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## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

***In Shaftesbury Nursery School, we believe that children should be protected and safeguarded from harm.***

Shaftesbury Nursery School fully recognizes its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. All staff are committed to providing an environment where every child can enjoy the right to live their life free from harm or abuse or potential harm or abuse; a caring, supportive and safe environment, which values individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all children can learn and develop to their full potential.

There is a broad range of international and domestic legislation relating to child welfare and protection. This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is predicated on:

### **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Kingdom agreed to be bound by the Convention in 1991. It sets out the rights which all children and young people up to the age of 18 should have.

### **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is the principle statute governing the care, upbringing and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It applies to all those who work with and care for children, whether parents, paid carers or volunteers. It is the most comprehensive and far-reaching child-care legislation ever introduced to Northern Ireland. It clearly identifies five key principles, which are:

1. Paramourncy
2. Prevention
3. Protection
4. Partnership
5. Parental Responsibility

This order sets out that the welfare of the child is considered as being of paramount importance. Under the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003/05, the Board of Governors has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They have delegated responsibility for promoting, developing and monitoring child protection within Shaftesbury Nursery School to the Designated Teacher or in her absence the Deputy Designated Teacher.

**The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003**

Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 place a statutory duty on Boards of Governors (BoG) to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils and to determine the measures to be taken at the school with a view to protecting pupils from abuse (whether at school or elsewhere).

**Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008**

This legislation reduced the age of consent in NI (in line with other areas of the UK), and strengthened the legal safeguards for young people between the ages of 16 and 17. Significantly, it introduced the concepts of grooming (including online behaviours), and “Abuse of a Position of Trust”.

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a Disclosure and Barring Service and requirements relating to individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults.

**The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011**

This Act established the SBNI and places interagency co-operation on a statutory footing. The objective of the SBNI is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland by co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the board. The SBNI is also responsible for development of regional policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

**The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016**

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016 gives a power to investigate education authorities in respect of complaints made by a member of the public (this came into effect on 1 April 2016). The power to investigate extended to Boards of Governors of grant-maintained schools from 1 April 2017.

**Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)**

This policy replaces the *Co-operating to Safeguard Children guidance* issued in 2003 and provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

**Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020**

This Strategy highlights an overarching strategic vision for addressing domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The Department of Health (DoH), and the Department of Justice (DoJ) are the strategic lead departments in taking forward both the domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence and abuse agendas through improved effective, collaborative, and cohesive engagement within and across Northern Ireland.

**Circular 2016/20** updates and replaces records management guidance included in DE Circular 1999/10 *“Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection”* and should be read in conjunction with **DE Circular 2015/13** *“Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff”*. **Circular 2017/04** *“Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools”* (SACPIS) replaced the 1999/10 guidance and supersedes this document. These circulars and the guidance they provide, have been used to inform this school policy.

This policy applies to all staff, Governors, students and volunteers working in the school. The main elements of the policy are:

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

Shaftesbury Nursery School recognizes that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the Personal, Social and Emotional Curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognize and stay safe from abuse.

**Shaftesbury Nursery School will:**

- Ensure that there is a Safeguarding Team in place. This consists of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Chairman of the Board of Governors and the nominated Governor responsible for Child Protection and Safeguarding. The Safeguarding Team meet regularly to review the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding practices and to address any issues arising.
- Ensure that there is a Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, who have received appropriate training/support for these roles.
- Ensure that there is a nominated Governor responsible for Child Protection, who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff (*including temporary and supply staff and students and volunteers*) and the Governing body knows the name of the Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher responsible for Child Protection and their designated role.
- Ensure all staff, students and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and the responsibility of referring any concerns to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Ensure that parents/ carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus and all Induction information.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.

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- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location.
- Develop and follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policies on:**

- *Behaviour Management Policy*
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- *Intimate Care Policy*
- E-Safety Policy
- Mobile Phones Policy
- *Staff Professional Code of Conduct*

Shaftesbury Nursery School recognizes that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. In Shaftesbury Nursery, we monitor children's wellbeing and involvement using Leuven Scales and the Quality Learning Instrument. Children who are abused may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour management policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, health services, education welfare services and the educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the Child Protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the Designated Teacher in the new school and that the child's social worker is informed.

