FORT HILL INTEGRATED COLLEGE

EDUCATE | INTEGRATE | INSPIRE | ACHIEVE

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Reviewed **Autumn 2026**
To be reviewed **Autumn 2027**

Introduction

We in Fort Hill Integrated College have a key responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy. We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and to acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone in our school community – teachers, Non-Teaching staff, volunteers, parents and students – has clear guidance on the action which is required where safeguarding issue is suspected (or disclosed). The overriding concern of all must be the care, welfare, and safety of the child. The welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. Safeguarding concerns will always be acted upon.

Guidelines for Child Protection in Fort Hill Integrated College are structured in line with all relevant guidance.

All records in relation to the execution of this policy will be retained and destroyed in line with statutory guidance circular 2020/07 (see appendix 7).

Policy Aims

Fort Hill Integrated College has a responsibility for the welfare and safety of all the pupils and endeavours to maintain a strong pastoral ethos based on a commitment to care, open communication, relationships of trust and working in partnership.

The aims of the Child Protection Policy are:

- To provide a framework in relation to Child Protection
- To define the roles and responsibilities of persons involved
- To outline the signs and symptoms of possible Child Abuse
- To set down clear procedures to be followed when a disclosure or suspected safeguarding issue arises.
- To provide a Code of Conduct for staff (**See Appendix 5)**

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” (DHSSPSNI, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” (sept 24) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

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

- The child or young person’s welfare is paramount;
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard;
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together.
- Working in partnership.
- Prevention; of harm

- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances.
- Protection; from harm.
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

Adult Safeguarding - applicable to students over the age of 18 years.

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount at all times.
- Maximising the student's / adults choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights.
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over. We will consult with the relevant agencies, CPSS and the Adult Protection Gateway Team as needed.

The number for the Adult Protection Gateway team is 028 9504 1744 and is available from 9am to 5pm. If you need to speak to someone outside these hours, contact the emergency social work service on 028 9504 9999.

How to recognise an adult is at risk: Guidance.

https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/recognising-adult-abuse-exploitation-and-neglect

Links to other Policies.

This policy in informed by and in turn informs the following (but not limited to) policies:

- Attendance and punctuality.
- Acceptable use
- Positive Behaviour.
- Self-harm and Suicide
- Drugs
- Mobile Phone
- Anti-Bullying .
- Search and confiscation
- Smoking and Vaping
- Safe Handling.
- Special Educational Needs.
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education.
- Intimate Care.
- E-Safety / related
- Educational Visits.
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Roles and Responsibilities

In Fort Hill Integrated College, the Designated Teacher (DT) for Child Protection is **Mr A Tate, Vice Principal**.
The Deputy Designated Teachers (DDT) for Child Protection are **Mr G McConnell** (Head of Junior School), **Mrs T Richardson (CWL)** and **Mrs D Patterson** (head of Senior school)
Fort Hill Integrated College's **Safeguarding Team** for Child Protection also includes, in addition, **Mr A Blythe** (Chair of Governors), **Mrs T Bailie**- (designated Governor for child protection), **Mrs L Patterson** (School nurse) **Mr C Millar** (Principal).

The above staff can be contacted directly via phone 02892 663670 or via the school info email account, info@forthill.lisburn.ni.sch.uk .

Governors

The Board of Governors has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils at Fort Hill Integrated College and to ensure that an appropriate Child Protection Policy and Procedures is in place. Mrs T Bailie- designated Governor along with Mr A Blythe (Chair) are the Governors with responsibility for Child Protection. The Board of Governors has a duty to ensure that correct procedures are in place and followed in relation to and in line with all relevant safeguarding guidance.

The Designated Teacher (and Deputy Designated Teachers)

- The Designated Teacher (and Deputy Designated Teachers) will undertake training, organise training for all staff and act as a point of contact for staff and parents.
- They will act on any information received as set out in this Policy, keeping records and liaising with various agencies as necessary.
- They will, in conjunction with the Principal, draw up the Child Protection Policy, disseminate the policy, ensure that the policy is adhered to and update it as required.
- They will ensure that safeguarding in executed in line with all relevant policies and guidance, in accordance with the directions given by the Board of Governors.

