A Policy for Child Protection and Safe-Guarding

Updated November 2026

Child Protection and Safe-Guarding Team
The designated teacher for child protection is **Caoimhín Devine**
In his absence **Aoife Ní Phóilin** and **Róisín Uí Néill** will assume responsibility for child protection matters.
Aoife Ní Phóilin has primary responsibility for issues regarding children in Nursery.
Róisín Brady-Moyes is the designated governor for Child Protection and Safe-Guarding.

Rationale

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them. When adults or organisations make decisions which affect children they must always think first about what would be best for the child."
(Extract from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991)

"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration" Article 3 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that the welfare of the child must be held to be paramount.

We in Gaelscoil na bhFál have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our care. We will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims 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. Our Anti-Bullying policy and Safe Use of the Internet Policy are also significant complementary documents in ensuring a comprehensive safe-guarding environment.

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 acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of the school have also adopted a Code of Practice. This Code is set out in the Appendix to this policy statement.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school, teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers, has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school. We are aware that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

Definitions and Potential Signs and Symptoms of Abuse:

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.

What we need to be aware of:

Three levels of abuse:

- **Potential:** Circumstances that might make abuse likely to happen.
- **Suspected:** Appearance, behaviour, or injury alerts someone to suspect abuse has or is
- occurring.
- **Confirmed:** Abuse is proven either in court or by admission of guilt.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse.

Child abuse may take a number of forms including:

Neglect - actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. Children who are neglected also suffer from other types of abuse.

Physical - actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child. It may take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual - actual or likely use or exploitation of a child sexually for one's own gratification or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve penetration or non-penetrative acts, the involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women, as well as other children can commit acts of sexual abuse.

Emotional - actual or likely persistent or significant emotional maltreatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.
All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. The definition refers to where it is the main or only form of abuse. Emotional abuse can have persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Exploitation – 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. Exploitation can manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, begging, engagement in criminal activity, financial fraud or child trafficking. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheel chair or bed.

BULLYING

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOL'S POLICY FOR ANTIBULLYING

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and the bully will be personally contacted if bullying behaviour is identified. The definition of bullying is given fully in the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

Homophobic Bullying

Children can, at times, be subjected to bullying because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. This type of bullying will not be tolerated in Gaelscoil na bhFál. Any incidents of homophobic bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Bullying policy.

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. Domestic violence can include violence inflicted on, or witnessed by children. The wide adverse effects of living with domestic violence are therefore recognised as a child protection issue by the school and the procedures for reporting suspicions or disclosures of domestic violence are the same as those for reporting other forms of abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. 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 procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time of mutilation and in later life. FGM is a complex issue with many men and women from practising communities considering it to be normal to protect their cultural identity. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is new born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of five and eight, putting children in this age bracket at the highest risk.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not, or cannot consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

E Safety/ Internet Abuse

Online Safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments

and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

The associated risks around online safety are identified under four categories:

- **Content Risks** – child or young person is exposed to harmful content.
- **Contact Risks** – child or young person participates in adult initiated online adult activity.
- **Conduct Risks** – child or young person is perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.
- **Commercial Risks** – the child or young person is expose to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs. (SBNI, 2014)

As a school, we have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of children accessing harmful or inappropriate digital content. We aim to teach children how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe online.

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.

Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection
The Designated / Deputy Designated Teachers are responsible for children are fully protected.

This is a highly skilled role developed and supported through specialised training requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues.

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is responsible for:

- The training of all school staff including support staff (staff to receive child protection training every two years)
- Attending relevant training by Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns
- Making referral to Social Services or PSNI Care Units
- Liaison with the EA Child Protection services
- Keeping the school principal informed
- The lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy
- Promotion of a child protection ethos in the school
- Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Notifying the following of child protection referrals:
    - the Child Protection Support Service for Schools
    - the Chair of the Board of Governors

Designated teachers and indeed all teachers need to know:

- how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral
- the role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them
- the requirements on record keeping
- the conduct of a Child Protection Conference and how the designated teacher or another member of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it

Procedures for reporting disclosed child abuse

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher.

