



CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Within the Pastoral Care policy of Cregagh Primary School are 3 underlying principles:

1. In all matters relating to child protection procedures and policies, the best interests of the child are of paramount consideration (UN Convention, Article 3, Children (NI) Order 1995).
2. As a school we have a pastoral responsibility towards the pupils in our care and are taking all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved (UN Convention Article 19)
3. Each child has the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously and to be consulted depending on his/her age and understanding about the proposed action (UN Convention Article 12)

We in Cregagh Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge and as a result we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare and safety is preserved. All of our staff, and those involved in extended schools provision, have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of our school has also adopted a *Code of Practice* for our behaviour towards pupils. This is set out in the appendix to this policy statement.

Mrs Pearson is Designated teacher with overall responsibility for child protection and Mr Higginson is Deputy Designated Teacher.

In addition, Cregagh Primary School has established a school Safeguarding *Team* which includes the Principal, the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher, Designated Governor and Chairperson (Mrs M. Hunter).

This team meets on a regular basis to discuss and monitor on-going safeguarding within the school.

There are clear procedures in place to be followed where the school has been alerted to possible abuse. These procedures provide for a second member of staff to assume responsibility if the Designated teacher is absent or is the subject of an allegation.

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) should be aware of signs of abuse, be alert to these and also be aware of procedures to be followed. To this end Child Protection Training will be given to all staff on a regular basis.

In the event of an allegation being made the designated teacher and or Principal will if necessary make a referral either to Social Services or Police.

Preliminary enquiries should be made carefully and sensitively – it is not the responsibility of staff to undertake investigations or make enquiries of other family members.

Correctly following appropriate procedures will safeguard staff from legal redress by a parent.

Principles for the Protection of Children

- 1. The welfare of the child is paramount and overrides all other consideration.*
- 2. All children have the fundamental right to be protected from harm.*
- 3. Careful consideration must be given to young people who have special educational needs as such children may be especially vulnerable.*
- 4. Children have the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously, and to be consulted according to his/her age and understanding about the proposed action.*
- 5. An appropriate balance should be struck between the child's rights and the parent's rights. All efforts should be made to work with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety*

6. *Where child abuse is suspected it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the appropriate reporting and recording procedures are set in motion as quickly as possible. This will normally involve Social Services or the Police and the Designated Officer of the Education Authority.*
7. *The school will maintain a summary of child protection arrangements including arrangements for parents to report concerns. These will be circulated to parents each year.*
8. *Children in Cregagh Primary School should be aware of what they should do and who to go to should they need advice.*

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding is more than Child Protection. **Safeguarding** begins with *promotion and preventative activity that* enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support for families and early intervention to meet the needs of the children.

Child Protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

Cregagh Primary School has established a school safeguarding team which includes the Principal, the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated teacher, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Designated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection. This team meets on a regular basis to discuss and monitor on going safeguarding within the school. The School will also work with a number of agencies and deliver a variety of programmes to promote Safeguarding. These will include:

- NSPCC *Staying Safe & Speak Out, Stay Safe* programmes
- Women's Aid Helping Hands programme
- The Outer South and East Belfast Family Support HUB
- Love for Life

Harm and Significant Harm

The N.I. Children Order (1995) defines **harm** as ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. The order states that **ill treatment** includes sexual abuse, forms of abuse which are physical and forms of abuse which are not physical. **Health** means both physical and

mental health and **development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Definitions & Types of Abuse

We use the following definitions:

ACTUAL - can be taken to mean confirmed i.e. the teacher is satisfied that the abuse has happened.

LIKELY - can be taken to equate with potential or suspected i.e. the teacher believes that the abuse probably happened.

Signs and Symptoms

This is intended as a guide. Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof that child abuse has occurred. It may however, indicate that investigation should take place.

- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment which is needed;
- Incompatible explanations for injury;
- Constant minor injuries;
- Unexplained bruising:
 - bruise marks in or around the mouth;
 - black eyes especially if both eyes are black and there are no marks to forehead or nose
 - grasp marks
 - finger marks
 - bruising of the ears
 - linear bruising (particularly buttocks or back)
 - differing age bruising (new bruising alongside older, fading bruising)
- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Cigarette burns
- General physical disability (indicative of sprains or breaks)

- Unresponsiveness in the child, withdrawn from their own social groups

Neglect

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

Physical Abuse

The act of deliberately physically hurting a child. This may take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or Likely sexual exploitation of a child. It occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or for the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing and touching outside clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, or forcing children to watch sexual images or activities. It may also include encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology).

We need to be aware that sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by males. Women and other children can also be involved in sexual abuse.