All others who work / volunteer in the College

- To exercise their safeguarding duties in line with Policy, guidance, training, and relevant Direction.

Parents

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.

What is Child Abuse?

As well as our statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils' learning, we at Fort Hill Integrated College recognise our responsibility towards our pupils and the fundamental right of those pupils to be protected from harm.

The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure pupils know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include material in the Curriculum that will equip pupils to develop the skills needed to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Child Abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed, or not provided with proper care. As a result of our daily contact with individual children, both teaching and Non-Teaching staff are well placed to observe the outward signs in a pupil's appearance, behaviour, learning progress, attendance or language which may indicate an issue.

Appendix 1 includes some examples of common signs and symptoms encountered, which might indicate abuse or neglect. This is not a checklist and some of the signs and symptoms may have other explanations – they may be due to other medical, emotional or psychological reasons but it is in the best interests of pupils that all concerns regards safeguarding or the possibility of abuse should be referred to the relevant staff.

All concerns MUST be reported in line with policy.

Adult safeguarding

An '**Adult at risk of harm'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- Personal characteristics and/or
- Life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.
Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An **'Adult in need of protection'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- Personal characteristics and/or
- Life circumstances and
- Who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and
- Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to

cause, him/her to be harmed.

For further information see: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document

The number for the Adult Protection Gateway team is 028 9504 1744 and is available from 9am to 5pm. If you need to speak to someone outside these hours, contact the emergency social work service on 028 9504 9999.

Preventative curriculum

The overarching aim of the school is to empower our pupils to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. The preventative curriculum is a term used to encompass safeguarding practices, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and 'Learning for Life and Work' (LLW).

Our preventative curriculum is crucial to safeguarding our pupils and providing them with the knowledge and information they need to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, beliefs and attitudes and to navigate the complex world around them.

Our preventative curriculum seeks to educate, equip and empower our pupils regards how they should respond if they encounter any of the issues addressed within this policy. This occurs via a wide range of learning opportunities, including:

- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- 'Learning for Life and Work' (LLW).
- Across a range of subject areas.
- Assemblies
- Collaborative work with a range of outside agencies / providers.

For a comprehensive guide to this area of the preventative curriculum, each relevant policy should be accessed.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or Disclosed) Child Abuse

1. Referral Process if a member of staff has a concern or becomes aware of an incident.

Fort Hill has a strict Child Protection referral process and every member of staff must follow the correct procedures. These are clearly defined during Staff Training sessions.

The following guidelines provide staff with a framework for action in the event of a disclosure of Child Abuse from a pupil. School recognises that it takes courage and determination for a pupil to tell an adult that he/she is being abused and issues around disclosures are usually complex and very sensitive. Staff can feel vulnerable in this situation and the following procedures are designed to reassure staff and provide support for them in the situation.

- Listen actively, calmly, open body language, accept, be non-judgmental Remember TED - tell, explain, describe.

- Reassure the pupil, acknowledge how difficult it has been for the disclosure to have been made and listen. Assure the pupil that you take their concerns seriously and they have done the right thing in telling you.

- Beware of leading questions; it is not our responsibility to investigate. For example, staff should say, “Can you tell me what has happened”, rather than, “Did they do X to you?” When, where, who questions are appropriate.

- Tell the child you are going to take notes and do so. Do not ask the child to write an account.

- No promise of confidentiality can or should be offered to a pupil when abuse is alleged. This can be difficult, but often when a disclosure is made the child has reached the stage when they want you to take control of the situation. Tell the pupil that you will have to pass on the information but that only those persons who need to know will be told.

- Tell the pupil what you are going to do next and do it, ensure they are ok before leaving. If you judge them to me in a vulnerable condition, organize their supervision by a relevant member of staff.

- *If, in your opinion, the information is of a nature to suggest the child is at serious risk of imminent harm, verbally report the disclosure to Safeguarding team before the recording step.*

- As soon as possible after the incident record a brief account of the incident including the time, date, location, non-verbal behaviour, to whom the referral was made and using language used by pupil (do not paraphrase or correct). Written reports on such incidents must be objective and based on evidence, they should contain facts and observations and avoid opinion. If marks/bruises are observed these may be shown on an outline drawing of the body, (no photos to be taken) (Keep hand written notes even if subsequently typed up.)

