

# **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

This policy draws upon advice provided by ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools’ (2017:04), Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (99:10) and all other items of legislation and circulars noted within these documents. Banbridge Academy acknowledges its pastoral responsibility towards its pupils and recognises that its pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. In recognising that the welfare of the child is paramount, the school seeks to provide a safe, pleasant and regulated environment and to assist each child to reach personal fulfilment and happiness.

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with preventative education and activities which enable children to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and well-being is promoted. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection, which specifically refers to the activity undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

## **Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection**

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families are helped to stay together
- Partnership between families, agencies, individuals and professionals
- Prevention of problems through timely supportive measures
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances
- Children should be protected from harm
- Evidence-based and informed decision making should occur

## **1. The Aims of the Child Protection Policy are:**

1. To ensure the safety and welfare of pupils on the school premises or when in the charge of staff on an educational visit.
2. To create a caring atmosphere in which pupils feel there is a genuine interest in their needs and a willingness to address their concerns.
3. To develop an awareness among all staff (teaching and non-teaching) of possible signs of abuse.
4. To establish clear procedures to be followed in a case of suspected abuse.
5. To comply with legal requirements in relation to safeguarding in the documents mentioned above.

## **2. Safety and Welfare**

- (i) The school endeavours through its Health and Safety Policy to maintain a safe environment for its pupils.
- (ii) All school activities including school trips, educational visits and residentials will be supervised in order to safeguard the welfare of the pupils. Personnel who accompany such trips will be appropriately vetted and a risk assessment will be conducted in line with DENI/EA guidelines.
- (iii) The school and the Board of Governors follow Child Protection guidance in relation to vetting and pre-employment checks as laid out in Department of Education circulars.

## **3. Staff Awareness**

- (i) Copies of the DENI booklet Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools and the Safeguarding Policy are made available to all members of the staff (teaching and non-teaching). Through these documents and in-service, training staff are made aware of the various categories of abuse (neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and exploitation) and of possible signs and symptoms.
- (ii) Staff should at all times refrain from any action which could be construed as abuse and adhere to the School's Staff Code of Conduct.
- (iii) A flow diagram indicating the procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the School's staff is on display in the staffroom (Appendix 4).

#### **4. Pupils**

- (i) Pupils are encouraged to discuss concerns they might have on any issue with their Form Teacher, Year Head or another member of staff to whom they can relate easily. This advice is outlined in the Student Planner and on posters displayed throughout the School which also indicate Child Helpline numbers.
- (ii) Independent Counselling sessions are available during which individual pupils may discuss issues of concern. They may also discuss health related issues with the school nurse.
- (iii) Issues of Personal Safety and Self-Protection are addressed in Personal Development periods and Assemblies.
- (iv) There is a permanent Child Protection notice-board in the corridor outside the interview rooms which provides advice. A flow diagram of how a parent can make a complaint is also on display (Appendix 2).

#### **5. Safeguarding Team**

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

- o Principal (Mr R McLoughlin)
- o Designated Teacher (Mrs H Evans)
- o Deputy Designated Teachers (Mrs A Gilpin and Mrs H Morrison)
- o Designated Governor for Child Protection (Mrs S Henning)
- o Chairman of the Board of Governors (Mr M Orr)

The Safeguarding Team meets once a term to review policy and procedures. Members of the Safeguarding Team will also meet as required to deal with cases.

