent to Cause Distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is not forwarded to anyone else. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent. For further information see:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress, the child protection procedures of the school will be followed.

APPENDIX 2

CHILDREN WITH INCREASED VULNERABILITIES

CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and staff will be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues.

Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities in will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

CHILDREN WITH LIMITED FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

Children who are not fluent in English will be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

The Designated Teacher/Safeguarding Team will seek advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service if necessary, to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. In Edenbrooke Primary School, we work hard to create an atmosphere in which pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

SCHOOL TRIPS AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE and EA guidance on educational visits, school trips and residentials to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA)

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then make arrangements for the child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily. It is important that the views of children, young people, and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the looked after child are considered when decisions are made. The Designated Teacher will attend CLA meetings and will provide a written report. Personal Education Planning procedures will be followed. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may not be involved with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and

young people may have been abused. School staff will work in partnership with those who provide care to the young person to provide an appropriate response and/or complete a risk assessment.

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS

If we become aware that a child in our school is homeless, we will share this information with Social Services whose role is to carry out a comprehensive needs and risk assessment. We will contribute to the assessment and attend multi-disciplinary meetings.

SEPARATED, UNACCOMPANIED AND TRAFFICKED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Separated children and young people are those who have been separated from their parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver. Unaccompanied children and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be a victim of human trafficking.

CHILD TRAFFICKING

Child Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation.

If we become aware of a child who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking we will immediately follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

CHILDREN OF PARENTS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers, or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action school staff take to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children's social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist us in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible. Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will consider the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

GENDER IDENTITY ISSUES

Young people from the LGBTQ+ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more

vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

We will support children from the LGBTQ+ community to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

CONCERNING BEHAVIOUR EXHIBITED BY CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

PEER ABUSE:

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all school staff should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and, where necessary, should contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

SELF-HARM:

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances. Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child has suffered abuse; however, this is not always the case. It is important to carefully consider the reasons why a child may be self-harming.

Concerns around a child self-harming should be notified to the designated teacher for child protection who will then address the concern appropriately in line with the school's Safeguarding policy. Advice will be sought from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals, including those in the non-statutory sector, to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

SUICIDAL IDEATION:

It is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

It is important that those who are listening to and engaging with the child or young person respond sympathetically in a non-judgemental or critical way. Further erosion of a young person's self-esteem should be avoided as it may compound the negative feelings and behaviours which have brought the young person to a suicidal crisis.

Normal safeguarding procedures of informing the DT or DDT will be followed to address any concerns brought to the attention of staff.

**EDENBROOKE PRIMARY SCHOOL
CONFIDENTIAL
NOTE OF CONCERN
CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO
DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any 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:

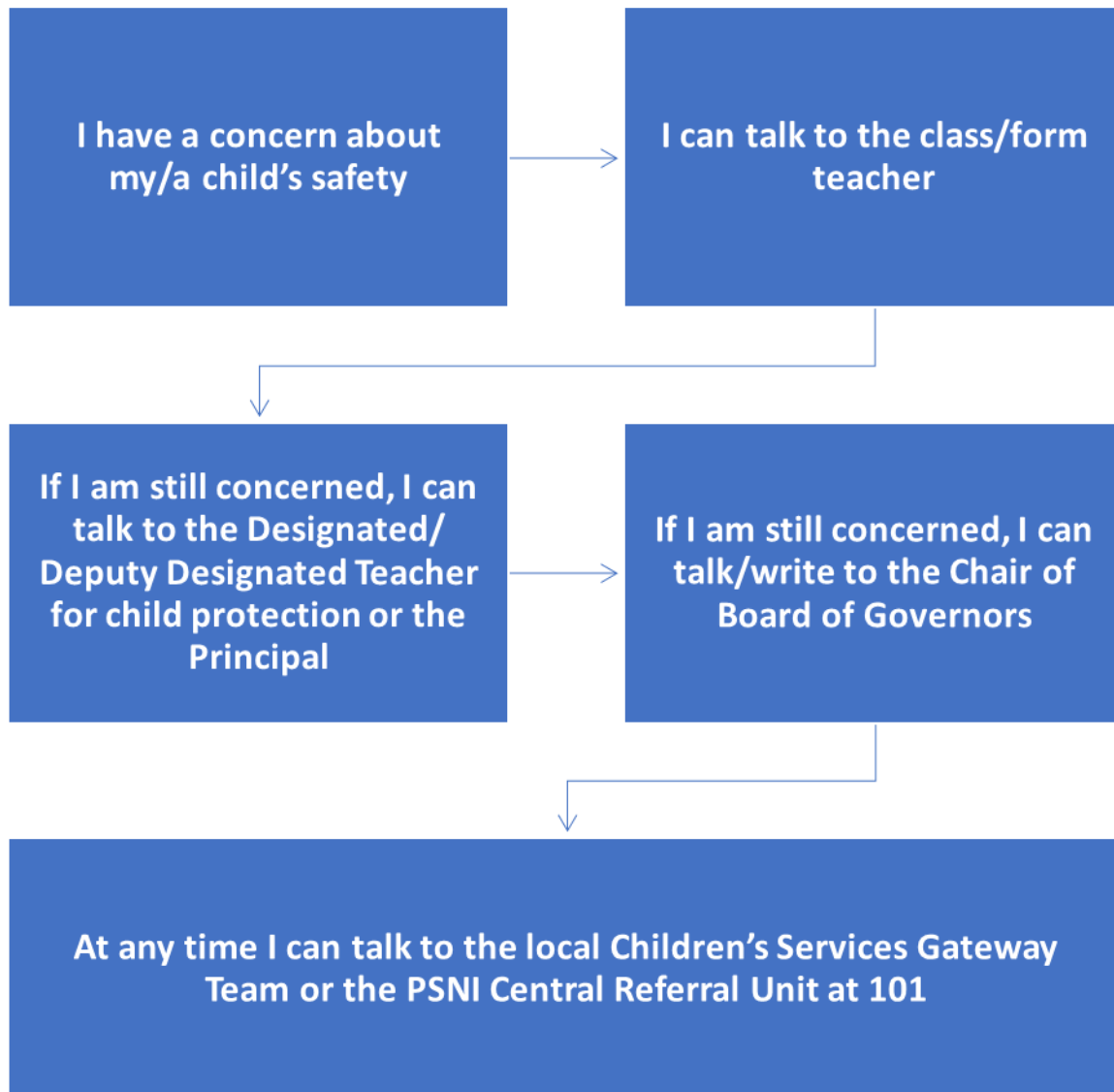
Written report passed to Designated Teacher:	
Yes: ☐	No: ☐
If 'No' state reason:	
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:	
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file:	
Yes: ☐	No: ☐
If 'No' state reason:	

