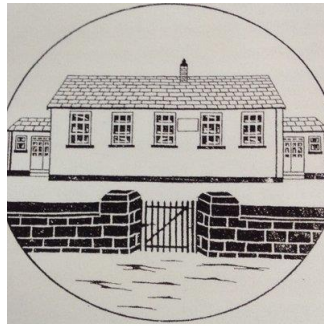


CREAVERY PRIMARY SCHOOL



**Keeping
children safe
is everyone's
responsibility**



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Child Protection Ethos ... *“Our school is about developing the potential of everyone to the full, within a caring and stimulating environment.”*

We in Creavery Primary School have a responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school

The staff at Creavery Primary School has adopted a Code of Conduct, **Appendix 1**, and visitors are required to read and adhere to **Appendix 2** - The Visitors Code of Conduct, sign the visitors' book and wear a visitors' lanyard.

2. Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, “Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (DHSSPSNI, 2017 and 2024), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” Circular 2017/04 (and subsequent amendments) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

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

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together
- Partnership
- Prevention
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances
- Protection
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

Aims to be addressed through this policy document:

- To introduce procedures in the school to deal with suspected cases of child abuse as directed by Department and EA circulars.
- To make the staff aware of the referral procedure within the school.
- To make parents aware of the procedures set up in school to deal with suspected cases of child abuse.

The appendices include Code of Conduct Guidelines for Staff and Visitors as well as information relating to internet access, use of children's images, use of mobile phones, administration of medication and changing clothes.

Adult Safeguarding

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

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

We are committed to:

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

We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over.

Other Related Policies

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. The child protection policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Attendance Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Safe Handling Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- First Aid & Administration of Medicines Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- RSE Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Educational Visits - School Trip Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistle Blowing Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should visit the School App/Website or contact the School Office.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

The School Safeguarding Team

As best practice, in the best interests of the children, and as a support for the Designated Teachers, the school should establish a Safeguarding Team. This team should include the Chair of the BoG, the Designated Governor for Child Protection, the Principal (as Chair), the DT and the DDT. The team may co-opt other members as required to help address specific issues, for example the SENCO, ICT Co-ordinator, etc.

This Safeguarding Team is a vehicle for ensuring effective co-ordination and co-operation between the key individuals responsible for safeguarding throughout the school.

The EA CPSS provides child protection training in relation to the specific responsibilities of each member of the team.

The responsibilities of the team should include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school.
- Support for the DT in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.
- Identify any actions required to address audit findings or ETI inspection of its safeguarding/child protection arrangements

Safeguarding Team in Creavery PS

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors - **Trevor Clarke MLA**
- Designated Governor for Child Protection - **Carol Hunter**
- Principal - **Louise Dunwoody**
- Associate Principal/ Designated Teacher - **Terry McMaster MBE**
- Deputy Designated Teacher(s) - **Judith Brown & Pauline Davison**

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors as a body must ensure that the school fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance including:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed (Mrs C Hunter).
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools (DT - Mr T McMaster, DDT's – Mrs J Brown & Mrs P Davison)

- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually, and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circulars
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities). This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness rising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chairperson of the BoG plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department, employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the 'Record of Child Abuse Complaints' against staff members even if there have been no entries.

Designated Governor for Child Protection

The BoG delegates a specific member (Mrs C Hunter) of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to advise the governors on:

- The role of the designated teachers
- The content of child protection policies
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teacher's Report
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

Principal/ Associate Principal

The Principal, as the Secretary to the BoG, will assist the BoG to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from DE are shared promptly, and timely inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. In addition, the Principal takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of DT and DDT Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.

It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the DTs to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role.

The Principal must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Every school is required to have a DT and DDT 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 responsibilities involve:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff and volunteers before they commence their role
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.

- Ensuring staff are aware that Notes of Concern should be completed using the template provided in DE circular 2020/07
- 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 BoG regarding child protection.

Deputy Designated Teacher

The role of the DDT is to work co-operatively with the DT in fulfilling his/her responsibilities. It is important that the DDT works in partnership with the DT so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

School Staff

Teachers, Classroom Assistants and other Support staff in school see children daily over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and a child may choose to disclose to them allegations of abuse.

Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection. In addition, class teachers should also keep the Designated Teacher informed in writing or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.

A pro-forma for reporting a concern or disclosure is included along with a body map for marking cuts, bruises, etc at **Appendix 14 - Child Protection Record – 'Note of Concern'**. If a member of staff does not feel their concerns are being taken seriously or action to safeguard the child is not being taken by professionals and the child is considered to be at risk of continuing harm, then they should speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or to Social Services.