- Report immediately to Designated Teacher, in their absence one of the Deputy Designated teachers and in their absence the Principal – this is your legal and professional responsibility. **A note of concern should always be completed by the referring member of staff and submitted along with any notes.**

- Staff should protect confidentiality and only share this information within appropriate professional contexts (safeguarding staff) Staff should seek support for themselves after the disclosure if needed.

How to respond when a child wants to talk about abuse –

Guidance about helping a child who wants to talk about abuse, the following may be of help:

General Points:

- Accept what the child says.
- Keep calm
- Actively listen
- Let the child know you'll need to tell someone - do not promise confidentiality
- The child is never to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened, or feel intimidated.
- Never push for information, allow them to disclose at their own pace.
- Do not ask leading questions remember "TED"
    - **T**ell me what happened,
    - **E**xplain what happened or
    - **D**escribe what happened, rather than "Did they hurt you?"

Helpful things to say:

- I will do my best to help
- I'm glad you have told me, you have done the right thing.
- It is not your fault
- I will get the information to the people who can help.

Avoid saying:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How?
- Making promises of outcome.
- Things like, 'I'm shocked, that's terrible, don't tell anyone else'.

Concluding a discussion with the child:

- Again, reassure the child they were right to tell you and that you believe the story

- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.

To summarise what you should do when you have a cause for concern:

- ✓ **RECEIVE** listen to what the child says but do not ask leading questions except when to show you have understood.
- ✓ **REASSURE** ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and their interests come first.
- ✓ **RESPOND** only to ensure that the child is safe and secure.
- ✓ **RECORD** make note of what you have seen or heard and the date and time.
- ✓ **REFER** refer to the Designated Teacher – **Mr A Tate** or in his absence the Deputy Designated teachers - Mrs Richardson/Mr McConnell/Mrs Patterson as soon as you have a concern about a child.

Next steps

The Designated Teacher will, if needed, discuss the matter with the Principal / DDT as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action.

The Designated Teacher will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, what action needs to be taken and if the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless the concerns are regards the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will be informed as soon as possible. The Principal / Designated Teacher / DDT may seek clarification or advice and consult with the CPSS or Gateway services before any action or a referral is made. The child's welfare is our priority.

If a referral is necessary, the Principal/Designated Teacher / DDT will inform:

- CPSS- for guidance and support.
- The Social Services Gateway Team (PHONE / UNOCINI pro forma).
- The parents/guardian (AS APPROPRIATE).

(The UNOCINI will be securely sent to Gateway services)

If no referral is necessary, the Principal/Designated Teacher /DDT will:

- Inform the individual making the complaint or providing information
- Inform the parents or guardian (unless implicated)
- Record details, including reasons for no referral, in the pupil's file

See Appendix 2 which summarises the procedures for staff in school to follow.

2. Procedures following a complaint or allegation against a member of staff.

Where a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff of the school, the procedures in DE Circular 2015/13 will be followed -

Circular 2015/13 - Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff

Respect for the individual and a concern for personal dignity are fundamental principles within the ethos of Fort Hill Integrated College. The school endeavours to create and maintain an environment in which relationships are based on respect. A Code of Conduct for Staff at Fort Hill Integrated College provides guidance and acts as a safeguard for all members of staff – teaching and Non-Teaching – whose work brings them into contact with children.

In the light of our school's duty of care the Principal (or where the complaint is against the Principal, the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board of Governors) will ensure that any complaint made that a member of staff has abused a pupil, is thoroughly investigated by execution of the normal Child Protection procedures.

Where the school carries out preliminary enquiries, these will have regard:

- first and foremost, to the welfare of the pupil concerned and that of other pupils at the school.
- the right of the child to be heard and taken seriously.
- to the efficient functioning of the school and
- to the rights of the individual against whom the complaint has been made.
- The school's duty of care for all.

