

# DOWN HIGH SCHOOL

## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



**“NOTHING ACHIEVED WITHOUT EFFORT”**

Updated by: WB/GMK June 2019

Date of Review: June 2021

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection Ethos**

At Down High School, **“we believe that through high aspirations, perseverance and commitment every pupil can enjoy school life as they succeed and fulfil their potential”**. We have a primary responsibility to promote wellbeing by providing a safe, caring and supportive environment for every member of our school community.

Safeguarding begins with preventative education and activities which enable children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and well-being are promoted.

We believe that every young person has a right to feel safe, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. All teaching and support staff should be alert to the signs of possible abuse indicating when a young person may be at risk and know the procedures to be followed. Staff also adhere to the Code of Conduct which establishes clear guidelines for working with young people

**In all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection procedures or policies, the best interests of the child must be the paramount consideration.**

This policy has been updated to reflect current changes and developments in child protection, guidance and legislation including;

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995)

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Department of Health NI, March 2016)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools (Department of Education NI, 2017)

## Definitions and potential signs and symptoms of abuse

### What is Child Abuse?

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

It is always preferable to prevent abuse, or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Through their day-to-day contact with young people, all staff are particularly well-placed to observe outward symptoms, change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. **(Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016).**

### Types of abuse

The following definitions of abuse are taken from *Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, March 2016*.

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

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

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

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and /or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.

**(Ref SBNI 2014, adopted from CSE Knowledge Transfer Partnership NI)**

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

Domestic violence and abuse can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to directly witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children. Children can witness domestic violence and abuse directly and indirectly between their carers and/or the effects of it; this frequently constitutes emotional abuse and can have profoundly damaging effects on a child's or young person's well-being. Young people may experience domestic violence and abuse in their own relationships.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse against women and girls who are often from north African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. Teachers have a statutory duty to report cases of FGM, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures. Although our school has no children from these backgrounds and consider girls in our school safe from FGM, we will continue to review our policy annually.

Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM this should be reported to the PSNI without delay. Contact can be made direct to the Sexual Referral Unit (based within the Public Protection Unit) at 028 9025 9299. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, referral should be made to the relevant HSCT Gateway Team.

## **Safeguarding and Online Safety**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become integral to the lives of young people inside and outside school. ICT provides powerful tools which open-up new learning opportunities for everyone but also present considerable risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content. Digital technologies can also place young people at significant risk of harm and potential exploitation and can be used to deliberately cause distress to others. At Down High School we have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and are energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe online.

### **Online safeguarding concerns include:**

- exposure to unacceptable materials (pornographic, violent, extremist literature);
- encountering inappropriate messages (harassing, demanding, threatening contacts);
- participation in adult initiated online activity (potential child exploitation, grooming and physical dangers);
- inadvertently provide personal information whilst online which could be sufficient to put them in danger or to allow commercial companies to exploit them;
- unauthorised access to, loss of or sharing of personal information;
- the sharing/distribution of personal images without an individual's consent or knowledge;
- sexting;
- cyber-bullying;
- access to unsuitable video/Internet games.

## **Managing the Risks- Online Safety at Down High School**

Whilst young people need to be protected from these online dangers, they also need to be educated about how to recognise and avoid these risks, as well as knowing what to do if they have a problem and where to seek advice and help. The school manages these risks through a filtered internet service for all pupils and staff as well as an extensive E-safety education programme.

### **Online Safety education is provided in many ways:**

- a planned e-safety programme is delivered as part of the taught ICT curriculum at KS3. This programme covers the safe use of ICT facilities, the Internet, VLE and digital technologies both in school and outside of school and how to identify and deal with cyber-bullying;
- pupils are taught safe working practices and are required to follow all Health and Safety guidelines;
- pupils are taught in lessons to use ICT safely and how to be critically aware of the materials/content they access on-line and are guided to validate the accuracy of the information;
- pupils are made aware of the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and encouraged to adopt safe and responsible use of ICT, the Internet and mobile devices both within and outside of school;
- rules for the proper and safe use of ICT systems and the Internet are posted in school;
- staff act as good role models in their use of ICT, the Internet and mobile devices;
- online safety messages are delivered through the Personal Development programme as part of LLW;
- use of anti-bully week to raise awareness of cyber-bullying;
- participation in annual E-Safety day;
- use of school assemblies, external speakers and drama performances to raise awareness of potential dangers in the online world;
- staff training as part of CPD.