#### **Responsibilities of the Principal**

The Principal must ensure that:-

- DENI 1999/10 and 2017/04 are implemented within the school
- He attends training in Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection
- A Designated Teacher and Deputy are appointed
- All staff receive Child Protection training
- All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- He takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff
- The Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation
- A termly update and an Annual Report are provided to the Board of Governors
- The School's Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy at least once every 2 years.
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

#### **Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher & Deputy Designated Teachers**

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role
- Organise training for all school staff including support staff
- Lead in the development of the School's Child Protection Policy
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns
- Maintain a current awareness of early intervention support and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs
- Make referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate
- Liaise with the Education Authority's Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Maintain records of all Child Protection concerns
- Keep the School Principal informed
- Promote a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection

### **Responsibilities of the Designated Governors for Child Protection**

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

- The role of the Designated Teachers
- The content of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- The content of a Staff Code of Conduct
- The content of the termly updates and Annual Designated Teacher's Report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

### **Responsibilities of the Chairman of the Board of Governors**

The Chairman of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that he has received appropriate EA training
- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- Ensure that the school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Child Protection and Recruitment & Selection training provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the EA Governor Support and Human Resource departments.
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a written annual report in relation to Child Protection activity
- Sign and date the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries

## **6. 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 Rs: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer (see Appendix 5)

### **The member of staff must:**

- Refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- 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 (**Appendix 1**)
- 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 beyond clarification
- **Not** ask leading questions

**In addition, the Class Teacher should:**

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self-harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts. The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher will offer the appropriate Pastoral Care and when deemed appropriate, follow the school’s Child Protection procedures.

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

| <b>Do:</b>   | <b>Do not:</b>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listen to what the child says</li> <li>❖ Assure the child they are not at fault</li> <li>❖ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret</li> <li>❖ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words</li> <li>❖ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality</li> <li>❖ Stay calm</li> <li>❖ Listen</li> <li>❖ Accept</li> <li>❖ Reassure</li> <li>❖ Explain what you are going to do</li> <li>❖ Record accurately</li> <li>❖ Seek support for yourself</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Ask leading questions.</li> <li>❖ Put words into the child’s mouth.</li> <li>❖ Ignore the child’s behaviour.</li> <li>❖ Remove any clothing.</li> <li>❖ Panic</li> <li>❖ Promise to keep secrets</li> <li>❖ Ask leading questions</li> <li>❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily or write it down</li> <li>❖ Delay</li> <li>❖ Start to investigate</li> <li>❖ <b>Do nothing</b></li> </ul> |

## 7. Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians should play their part in Child Protection by:

- Sending in a note on the child's return to school on the first day after an absence
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child at any time
- Letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour, ICT Acceptable Use and Child Protection policies
- Reporting to the School Office when they visit the school
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school
- Informing the school if their child has a medical condition or educational need
- Informing the school if there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or well-being of a parent or child
- Informing the school 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

## 8. The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure that:

- The school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Relevant Child Protection training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

## 9. What Is Child Abuse?

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools' (2017/04) and 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016).

### 9.1 Definition of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm. 'Harm' means ill treatment or the impairment of health and development, and the question of whether harm is significant is determined in accordance with Article 50 of the Children Order (1995).

### 9.2 Types of Abuse

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

**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 persistent 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 suffer from other types of 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.

**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 purposes of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature

### **Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People**

Child sexual exploitation 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. Child sexual exploitation doesn't 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.

#### Potential indicators of CSE

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation
- Truancy/leaving school without permission
- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Receiving lots of text/phone calls prior to leaving
- Change in mood-agitated/stressed
- Appearing distraught/dishevelled 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 behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)
- Self-harm or other expressions of despair

- Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse.

### **Grooming**

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It 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 order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing gifts, money, 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. Adults may misuse on-line settings e.g. chat rooms to try and establish contact with children and young people. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation but can be a precursor of other forms of abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation/Grooming are forms of abuse and as such, any member of staff suspecting that they are occurring should follow the child protection procedures and report their concerns to the Designated Teacher.

### **Domestic and Sexual Violence**

It is now 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:

- Nervousness
- Low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nightmares / flashbacks
- Physiological – stress / nerves
- Stomach pain
- Bed wetting
- Immature / needy behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Aggression
- Internalising distress or withdrawal
- Truancy
- Alcohol and drugs
- Bullying

These symptoms are not to be diagnosed 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 to Social Services

The Designated/Deputy Designated teacher will immediately follow the school's child protection procedures.

