

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular activities take place at lunch time and after school where the emphasis is on taking part.

The following clubs and societies all function at various times of the year:

Athletics Club	Dance Club
Hill Walking Club	Football Club
Girls' Hockey Club	Boys' Hockey Club
Fitness Club	Trampoline Club
Rugby Club	Science Club
Photography Club	Choir
Drama Society	Environmental Society
Young Enterprise	Scripture Union
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Orchestra
Charity Committee	Puzzle Club
Netball Club	Samba Drum Group



Pupils are also encouraged to apply for courses, scholarships and competitions, e.g.

Spirit of Enniskillen	Rotary Youth Leadership
Ireland Scholar Athletics Games	Civic Link
North-East School of Sport	
Outdoor Pursuits Courses	
Soroptimist International Public Speaking Competition	

Leadership skills are developed by encouraging pupils to adopt the roles of: Class Monitor, School Prefect, Peer Mentor, House Captain and School Council Representative.



The various clubs and societies within school frequently organise visits or tours within Northern Ireland and abroad. Educational visits to several foreign countries have been a feature of school life during the last 15 years.

### Youth Club

The school Youth Club operates on Wednesday evening. Its activities are mainly recreational and social.

It is organised by a school Youth Tutor assisted by a group of fully trained staff. It adds a most useful dimension to school life in the opportunity for involvement in activities related to both the local and more distant communities of young people.



# Pastoral Care

Year Tutors are senior members of staff who are responsible for the individual and collective needs of pupils in each year group. The experience and expertise of these teachers is a central feature of the carefully planned counselling and advice service which is available to all pupils throughout their school career.

In the event of problems or difficulties, pupils should consult immediately with the most relevant member of staff, i.e. Subject Teacher, Registration Teacher or Year Tutor. The Principal and Vice-Principal are also readily available for consultation and assistance.

## CONTACT WITH PARENTS

Every effort is made to maintain close contact with parents, who should not hesitate to get in touch with the Principal on any matter affecting the welfare, progress or development of their children. It is more convenient if appointments are made by telephone; appointments can be arranged during school hours or at other times.

Consultations can be made with other relevant members of staff through the Principal as and when they are needed.

Meetings with parents are organised on several occasions during the school year. These are usually for the parents of students in individual year groups but from time to time meetings may be on a wider basis.

Other interviews of a personal nature may be held with parents and/or pupils to discuss progress or matters of concern. These can be initiated by either the school or the parent.

### Parental Concerns

We wish to maintain the excellent home-school communication that exists at present and if a parent is concerned about any aspect of their child's education or welfare they should contact the school office and an appointment will be arranged.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school, as well as being essential if an individual is to maximise his/her progress, is a statutory obligation. Certificates recording periods of unbroken attendance are awarded by the school.

A school day consists by statute of two half days. Rolls are called daily.

School begins punctually at 9.00 a.m. each morning with an Assembly and continues until 3.30 p.m. Lunch is taken between 12.55 and 1.40 p.m. Pupils are expected to be punctual for school and all classes.

When, through illness or other cause, a pupil is absent for one session or more an explanatory note must be brought on the day of return, signed by the parent or guardian and stating the reason for absence. The pupil's class should be noted on such letters. In the event of infectious or contagious disease the Principal must be informed immediately and the pupil must not return to school until a doctor's consent has been obtained.

Parents should make every effort not to take pupils for holidays during term time bearing in mind that absence from school can hinder progress and have a detrimental effect on internal and external examination results. Teachers will not prepare work for pupils who go on holiday during term time however they will prepare work for pupils absent on long term illness.

## DISCIPLINE

The school has an established Disciplinary Policy and a policy in relation to Bullying. Good discipline in Ballycastle High School is based on positive relationships. Discipline problems are avoided by adopting the following strategies:

- consciously fostering a sense of personal worth in all pupils
- encouraging a sense of mutual respect between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves
- creating a well-planned, well-taught and interesting curriculum
- creating a pleasant well-equipped learning environment
- promoting a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- providing a well-organised and effective system of pastoral care
- maintaining close contact between home and school.