## Potential signs and symptoms of abuse

### Physical Abuse

#### Physical Indicators

- 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

- Self-destructive 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

### Neglect

#### Physical Indicators

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

#### Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self-esteem

### Emotional Abuse

#### Physical Indicators

- Sudden speech disorder
- Signs of self-harm
- Signs of solvent abuse
- Wetting and/or soiling
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relationships
- Lack of confidence

#### Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Aggressive towards others
- Reluctance for parent liaison / seem isolated from parents
- Fear of new situations
- Chronic runaway
- Inappropriate emotional responses (may struggle to control emotions or have extreme outbursts)

## Sexual Abuse

### Physical Indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- Unexplained pregnancies
- Signs of self-harm

### Behavioural Indicators

- Be chronically depressed/suicidal
- Inappropriately seductive 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 to siblings

## Child Sexual Exploitation

### Physical Indicators

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones without plausible explanation
- Appearing dishevelled / distraught or under the influence of substances
- Physical symptoms such as bruising/bite marks
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)
- Signs of self-harm and other expressions of despair

### Behavioural Indicators

- Truancing / leaving school without permission
- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Change in mood – agitated/stressed
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis
- New peer groups
- Significantly older boyfriend/girlfriend
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Low self-esteem

While these indicators can be useful in identifying potential risk, their presence does not necessarily mean CSE is occurring. More importantly, not does their absence mean it is not.

## Domestic Violence and Abuse

The physical and behavioural indicators of Domestic Violence and Abuse may potentially be a combination of those indicative of physical or emotional abuse or neglect.

A **Safeguarding Team** is in place to ensure the best interests of pupils in Down High School and manage all issues relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding.

**The Safeguarding Team in Down High School consists of:**

<b>Mr G McKillen</b>	<b>Designated Teacher for Child Protection</b>
<b>Miss W Bell</b>	<b>Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection</b>
<b>Mrs H Hamilton</b>	<b>Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection</b>
<b>Mrs M Perry</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Mrs A Heenan</b>	<b>Chair of the Board of Governors</b>
<b>Mrs D Crosby</b>	<b>Designated Governor for Child Protection</b>

**Members of the Safeguarding Team can be contacted by telephoning the school on 028 44612103**

## **The roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers**

### **Designated Teacher for Child Protection- Mr G McKillen**

Every school is required to have a Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher with responsibility for child protection. These are highly skilled roles developed and supported through a structured training programme, requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues. The role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

## **Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection- Miss W Bell/Mrs H Hamilton**

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling their responsibilities. It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that they develop sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required. Deputy Designated Teachers are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

## **The reporting process for Child Protection concerns**

### **What to do if you have a concern**

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

Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family needs intervention and/or support.

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

- Staff should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- Staff should not, therefore, ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?".
- The priority at this stage is to actively listen to the child, and not to interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is freely recalling significant events (*the child must not be asked to unnecessarily recount the experience of abuse*), and as soon as possible afterwards to

make a record of the discussion to pass on to the Designated Teacher, using the 'Note of Concern' (appendix 1). The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but *under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed nor a photograph taken.*

- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or 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. Subsequent sections of this booklet give guidance on record-keeping. It should be emphasised that lack of proper records will not, of itself, exempt the school from any subsequent requirement to give evidence in court. *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.

### **A summary of what to do if a disclosure is made:**

- **RECEIVE** – remain calm, listen to what a child says but do not ask leading questions except to show that you have understood and **do not promise that the information will not be passed on.**
- **REASSURE** – ensure that the child is reassured that they have done the right thing in telling you and that their interests come first.
- **REACT** – to ensure that the child is safe from harm and/or further abuse.
- **RECORD** – using the **Note of Concern**, record what you have seen or heard and the date and time. Do not record assumptions or interpretations.
- **REPORT** – pass the Note of Concern **immediately** to the Designated Teacher (Mr Mckillen) or Deputy (Miss Bell or Mrs Hamilton). The principle of confidentiality is paramount in all Child Protection issues.

**It is not the responsibility of teachers or any member of staff to carry out investigations into suspected or reported abuse. They simply seek discreet clarification or listen to disclosures of the child.**

**Processes for Referral are set out in the Flowcharts below:**

**If a parent has a potential Child Protection concern:**

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



I can talk to the class/form teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection (Mr G McKillen/ Miss W Bell/Mrs Hamilton) or the Principal (Mrs M Perry) Telephone: 028 44612103



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors (Mrs A Heenan)



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman  
Tel: 0800 343 424



At any time I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team (South Eastern) Tel: 0300 1000 300  
Or the PSNI Central Referral Unit Tel: 028 9025 9299

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

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY  
Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.

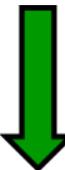


Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal (MJP) or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay.  
If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.