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. As such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion to the appropriate agencies.

### **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or more parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in NI and where knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage is brought to the attention of school the PSNI will be informed immediately.

### **Children who display harmful Sexualised Behaviour**

Banbridge Academy supports children and young people through the Personal Development element of the curriculum to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality. In the case of problematic sexual behaviour advice will be sought from the CPSS.

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

**When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity or, where we have concerns about a 16/17 year old in a sexual relationship, the Designated Teacher has a duty to share this information with Social Services.**

### **Online safety**

The e-safety curriculum at Banbridge Academy supports pupils in acting responsibly and keeping safe online. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of all teachers. Cases of inappropriate use are dealt with in line with the School's Online Safety, Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies. In serious cases child protection procedures may need to be invoked.

### 9.3 Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

#### Physical Abuse

| <b>Physical Indicators</b>  | <b>Behavioural Indicators</b>  |
|---|--|
| <p>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; 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</p> | <p>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; comes to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories</p> |

#### Emotional Abuse

| <b>Physical Indicators</b>  | <b>Behavioural Indicators</b>   |
|---|---|
| <p>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).</p> | <p>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.</p> |

#### Neglect

| <b>Physical Indicators</b>   | <b>Behavioural Indicators</b>  |
|--|--|
| <p>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.</p> | <p>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 images/films/computer games.</p> |

## Sexual Abuse

| <b>Physical Indicators</b>  | <b>Behavioural Indicators</b>   |
|---|---|
| Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs;<br>bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas;<br>torn, stained or bloody underclothes;<br>chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches;<br>difficulty in walking or sitting;<br>frequent urinary infections;<br>avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers;<br>unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating. | What the child tells you;<br>Withdrawn; chronic depression;<br>excessive sexual precociousness;<br>seductiveness;<br>children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality;<br>parent/child role reversal;<br>over concerned for siblings;<br>poor self esteem; self devaluation;<br>lack of confidence; peer problems;<br>lack of involvement;<br>massive weight change;<br>suicide attempts (especially adolescents);<br>hysterical/angry outbursts;<br>lack of emotional control;<br>sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour;<br>inappropriate sex play;<br>repeated attempts to run away from home;<br>unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories;<br>vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity;<br>exposure to pornographic material. |

### **10. Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse**

#### **10.1 How a Parent/Guardian can make a Complaint**

At Banbridge Academy we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns parents/guardians may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If parents/guardians have a concern they can talk to the class teacher, Year Head or the Principal/Designated Teacher for Child Protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. If their concerns persist they can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman. At any time, a parent/guardian may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Contact details are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2**.

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

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

The Designated Teacher will notify cases of suspected abuse to the Principal and if deemed necessary, may refer them to Social Services and/or the Police and the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

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

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. She will also notify the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team with a copy sent to the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection.

If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of the volunteer will be suspended immediately, pending an investigation.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 3**.

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

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

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

Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Child Protection procedures as outlined in Appendix 4 will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance in DE Circular 2015/13.

## **11. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings**

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.

## **12. 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.

### **13. Record Keeping**

All Child Protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current Child Protection concerns these will be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

### **14. Vetting Procedures**

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance (Safeguarding Vulnerable groups NI Order 2007, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, DE Circulars 2013/01, 2012/19).

### **15. Visitors to School**

Visitors to school should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require. Visitors should

- be met by school staff/representatives
- be signed in and out of the school by school staff using the Visitor's book
- if appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school
- where possible, be escorted by a member of staff/representative
- be clearly identified with a visitor/contractor pass
- have restricted access to only those pupils connected with their visit
- cordon their work off from pupils for health and safety reasons if they are carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks

### **16. Code of Conduct for all staff paid or unpaid**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

### **17. Staff Training**

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

When new staff, substitute teachers or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### **18. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Safeguarding Team in Banbridge Academy will update this policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor Child Protection activity and the implementation of the Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

### **19. Related School Policies**

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such is linked to and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care
- Anti-bullying
- Positive Behaviour
- Special Educational Needs
- Attendance
- Online safety
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Educational Visits
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Supporting pupils with medication needs
- Health and Safety
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Intimate Care

These policies are available to parents/guardians and any parent/guardian requiring a copy should contact the School Principal.