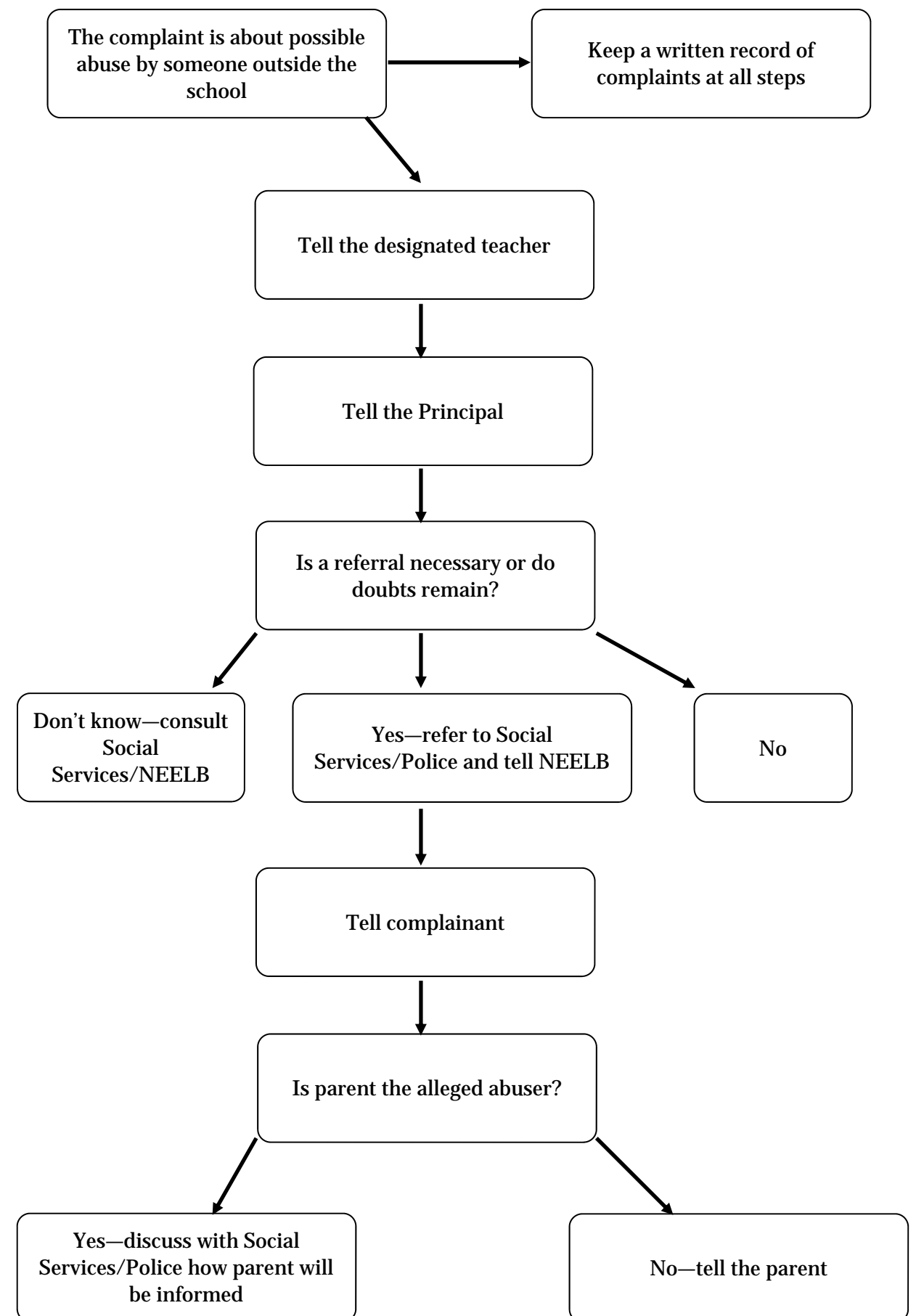
The good discipline which pertains in Ballycastle High School can be explained partly by these policies, partly by the quality of children and staff in the school and partly because it is a small school. Clearly it is easier for a child to gain a sense of personal worth in a small school.

In the unlikely event however of there being serious misbehaviour the school will follow the procedures for the suspension and expulsion of pupils as laid down by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board.

Copies of the Board procedures are available from the school or the Board itself.

**Figure 1**

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



## **Procedures to be followed when a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of the school staff**

Beyond initial clarification it is not the responsibility of teachers to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse.

When a complaint has been made -

1. The person receiving the complaint must immediately inform the Principal;
2. The Principal will seek discreet preliminary information from the person making the complaint;
3. Having satisfied himself that a complaint has indeed been made the Principal
  - will inform the designated teacher who will initiate the record of the complaint
  - decide after consultation with the appropriate NEELB officer as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action
  - consult the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

In the light of advice taken the Principal, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, will decide that either;

- (a) the allegation is apparently without substance and no further action is necessary;  
or
- (b) an immediate referral to the Social Services or the Police is warranted;  
or
- (c) the allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedures.

### **Role of the Designated Teacher**

Designated Teacher: Mrs. I. E. Kerr  
Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs. C. Stewart

In all cases of suspected abuse members of staff should report the information to the designated teacher.