See Appendix 3 for procedures to follow when a complaint or allegation is made against a member of staff

3. Procedure for those other than staff at school where there is a concern about a / your child in Fort Hill Integrated College.

At Fort Hill Integrated College, we believe that children and young people have the right to be treated with respect.

If a parent or someone other than a member of the School's staff has any concerns or worries they should use the procedure outlined in Appendix 4. A version of this diagram is included in our 'First Days' Booklet given to all new families.
A "keeping children safe - information for Parents" leaflet including the referral procedures is also be distributed to all parents annually.

As an operation Encompass school, the PSNI may inform us of incidents in the home of our pupils. **See Appendix 7**

See Appendix 4 for procedures to follow if a parent or someone other than a member of staff has a concern.

Staff and Volunteers – Vetting Procedures

The recruitment and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in proximity with children. Pre-employment checking / vetting is carried out on volunteers, sports coaches and any new member of staff. Only sub teachers from the NISTR register are employed as pre-registration checking / vetting has been carried out on these staff.

External providers and volunteers who require vetting will be required to provide an EA EDC every 2 years, or in line with their employers' procedures up to a maximum of every 3 years.

Procedures are fully compliant with the following guidance:

DE 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools':

- Guidance for schools and employing authorities on pre-employment safer recruitment practices

DE Circular 2025/06 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Schools

A recent amendment (Sept 2026) to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 means that all staff or volunteers in any regular contact with children or young people are undertaking 'regulated activity' and must be Access NI checked. The previous supervision exemption is no longer valid.

Visitors to School

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

Visitors are:

- Met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school, by school staff.
- Given restricted access to only specific areas of the school, if appropriate.
- Escorted by a member of staff/representative, where appropriate.
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Given access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- Cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons if delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repairs.

Review of the Child Protection Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated every 3 years, or sooner if changes dictate this.

Appendix 1

Signs and Symptoms – details on the categories of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour. Signs and symptoms which could indicate physical abuse include physical indicators such as:

- Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries

Behavioural indicators such as:

- Self-destruct tendencies
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. Signs and symptoms which could indicate emotional abuse include the following physical indicators:

- Sudden speech disorder
- Signs of mutilation
- Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)
- Wetting and/or soiling
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relationships

Behavioural indicators such as:

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Reluctance for parental liaison
- Fear of new situations
- Chronic runaway
- Inappropriate responses to painful situations

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They

may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Signs and symptoms which could indicate sexual abuse include the following physical indicators:

- Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or head aches
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Vulnerable diseases
- Unexplained pregnancies

Behavioural indicators such as:

- Chronically depressed/suicidal
- Inappropriateness or precocious
- Sexually explicit language
- Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence
- Recurring nightmares/fear of the dark
- Outbursts of anger/hysteria
- Overly protective of siblings

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care of treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth). Signs and symptoms which could indicate neglect include the following physical indicators:

- Constant hunger
- Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Emaciation/distended stomach
- Constant tiredness

Behavioural indicators such as:

- Tiredness/listlessness
- Lack of social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self esteem
- Exploitation

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.

Child sexual exploitation; Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of 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. CSE does not always include physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Potential indicators of CSE include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation.
- Truanting/leaving school without permission.
- Persistently going missing or returning late.
- Receiving lots of texts/ phone calls prior to leaving.
- Change in mood - agitated/stressed.
- Appearing distraught/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 behaviours.
- Low self-esteem.
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less).
- Self-harm and other expressions of despair.
- Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse.

While these indicators can be useful in identifying potential risk, their presence does not necessarily mean exploitation is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence mean it is not.

Domestic Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual abuse as follows:-

Domestic Abuse:

> *'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'*

- The school recognises the impact on children of an abusive family setting and any referred cases will be reported to the appropriate statutory agency, eg social services / PSNI.