#### **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

*Reviewed August 2018*

**Appendix 1**

CONFIDENTIAL

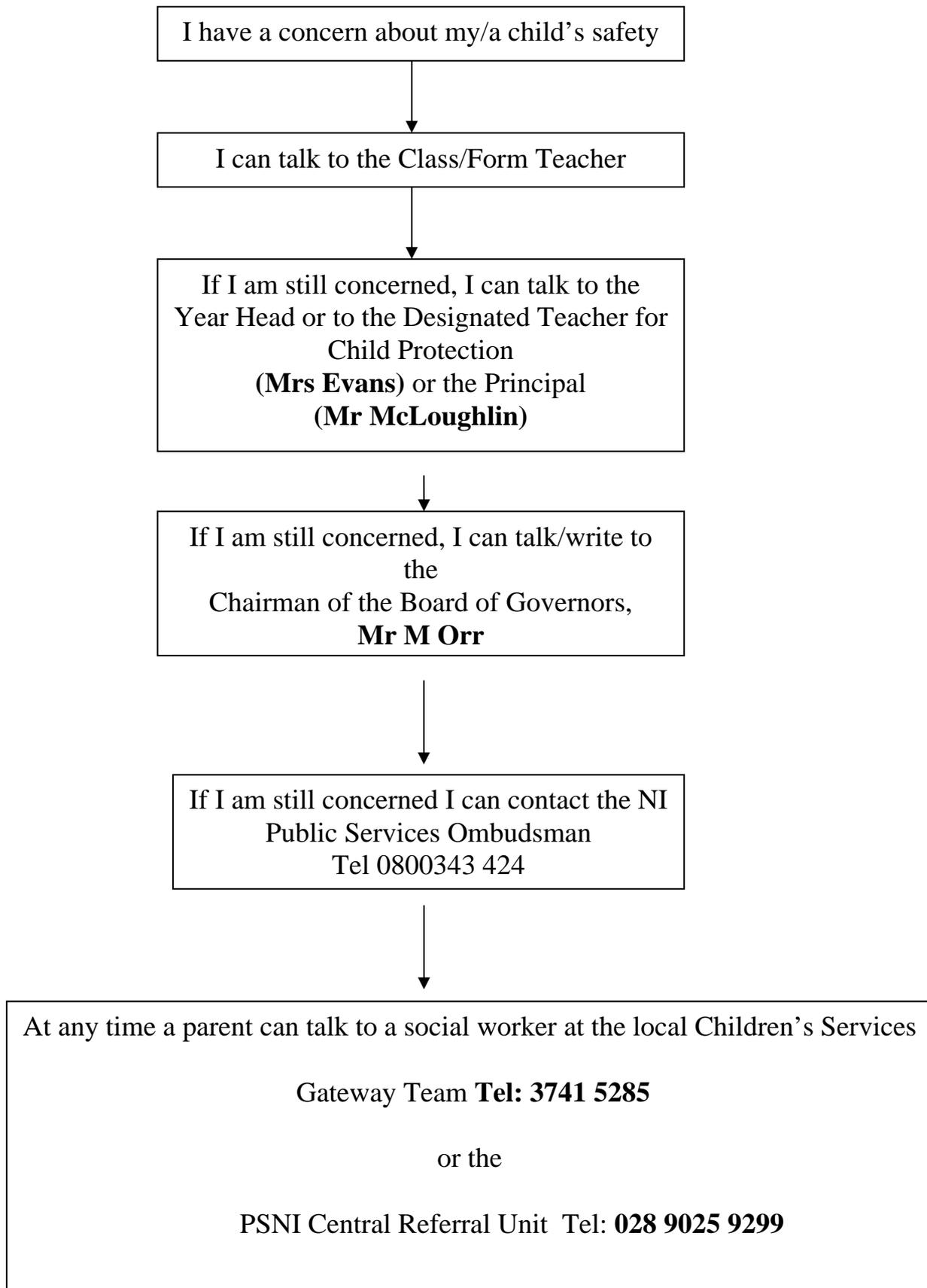
**NOTE OF CONCERN**

**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD – FORWARD THE HARD COPY TO THE DESIGNATED TEACHER IMMEDIATELY**

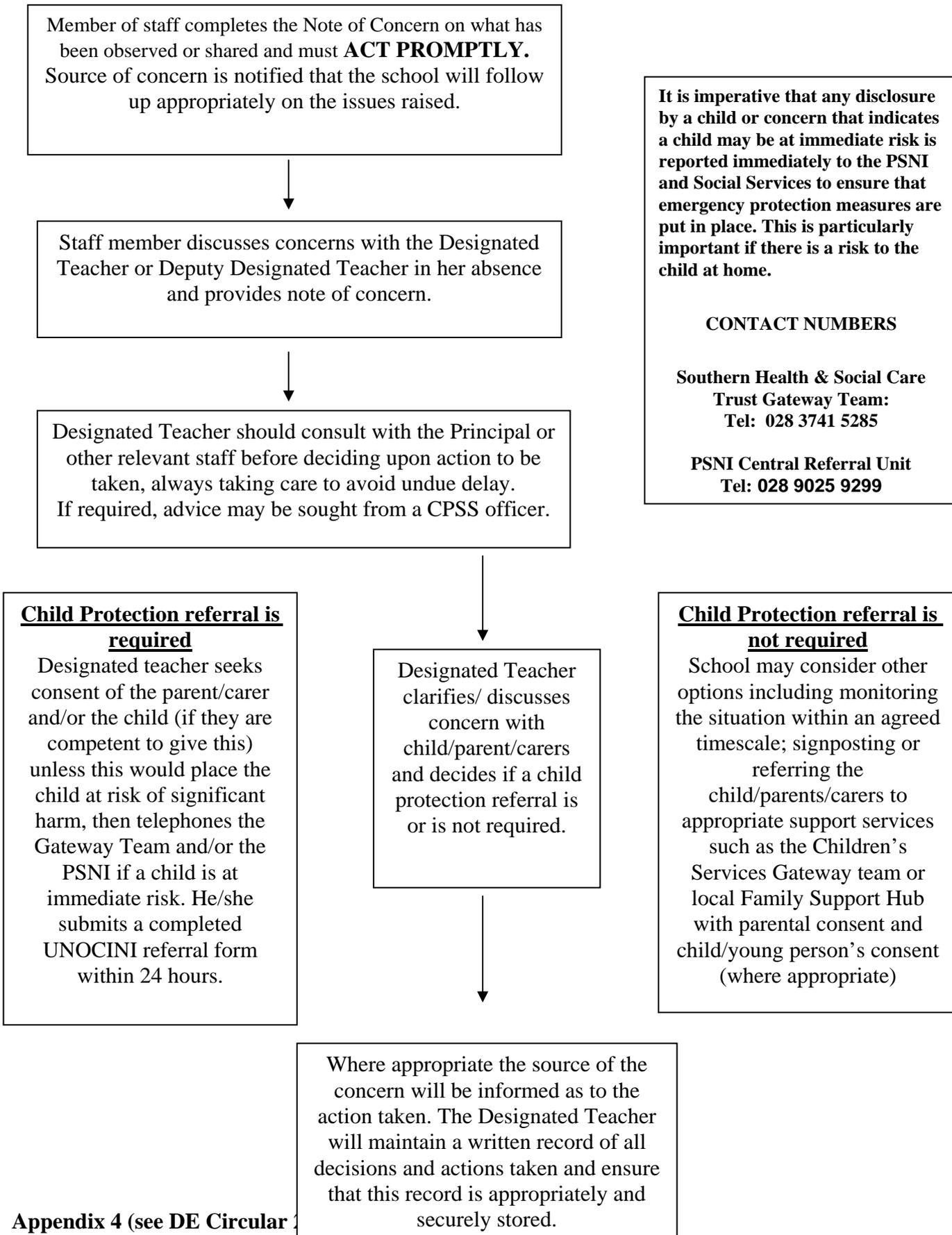
|  |
|--|
| Name of Pupil:   |
| Year Group:  |
| Date, time of incident / disclosure:   |
| Circumstances of incident / disclosure:  |
| Nature and description of concern:   |
| Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom: |
| Action taken at the time:  |