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child. It is sometimes referred to as psychological abuse and can have severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including on-line bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Exploitation

Although exploitation is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register we should recognise that the abuse resulting from exploitation can be categorised within the existing CPR categories. Children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse. **Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, abuse of power or manipulation of a young person for personal gain. It may be evident in many forms such as child labour, slavery, engagement in criminal activities, begging, benefit fraud or child trafficking. It may also be sexual in nature.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM occurs mainly in Africa and to lesser extent, in the Middle East and Asia. Although it is believed to be a religious issue by many, it is in fact a cultural practice. There are no health benefits. Communities particularly affected by FGM in the UK and Ireland include girls from: Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, Yemen, Indonesia and Afghanistan.

FGM occurs mostly to girls aged from 5-8 years old; but up to around 15. It has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. The summer holidays is a time of particular risk, as the recovery period after FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. School should be alert to the possibility of FGM as a reason why a girl in a high risk group is absent from school or where the family request an 'authorised absence' for just before or just after the summer school holidays.

See '*FGM: The Facts*' at www.gov.uk for further information and advice.

Domestic Violence

Whilst not a separate category of abuse it is important to realise that domestic violence can be frightening and have a negative effect on children. If domestic violence is reported to a member of staff, they must inform the Designated teacher who will report to Social services.

Any suspicion of Domestic Violence within the family home will be reported to social services.

Bullying

Bullying is a distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. It can cause physical and /or emotional harm and can take place in a variety of settings and on-line. All staff must be vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully.

Any complaint by a parent or child that bullying has taken place will be fully investigated (see Bullying policy).

Drugs

Cregagh Primary school recognises that young people today are exposed to the risks associated with the drug culture which exists. As a result, the school has developed a Policy for Drugs Education (which takes cognisance of DENI's Circular 2015/23 and CCEA's 2015 publication Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland).

Misuse of Digital Technologies

Children are exposed to and use e-technologies from an early age and while it is a useful tool for learning and entertainment children need to have knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with its use. Children need to be encouraged to develop safe and responsible online behaviours in order to be safe online. Cregagh Primary School will therefore incorporate online safety as part of their e-technology curriculum (see ICT documentation)

Protecting Life (concerns over self-harm or suicidal thoughts)

When a child is emotionally distressed it can sometimes feel overwhelming to think about what to say or do. At such times, a child's observable or disclosed emotional and/or mentally state may lead staff to have concern that the individual may intend to inflict harm upon themselves. The immediate reaction by a member of staff to the alert that a pupil is in distress is crucial to the protection of that pupil.

In such an instance, keep the child with you until you can deliver them to the care of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative) or whilst the DT makes arrangements to safeguard the child. This will include the DT contacting the pupil's parents/guardians/carers to advise them of the content of any disclosure, the school's concern and ask them to take the child to the GP/Out of Hours Service requesting an 'emergency mental state assessment' and potential referral to CAMHS.

<p style="text-align: center;">PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF SUSPECTED/DISCLOSED CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOL.</p>

- If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, which gives, rise to concerns over possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly.
- He/she should not investigate but should report those concerns to the Designated teacher, using the Record of Concern *pro forma* (Appendix 1).
- The Designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.
- The Principal with the Designated teacher will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services.
- The Principal/Designated teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA'S Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No referral will be made without fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.
- Where there are concerns about possible abuse the Principal/Designated teacher will make a referral to Social Services in writing, using the standard referral form. This form will be copied to the Designated Officer for Child Protection in the Education Authority.
- The parent/carer of is consulted by the school and informed that a referral is to be made to Social Services.
- The Designated teacher should make a record of all discussions held and actions taken within 24 hours of referral.

- If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. The safety of the child is our first priority.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

- If a complaint of possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal or designated teacher must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply.
- Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff will be removed from duties involving children and *may* be suspended.
- If a complaint is made against the *Principal*, the designated teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and they will ensure the necessary action is taken.

Handling Disclosure

Where teachers see signs they should seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Classroom assistants or other members of staff should immediately bring them to the attention of the class teacher or designated teacher.

If a child discloses abuse to you:

- Listen and do not interrupt if the child is talking freely.
- Care must be taken if you are asking questions – they should not be leading or encourage the child to change his story. E.g. “Tell me what happened” not “Who did that to you” or “What did X do to you”. This could affect evidence at a later stage.
- Make notes either at the time or as soon as possible after. Record time, place, people present. Physical injuries should be described in detail or sketched. *Under no circumstances remove a child’s clothing.*
- Any explanation of an injury by a parent or a carer should be written down.
- All staff should be aware that *NO promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.*
- Tell the child that you can’t keep secret things, which may hurt him/her.
- Staff should be aware that any disclosure is confidential and details should only be passed to the DT or DDT.

Five things to say

1. I will listen to you.
2. I'm glad you told me this.
3. I'm sorry that this has happened to you.
4. It is not, nor ever was your fault.
5. We are going to do something together about this.

