

# Moyle Primary School and Nursery Unit



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

**Date ratified by Board of Governors: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021**

**Date of Review: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023**

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# Safeguarding Ethos

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The Governors and staff of Moyle Primary School and Nursery Unit take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguarding of all children and young people entrusted to our care and 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. This policy aims to embed a culture which recognises the child's fundamental right to be safe and promote their general welfare.

Effective safeguarding will:

- *Promote* the welfare for the child and young person.
- *Prevent* harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention.
- *Protect* children and young people from harm when this is required.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school

## Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, "Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

## The following principles underpin our practice in relation to safeguarding children in our school:

- Maintaining children's safety and welfare as our paramount concern
- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with our children. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in school are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.
- The voice of the child should be heard through providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected; confident to talk openly and sure of being listened to
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that children have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties
- Using the curriculum to provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness and decision making so that students become equipped with a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations. All efforts should be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety or welfare
- Embed a culture of understanding and awareness of harm and its effects on children by promoting early identification of need. Ensuring all staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and follow clearly defined processes of reporting risk of harm, being aware of the school's procedures and lines of communication for reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse
- Evidence based and informed decision making ensures responses are appropriate and timely when a child is identified as being in need of support and/or protection.
- Monitoring children and young people who have been identified as "in need" including the need for protection; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals
- We will seek to prevent problems occurring or worsening through the introduction of timely supportive measures.
- Partnership is the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met. This involves ensuring the effective and co-ordinated supportive liaisons between families, agencies, individuals and professionals with other agencies.

## Other Related Policies

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

- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy
- Pastoral Care
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Intimate Care
- E-Safety Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the School office or visit the school website at: [www.moyleprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.moyleprimaryschool.co.uk)

## School Safeguarding Team

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The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors – Rev. Paul Reid
- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs Karen Weir
- Principal – Mr Gareth Hamilton
- Designated Teacher – Mrs Caroline Wilkin
- Deputy Designated Teacher – Miss Aimee Montgomery (Mrs Julianne Greer)
- Deputy Designated Teacher for Nursery – Miss Nicola Blain

# Roles and Responsibilities

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## Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. They must also appoint a Deputy Designated Teacher who as a member of the Safeguarding team will actively support the Designated Teacher in carrying out the following duties:

- 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, Women's Aid, EISS etc;
- 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; and
- compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

## Principal

- as secretary to the Board of Governors, will assist them in fulfilling their safeguarding and child protection duties;
- ensures the Board of Governors are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding including changes to legislation, policy, procedures, DE circulars, inclusion of child protection on the termly meeting agenda;
- to manage allegations / complaints against school staff;
- to establish and manage the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection;
- to appoint and manage designated teacher/deputy designated teachers who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities;
- to ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection including awareness of safeguarding and child protection for new staff and volunteers as part of an induction programme;
- ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy or summary of the child protection policy at intake and at a minimum every 2 years; and
- to maintain the schools record of child abuse complaints.

## Board of Governors must ensure that:

- they safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- 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;
- ensure the school has a child protection policy annually, and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- the school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;
- the school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every three years, or as specified in relevant guidance;
- there is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school;
- all school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19;
- they receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff; and
- 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.

## Chair of Board of Governors

The chair of the board of governors:

- has a pivotal role in creating and maintaining a safeguarding ethos;
- receives training from CPSS and HR;
- assumes lead responsibility in the event of a CP complaint or concern about the principal; and
- ensures compliance with legislation, Child Protection record keeping and policies.

## Designated Governor for Child Protection

Advises the board of governors on: -

- the role of the designated teachers;
- the content of child protection policies;
- the content of a code of conduct for adults within the school;
- the content of the termly updates and full annual designated teachers report; and
- recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

## School Staff

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The protection and promotion of the welfare of children is a responsibility for all members of staff, teaching and nonteaching. Moyle promotes a culture of mutual trust and respect in school through which the best interests of the children entrusted to our care is paramount.

Throughout their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff, especially teachers, but also nonteaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning patterns or development.

- members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the designated teacher for child protection or to the deputy designated teacher if she is not available;
- class teachers should complete the incident form on the Child Protection Online Management Service website (CPOMS) if there are safeguarding concerns such as: 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 and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse;
- **staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions.

## Support Staff

- if any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member, they should report these concerns to the designated teacher or deputy designated teacher if she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made, and any further necessary action will be taken.



## Parents

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

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school:

- familiarising themselves with the school's policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Online Safety, and Complaints;
- if the child has a medical condition or educational need;
- if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child;
- if there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility;
- if there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school;
- if their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: [www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection)

**It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.**

## Child Protection Definitions

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### Definition of Harm

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.

**Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm.**

## Harm can be caused by:

### Physical Abuse:

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.

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Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

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

### Emotional Abuse:

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.

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Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

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

## Sexual Abuse:

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.

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Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

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

## Neglect:

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.

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Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

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

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

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

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## Specific types of Abuse

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in Moyle are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 1**.

## Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English and sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see these in **Appendix 2**.

## Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

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Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017)  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

## How a Parent can Raise a Concern

At Moyle Primary School and Nursery Unit we aim to work closely with parents and guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have in relation to the safety of their or another child 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 to the Designated Teacher for child protection or the principal. If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. This procedure is outlined in **Appendix 3.**

## Where School has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff

In Moyle, 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 will complete an 'Incident Form' on CPOMS and act promptly. **They will not investigate** - this is a matter for Social Services - but will discuss these concerns with the designated teacher or with the deputy designated teacher if she is not available.

The designated teacher will consult with the principal or the Vice Principal if he is not available, always taking care to avoid due delay. If required, advice may be sought from an Education Authority Child Protection Officer. The designated teacher may also seek clarification from the child or young person, their parent/carer.

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

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

The designated teacher will phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form. Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

For further detail please see **Appendix 4.**

## Operation Encompass

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

For further information see '*The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022*'.

## Talking to Children where there are Concerns about Possible Abuse

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 nonteaching 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:

- Staff should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- Staff should not, therefore, ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?".
- The priority at this stage is to actively listen to the child, and not to interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is freely recalling significant events (the child must not be asked to unnecessarily recount the experience of abuse), and as soon as possible afterwards to make a record of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher, using the 'Incident Form' on CPOMS.
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred, should be recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible afterwards, quoting words actually used.
- 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.
- Staff should not ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

## Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff or a Volunteer

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher if the principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the principal, then the designated teacher should be informed and she will inform the Chairperson of the board of governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in **Appendix 5** will be followed.

## Consent

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Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child/young person, should, where practicable, be discussed with the parent and consent sought for a referral to children's social services in the local HSC Trust, unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child/young person at further risk through delay or undermine any criminal investigative process (for example in circumstances where there are concerns or suspicions that a crime has taken place); or there is concern raised about the parent's actions or reactions. The communication/language needs of the parents/carers should be established for example in relation to disability/ethnicity and the parent's/carer's capacity to understand should be ascertained. These should be addressed through the provision of appropriate communication methods, including, where necessary, translators, signers, intermediaries or advocacy services.

Effective protection for children/young people may, on occasions, require the sharing of information without prior parental/carer consent in advance of that information being shared.

Where staff decide not to seek parental consent before making a referral to children's social services in the local Health and Social Care Trust or the police, the reason for this decision must be clearly noted in the child/young person's records and included within the verbal and written/UNOCINI referral.

When a referral is deemed to be necessary in the interests of the child/young person, and the parents/carers have been consulted and do not consent, the following action should be taken:

- the reason for proceeding without parental consent must be recorded;
- the withholding of permission by the parent/carer must be included in the verbal and written referral to children's social services;
- the parent/carer should be contacted to inform them that, after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

Staff making a referral may ask for their anonymity to be protected as far as possible because of a genuine threat to self/family. In such instances this anonymity should be protected with an explanation to the staff member that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information may become the subject of court processes.

## Confidentiality and Information Sharing

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



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

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

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

## Record Keeping

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

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in Moyle are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected. CPOMS uses a separate 'authenticator' app to ensure security.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be sent to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher by alerting them on CPOMS. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

## Safe Recruitment Procedures

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

## Extended School's Programme

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The child protection procedures of Moyle Primary School extend in their entirety to our Extended School's Programme. All Extended Schools Staff will be vetted in the same way as other staff. Where volunteers have received training from their organisation with regards to

child protection then they will receive a short training session given by the Deputy Designated Teacher/Extended Schools coordinator, covering the aspects of training relevant to our school. Where the person has not attended child protection training then they will have to attend the full child protection training session.

## Code of Conduct for all Staff – paid or unpaid

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All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors

**(Our Code of Conduct is set out in a separate document and is available on request.)**

## Physical Contact with Pupils/Safe Handling/The Use of Reasonable Force

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All staff have a responsibility to maintain confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. Integral to this is a clear understanding of standards of behaviour expected and in particular the acceptable boundaries of physical contact with pupils. School staff must accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny and that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued.

In extreme cases, a staff member might have to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him or her from committing an offence, from causing injury to him or herself, to others or to property, or otherwise from behaving in an undisciplined way. Staff are empowered to use reasonable force in these circumstances, either on school premises or anywhere else where the member of staff is in lawful charge of the pupil concerned. In such instances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used.

Staff should act within the Department's and the Education Authority's (EA) guidelines on the use of reasonable force and should seek to avoid causing injury to the pupil.

## Intimate Care

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It is essential that every child is given the opportunity to exercise choice, appropriate to their age, whilst also ensuring that care is given as gently and sensitively as possible.

Staff should always bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position.

Given the right approach, intimate care can provide opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self-esteem.

Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young person's right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times. Further details are provided in our **Intimate Care Policy**.

## The Preventative Curriculum

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The statutory personal development curriculum (PDMU) requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. Class circle time and assemblies are used to support this work and outside agencies such as NSPCC and PSNI give presentations on Stranger Danger, Drugs etc.