## How a Parent can make a complaint



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



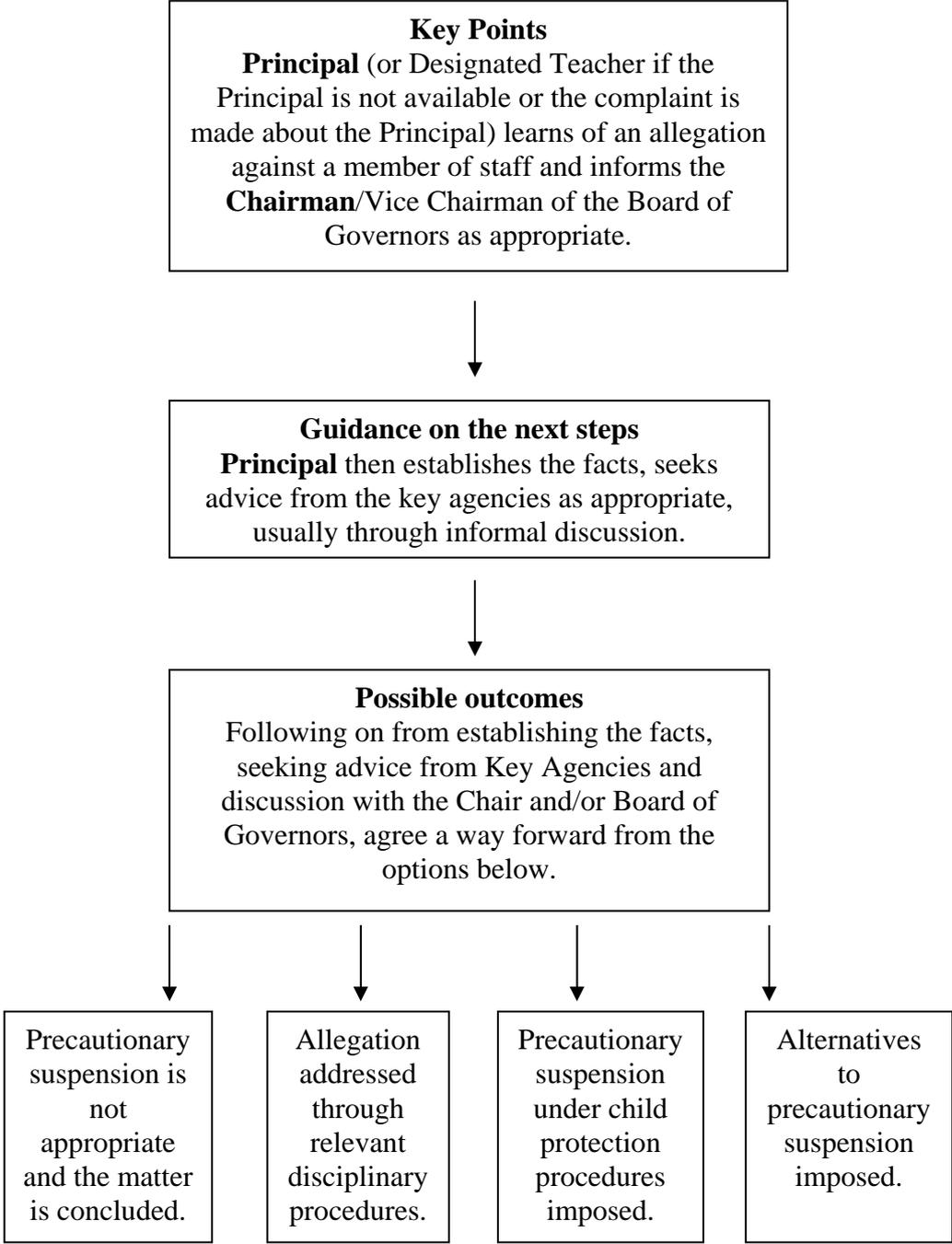
**It is imperative that any disclosure by a child or concern that indicates a child may be at immediate risk is reported immediately to the PSNI and Social Services to ensure that emergency protection measures are put in place. This is particularly important if there is a risk to the child at home.**