Where a teacher receives a disclosure or sees signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, talk with the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's ancillary or auxiliary staff or a volunteer receives a disclosure or sees such signs, they should immediately bring them to the attention of the Designated Teacher.
It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

Guidelines Regarding Disclosure

If a child disclosed that he/she has been abused, it is important to talk/comfort to say:

- I believe you:
- I am glad that you have told me this:
- I am sorry that this has happened to you:
- It is not, nor ever was your fault:
- We are going to do something about this together.

Five things to do:

- Stay calm, listen, say you will take a few notes (very important as a safeguard for you).
- Do not interrogate; do not ask how, when, where or why?
- Record your notes later again (time, place, date, behaviour of the child, place where the abuse occurred. If possible, do a drawing or description of physical abuse).
- Follow guidelines immediately.
- Disclosure can leave you traumatised - remember you may need support.

Please remember – No promise of confidentially can or should ever be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse. Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children only within appropriate professional contexts.

RECORDING NOTES

These are suggested guidelines only.

- Notes should be written on the presumption that parents can request access to them.
- Note takers' personal feelings or reactions to clients or speculations about their motivations should not be recorded.
- Notes should be factual and in neutral language.

Why take notes:
- Aid to memory.
- Protection for note taker if other party alleges something different agreed during meeting.
- Opportunity for note taker to reflect on meeting, look for the positives and plan further action.
- Protection and information for the school.

When:
- As soon after session as possible.
- During session if all parties are comfortable with that.

Procedures for reporting suspected child abuse

- Where there is cause for concern about a child, the member of staff or volunteer will notify the Designated Teacher on the same day if possible. They will record the concern (signing and dating it) and pass it to the Designated Teacher.

- The matter must not be dealt with alone. H/she should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with him and make full notes.

- On no account should the suspecting adult attempt to interview the pupil, examine the pupil physically, gather any other evidence or contact parents or carers. Such actions could have serious implications for any future criminal proceedings.

- The designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made. The designated teacher may consult with the EA Child Protection Service as part of the decision-making process.

- The Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher, will decide whether, in the best

interests of the child, 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 there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

- No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

- Any referrals made will be followed up in writing as soon as possible using the standard UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form. A copy will also be sent to the CPSSS (Child Protection Support Service for Schools) at the Education Authority. (This will be done in an envelope marked Confidential: Child Protection).

Procedures for complaints against a member of staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors **Róisín Brady-Moyes**, who is also the Designated Governor for Child Protection will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher (or his/her deputy, if he/she is not available must be informed immediately. He/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If a complaint is made against a member of the Board of Governors, it will be treated in the same manner as a person as complaints against a person who is not on the school's staff, and the same procedures followed. The principal should immediately inform the Chairperson, unless he/she is the subject of the complaint, in which case the Chairperson's role should be exercised by the Vice-Chair. The EA's Designated Officers for Child Protection will be notified immediately.

If a complaint is made against a volunteer working in the school, it will be treated in the same manner as a person as complaints against a person who is not on the school's staff, and the same procedures followed. If the Principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

When complaints are made against members of staff, The EA Designated Officers for Child Protection will be informed immediately.

Vetting Procedures and guidelines for Volunteers

Volunteers

Guidance on volunteering staff contained in DENI Circular Number: 2012/19 will be followed. Unsupervised volunteers will be vetted by Access NI. Volunteers working under supervision will not require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) but the school reserves the right to require such a document where circumstances deem necessary. A check of the barred list, in these circumstances, will not be required. The school will ensure that when volunteers are used:

• there must be supervision by a person who is in Regulated Activity;

• the supervision must be regular and day to day; and
• the supervision must be "reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children".