As a condition of employment all staff have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff have also adopted a Code of Conduct for appropriate behaviour towards pupils. This code is detailed in a separate document.

The purpose of the following procedures is to protect, safeguard and support pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in the school (*teachers and non-teaching staff and students/volunteers*) has clear guidance on the action which is required where the abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school.

## **What is child abuse?**

'Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one.'

### **There are five categories of abuse:**

1. 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.

2. 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 (*for example, rape, or oral sex*) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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, 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.

The Designated Teacher ensures that staff training is kept up to date and that all staff remain abreast of current Child Protection and Safeguarding information, including the types of abuse and their symptoms. These include; Grooming, Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, E- Safety and Internet Abuse. Where there is evidence or reasonable suspicion of domestic violence and abuse in a household where children or young people reside, this will be referred to Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Service.

### **Safeguarding Team**

Chairman of the Board of Governors: **Mr. Danny Wilson**

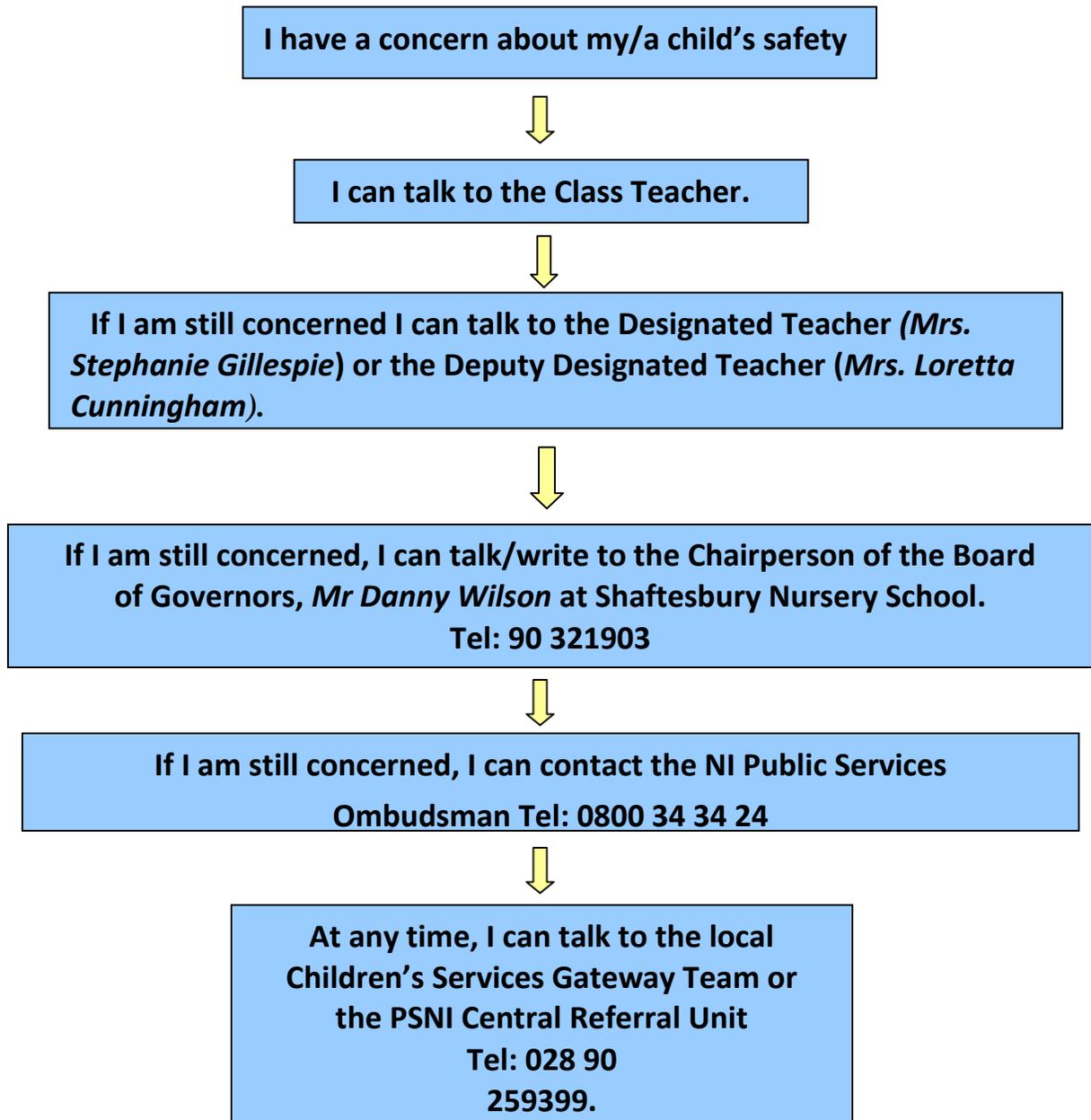
Governor responsible for Child Protection & Safeguarding: **Dr. Rhonda Mitchell-Barrett**