**CONTACT NUMBERS**

**Southern Health & Social Care Trust Gateway Team:  
Tel: 028 3741 5285**

**PSNI Central Referral Unit  
Tel: 028 9025 9299**

**Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school’s staff**



## **Additional advice for staff around talking to children where there are concerns about possible abuse.**

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, see some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or other member of the school's non-teaching staff sees such signs, he/she should immediately bring them to the attention of the class teacher or 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 service 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.
- 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 an adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what 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 if he/she is freely recalling significant events, and as soon as possible afterwards to make a record of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher (see Appendix 1).
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent, carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred, should be written down 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 also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings. It is therefore essential that accurate contemporaneous records are maintained.
- Staff should not ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

Remember the 5 Rs: **Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer**

## **Appendix 6**

## **Advice for staff around potential suicidal thoughts or behaviour (From Imatter: Protecting Life in schools 2016)**

At times children and young people will express suicidal thoughts or intentions to adults they trust. Any such expressions should be taken seriously and acted upon. Young people may also express suicidal ideation to their peers rather than to adults. It is important that pupils are encouraged to pass this information to a trusted adult who can take steps to ensure that their friend is kept safe.

Sometimes however young people may not express their feelings but those closely involved in their life may be in a position to notice changes in behaviour which can also act as warning signs.

It is important to note that the following list is not exhaustive and these symptoms do not necessarily indicate suicide risk. It is, at best, a list of warning signs that may help teachers to identify pupils who may need particular support.

Teachers have a key role to play in being able to identify warning signs of potential suicidal thoughts or behaviours. These include:

- Unexpected reduction of academic performance
- Ideas and themes of depression, death and suicide
- Negative changes in mood and marked emotional instability
- Positive changes in mood and calmness
- Significant grief or stress
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Physical symptoms with emotional cause
- Writing about suicide
- Speaking about suicide
- Listening to songs praising suicide
- Art work about suicide
- Threats and statements of intent
- Preoccupation with a known suicide
- Life threatening risk taking behaviour
- Break-up of relationships

It may also be important to have an awareness of the websites, social media or computer games that young people are engaged with. Some of these have themes and content that may attract vulnerable young people but prove to be detrimental to them.

### **A pupil at risk – immediate reaction**

All school staff have a duty of care towards their pupils. The immediate reaction by a member of staff to the alert that a pupil is in distress is crucial to the protection of the pupil. It is therefore important that staff consider in advance how they would react in such a situation. In every such response the two essential elements are:

- i. To respond with empathy and in a non-judgemental way to the child in need; and
- ii. To follow usual child protection and safeguarding procedures and to make appropriate referrals to ensure the child's safety, because self-harm and expressions of suicidal thoughts are safeguarding issues.