Volunteers:

- Should be placed only with teacher's consent and all staff are aware of the limitations placed on volunteers contact with children.
- Should not have access to records or information relating to staff or pupils.
- Should be aware of school's discipline/ child protection policies and code of conduct.
- Must adhere to school policies and codes of conduct recognising and that they should draw
- attention to the principal or senior member of staff where they find themselves in a position of unsupervised regulated activity.

Vetting:

- Principal/Vice-Principal are responsible for maintaining vetting records
- Data and information are stored in line with GDPR regulations

Child Protection and the Preventative Curriculum:
In Gaelscoil na bhFál we will aim to teach the children in a warm, welcoming and safe environment. The curriculum will be child centred and each child will be valued, praised for effort, encouraged and reassured. The school will make every effort to meet the special educational needs of the children. The school recognises the need to tackle issues such as bullying and will not tolerate it in any form. There is a school policy for dealing with complaints of bullying and the children have been consulted about this.

There will be opportunities for the children to discuss abuse in all its forms and it is the duty of each class teacher to approach this in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of their pupils. The best way to protect children is to teach them to protect themselves. Through the use of activities such as "Circle Time" the children will be taught to develop skills such as turn taking, self -respect, peer respect, confidence and discipline. Circle Time will be seen as a safe platform to discuss sensitive issues in a non- threatening and non-personal way. It will enable us to have opportunities for developing the children's emotional literacy, to make them more aware of good/bad secrets, good /bad/feelings/ good /bad touch and to develop the need for trust and co-operation.

Each class teacher will make the children aware of the name and nature of the designated teacher. Parents will also be made aware of this at the yearly curricular meetings, and in the parental copy of the Child Protection policy.

The school will actively involve external services to enhance child protection in our school.

Intimate Care Guidelines
• The school has an Intimate Care Policy.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
The NI Education Order (2007) specifies the minimum content for each area of learning of the curriculum at each key stage. Teachers have considerable flexibility to select from within those areas of learning the aspects they consider appropriate for the age, stage and interests of the pupils.

In Gaelscoil na bhFál RSE is covered within the 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' area of learning. A policy has been devised to help us meet the demands of the RSE curriculum, which is delivered in collaboration between staff, parents and external agencies.

Physical Contact with Pupils/ Safe Handling/ Use of Reasonable Force

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOL'S POLICY FOR ANTIBULLYING

All staff have a responsibility to maintain confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. Integral to this is a clear understanding of standards of behaviour expected and in particular the acceptable boundaries of physical contact with pupils.

School staff must accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny and that perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued.

In extreme cases, a staff member might have to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him/her from committing an offence, from causing injury to him or herself, to others or to property, or otherwise from behaving in an undisciplined way. In such circumstances, staff are empowered to use reasonable force, either on school premises or anywhere else where the member of staff is in lawful charge of the pupil concerned. In such instances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used. Staff should act within the EA's guidelines on the use of reasonable force and should seek to avoid causing injury to the pupil.

Recording, Retention and Disposal of Child Protection Concerns

1. Purpose and Scope

This section outlines the procedures for recording, retaining, and disposing of child protection records in accordance with DE Circular 2020/07, the Data Protection Act 2018, and UK GDPR regulations. It applies to all staff involved in safeguarding and child protection within the school.

2. Recording Child Protection Concerns

All child protection concerns must be recorded promptly and accurately using the school's Note of Concern Proforma. Records should include:

- - Chronology of events and actions taken
  - Notes of concern
  - Records of discussions, referrals, and inter-agency communications
  - Formal plans (e.g. Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan)
  - Risk assessments and safety plans
  - Minutes of inter-agency meetings

Records must be signed, dated, and stored securely in a separate Child Protection File, not within the pupil's general educational record.

3. Storage and Access

Child protection records must be stored securely:

- - Physical records in a locked, fireproof cabinet
  - Electronic records in password-protected systems (CPOMS), with access restricted to the Principal, Designated Teacher (DT), and Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT)

Access is strictly on a need-to-know basis and governed by GDPR principles of necessity, proportionality, and security.