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Mrs. Stephanie Gillespie (Principal)**

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Mrs. Loretta Cunningham (Assistant teacher)**

**Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

Should a parent/ carer have concerns regarding the safety of their (or another) child they should follow the procedures set out below:



**The Designated Teacher** for Child Protection is:

**Mrs. Stephanie Gillespie (Principal)**

In her absence, the **Deputy Designated Teacher** for Child Protection is

**Mrs. Loretta Cunningham (Assistant Teacher)**

If a child makes a disclosure which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, or if information is received that gives rise to a concern, the member of staff will act promptly and the guidance below will be followed:

- The staff member will not investigate- this is a matter for the Social Services or the PSNI – but will report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.
- The Designated Teacher will, as a matter of urgency, plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made, signed and filed. The Designated Teacher will then decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services or the PSNI. Advice may be sought from the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) at the Education Authority (EA).
- **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/carer may be the possible abuser, the parent/carer will be informed immediately.
- The Principal may seek clarification or advice by consulting one of the Designated Officers for Child Protection at CPSSS or the Senior Social Worker 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 child is always the priority.**
- See also Appendix 2 – Responding to a child’s disclosure

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

- The Social Services
- And/ or the PSNI
- The Education Authority’s Designated Officer for Child Protection at CPSSS

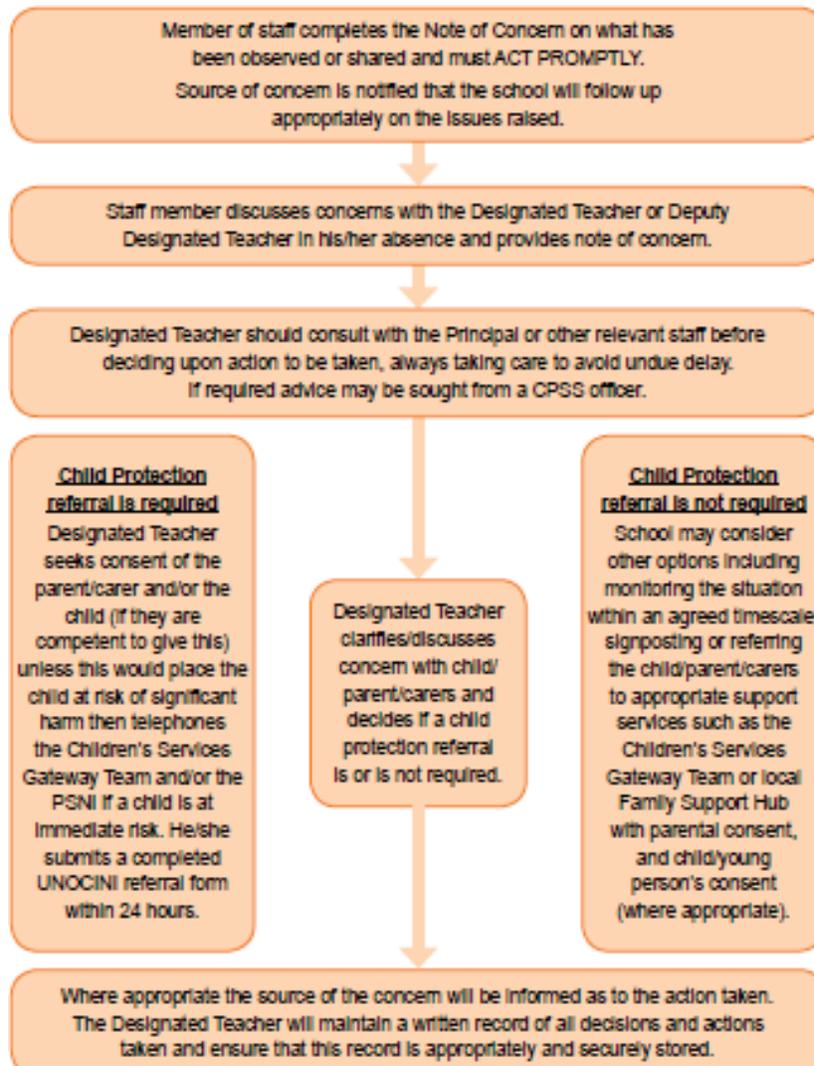
Disclosures made, relevant information received, or concerns identified will be recorded on the *Note of Concern* form which is in Annex D of Circular 2016/20 and to which, all staff have access. A copy of this document is included herein at Appendix 1.

