



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

"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)

1. Introduction

All adults – teaching staff, support staff and volunteers in Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit accept that they have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of our pupils. 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.

The purpose of this policy is to enhance the protection of our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in school has clear guidance on the action required where a child's welfare is a concern. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit and the safety and well-being of our pupils is of paramount importance.

As part of our ongoing work in the area of Child Protection we will endeavour to raise children's awareness about themselves and to develop a trusting and safe climate in which our children feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings.

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit recognises the importance of a partnership between home and school but where issues of child abuse or suspected child abuse arise our primary responsibility is to the child.

2. Parental Responsibility

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit will work in partnership with parents (those with Parental Responsibility (PR) for a child). In order to ensure that we do so – we are required to verify that those with whom we are sharing information have PR. PR means all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his/her property:

- Where a child's father and mother were married to each other at the time of his birth, they shall each have parental responsibility for the child
- Where a child's father and mother were not married to each other at the time of his birth — the mother shall have parental responsibility for the child; the father shall not have parental responsibility for the child, unless he acquires it. **The Family Law Act (NI) 2001 amends the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995** and makes provision for the acquisition of parental responsibility by unmarried fathers. For children whose births were registered after **15 April 2002**, parental responsibility rests with both parents, provided they are both named on the birth certificate, regardless of whether or not they are married.
- Unmarried fathers whose children were born before **15 April 2002** – or after this date if they are not named on the birth certificate – do not automatically have responsibility for the child. The father could acquire parental responsibility through a parental responsibility agreement with the mother or a parental responsibility order through the courts. A married stepparent or civil partner may also obtain parental responsibility in this way
- Parental responsibility is acquired with a Residency Order
- More than one person may have parental responsibility for the same child at the same time
- A person who has parental responsibility for a child at any time shall not cease to have that responsibility solely because some other person subsequently acquires parental responsibility for the child

- Where more than one person has parental responsibility for a child, each of them may act alone and without the other (or others) in meeting that responsibility
- The fact that a person has parental responsibility for a child shall not entitle him to act in any way which would be incompatible with any order made with respect to the child
- A person who has parental responsibility for a child may not surrender or transfer any part of that responsibility to another but may arrange for some or all of it to be met by one or more persons acting on his behalf
- The person with whom any such arrangement is made may himself be a person who already has parental responsibility for the child concerned.
- The making of any such arrangement shall not affect any liability of the person making it which may arise from any failure to meet any part of his parental responsibility for the child concerned

3. **Aims & 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, "Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection" (DENI Circular **2017/04, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools- A Guide for Schools – revised 2019 and updated August 2020**) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

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

- In all matters relating to Child Protection procedures or policies, the best interest of the child is of paramount importance.
- Children have the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously, and to be consulted according to their age and understanding about proposed action.
- Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit has a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded, and their safety is preserved.
- There are clear procedures in place to be followed where the school has been alerted to possible abuse as outlined in the above-mentioned document.
- All teaching and support staff are alert to the signs of possible abuse and know what procedures need to be followed.
- Child Protection arrangements should also seek to maintain the necessary balance between protecting children and respecting the rights of parents, families/carers and members of staff.
- A copy of the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection arrangements will be maintained and circulated to parents at intake. The full policy document is also accessible within school and copies provided given 24 hours notice. All parents will be issued with a copy of the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection summary flyer annually. Both of these documents are available to download from the school website. Parents are asked to sign and return acknowledgement and agreement to this policy via the September Data Pack Parental return form.
- Child Protection arrangements are also understood by children so that they know what to do and who they can talk to.

3a **CPSS Updates 2021/22**

PSNI Central Referral Unit (CRU) cru@psni.pnn.police.uk This is the single point of contact for all agencies and partners making referrals for suspected child abuse cases. Monday – Sunday: 9:00–17:00

Signs of Safety Practice Model across all Children's Services Teams

Risk Assessments

- Educational trips; EA Educational Visits Interim Guidance for Schools 2017
- Use of volunteers/external providers for school-based activities
- Complaint against a member of staff; DE Circular 2015/13
- Health and Safety
- Harmful Sexualised Behaviour
- Generic risk assessment

SBNI Strategy 2018-22

SBNI now proposes to adopt a strength-based, trauma-informed approach to safeguarding children and young people, underpinned by research relating to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The SBNI member bodies have decided to place a specific focus on three of the most significant ACEs for children and young people living in Northern Ireland over the next four years.