Five Things to do

1. Stay calm - listen - take notes (if possible) and if necessary ask the child to clarify.
2. Reassure but don't promise confidentiality.
3. Don't criticise the perpetrator –this may be a close and deep relationship for the child.
4. Keep notes so that it is not necessary for the child to tell his story to different people.
5. Relax and get some support for yourself as it may be distressing for you.

Physical restraint of pupils

In extreme cases, a teacher might have to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him or her from committing an offence, from causing injury to him or herself, to others or to property, or otherwise from behaving in an indisciplined way. Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 empowers members of staff of schools to use reasonable force in these circumstances, either on school premises or anywhere else where the member of staff is in charge of the pupil concerned. In such instances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used; the teacher should act within the Department's and the Education Authority's guidelines on the use of reasonable force and should seek to avoid causing injury to the pupil.

Educational Visits

When Educational visits are taking place the basic principles of Child Protection must always be borne in mind. The teacher responsible for organising an educational visit must follow the guidance laid out in the Education Authority's *Educational Visits Interim Guidance for Schools* (2017). The teacher in charge must fill out the necessary forms, available from the Principal, before the visit. Staff should also bear in mind that, while on educational visits, they must be aware of the perception that the public may have of any actions taken in relation to a child. Photographs on any visit must be taken with a school camera and not with a staff member's mobile phone.

Use of Images

Cregagh Primary School operates the following policy on its website regarding the use of photographs, to ensure the privacy and safety of pupils at the school:

1. Where a photograph is used which shows a pupil, no name is displayed.
2. Where a pupil is named, no photograph of that pupil is displayed.
3. Any comments or annotations added to images on school managed Social Media will be removed as this may compromise privacy and safety.

By observing these points, the school ensures that visitors to the website cannot link images of pupils to names of pupils. When choosing photographs for the website, the school is mindful of the way pupils may appear in them, and will not include images which are in any way inappropriate, such as close-up portrait shots of individual pupils.

The school follows a policy of seeking parents' permission before using images which show pupils on the website.

No other private information about pupils is ever published on the website such as surnames or contact details.

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](#).

REFERRAL TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Cregagh Primary school will undertake referral to Social Services under the following circumstances:

- i. A child discloses or there is evidence of suspected sexual abuse.
- ii. A child discloses or there is evidence of suspected physical abuse.
- iii. A child discloses or there is evidence of emotional abuse.
- iv. A parent presents as being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs.
- v. There is sufficient cause for concern that a child's physical needs are being neglected.
- vi. There is sufficient cause for concern that a child has been exposed to domestic violence.

Transfer of Records

if there is a concern of a Child Protection nature then the school will pass it on to the pupil's new school at transfer.

THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS ALWAYS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO ALL STAFF AT CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND OVERRIDES ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

PARENTS WISHING TO RAISE A CONCERN

In Cregagh Primary School we recognise that at times members of its community may have a concern relating to some area of school life. We are very happy to deal with any concerns thus maintaining and strengthening good working relationships between all parties. A separate policy exists that sets out how parents may make a formal complaint.

Concerns relating to a child protection matter should be reported to Mrs Pearson, Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to Mr Higginson, Deputy Designated Teacher.

How can a parent raise a GENERAL concern?

1. Make an appointment to speak to the child's class teacher
2. Make an appointment to speak to the relevant Head of Key Stage: Miss McKendry (Foundation & Key Stage One: P1-4); Mr Larmour (Key Stage Two: P5-7); Mrs Pearson (Hearing Impairment Unit)
3. Speak to Mr Heggarty, Principal (Acting)
4. Speak to Rev. Green, Chair of the Board of Governors.

Appointments can be made at the school office

How can a parent raise a concern about his/her child's or another child's SAFETY?

1. Parents may make known their concerns about their (or another) child's safety by speaking to the class teacher, Mrs Pearson, Mr Higginson or Mr Heggarty.
2. Once a concern has been voiced the Designated Teacher will agree to keep the parent informed on the progress and outcome of their complaint.

3. Should the parents be dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may speak directly to the Principal and /or the Chair of the Board of Governors

The chart over-page, illustrates how parents can raise a concern:



Safeguarding (Child Protection)

How a Parent can 'Report a Concern' about a child's Safety

Any parent can report a concern regarding the safety of their child or any other child

Step 1

'I have a concern about my child (or any other child)'



Step 2

'I can talk to the class teacher of this child'



Step 3

'If I am still concerned I can talk to Mrs Pearson, the Designated Teacher,
(or if Mrs Pearson is unavailable, Mr Higginson, the Deputy Designated Teacher)'



Step 4

'If I am still concerned I can talk to the Principal (Mr Heggarty)'



Step 5

**'If I am still concerned I can talk or write) to Rev. Adrian Green,
Chairman of the Board of Governors'**



Step 6

'Also, at any time I can contact the following:'

Social Services (Knockbreda Centre, Belfast) – Telephone: 028 90 631770

PSNI – Ask for the Child Protection Unit, Newtownards – Telephone: 0845 600 8000