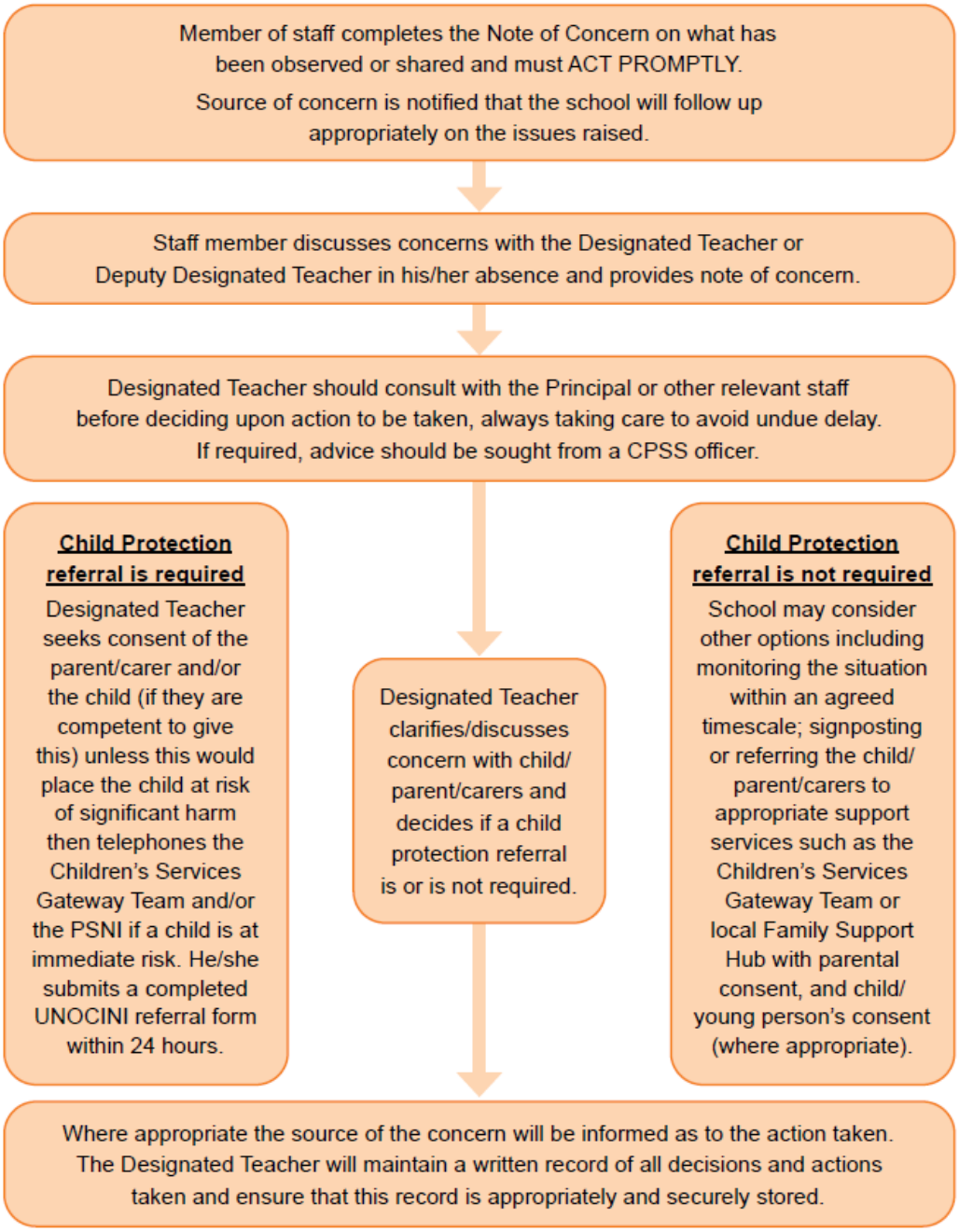
- domestic and sexual violence and abuse is included in the school's preventative curriculum.

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.

Bullying is a form of abuse that is not tolerated in Fort Hill College. All staff are encouraged to always be vigilant to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take steps to prevent / address incidents. Reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be taken seriously and steps will be taken to protect and support the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and to change the behaviour of those displaying bullying behaviour. (For more detail reference should be made to Fort Hill's Anti Bullying Policy/Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy/Mobile Phone and Handheld Electronic Devices Policy)

Appendix 2

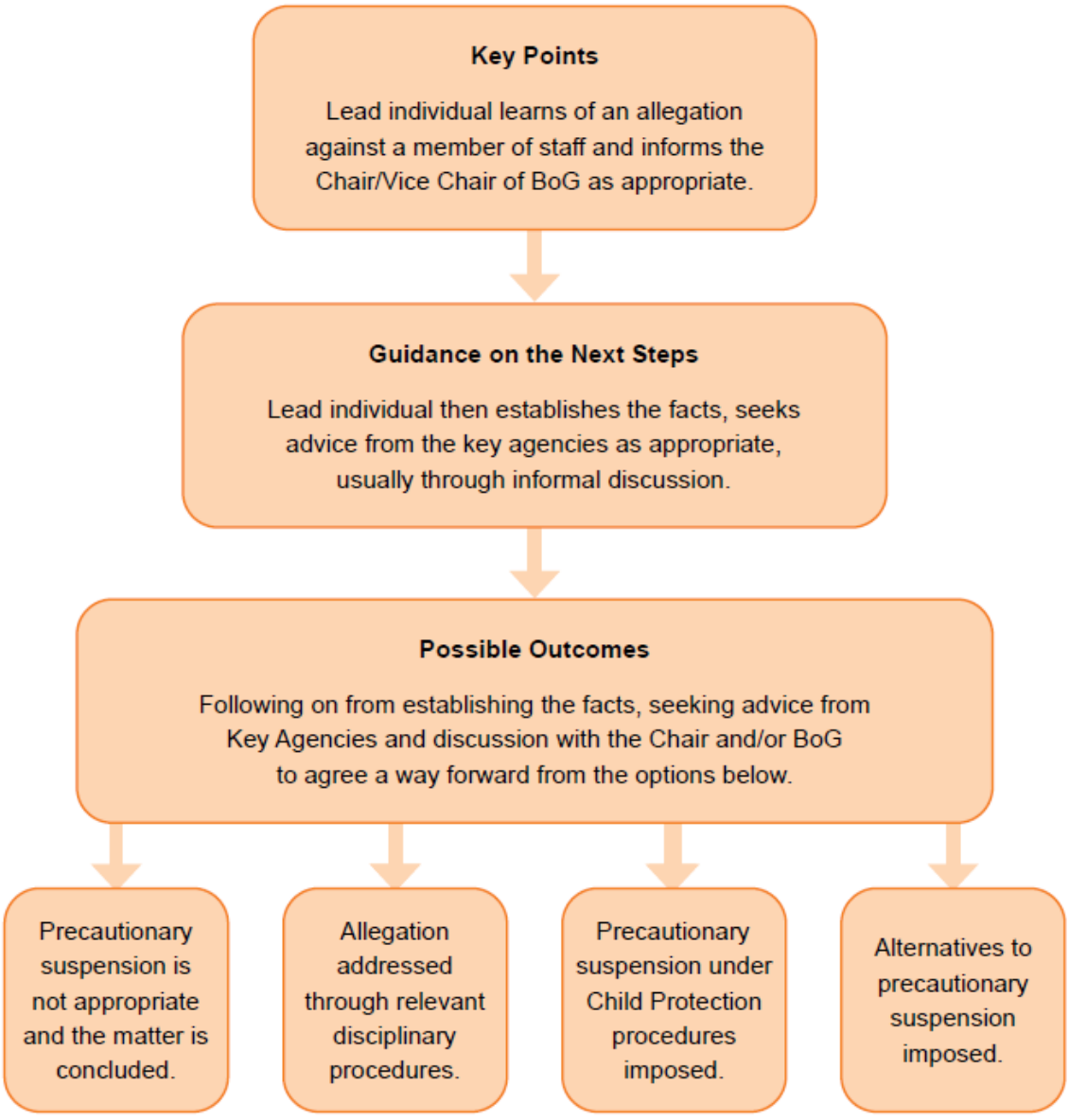
Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff.



If the concern is about an individual over the age of 18: The number for the Adult Protection Gateway team is 028 9504 1744 and is available from 9am to 5pm. If you need to speak to someone outside these hours, contact the emergency social work service on 028 9504 9999.

Appendix 3

Procedure following a complaint or allegation against a member of the School's staff.