4. Retention of Records

- - Child protection records must be retained until the subject's 25th birthday, or longer if required for legal or safeguarding reasons.
  - Records of allegations against staff (unless fully exonerated) should be retained indefinitely.

- The school must maintain a Retention and Disposal Schedule in line with the DE Model Disposal of Records Schedule.

5. Disposal of Records

- - Disposal must be carried out securely and in accordance with the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and the Disposal of Documents Order 1925.
  - Disposal actions must be documented, and advice sought from the EA Information Governance Team where necessary.

6. Transfer of Records

- - When a pupil transfers to another school, child protection records must be securely transferred within 15 school days.
  - A formal record of the pupil's safeguarding history must accompany the transfer, ensuring continuity of care and protection.

7. School Closures or Amalgamations

In the event of closure or amalgamation, child protection records must be transferred securely to the successor school or archived/disposed of in line with statutory guidance.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Appendix 1

Neglect

- Dirty
- Lack of appropriate clothing
- Complaining of Cold
- Complaining of Hunger
- Body sores
- Urine smells
- Unkempt hair or appearance
- No parental interest
- Not wanting to communicate
- Behaviour problems
- Attention seeking
- Lack of respect
- Often in trouble
- Bullying
- Use of bad language
- Always out at all hours
- Stealing
- Lack of confidence - low self esteem
- Jealousy
- Poor attendance

Physical

- Bruises - without explanation, or with inconsistent explanations, in unusual places (eyes, ears, mouth / linear bruising)
- Broken bones of differing ages
- Cuts and grazes
- Behaviour changes/bed wetting/withdrawal/regression
- Frequent unexplained injuries or inconsistent explanations
- Finger marks, grasp marks, bite marks
- Cigarette burns
- Fear of physical contact
- Violent behaviour during role play
- Unwillingness to change clothes
- Aggressive language and use of threats
- Cowering, apprehension
- Not wanting to go home with parent or carer
- Burns or scalds

Sexual

- Inappropriate behaviour and language
- Withdrawn
- Change of behaviour
- Sexualized role play
- Rejecting physical contact or demanding attention
- Physical evidence - marks, bruising
- Pain going to toilet, strong urine
- Rocking
- Relationships with other adults or children, being forward
- Knowledge
- Stained underwear
- Bruising/marks in genital area
- Sexually precocious behaviour
- Sexually explicit drawings or pictures
- Anti-social behaviour
- Sudden poor performance in school
- Inappropriate displays of affection

Emotional

- Crying
- Rocking
- Withdrawn
- Not wanting to socialise
- Cringing
- Bad behaviour
- Aggression
- Behaviour changes
- Bribery by parent
- Self infliction and mutilation
- Lack of confidence
- Attention seeking
- Isolation from peers - unable to communicate
- Clingy
- Afraid of authoritative figures
- Low self esteem
- Soiling and wetting
- Difficulty in forming relationships

A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector whose work brings them into contact with children/young people

Introduction

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

Code of Conduct

1. Private Meetings with Pupils

a. Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised 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.

b. Where such conditions cannot 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.

c. Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.

b. 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. Where children have soiled themselves it is school policy to ask the parent to come into school to deal with the matter.

c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or w
Appendix 2
uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, ot
property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/0, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).

d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.

e. Schools should, in particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas like the photographic darkroom, draw up their own guidelines for these circumstances.

f. Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the present of other children or another adult. However no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.

g. Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

h. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager.

i. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, on school trips or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

b. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Gaelscoil na bhFál implements a policy of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials such as sex education programmes.

c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing wit[illegible] boys and girls.