### **Procedure to be followed by the designated teacher in the event of suspected abuse:**

- the designated teacher should immediately inform the Principal and where appropriate refer these cases to or consult with Social Services.
- any allegation by a child that he/she is suffering or has suffered abuse should immediately start the reporting procedures.
- where the designated teacher is suspected of abuse, the Principal should be informed immediately and the normal reporting procedures should be put in place.
- where the Principal is suspected of abuse, the designated teacher should report the matter to Social Services, the Police and the chairperson of the Board of Governors.

## **SCHOOL RULES**

An orderly school is a pre-requisite for efficiency in all its activities and is to the mutual benefit of all its users. All pupils will adhere to school rules.

Each member of the school staff is part of the discipline structure in school with his/her own authority, but the ultimate authority is in the hands of the Principal.

All members of the school staff community will be treated with courtesy and respect. Disorderly conduct on the part of pupils coming or going from school by bus or in the streets is the responsibility of parents and may be investigated by the relevant authorities. In any enquiry the school will assist the relevant authorities.

In the interests of our school environment, litter should be placed in the bins provided. Where wilful damage to the school property is involved the school reserves the right to inform the police.

For their own safety, pupils are not allowed to go into town or leave school before the regular time without a permanent or temporary pass issued by the Principal.

Permanent passes are given to those who go home for lunch.

Temporary passes will only be issued for a substantial reason (i.e. for something which could not be done outside school hours) and at the written request of a parent or guardian.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Any changes to policies or procedures during the current school year will be notified to parents in writing.

Copies of school policies are available to parents upon written request.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are part of everyday living and the school recognises that many parents and pupils find them extremely useful. Mobile phone usage need not be a problem and the following code formally states the accepted practice in this school. However, they can be misused within a school environment and pupils are expected to comply with the following code for possession of phones in school:

- Mobile phones must be switched off during class time. Teachers have the authority to confiscate phones which are causing a nuisance. These phones can be collected from the school office at the end of the day. Repeated offences, or other inappropriate use of mobile phones, will be dealt with by means of the school discipline procedure.
- Mobile phones must **never** be taken into a room where public examinations are taking place.
- A pupil is never asked to ring home on behalf of the school nurse requesting that a parent collect him/her because of illness. In the event of a pupil becoming ill responsibility for contacting parents rests with the school nurse.
- Mobile phones must never be used to send threatening or unpleasant messages, or take photographs of pupils.
- The school cannot accept liability for loss of or damage to pupils' phones.

## Health Education and Drugs

As required by the NEELB, the school has a clearly established policy dealing with Drugs Education and related problems which may arise. This Drugs Policy is one element of the School's Health Education Policy.

By drugs the school means a range of legal and illegal substances such as solvents, cannabis, alcohol, cocaine, cigarettes etc.

We aim to enable our pupils to make healthy informed choices by:

- (a) providing opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding about the dangers of drugs
- (b) providing opportunities for pupils to be equipped with the attitudes and skills they need to avoid misuse of drugs
- (c) enabling any pupil who is misusing drugs or who has concerns about the misuse of drugs, to seek help
- (d) providing staff with appropriate information and training to allow them to handle drugs education, related issues and incidents
- (e) supporting staff in the development of schemes of work and programmes which include drugs education
- (f) encouraging partnership between parents and school.

The school subscribes, along with all other secondary schools in the North Antrim area, to the procedures in dealing with drugs related incidents in schools. A copy of which is available from the school.

## Child Protection Policy

We, in Ballycastle High School, have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge.

We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which individuals are valued for their unique talents and abilities, so that all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by proactively 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 our school has also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils.

The purpose of the 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.

## Identifying signs of possible abuse

Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff - especially teachers, but also non-teaching staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances, or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse. Sometimes however they may be due to child abuse. Symptoms may give rise for concern but are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred.

## Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will not be tolerated. Members of staff, both teaching and ancillary, are conscious of the potential for bullying and will take immediate steps to prevent or stop it happening. Parents of a pupil who suffers bullying, or whose child exhibits bullying behaviour, will be personally contacted immediately such behaviour has been investigated and identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated, if necessary, by the designated teacher for child protection, and team action will be taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who exhibits this type of anti-social behaviour will depend on the individual case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her ongoing behaviour will be carefully monitored until the staff is satisfied that a normal pattern of social interaction has been established.

## School procedures in suspected cases of child abuse

The procedure when the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by anyone other than a member of the school's staff -

Beyond initial clarification it is not the responsibility of teachers to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse, or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child's family.

When a complaint has been made or signs of possible abuse noticed -

1. The person receiving the complaint should clarify and make a note of this information and must then inform the designated teacher;
2. The designated teacher must notify the Principal and together they will decide, taking advice as necessary, if the information is such that the matter should be referred immediately to the Social Services or Police;
3. The person who made the complaint or noticed signs of possible abuse will be advised as soon as possible by the Principal or designated teacher whether or not the complaint has been referred to an investigating agency.