Name of Staff Member Making the Report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 4 If a Parent Has a Potential Child Protection Concern Within the School

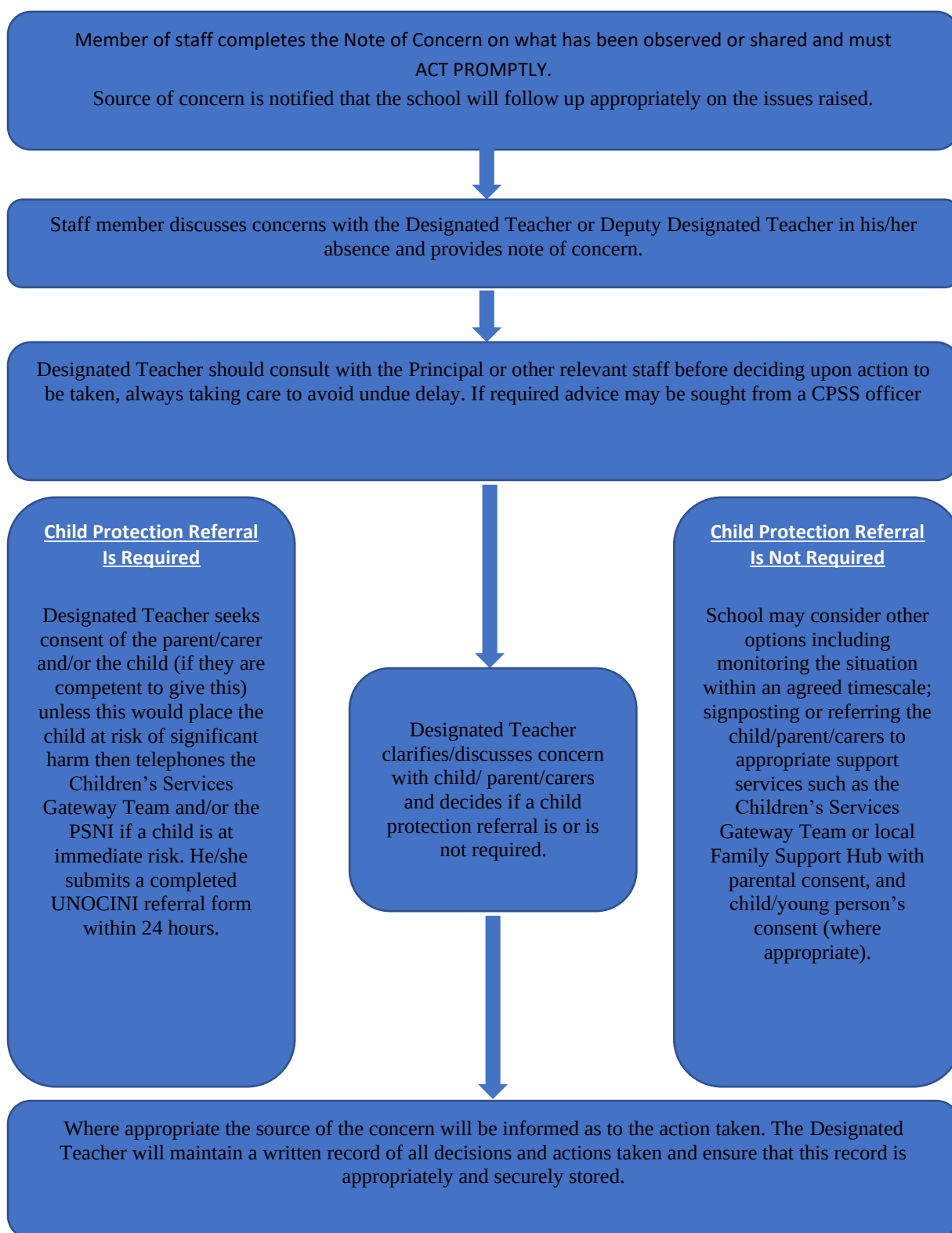


If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school's complaints policy. This policy should culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

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

APPENDIX 5

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



APPENDIX 6

Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff