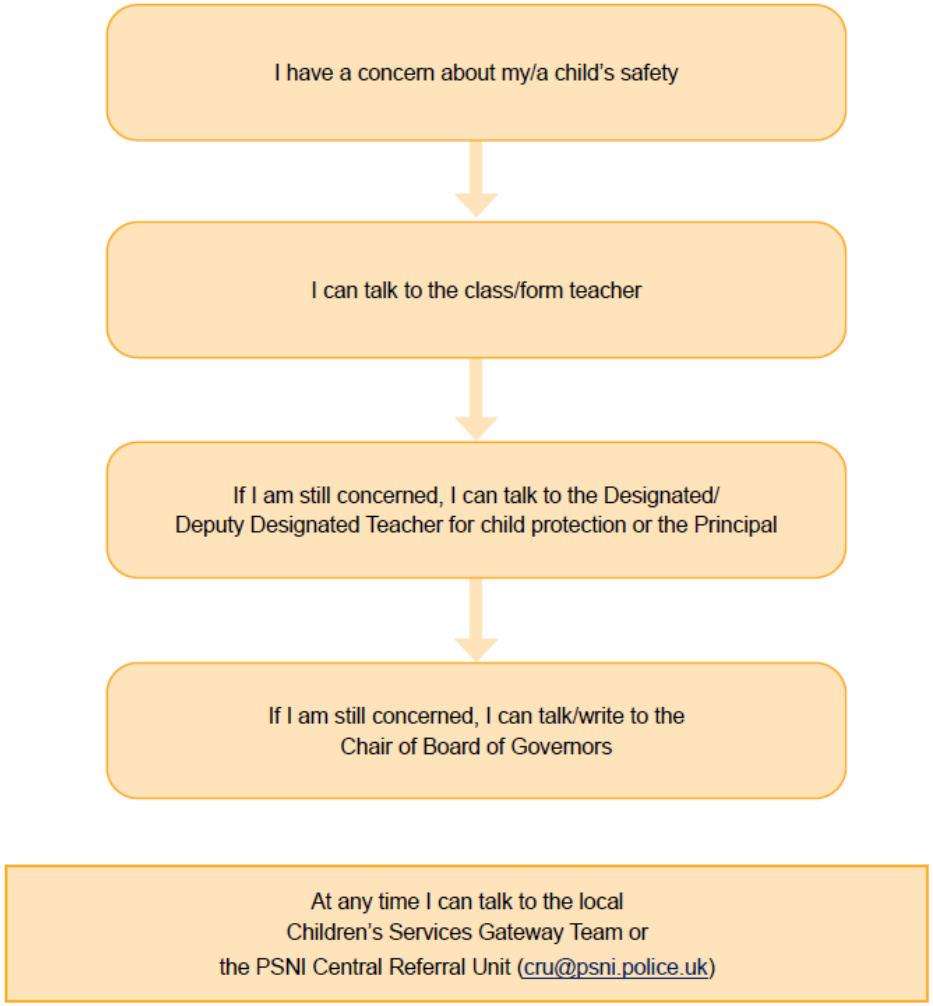


All allegations of a child abuse nature **will** be recorded in the hard backed and bound Record of Child Abuse Complaints book[6], which must be retained securely. A record of this should be placed on the relevant pupil's Child Protection File. For more information on recording of child protection complaints see DE Circular 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

If the concern is about an individual over the age of 18: The number for the Adult Protection Gateway team is 028 9504 1744 and is available from 9am to 5pm. If you need to speak to someone outside these hours, contact the emergency social work service on 028 9504 9999

Appendix 4

Procedure for those other than staff at school where there is a concern about a/your child in Fort Hill Integrated College.



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

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

If the concern is about an individual over the age of 18: The number for the Adult Protection Gateway team is 028 9504 1744 and is available from 9am to 5pm. If you need to speak to someone outside these hours, contact the emergency social work service on 028 9504 9999

Appendix 5

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools

Date Ratified by BOG: _____

Review Date: _____

Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct, which applies to all teaching staff, support staff and volunteers, is designed to give guidance on the standards of behaviour which should be observed. School staff and volunteers are role models, in a unique position of influence and trust and their behaviour should set a good example to all the pupils within the school.