- Neglect
- Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Child and Parental Mental Health

4. 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:

- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E Safety and Use of Digital Technologies Policies
- Pastoral Care
- Intimate Care
- Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter (**Appendix 1**)
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Attendance
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)

*These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact the School Principal or visit the school website at www.whitehouseps.org

Appendix 6 has some useful contact numbers and email addresses.

5. The Safeguarding & Child Protection Team at WPS & Nursery Unit

Chair of Governors:

Mrs. D Baillie

Principal:

Miss Blain

Designated Governor for Child Protection & E Safety:

Mrs D Baillie*

Designated Teacher for Child Protection & E Safety:

Mrs. R Watson

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection:

Mrs. H Clifford

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection for Nursery:

Mrs. C Spratt

(*BoG is due to reconstitute 2023/24)

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Designated Teacher

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit has a Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher 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 Designated Teacher 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.
- 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.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

6.2 The Deputy Designated Teacher

- The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) is to work cooperatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling his/her responsibilities.
- The Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher (DT) so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required. Deputy Designated Teachers are provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.
- Whitehouse Primary School has two Deputy Designated Teachers due to the presence of an additional provision of a nursery unit.

6.3 The Principal

- The Principal, as the Secretary to the Board of Governors, will assist the Board of Governors 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 the Department of Education is 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 Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.
- It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the Designated Teachers (DTs) to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role.
- 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. (WPS issue summaries to all parents annually)

6.4 The Designated Governor for Child Protection

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit has delegated a specific member of the governing body (***Mrs Baillie temporary**) to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to be able to advise the governors on:

- The role of the designated teachers;
- The content of child protection policies;
- The content of a Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter for all adults within the school;
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report;
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

***The board of Governors are due to reconstitute – 2023/24**

6.5 The Board of Governors

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 places a statutory duty on Boards of Governors (BoG) to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- Have a written child protection policy.
- Specifically address the prevention of bullying in school behaviour management policies.

The Boards of Governors at Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit ensures 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.
- 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. (Circular 2021/12 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016)
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every three years, or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19
- They must ensure that the implications for safeguarding their pupils in the extended school environment are fully addressed and that this is addressed, and that these are outlined within the school's child protection policy.
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters This report includes 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
2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools:
 - Safeguarding and child protection concerns.
 - Disclosures of abuse
 - Complaints against staff
 - Staff induction and training

6.6 Chairperson of the Board of Governors

- The Chairperson of the Board of Governors (Mrs D Baillie) plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within our school environment.
- In the event of a safeguarding and 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 the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries.

6.7 Safeguarding and Child Protection Team

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team's role is:

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school.
- Support for the Designated Teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.
- Review the child protection/safeguarding practices annually using the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) pro-forma entitled 'Guidance for the evaluation of child protection/safeguarding.'

6.8 Other Members of School Staff

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

They should 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/Principal
- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (WPS Pastoral Care Report Form - **Appendix 3**)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- **Not** investigate
- **Not** ask leading questions

In addition, the member of staff / 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.

6.9 Parents

Parents should play their part in safeguarding by:

- 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 may have in relation to their child with the school.
- Signing and returning acknowledgment of Child Protection information included in the September data pack issued annually.
- Follow guidelines as outlined in Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter (**Appendix 1**)
- Informing the school if the child has an allergy, medical condition or educational need.
- Making sure that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.
- Informing the teacher if there are any changes in the arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.

- Contacting the school if their child is absent and send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the parent/carer knows about the absence and the school is reassured as to the child's situation.
- Informing the school if there is any change in circumstances for example – change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- Informing the school if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.

(More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website www.eani.org.)