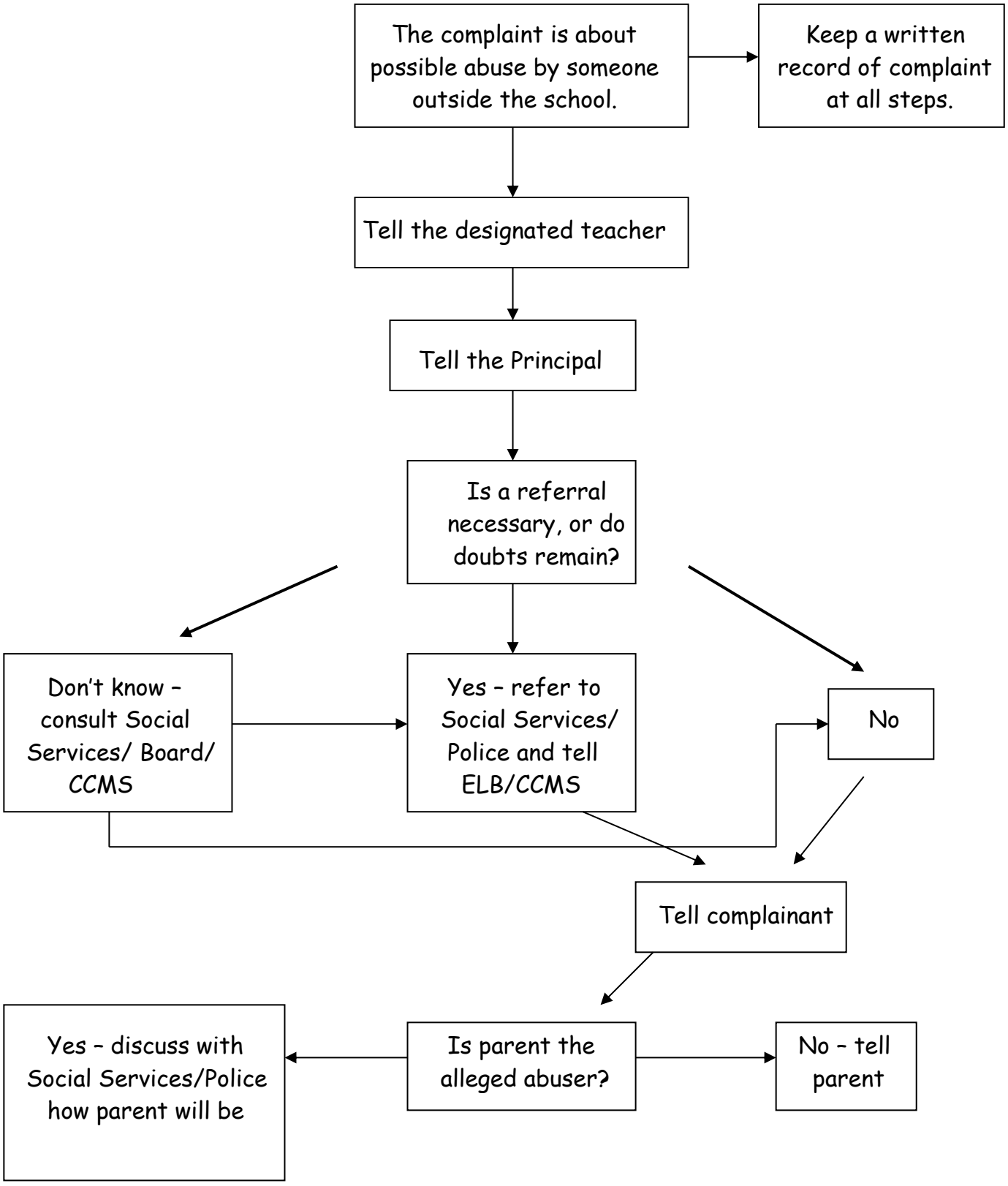
Conclusion

It would be impossible and in appropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

