



# CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

*"A Family of Learning at the Heart of the Community"*

## Child Protection & Safeguarding (Parent Copy)



Revised and amended May 2025

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## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

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 reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare and safety is preserved.

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

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.

## **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, Designated Governor and Chairman of the Governors (Mrs Moyra Hunter). 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 to promote Safeguarding. These will include:

- NSPCC *Speak Out, Stay Safe* Programmes
- Women's Aid Helping Hands Programme
- The Outer South and East Belfast Family Support HUB
- Love for Life
- Julie Magowan Counselling Service.

## **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 children 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. 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 EA-SE;
6. The school will maintain a summary of child protection arrangements including arrangements for parents to report concerns. These will be circulated to parents at the start of each new full-term;
7. Children in Cregagh Primary School should be aware of what they should do and who to go to should they need advice.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF SUSPECTED/DISCLOSED CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOL</b></p>
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- 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 (Mrs Pearson), and discuss the matter with her and make full notes;
- 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 may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA (South Eastern Region'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 will inform: Social Services and EA's Designated Officer;
- 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 of possible child abuse about a member of Staff**

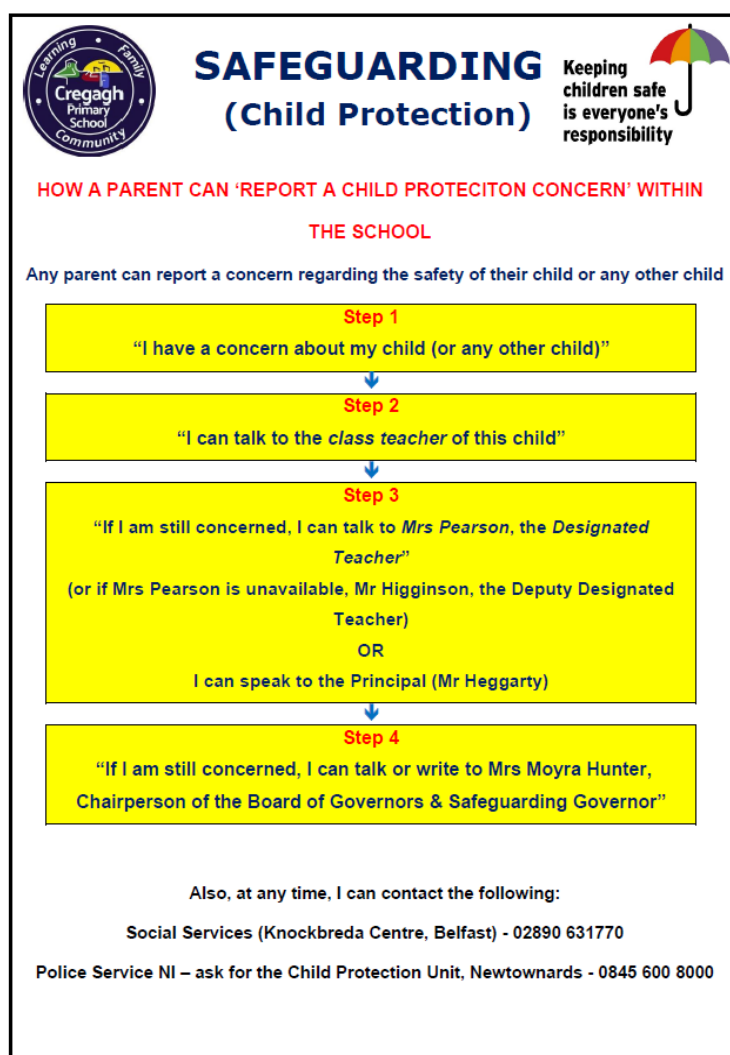
- If a complaint of possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal or Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply.
- Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff will be removed from duties involving children and may be 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.

## **Safeguarding Considerations for Deaf Children**

At Cregagh Primary School and Deaf Unit, we recognise that deaf children may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities due to communication barriers, social isolation, or difficulties in recognising or reporting abuse. All staff are trained to be alert to these specific needs and to ensure that every deaf child can access safeguarding support in a way that is fully inclusive and accessible. This includes the use of appropriate communication methods, including British Sign Language (BSL), visual supports, and trusted adult advocates. Staff are aware that deaf children may be at greater risk of misunderstanding or being misunderstood, and as such, safeguarding disclosures will be handled with heightened sensitivity and the involvement of staff trained in deaf awareness. The Safeguarding Team will ensure that safeguarding information is explained clearly and appropriately to all deaf pupils, and that they know who they can go to for help, both in spoken and signed communication.

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

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



### 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.

- A child discloses or there is evidence of suspected sexual abuse.
- A child discloses or there is evidence of suspected physical abuse.
- A child discloses or there is evidence of emotional abuse.
- A parent presents as being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs.
- There is sufficient cause for concern that a child's physical needs are being neglected.
- Any suspicion of Domestic Violence within the family home will be reported to social services.

## **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.

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

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

**THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS ALWAYS OF  
PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO ALL STAFF AT  
CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

*A copy of the full Child protection Policy  
is available at the school office*