7 **What is Abuse?**

The following definitions are taken from the document Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

7.1 **Types of Abuse**

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

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.

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.

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 opportunities 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.

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.

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.

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.

8 **Specific Types of Abuse**

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit are also aware of and will make use of child protection reporting procedures when necessary and as appropriate in relation to the following:

8.1 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:-

Domestic Violence and Abuse: *'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'*

Sexual Violence and Abuse *'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).'*

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy can be found at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-strategy

It is recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Symptoms which young people may display, and which are indicators only include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervousness • Low self-worth • Disturbed sleep patterns • Nightmares / flashbacks • Physiological – stress / nerves • Stomach pain • Bed wetting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immature / needy behaviour • Temper tantrums • Aggression • Internalising distress or withdrawal • Truancy • Alcohol and drugs • Bullying
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These symptoms can lead to a child/ young person being misdiagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive. If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with Social Services.

The following definitions are taken from DENI Circular **2017/04, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools- A Guide for Schools**. If there is any concern or disclosure made that a child is or has been subjected to any of the following the school's child protection policy will be followed.

8.2 Operation Encompass

We are an Operation Encompass school (Starting Feb 2023) 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. www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2022

8.3 Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Child Sexual Exploitation	Potential indicators of CSE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation.• Truanting/leaving school without permission.• Persistently going missing or returning late.• Receiving lots of texts/ phone calls prior to leaving.• Change in mood - agitated/stressed.• Appearing distraught/disheveled or under the influence of substances.• Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.• Physical symptoms e.g. bruising; bite marks.• Collected from school by unknown adults or 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 abuse. <p>While these indicators can be useful in identifying potential risk, their presence does not necessarily mean CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence mean it is not.</p>
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8.4 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 in order 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.

8.5 Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

8.6 Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

Forced Marriage Possible Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absence and persistent absence.• Request for extended leave of absence/failure to return from visits to country of origin.• Surveillance by siblings or cousins.• Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.• Poor exam results.• Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home.• Not allowed to attend extracurricular activities.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger. • Prevented from going on to further/higher education.
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8.7 Self Harm & Suicide

'It is most helpful to consider self-harm as a continuum, ranging from behaviour which has a strong suicidal intent (for example, some kinds of overdose) to behaviour which is intended to help the person stay alive (such as cutting)' (*John Coleman 2004*)

If a child in our school shows evidence or discloses or a concern is raised that a child has or has a wish to self-harm or expresses suicidal ideation, the school will contact the parent and request that they collect their child and visit their GP. We will work closely with parents and the child to develop a risk managed approach to supporting that child in school. This is in keeping with received information from DoE – Protecting Life in School – Safeguarding Action Checklist.

8.8 Gender Identity Issues/Sexual Orientation

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit strive to provide a happy environment where all young people feel safe and secure. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Any child requiring support regarding their gender identity and orientation will be supported by the school. Staff will work closely with parents and any child in order to support the child's well-being and continuing education in school.

8.9 Children displaying Sexually Harmful Behaviour

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit recognises that learning about sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. Our school supports children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise. Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the school's positive behaviour policy, but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centered.

8.10 E-Safety/Internet Abuse

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. 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.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

Content risks: the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.

Contact risks: the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.

Conduct risks: the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.

Commercial risks: the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

Our school policy on the internet and digital technologies is set out in separate documents entitled, Use of Internet and Digital Technologies Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. They are informed by DE guidance, and they are reviewed annually and updated as required. All staff, pupils and parents sign an Acceptable Use Policy annually. This agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of individuals and highlights that the school can monitor network and Internet use to help ensure staff and pupil safety.

Any allegation of inappropriate behaviour must be reported to Mrs Rachael Watson (Designated Teacher for CP) who is the Designated E - Safety Officer. The Designated E-Safety member of the Board of Governors is (Mrs D Baillie temporary). The E – Safety team (Miss Blain, Mrs. Richmond, Mrs. McNevison, & Mrs. Watson) will monitor E-Safety issues. Pupils from Key Stage 2 are represented on the school's ICT/E Safety Team to promote positive messages throughout the school.