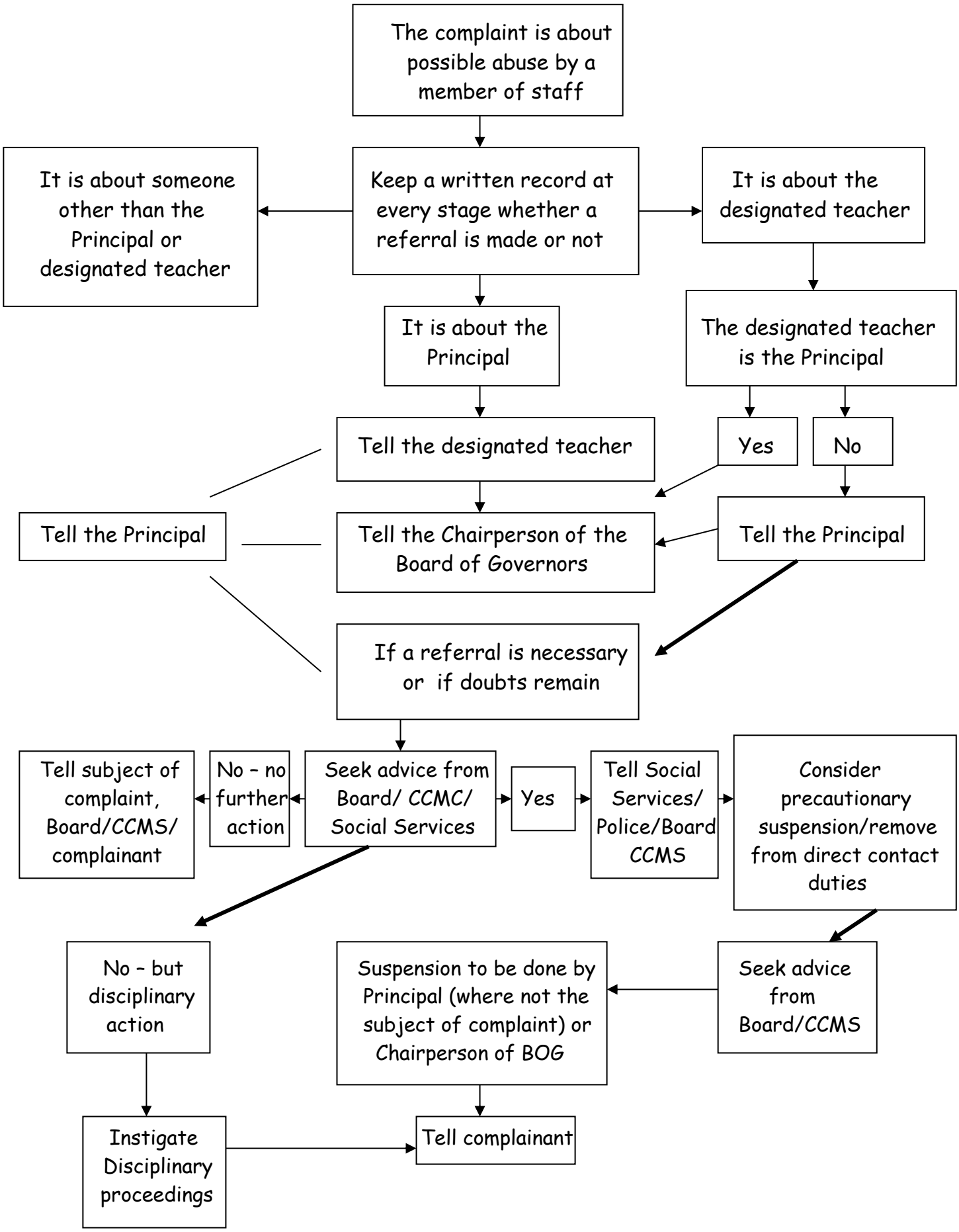
In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this booklet, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult their line manage or a representative of their professional association.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual 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.