Schools are well-placed to teach pupils how to develop healthy relationships, and to make informed choices in their lives so that they can protect themselves.

Safeguarding and Child Protection In schools DENI 2017

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 endeavour to:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include the safeguarding of children as an important focus in the school's personal development programme and to address issues where they arise within the context of subjects. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

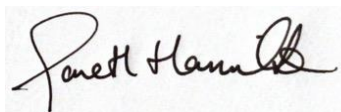
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This policy will be reviewed annually by the safeguarding team and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the schools staff induction and training programme and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the designated teacher for child protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team. The board of governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the designated teacher.

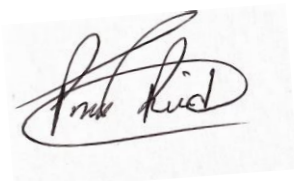
**Date Policy Reviewed:** November 2021 (updated 24.1.23)

**Signed:** **Caroline Wilkin**

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Designated Teacher)**



\_\_\_\_\_ **(Principal)**



\_\_\_\_\_ **(Chair of Board of Governors)**

## Appendix 1: Specific Types of Abuse

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**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. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

If the staff in Moyle become aware of signs that may indicate grooming they will take early action and follow the school's child protection policies and procedures.

**Child sexual exploitation** (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS version 2.0 2017)

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

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring will follow the school's child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

**Domestic and Sexual violence and abuse** can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children.

Domestic violence and abuse is defined as 'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.' Sexual Violence and Abuse is defined as '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).’ (Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016).

If it comes to the attention of school staff that Domestic Abuse, is or may be, affecting a child this will be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information with the Social Services Gateway Team.

**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. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy.

**Forced Marriage** A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and if in Moyle we have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person we will contact the PSNI immediately.

### **Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour**

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child’s development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. As a school we support 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.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as ‘healthy’, ‘problematic’ or ‘sexually harmful’. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. We will also take guidance from DE

Circular 2016/05 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

## What is Harmful Sexualised Behaviour?

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

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

Sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the schools positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centred.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and in our school we will refer to our child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

## 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.

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

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

*Sexting* is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobile or over the internet. Through our preventative curriculum we will make pupils aware of the dangers of sharing 'indecent images,' and the illegal nature of this. Should offences be committed the matter will be dealt with sensitively, considering all circumstances and working alongside parents. Advice will be sought from the CPSS

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

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

#### *Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress*

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that it is **not forwarded to anyone else**. Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted)) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent.



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

## Appendix 2 - Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

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### Children with a disability

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

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

## Children with limited fluency in English

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English 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.

Designated Teachers should work with their SEN co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer pupils, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. All schools should try to create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

## Pre-school provision

Many of the issues in the preceding paragraphs will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedures in consultation with the child's parent[s]/carer[s]

## Looked After Children

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a Health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then make arrangements for the child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily. It is important that the views of children, young people and their parents and/or others with parental responsibility for the looked child are taken into account when decisions are made.

A member of school staff will attend LAC meetings and will provide a written report. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

## Children / young people who go missing

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

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

School staff will work in partnership with those who look after the child or young person who goes missing and, if appropriate, will complete a risk assessment. Current school policies will apply e.g. attendance, safeguarding, relationships and sexuality education.

## Young people in supported accommodation

Staff will work in partnership with those agencies involved with young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation and will provide pastoral support as necessary.

## Young people who are homeless

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

## Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children and young people

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

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

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

## Children of parents with additional support needs

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

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will give consideration to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

## Gender identity issues and sexual orientation

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

## Work experience, school trips and educational visits

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE guidance

on educational visits and school trips to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

## Children/young people's behaviours

### Peer Abuse

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

### Self-Harm

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs.

Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however this is not always the case. School staff should share concerns about a child or young person who is self-harming with a member of the safeguarding team who will seek advice from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

### Suicidal Ideation

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child or young person who presents as being suicidal as it is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

## Appendix 3

### How a Parent can make a Complaint

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:

I have a concern about my/a child's safety



I can talk to the class teacher

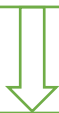


If I am still concerned, I can talk to:

- the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child protection, **Mrs Wilkin**
- the Deputy Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection, **Miss Montgomery**
- the Nursery Link Teacher, **Miss Blain**
- the Principal, **Mr Hamilton**



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors, **Rev Reid**.



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman

Tel: **0800 343 424**



At any time I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team at **0300 1234 333**

or the PSNI Central Referral Unit at **028 9025 9299**

#### **Appendix 4**

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

Member of staff completes an Incident form on CPOMS, detailing what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.

Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.



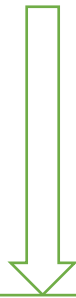
Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and 'alerts' them through CPOMS.

Designated Teacher should discuss with the Principal, the school staff for support.



**Child Protection referral is required**

Designated Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.



Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/ parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.



**Child Protection referral is not required**

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children's Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person's consent (where appropriate).

Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a record on CPOMS of all decisions and actions taken.



## Appendix 5

### Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