Our school was awarded the 360 Safe Award in 2016 which credited our approaches to E - Safety ensuring that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. It recognised that pupils have a clear understanding of online safety issues.

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.

We actively engage with parents to share information, advice and guidance on the appropriate and safe use of digital technology.

Parents have the responsibility to work collaboratively with the school to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. Parents should be mindful of the school policies in relation to digital technologies.

8.11 Managing the Risks

Twenty-first Century life presents dangers including violence, racism, radicalisation and exploitation. Whilst children and young people need to be protected from these dangers, they also need to be educated about how to recognise and avoid the risks and become 'Internet Wise'. Pupils need to know how to cope if they come across inappropriate material or situations online and should be encouraged to seek help and advice when they need it without fear of censure or criminalisation.

8.12 Sexting

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit seeks to work collaboratively with parents in order to address any of the challenging issues that children are now potentially exposed to via the use of digital technology. Where we become aware that sexually suggestive images have been shared inappropriately the child protection policy will be followed.

9 Identifying Abuse Signs and Symptoms of Abuse ~ Possible Indicators

9.1 Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
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; 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	Self-destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; 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 artwork or stories

9.2 Emotional Abuse

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.

9.3 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.

9.4 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; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	What the child tells you; withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; self-devaluation; 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

10 **Bullying**

Our school has the responsibility for the personal and social welfare of our pupils which includes ensuring that no child is bullied. (2021/12 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act NI 2016) Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and it will not be tolerated in our school. All staff are aware of the Anti Bullying policy and endeavour to be vigilant to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take steps to prevent it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline and support the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted by the School Principal immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint made by a parent that alleges that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be noted and will be investigated by the Principal and action will be immediately taken to protect the victim. Action includes careful monitoring, both in class and in the playground, encouraging other children to play with /support the child.

The parents of the child who is carrying out bullying behaviour will be personally informed by the Principal of the investigation and will be told the sanctions which will take place for their child. These sanctions may include careful monitoring and discussion with the offending child, loss of privileges, detention at break / lunchtime. The behaviour of this child will be carefully monitored until the staff are satisfied that the problem has been resolved.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, measures will be taken in accordance with the School's Anti Bullying Policy.

11. **Looked After Children**

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit is committed to supporting looked after children to ensure they get the best from a secure and safe educational setting such as ours. We will work closely with the child, parents and carers where appropriate to ensure the best educational outcomes for looked after children. Personal Education Plans (PEP's) will be completed where appropriate for children who are Looked After. Designated school staff will be actively involved in liaising with other key agencies in developing PEP's and attending regular reviews.

12 **Confidentiality**

All matters regarding Child Protection are dealt with in the strictest of confidence and as outlined in DENI Circular 2017/04, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools A Guide for Schools.

The above circular advises that all staff in the school both teaching and support staff, have a 'responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Social Services and the Police) Staff should not give the child or young person undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should, of course, reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know. School staff are aware of the need to record and report child protection issues and the appropriate procedures to be followed. The importance of confidentiality is highlighted. Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

13 **Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or Disclosed) Child Abuse**

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.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 2**.

All school staff are aware of their responsibility to communicate immediately with the Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher if informed by a child, parent or other person, or if they have suspicions or concerns about any child or adult.

The purpose of the following procedures is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in the school – teachers, non – teaching staff and volunteers, have clear guidance on the action which is required where neglect or abuse of a child is suspected.

All procedures are in keeping with those outlined in DENI Circular **2017/04, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools**. A flow chart outlining the procedure where a school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff including volunteers is available in **Appendix 2**

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 or she must inform Mrs. R Watson (DT Designated Teacher for Child Protection) or Mrs H Clifford or C Spratt (DDT Deputy Designated Teacher for Nursery) in her absence.

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for Social Services and/or the PSNI – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with her and make full notes. Information regarding the concern **must** be recorded on a copy of the school's Pastoral Care Report Form in **Appendix 3** by the member of staff on the same day. These notes or records must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations, signed and dated. 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.