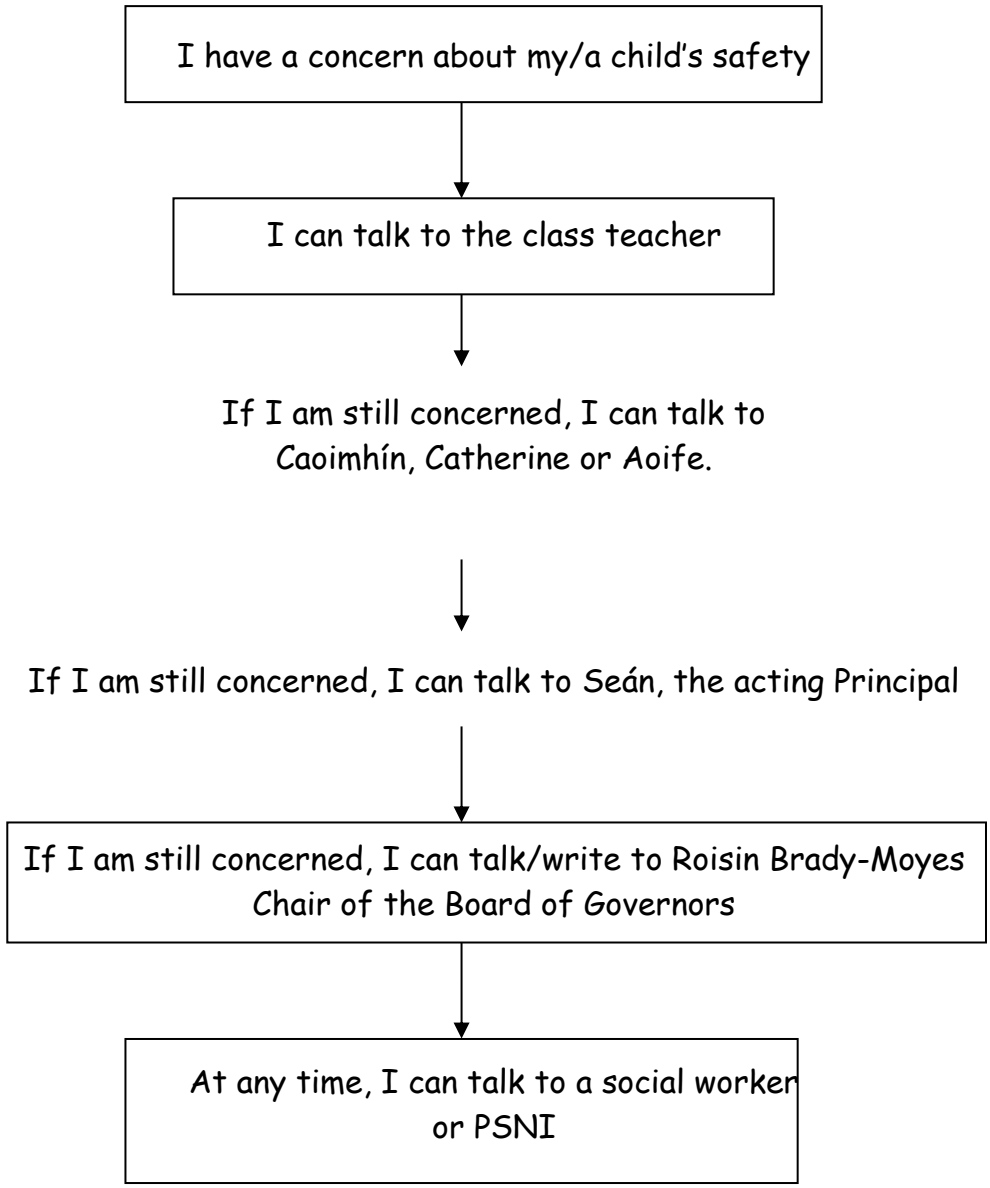
Procedures where the school has concerns or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff.



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



How a parent can make a complaint



SIGNED:	**Designated Teacher**
SIGNED:	**Principal**
SIGNED:	**Chair of Board of Governors**
DATE:	