It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It is merely for guidance and specific breaches of the Code must not be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

The Code includes sections on:

- Setting an Example
- Relationships and Attitudes
- Private Meetings with Pupils
- Physical Contact with Pupils
- Honesty and Integrity
- Conduct Outside of Work
- E-Safety and Internet Use
- Confidentiality

1. Setting an Example

1.1 All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times, and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.

1.2 Staff and volunteers must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

2. Relationships and Attitudes

2.1 All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with
pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to
ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times and sexual relationships with current pupils are not permitted and may lead to criminal conviction.

2.2 Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school; perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.

2.3 Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner, which within the context of this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;

- respect for school property;
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

3. Private Meetings with Pupils

3.1 It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place. As far as possible, staff and volunteers should conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with an open door and ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

4. Physical Contact with Pupils

4.1 To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.

4.2 Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force as per Section 10.3 of the main safeguarding guidance document (Circular 1999/09 and guidance document 'Towards a Model Policy in Schools on Use of Reasonable Force).

5. Honesty and Integrity

5.1 All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (eg a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents eg at Christmas or the end of the school year. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

6. Conduct outside of Work

6.1 Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school. Advice should be sought from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

7. E-Safety and Internet Use

7.1 A staff member or volunteer's off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's Online Safety Policy.

7.2 Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social media and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. It is preferable that any contact with pupils is made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

8.2 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

8.3 If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

8.4 Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally concerns and

allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

8.5 The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.

Appendix 6

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.

Further information see The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Appendix 7

Retention Periods for Child Protection Records

7.1 It is recommended that, in general, child protection records should be retained by the school for the following periods:

Record[4]	**Retention Period**
Pupil Child Protection Case Files	D.O.B + 30 years
The school's confidential Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely*
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register	Maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's file while he/she continues to attend. On transfer, the school should inform the new school and destroy all social services records. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register	On transfer to a new school, the school should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years
Complaint against a member of staff Staff members file[5] Child's Child Protection File Record of Child Abuse Complaints	 Indefinitely* unless totally exonerated (see para. 4.21) D.O.B + 30 years Indefinitely*

[4] Please note that this refers to electronic child protection records as well, held for example within software packages such as MyConcern and CPOMS.

[5] The Department of Education Disposal Schedule recommends that a staff file is retained for 7 years after leaving employment. In the case of child protection concerns the file should be retained for the time periods specified in the school Child Protection Records Retention and Destruction Policy.

* ***As a general guide 'indefinitely' should be a minimum of 40 years.***

Disposal

7.2 At the end of the agreed retention period, records will be securely disposed of, for example in the case of physical copies, incinerated or shredded in the

presence of a member of the school, or entrusted to a firm specialising in the destruction of confidential material.

7.3 Information held electronically, either within private folders on the C2k system or held on an online/cloud based system, will also be deleted within the timescales set. Following deletion, the electronic records will be held securely on the C2K centralised backup for a period of time but in due course will be overwritten and the documents removed. No evidence will remain on the C2k system.

7.4 The National Archives has issued guidance based on the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse stressing that any information which may be required by the Inquiry should not be destroyed. This principle will be applied in all cases and careful review will be carried out before destruction of documents.

FORT HILL INTEGRATED COLLEGE

This is the updated 2024/25 version of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures including the Code of Conduct for staff.
It is your responsibility to read through it from time to time and ensure that you are always familiar with its contents. Please speak to Mr A Tate (Designated Teacher), Mr G McConnell/Mrs T Richardson/ Mrs D Patterson (Deputy Designated Teachers) or Mr Millar (Principal) if you need further guidance or clarification.
A copy of this Policy is available from Private 10 which can be accessed by all staff.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Consultation – feedback

- Pupil
- Parent/Guardian
- Staff Teaching
- Staff Non-Teaching
- Senior Management
- Board of Governors
- External Stakeholders
- PTA

Please read through this Policy and if you have any comments on its contents, please Return to Mr A Tate (Designated Teacher).

Comments:

Thank you
Mr A Tate (Designated Teacher)

Signed _____