Additional copies of this form can be obtained from any member of the school pastoral care team.

The Designated/Deputy 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 or the DT/DDT is advised otherwise, the parent will be informed immediately.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher may consult with members of the school's safeguarding team, the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Education Authority's 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 of paramount importance.

The DT will ensure that a written record of decisions is maintained in the pupil's child protection file.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services/Gateway Team. He/she will also notify the EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection & PSNI if necessary or advised. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway Team and a copy will be kept in the pupil's child protection file.

In the event of an **urgent** Child Protection issue arising and DT Mrs. R Watson or DDT Mrs Clifford / Mrs. Spratt are **NOT** in the school building the person with the concern should initially contact Miss Blain to seek advice. Failing that contact should be made with CPSS. Failing that a call should be made directly to Social Services for advice on the matter. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. All relevant contact details are displayed in the school office and all external phone points.

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.

14 Talking to Children where there are Concerns about Possible Abuse

When dealing with a disclosure or talking to a child where there are concerns about possible abuse advice as outlined in DENI Circular 2017/04, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools A Guide for Schools will be followed.

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's non-teaching staff sees such signs, he/ she should immediately bring them to the attention of either the class teacher or the Designated Teacher, and it may be appropriate for the necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher.

Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family is in need of intervention by statutory, voluntary or community-based services through a 'child in need' referral (with parental consent).

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some circumstances, talking to the child will quickly clarify initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred, and point to the need for an immediate referral. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore, be kept to a minimum.

14.1 Dealing with a Disclosure:

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

Receive - Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is being said and allow the child to talk freely

Reassure - Stress that it was the right thing to tell. Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault. No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be made to a child or anyone giving information about possible abuse. 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.**

Respond - Listen, rather than ask direct questions. Explain your duty and what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Record –as soon after the disclosure as is practical document the disclosure (on a copy of the school's Pastoral Care Report Form see appendix 3). The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations. Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the actual words used by the child. **Original notes should not be destroyed.**

Refer – Pass all information directly and immediately to the DT / DDT.

ALL staff need to remember that it is **not** their duty to investigate allegations of child abuse but to simply gather information by way of discrete preliminary clarification and share it with DT / DDT.

Support for staff to whom disclosure has been made

It is acknowledged that receiving a disclosure from a child or receiving information from Social Services about Child Abuse can be a stressful experience for any member of staff. Therefore,

support will be offered to that member of staff within the school. Other sources of support may be accessed through the CPSSS.

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

Do:	Do Not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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 ❖ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality ❖ Stay calm ❖ Listen ❖ Accept ❖ Reassure ❖ Explain what you are going to do ❖ Record accurately ❖ Seek support for yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ask leading questions. ❖ Put words into the child's mouth. ❖ Ignore the child's behaviour. ❖ Remove any clothing. ❖ Panic ❖ Promise to keep secrets ❖ Ask leading questions ❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily ❖ Delay ❖ Start to investigate ❖ Do Nothing

15 **How a Parent can Raise a Concern**

We trust parents will share and agree with our practice in the area of Child Protection. 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 or any member of the school's safeguarding team, the Principal, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. (Mrs D Baillie) If they are still concerned, they can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman and at any time they can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team or PSNI Central Referral Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 4**.

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

All staff at Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit undergo child protection training annually and there is a Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter

Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures in DE Circular 2015/13 should be followed - www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201513-dealing-allegations-abuse-against-member-staff.

In all decisions the child's welfare is the paramount consideration and the child should be listened to, and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed and, in some cases, this will require consideration of suspension as a precautionary measure.

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

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

If a member of staff receives a complaint concerning possible child abuse by a member of the Board of Governors, all aspects of the following procedures for complaints against a member

of staff should be followed. The Principal should immediately inform the Chairperson unless he/she is the subject of the complaint, in which case the Chairperson's role should be exercised by the Vice Chairman.

Child protection procedures as outlined in **Appendix 5** will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

17 Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified at risk or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register. The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal 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.

18 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.