This form will be completed and signed by the staff member to whom the disclosure was made and also signed by the Designated/ Deputy Designated teacher for Child Protection. Once signed, the form will be placed on the pupil's Child Protection File.

Where appropriate a UNOCINI will be forwarded to the Gateway Team of Social Services within 24 hours of making a verbal Child Protection referral.

The consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (*if they are competent to give this*) must normally be given prior to a referral. An exception can be made if it is considered that a child is in need of immediate safeguarding and that to try and gain consent may increase the risk to the child. Issues of consent (*including when consent is not forthcoming*) must always be clearly recorded and kept on file.

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



## **Complaints against staff**

In line with the guidance in Circular 2015/13 *“Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff”*, all concerns must be taken seriously and every effort to maintain confidentiality must be made. The allegation details must not be made known to other staff or pupils.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal/Designated Teacher (*Mrs Stephanie Gillespie*) must be informed immediately. The Principal will take on the role of Lead Individual to manage the handling of the allegation. The Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Safeguarding Team will be informed immediately.

If there is a complaint against the Principal/Designated Teacher, it should be made known to the Chairman of the Board of Governors who will ensure that the necessary action is taken and will inform the Safeguarding Team. The Chairperson will take on the role of Lead Individual to manage the handling of the allegation.

The Lead Individual must determine the facts of the allegation but it is the role of Social Services/ PSNI to conduct any investigations. The Lead Individual should seek advice and views from other key agencies including:

- The Chairman (*if not the Lead Individual*)
- The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)
- Employing Authority
- Social Services
- PSNI
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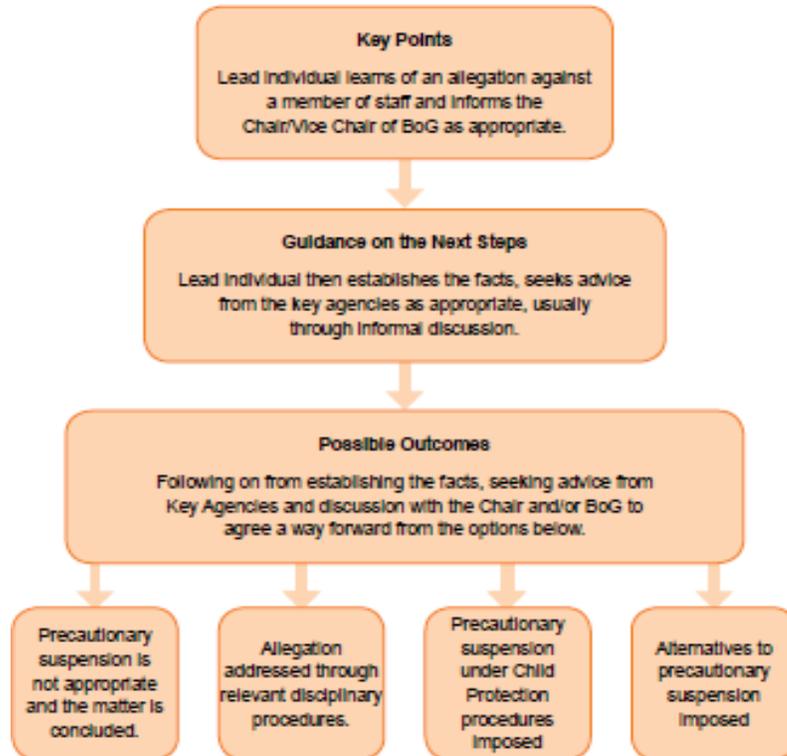
Following full review of the facts and discussion between the key agencies, appropriate action must be determined. If deemed necessary, the complaint will be referred to Social Services/ PSNI for investigation and the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils. In accordance with agreed disciplinary procedures, an imposed precautionary suspension may be invoked by the Board of Governors, but this will be in conjunction with the information shared by the Lead Individual and on the advice of the Education Authority. Principals and Boards of Governors have a duty of care for the welfare of pupils and any allegation needs to be effectively evaluated and managed. However, as

employers, they also have a duty of care to their staff and should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

Records of the allegation should be signed and dated by the Principal. If the Principal is the subject of the concern, the allegation records will be signed by the Lead Individual. All records are retained in the school, on both the child's Child Protection File and on the file of the member of staff concerned.

If following subsequent investigation by one of the investigating agencies, the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record on the staff member's file must be expunged and the entry in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints struck through with an explanation entered. Unless the staff member concerned is totally exonerated, the record should be retained indefinitely. The record on the child's file should be noted with the outcome of the investigation and should be held on file until the child's DOB +30 years.

### **Dealing with an allegation against a member of staff**



### Confidentiality

It should be noted that any information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told. The Designated Teacher will record who information is shared with, when, and the reasons for this. All staff should understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and the consequences of any breach. Information must always be shared with other agencies where there is a legal duty to do so e.g. PSNI and Social Services.

The person making a complaint or giving information will be advised as soon as possible by the Principal (*or if the complaint is against the Principal then the Chairman*) about whether the complaint has been referred to an investigating agency. All allegations are recorded in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints Book which is securely retained and is reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

### **Reporting to the Board of Governors**

Child Protection and Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for all Board of Governor meetings at Shaftesbury Nursery School. The Designated Teacher updates Governors on all Child Protection activities and annually, gives a report to the Board of Governors on all Child Protection matters. The annual report includes information such as what child protection training has been provided for staff/students/volunteers, statistics in relation to child protection concerns e.g. the number of referrals to Social Services and number of children on the child protection register, the number of complaints against staff, any safeguarding/child protection initiatives delivered as part of the school’s preventative curriculum and policy reviews undertaken.

All reports must be anonymised in keeping with the principle of confidentiality. The school’s Record of Child Abuse Complaints is made available to the Chairperson of Board of Governors annually. If an allegation is recorded anonymised information will be shared with Governors including what action was taken and the outcome of the complaint. The Chairman signs and dates the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries.

The Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) will ask to see the Record and Chairperson’s signature during inspections, but not the content or detail of complaints. The ETI are not entitled to see the content of any child protection record, however, they do need to be assured that records

exist and are held in a secure and confidential manner. They will also request sight of the Record of Child Abuse Complaints and, whilst they are not entitled to view the content, they will check that the book is completed and signed off annually by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

### **Storage and transfer of records**

Any information held regarding a child on the Child Protection Register or any Notes of Concerns raised during the pre-school year attended at Shaftesbury Nursery School will be copied and passed on to the child's new primary school. Should the child move to another pre-school setting during the Nursery year, any Child Protection concerns will be passed on to the new setting. When the child is leaving Shaftesbury Nursery School, it is the Nursery which will inform the receiving school immediately that the child's name is on the Child Protection Register and pass on contact details for the social worker. In addition, the Designated Teacher will contact the Designated Teacher from the receiving school in advance of sending the child protection record, to discuss the concerns directly. Any third-party information will be redacted and will not be passed on.