### **Child protection referral is required**

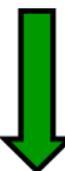
Designated Teacher (GMK) seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephone the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He submits a completed UNOCINI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



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

### **Child protection referral is not required**

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



Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher (GMK) will maintain written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

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

Any complaint about possible abuse by a member of the school staff should be reported to the Principal, Mrs Perry (Lead Individual) or to the Chair of Governors, Mrs A Heenan if the complaint is about Mrs Perry.

### Key Points

Lead individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair of BoG (A Heenan) as appropriate.



### Guidance on the Next Steps

Lead individual then establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.



### Possible Outcomes

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair (A Heenan) and/or BoG to agree a way forward from the options below.



Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded.

Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed.

Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed.

## Recruitment and Vetting of Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers in Down High are vetted / supervised in accordance with the following relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

[www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2007/1351/pdfs/uksi\\_20071351\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2007/1351/pdfs/uksi_20071351_en.pdf)

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted)

DE Circular 2013/01 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools':

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201301-guidance-schools-and-employing-authorities-pre-employment-safer](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201301-guidance-schools-and-employing-authorities-pre-employment-safer)

DE Circular 2012/19 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Schools from 10 September 2012:

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201219-changes-pre-employment-vetting-checks-volunteers-working-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201219-changes-pre-employment-vetting-checks-volunteers-working-schools)

## The Preventative Curriculum

At Down High School our core aim is **to promote wellbeing by providing a safe, caring and supportive environment for every member of our school community**. We recognise that while it is important that those at risk of harm are identified and interventions put in place, it is equally important that children know how to develop healthy relationships, and to be able to make informed choices in their lives so they can protect themselves. Safeguarding begins with preventative education which enables young people to grow up safely and securely. We are proactive in promoting a preventative curriculum which builds the emotional wellbeing, confidence, self-esteem and personal resilience of our pupils so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations. The school is also strongly committed to ensuring that the personal development curriculum and wellbeing of pupils has a high priority and this is reflected in the current school development plan.

Initiatives which contribute to our preventative curriculum include the following. They may take place as part of the curriculum in class, through discussion in form time, presentations in Assembly or one-off presentations from external agencies.

- Personal Development programme through LLW
- E-safety
- Road Safety
- Anti-bullying
- Healthy relationships (Love for Life)
- Drugs and alcohol abuse awareness
- Anti-smoking

- Addressing Child Sexual Exploitation (e.g. Chelsea's Choice production)
- Healthy eating and lifestyle awareness
- Allergy and asthma awareness
- Promotion of positive mental health
- Firework and fire safety, evacuation drills

## **Policies**

Down High School has developed a range of policies which support the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Drugs and Substance Abuse
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Critical Incident
- E-Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- Attendance
- Use of Mobile Phone
- Healthy Eating

## **Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools**

School staff and volunteers must always be mindful of the fact that they are role models to pupils in school and hold a unique position of influence and trust. As such, staff and volunteers should adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils and ensure that in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection the best interests of the child is always the primary consideration.

This code of conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive relationships and interaction with staff. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of safeguarding and child protection, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### **Code of Conduct for:**

#### **1. Private meetings with Pupils**

- Staff should be aware of the dangers, which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognized that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.

- Where such conditions apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.
- Staff are not permitted to conduct private tutoring on the school premises.

## **2. Physical Contact with Pupils**

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, would be uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of a member of staff to restrain pupils.*)
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Teachers should be aware of being alone with children in areas where other members of staff are not present.
- Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure that it is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should not hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff or volunteer feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the designated teacher or Principal.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual or where they may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

## **3. Choice and use of Teaching Materials**

- Teachers should choose teaching materials carefully to ensure that they are appropriate and their use is not open to misinterpretation.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

#### **4. Online Safety and Internet Use**

- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.
- Staff should exercise the utmost care in the way they use all social media or any other web based presence they may have. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they might have.
- Contact with pupils and parents should be via school authorised means. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils or parents.

If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.

- Photographs and videos of pupils should only be taken using school equipment for purposes agreed by the school. Pupil images should only be stored on the school system.

#### **5. Relationships and Attitudes**

- Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are professional at all times and appropriate to the gender, age and maturity of the pupils. Care should also be taken to ensure that their conduct does not give rise to comment, speculation or alleged abuse of trust.
- All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils and should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students. Attitudes, dress, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

#### **6. Confidentiality**

- As a necessary part of their job members of staff and volunteers will have access to confidential information about pupils and in some circumstances this information will be highly sensitive and private. Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or 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.

#### **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff and volunteers interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances, professional judgement should be exercised. From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles and relationships with children/young people, to

ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.