All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and regular refresher training. Each member of staff will receive the general training on this policy and the procedures once every two years. This will be led by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or EA personnel.

Parents

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child – see Appendix 3.

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school:

- If the child has a medical condition or educational need.
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- If their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. By telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, and sending in a note (Absence Slip) on the child's return to school, will reassure the school as to the child's well-being.
- Making requests to the school in advance for permission to allow their child to attend medical or other appointment including providing details of any arrangements for the collection of the child.
- Reporting to the school office when they visit the school.
- Sharing any concern they may have in relation to their child with the school.
- Familiarising themselves with the schools Safeguarding Policies e.g. Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Use of Internet and Child Protection Policies etc..

More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.

CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS & INDICATORS

4. Definition of Harm

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland August 2017)

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. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse – **see Appendix 17.**

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and on-going information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- **Neglect;**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
and
- **Exploitation**

The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child. The main types of abuse as well as their physical and behavioural indicators are included in **Appendix 15** while specific types of abuse are in **Appendix 16**.

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.

(Co-operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland August 2017)

Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.	tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that there is no carer at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.

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. *(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland August 2017)*

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing; grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns, especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday	self-destructive tendencies; aggression to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; coming to school early or staying last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in artwork or stories

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 on-line bullying through social networks, on-line games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers. *(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland August 2017)*

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self-mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).	Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family; indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.

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.

(Co-operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland August 2017).

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	what the child tells you; withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self-esteem; self-devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material

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.

Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

(Co-operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland August 2017)

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

Specific Types of Abuse

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in Creavey P.S. are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy - **see Appendix 16.**

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English or sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see **Appendix 17.**

5. Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which 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 to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. 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.

If a child discloses a potential protection concern:

The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a child protection nature.

Receive - listen to what the child says, without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said, making brief cursory notes. These notes should be retained.

Reassure -ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe, and his/her interests will come first. **No promise of confidentiality can or should be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.**

Respond - respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether you need to refer the matter. Use open questions e.g. anything else to tell me? Do not interrogate or ask leading questions- this may invalidate your evidence and the child's in any later court proceedings. Do not criticise the perpetrator- the child may love this person and reconciliation may be possible. Explain what you must do next and to whom you have to talk.

Record- Staff will make notes at the time of the disclosure on the school pro-forma (Note of Concern) **Appendix 14** as soon as possible. They may also use the body maps in **Appendix 14** for noting marks on the child's body. The date, time, place, those present, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child will be recorded. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, the actual words used will be recorded rather than translating them into 'proper' words. Any injuries or bruises noticed will be recorded on a diagram ('**Body Map**') showing position and extent. Under no circumstances will a child's clothing be removed. Staff will be made aware that their note of the discussion might need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings

Do not destroy original notes. All records, information and confidential notes will be kept in separate files in the locked Safeguarding File Box. These will only identify the child by their initials and date of birth. These records are kept separate from the child's individual report.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a summary is entered on a Record of Abuse Complaints Notebook. This entry, which will contain details of the complaint, is stored in the locked Safeguarding Drawer, and will be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually and signed by the Chair and Principal/ Associate Principal if appropriate.

Report- refer the matter to the Designated Teacher. Respect confidentiality i.e. the matter should only be discussed on a 'need to know basis'.

In addition to the above, the school specifically recognises the need to protect children when:

- On school trips;
- Using the internet;
- Administering medication;
- Changing wet or soiled clothes.

For this reason, the school will request parental consent on:

- All out of school activities – **see Appendix 7**;
- Photographic Consent Form (GDPR) – **see Appendix 8**;

- Access to the internet – **see Appendices 9 & 10**;
- Administration of medication – **see Appendix 11**;
- Intimate Care – **see Appendix 12**.

6. Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

How a Parent can make a Complaint

In Creavery Primary School we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.

If a parent has a concern they can talk to the Class Teacher, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal.

If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 3**.

When the School has a Concern

The following is the procedure where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff including volunteers.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff will complete a 'Note of Concern' – **see Appendix 14 and must act promptly**. A body map is also available in **Appendix 14. He/she should not investigate**- this is a matter for Social Services- but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher and make full notes. Refer to flowchart in **Appendix 4**.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will consult with the Principal or other relevant staff and decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **They will always take care to avoid delay**. He/she may also seek advice or clarification from the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection or from Social Services (Gateway Team). Where it is evident that a young person has been or is at risk of being abused and/or a criminal offence may have been committed then the school must make a referral.

If a child protection referral is required, the Designated Teacher will seek consent from 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.