When a child, on whom the school holds safeguarding or child protection information, leaves the school and the school are unaware of the new school they must notify the Education Welfare Service at the Education Authority who will then attempt to locate the child. Social Services must be informed immediately if the child has a Child Protection Plan or is a Looked After Child. The school must retain the child's child protection records and forward the relevant information to the receiving school when the child has been traced.

### **Retention of Child Protection Records**

When a pupil leaves the school or child protection concerns cease to be current or ongoing, and records cease to be of active use other than for reference purposes, the child's individual Child Protection File should be closed. The Designated Teacher should consult the School's Disposal of Records Schedule, review the file and mark the front cover of the file indicating the date on which the file can be destroyed, i.e. 30 years from the pupil's date of birth. If new concerns arise a new file can be opened and cross-referenced with the previous record. The potential for historical allegations should also be considered when archiving child protection records.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Policy Ratified: September 2019

Signed by Principal: .....

Signed by Chair of Governors: .....

Policy reviewed: March 2021  
August 2021

## **Child Protection Key Agency Contact Numbers**

### **Nursery School Contacts**

Shaftesbury Nursery School

Tel: 90 321903

Designated Teacher: Mrs. Stephanie Gillespie

Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs. Loretta Cunningham

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Mr. Danny Wilson

### **Education Authority**

40 Academy Street

Belfast

BT1 2BR

### **Child Protection Support Services (CPSS)**

#### **Regional Helpline Service – Belfast Region**

Tel: 95 985590

### **Social Services Gateway Team**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Gateway Services

110 Saintfield Road BELFAST

BT8 6HD

Tel: 90 50 7000 / Out of hours: 95 04 9999

Ask for Senior Social Worker/Duty Social Worker

### **PSNI**

Central Referral Unit

Tel: 101 OR 028 9025 9299

Ask for the Detective Sergeant in the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU).

**PROFORMA Appendix 1**

**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:

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Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:

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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 If

"No" state reason:

Name of staff member making the report: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

### How to respond to a child who makes a disclosure

#### 1. Receive

- Stay calm
- Listen to what the child is saying without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what the child is saying
- Be discreet

#### 2. Reassure

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to you, **do not make promises that you cannot keep** (e.g. *everything will be alright now, I'll stay with you*)
- Do not promise confidentiality, staff have a duty to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection. Explain that you will need to talk to Mrs Gillespie who will know what to do next
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it

#### 3. Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter to the Designated Teacher for child protection
- Do ask open questions (*can you tell me what happened? Anything else you wish to tell me? Yes ...* )
- Do not ask closed questions (*those that will evoke a yes/no response, eg Did \_\_\_\_\_ do this to you?*). Such questions invalidate evidence where a subsequent court action is necessary
- Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love that person
- Do explain what you will do next (*talk with the Designated Teacher who will know how to get help*)

#### **4. Record**

- Make notes as soon as possible after hearing what the child has said and write them up. *Use proforma at Appendix 1 of Policy.*
- Do not destroy these original notes
- Record the date, time place, people present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour. Record the words the child used as much as possible. – if the child uses ‘pet’ words record those rather than translating them into ‘proper’ words. Any injuries or marks noticed can be depicted on a diagram showing position and extent
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations and assumptions.
- Sign the record and hand it to the Designated Teacher

*(All written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately, are securely maintained, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location.*

#### **5. Refer**

- **Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the Designated Teacher as soon as possible within the working day** so that she may begin the decision making process regarding referral to statutory services.

#### **6. Seek Support for yourself**

Hearing a disclosure can be distressing for staff. It is vital you seek support for yourself. There are structures in place to support staff Health and Wellbeing.

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