19 Record Keeping

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit seeks to create and retain reliable records to demonstrate accountability for decisions and actions taken. (2020/07 Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools)

School staff are aware of the need to record and report child protection concerns. It is essential that an accurate record of all cases of child abuse, or possible abuse, is maintained detailing all actions taken.

Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit ensures that:

- School staff are aware of the need to record and report child protection issues and the appropriate procedures to be followed. The importance of confidentiality should be highlighted.
- The Child Protection Files are held in a separate, secure confidential filing system, ideally in a fireproof cabinet. This is only accessible to the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher or the Principal.
- Files must not be removed from school premises except when taken to a case planning meeting or on foot of a court order. A record should be kept of when information is removed, by whom, for what purpose, and when it is returned.
- If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or portable memory device all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

19.1 Transfer of Records and Information

If a pupil who is known to be on the Child Protection Register changes school, the DT will inform the Social Worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school.

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

A copy of child protection records will be transferred from WPS & Nursery Unit to the receiving school for the child. These files will contain information generated by Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit all other information will be destroyed. In some cases, advice may be sought from CPSS in regard to the transfer of information.

19.2 Record Keeping in Relation to Staff

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a summary is entered in a hard backed book 'Abuse Complaints Against Staff' which will be housed in the locked Child Protection cabinet. This entry will contain details of the complaint and will be made available to the Chair of the Board of Governors at least annually for formal signatory or as deemed necessary.

20 Staff Training

20.1 School Governors

Child Protection Training for school governors has three specific strands:

- Initial Child Protection Awareness Training as part of the induction programme for all new governors.
- Child Protection Training from the CPSS for Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection in order that they can assist the full Board of Governors with their child protection governance. This should be completed during each term of office (every four years).
- Training on recruitment, selection and vetting which incorporates child protection legislation and DE guidance for all governors who will be sitting on interview or teacher appointments panels.

20.2 Designated Teacher Training/Deputy Designated Teacher Training

Designated Teachers (DTs) and Deputy Designated Teachers (DDTs) at Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit have attend the two-day CPSS Introduction to Child Protection course, within their first year in post.

DTs and DDTs attend refresher training every 3 years thereafter. All training is subject to the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's (SBNI) Child Protection and Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy 2014-2017.

20.3 Whole School Training

The DT and DDT cascade child protection training to the whole school every year with new staff receiving training as part of their induction. All staff are made aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and are aware of the relevant child protection procedures, including how to contact the Designated Teacher.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school, they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter and given copies of these policies. The DT/DDT are named and/or introduced.

21 Recruitment, Vetting and Induction of Staff and Volunteers

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate. The Principal manages Recruitment, Vetting and Induction of Staff and Volunteers with the support of the DT / DDT.

The school's vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in DE circulars 2006/06, 2006/07, 2006/08, 2006/09, 2008/03. 2013/01, 2012/19 Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk

21.1 Volunteers

There are two types of volunteers working in schools: those who work unsupervised and those who work under supervision. Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an EDC. A volunteer who works under supervision is not required to obtain an EDC,

however, schools/ organisations must determine whether the level of supervision meets the statutory standard - see DE Circular 2012/19.

We ensure that volunteers, e.g., coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc who are employed by others, have the necessary clearances in place.

21.2 Visitors to Schools

Visitors to our school, such as parents, suppliers of goods and services, to carry out maintenance etc are not routinely vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors are managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school is restricted as needs require.

Visitors are:

- Met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school-by-school staff.
- If appropriate, given restricted access to only specific areas of the school.
- Where possible, escorted by a member of staff/representative.
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- If delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

21.3 Pupils on Work Experience

Pupils coming into the school on work experience do not require Access NI clearance as they are fully supervised by school staff. The normal child protection induction processes will apply.

22 **Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter 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 staff, parents' and visitors 'charter is distributed to all staff—permanent and non-permanent and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is set out in **Appendix 1** and is displayed in the school.

23 **Shared Education, Extended Schools and Off-Site Arrangements**

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by our school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. Shared Education have clear guidelines and procedures for child protection and this information has been agreed and shared by all schools involved. A copy of these are available on request.