## **Responding to a distressed pupil**

When a child or young person is emotionally distressed it can sometimes feel overwhelming to think about what to say or do. Being there to listen and talk can make a difference. As a teacher it is important to:

### **Listen**

It can be very difficult for a young person to disclose distress so it is essential that he/she is given time and attention. Privacy is also important.

### **Take it seriously**

Disclosures of distress should never be minimised. The young person should be taken seriously but the adult should not express alarm. The young person needs to feel safe and have confidence in adults.

### **Accept the possibility of suicidal thoughts**

These feelings are real and should not be dismissed.

### **Don't promise confidentiality**

Ensure that the young person knows that the information will be handled sensitively but that it must be shared with others to safeguard them.

### **Show a caring attitude**

It is acceptable to express care for the young person and a commitment to their wellbeing.

### **Be Open**

If suicidal intent is suspected it is important to ask the young person whether they are thinking of harming themselves and if they have made any plans. This gives the young person permission to be completely honest and, therefore, be able to seek help.

### **Supervise closely**

Keep the child/young person with you until you can deliver them to the care of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative). Sometimes it is more helpful for the teacher to whom the young person expressed their distress to be the one who stays with them while the Designated Teacher makes arrangements to safeguard the child.

## **Safeguarding the pupil**

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative) should safeguard the young person by doing the following:

### **Continue to supervise closely**

The pupil should not be left unsupervised at this stage.

### **Contact parents/guardians/carers**

Parent/guardians/carers should be advised of the content of the disclosure, the school's concern and asked to take the child or young person to the GP or Out of Hours Service requesting an '**emergency mental state assessment**' and potential referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

### **Safely hand over the young person into the care of parents/guardians/carers**

Parents should be advised to supervise very closely.

### **If the above is not possible**

If the school cannot safely deliver the child into the care of parents/guardians/carers, or have concerns that appropriate support will not be sought/provided, it is possible for school staff to seek appropriate medical advice acting in *loco parentis*. This would be the exception rather than the rule however.

## **Follow-up**

The Designated Teacher (or other member of staff) should remain in sensitive contact with parents/guardians/carers and plan to support the young person upon return to school. In planning to support the young person the school may wish to seek medical/psychiatric advice in this regard.

**Support for staff and/or peers**

It is important that individuals who are involved in this type of situation should be carefully supported within the school.

**Explain to the pupil what will happen next**

Make it clear that someone will stay with them and that you are making every effort to find appropriate help. Explain where they are going, who is going with them and what you are hoping to achieve for them.

## Safeguarding action checklist

The Designated Teacher / Safeguarding Team may find the following checklist useful in helping to ensure that everything possible has been done to help the pupil.

### If there is a disclosure or strong suspicion of suicidal intent, ensure that:

|   | Please tick |
|---|-------------|
| The pupil is listened to and supported in the immediate term (e.g. is with a trusted member of staff)   |             |
| Designated pastoral care teacher is informed  |             |
| Parents/guardians/carers are informed<br>How was this done? Provide details below.  |             |
| Parent/guardian/carer comes to the school for the pupil and he/she leaves in their care (parents/guardians/carers are advised to monitor the child closely).  |             |
| Parents are advised to take their child to the GP and ask for a mental state assessment and appropriate action. (Concerns around negligence regarding a child's mental health needs should be followed up through the normal safeguarding procedure). |             |
| Teacher's name:   |             |
| Time:   |             |
| Date:   |             |
| The Designated teacher (or appropriate alternative member of staff) follows up with the parent/guardian/carer within a short time frame. This should be as soon as possible but must be on the same day that the incident occurred.                   |             |
| School sends a follow-up letter to parents detailing concerns, action taken and advice given.   |             |
| Longer-term support is sought for the young person as appropriate.  |             |
| Teachers' support needs are identified and action taken if appropriate.   |             |