The Designated Teacher will phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form.

Referrals to Social Services will be made by telephone in the first instance and within 24 hours will be followed by the completion of a UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form.

If a referral is made a copy of the UNOCINI referral form should be sent to the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection. A copy of the UNOCINI form will be placed in the school's child protection file.

If a child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent.

Complaint Against a Member of Staff/Volunteer

The following is the procedure when a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff or a volunteer.

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal/ Associate Principal, then the Deputy Designated Teacher should be informed, and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority.

The procedure is outlined in **Appendix 5** - procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance ([DE Circular 2015/13](#)).

NOTE: In all cases of suspected child abuse, the action to be taken by the school is that of informing Social Services and the Education Authority. The school will NOT be involved in investigating the suspected abuse.

7. Suspension from Duty

Where the matter has been referred to the Social Services and or PSNI, 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 will be informed immediately.

8. Consent

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that

child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person has been sought and is withheld we will consider and, where possible, respect their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child, and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

There is a difficult balance between gaining consent for a referral into Adult Protection Gateway services and also ensuring a vulnerable adult is protected from harm. Consent will always be sought from the person for a referral to statutory agencies.

If consent is withheld, then a referral will not be made into the Adult Protection Gateway unless there is reasonable doubt regarding the capacity of the adult to give/withhold consent. In this case contact will be made with the local Adult Protection Gateway team to seek further advice.

In situations where there is reasonable doubt regarding an individual's capacity, they will be informed of the referral, unless to do so would put them at any further risk.

The principle of consent may be overridden if there is an overriding public interest, for example in the following circumstances:

- the person causing the harm is a member of staff, a volunteer or someone who only has contact with the adult at risk because they both use the service
- consent has been provided under undue influence, coercion or duress
- other people are at risk from the person causing harm
- or a crime is alleged or suspected

9. Operation Encompass

Where domestic violence is occurring within a home the PSNI will inform a Designated Teacher at their earliest possible opportunity so that accommodation can be made for the child and teachers can act in a sensitive manner – **see Appendix 6.**

10. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Other Social Services Meetings

The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences, core group or family support planning meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with their child protection plan.

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will follow DE guidance in determining what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

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 the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

In accordance with DE guidance, we have developed clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in our school are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child’s date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected. These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

If a pupil from our school attends an EOTAS provision, a member of the Safeguarding Team will share any child protection concerns they have with the DT in the centre. If child protection concerns arise when the pupil is attending an EOTAS provision the designated teacher in EOTAS will follow child protection procedures and will advise a member of the school’s safeguarding team of the concerns and any actions taken. It is the responsibility of EOTAS staff to maintain their records in accordance with DE Circular 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools and any subsequent updates.

For reasons of confidentiality the only people who need to know details of suspected cases are:

- a) **Miss L Dunwoody, Mr T McMaster**, Designated Teachers
- b) **Mrs J Brown, Mrs P Davison**, Deputy Designated Teachers
- c) Chair of the Board of Governors (**Mr T Clarke MLA**) & Designated Governor for Child Protection (**Mrs C Hunter**)

Other members of staff need to know only enough to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed pupil. They do not need to know detail

12. Recruiting and Vetting Procedures

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate if they are engaged in regulated activity. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Creavery P.S. are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

This includes all staff such as teaching and non-teaching, including parent and other volunteers, students on work experience, external coaches and music tutors, who will all be subject to vetting procedures through Access NI before permission is granted to work in the school. Information from Access NI Certificates will be kept in the Secretary's Office – **see also Appendix 13 'Guidelines for Volunteers.'**

13. Code of Conduct for all Staff Paid or Unpaid

All actions concerning children 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 child in their charge must be above reproach.

All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors – **see Appendix 1.**

14. Safeguarding in the Curriculum

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. (DE guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" Circular 2017/04 and subsequent amendments).

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its 'Preventative curriculum'. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of other subjects. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal

resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

Furthermore, school posters/displays include information directing a pupil on how to seek help, advice and support within the school and from external agencies and professionals. Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main foyer area which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. Other initiatives which address child protection and safety issues: School visitors e.g. Police, Fire Brigade etc.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team and approved by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the school's staff induction and training programme and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

All parents will receive a summary once every two years outlining the basic Child Protection Procedures and Policy. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teachers for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team.

Date of Next Review: September 2026

Signed:  (Chair of Board of Governors)
 (Associate Principal)

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

CPSS (Child Protection Support Service)	028 9598 5590
Northern Health & Social Care Trust Gateway Team Out of Hours	0300 1234 333 0800 1979 995
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC	0808 800 5000