The following child protection procedures are followed if a child who is not from our school makes a disclosure or child abuse is suspected. These arrangements have been agreed by both Whitehouse primary School and Nursery Unit and St James's Primary School.

- The teacher should contact the DT in the school in which the child is a pupil by telephone immediately. This will ensure that if any further action needs to be taken, this happens promptly and before the child is dismissed from school.
- All suspected or disclosed abuse should be recorded and reported, using the supplied pro forma, in accordance with the policies of the child's school.
- These forms should be placed in a sealed envelope and returned to the DT from the child's school with the accompanying teacher. A copy of the form should also be given to the DT in the host school.

If other organisations provide services or activities on our site, we will ensure that they adhere to the appropriate child protection procedures in place in our school. There will be clear communication channels to ensure the Designated Teacher for CP is kept appropriately informed.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will work in accordance with the Educational Authorities policy on Educational Visits and check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

24 The Preventative Curriculum

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm of our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of 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. Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and safeguarding team visits to classes. There is a permanent child protection notice board in the entrance hall and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers.
- The school has developed a 'Helping Hand' giving details where children can get support if they need to. These are visible throughout the school and in classrooms.
- Each classroom has a designated area to display pastoral care information.
- A flow diagram of how a parent may raise a concern is also on display.
- An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in staff room.
- Year 4 – Year 7 have locked keeping safe boxes for children to write their worries or concerns. These are checked regularly by class teachers.
- Included in the curriculum are 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.
- Pupils are issued with a 'We Care' flyer annually that gives them details about the pastoral care team, internet safety, our school helping hand, school-based counselling, Q and A's, bullying, pastoral promises and our positive values.
- The school website promotes all aspects of pastoral care for pupils and parents.

25 Other Policies

25.1 Safe Handling

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in a separate policy Safe Handling/Use of Reasonable Force Policy in accordance with guidelines from EA . It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. (Circular 2021/13 Interim Guidance on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings.)

25.2 Health & Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits. See NEELB Educational Visits: Best Practice 2009 for guidance.

Visitors to the school are asked to sign in, in necessary show ID, and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in but are expected to report to the school office before entering. All visitors are expected to enter through one entrance and observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. The Principal will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

25.3 Data Protection

Whitehouse Primary School recognises and accepts its responsibility as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 and sub-legislation contained therein. The School, as a Data Controller, will take all reasonable steps to meet this responsibility and to promote good practice in the handling and use of personal information. In particular, the School will comply with the Data Protection Principles set out in the 1998 Act. Please refer to The Data Protection Policy.

25.4 Photography & Images of Children

Regarding the use of images parental permission is annually sought on this matter and all replies are kept by the class teacher. Relevant information regarding replies is also sent to the

Designated Teacher. Parents have the responsibility to notify the school if there are any changes to this information throughout the year. To protect our pupils, we will:

- seek parental consent and their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- not use pupils full name with an image
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- ensure that personal data is not shared.
- store images appropriately, securely and for no longer than necessary.
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

25.6 Intimate Care Policy

Parents / carers have a responsibility to advise the school of the intimate care needs of their child. In such cases a meeting will be held to discuss the policy and procedures to be followed. In the event of an accident or a child needing assistance regarding intimate care the procedures outlined in the school's intimate care policy will be followed.

25.7 Special Educational Needs

Staff at Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit Children are aware that young people with disabilities (i.e. any child or young person who has a physical, sensory, or learning impairment or a significant health condition). Staff are aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff are aware that children with a special educational need should 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.

26 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Safeguarding Team in Whitehouse Primary School & Nursery Unit will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher. On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

Signed:

_____ (Designated Teacher)

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

Appendices

Appendix 1 Staff, Parents' and Visitors' Charter

Appendix 2 Flow Chart outlining the procedure where a school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff including volunteers.

Appendix 3 A copy of the school's Pastoral Care Report Form

Appendix 4 A flowchart outlining how a parent can raise a concern

Appendix 5 Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff

Appendix 6 Useful Contact Numbers and Email Addresses

