



# BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

## Child Protection Policy

- *Approval by the Board of Governors – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019*
- *The implementation of this policy will be monitored by: Senior Management Team*
- *This policy will be reviewed every year.*





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

### **1. Purpose 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, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

### **2. The Aims of the Child Protection Policy are:**

- a. To ensure the safety and welfare of pupils on the school premises or when in the charge of staff on an educational visit or other outing.
- b. To create a caring atmosphere in which pupils feel there is a genuine interest in their needs and a willingness to address their concerns.
- c. To develop an awareness among all staff (teaching and non-teaching) of possible signs of abuse.
- d. To establish clear procedures to be followed in a case of suspected abuse.
- e. To comply with legal requirements in relation to child abuse and the guidance in the DENI Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

### **3. Safety and Welfare**

- a. The school endeavours through its Health and Safety Policy to maintain a safe environment for its pupils.
- b. All school activities including school trips, educational visits and residentials will be supervised in order to safeguard the welfare of the

pupils. Personnel who accompany such trips will be appropriately vetted and a risk assessment will be conducted in line with DENI/EA guidelines.

- c. The school and the Board of Governors follow Child Protection guidance in relation to vetting and pre-employment checks as laid out in Department of Education circulars 2006/6, 2006/25 and 2008/03.

#### 4. Staff Awareness

- a. Copies of the DENI booklet Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection and the EA Child Protection Procedures are made available to all members of the staff (teaching and non-teaching). Through these documents and in-service training, staff are made aware of the various categories of abuse (neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse and emotional abuse) and of possible signs and symptoms.
- b. Staff should at all times refrain from any action which could be construed as abuse and adhere to the school's Code of Conduct on Contact with Pupils.
- c. A flow diagram indicating the procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff is on display in the staffroom.

#### 5. Pupils

- a. Pupils are encouraged to discuss concerns they might have on any issue with their Form Teacher, Year Head or another member of staff to whom they can relate easily. This advice is outlined in the Homework Diary and on posters displayed throughout the school which also indicate Child Helpline numbers.
- b. Independent Counselling sessions are available during the week during which individual pupils may discuss issues of concern. They may also discuss health related issues with the school nurse.
- c. Issues of Personal Safety and Self-Protection are addressed in Personal Development and Pastoral lessons.
- d. There is a permanent Child Protection notice-board in the corridor outside Room 1 which provides advice.





## 6. Safeguarding Team

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

- Principal (Mr I Williamson)
- Designated Teacher (Miss J Elliott)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs C Stewart)
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Rev D Ferguson)
- Chairman of the Board of Governors (Rev P Barton)

The Safeguarding Team meets once per term to review policy and procedures. Members of the Safeguarding Team will also meet as required to deal with cases.

### (a). Responsibilities of the Principal

The Principal must ensure that:-

- DENI 2017/04 ('Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools') is implemented within the school
- A Designated Teacher and Deputy are appointed
- All staff receive Child Protection training
- All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- The Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed
- Child Protection activities feature on the agenda of the meetings of the Board of Governors and termly updates and an annual report are provided
- The school Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy at least once every 2 years.
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

### (b). Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher & Deputy Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training)
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents



- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate
- Liaise with the EA's Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Maintain records of all Child Protection concerns
- Keep the School Principal informed
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection

**(c). Responsibilities of the Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The Designated Governor will provide the Child Protection lead 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 and vetting of staff

**(d). Responsibilities of the Chairman of the Board of Governors**

The Chairman of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Child Protection and Recruitment & Selection training provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the EA Governor Support and Human Resource departments.
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to Child Protection activity.

## 7. Other Members of School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse.

Remember the 5 Rs: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer

The member of staff must:

- Refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- Act promptly
- Make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (Appendix 1)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- Not give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- Not investigate
- Not ask leading questions

### **In addition the Class Teacher should:**

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

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

**Do**

- Listen to what the child says
- Assure the child they are not at fault
- Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret
- Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words
- Remember not to promise the child confidentiality
- Stay calm
- Listen
- Accept
- Reassure
- Explain what you are going to do
- Record accurately
- Seek support for yourself

**Do not**

- Ask leading questions.
- Put words into the child's mouth.
- Ignore the child's behaviour.
- Remove any clothing.
- Panic
- Promise to keep secrets
- Ask leading questions
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Delay
- Start to investigate
- **Do nothing**

## 8. Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians should play their part in Child Protection by:

- Sending in a note on the child's return to school on the first day after an absence
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child at any time
- Letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Promoting Positive Behaviour, Acceptable use of the Internet and Child Protection policies
- Reporting to the School Office when they visit the school
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

## 9. The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure that:

- The school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Relevant Child Protection training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.





## 10. Definition of abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger. There are many different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.

### 10.2 Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse** is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**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.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status.

### Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

#### Physical Abuse

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing</li><li>• grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots;</li><li>• unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns;</li><li>• unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions; untreated injuries;</li><li>• bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion;</li><li>• injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive);</li><li>• appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults;</li><li>• improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway;</li><li>• uncomfortable with physical contact;</li><li>• comes to school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home;</li><li>• clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body;</li><li>• violent themes in art work or stories</li></ul>
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### Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”;</li> <li>• poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet;</li> <li>• recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders;</li> <li>• signs of self mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness);</li> <li>• extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apathy and dejection;</li> <li>• inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;</li> <li>• rocking/head banging;</li> <li>• inability to play;</li> <li>• indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison;</li> <li>• fear of new situation;</li> <li>• chronic runaway;</li> <li>• attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.</li> </ul>

### Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks very thin, poorly and sad;</li> <li>• constant hunger; lack of energy;</li> <li>• untreated medical problems;</li> <li>• special needs of child not being met;</li> <li>• constant tiredness;</li> <li>• inappropriate dress;</li> <li>• poor hygiene;</li> <li>• repeatedly unwashed; smelly;</li> <li>• repeated accidents, especially burns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tired or listless (falls asleep in class);</li> <li>• steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends;</li> <li>• withdrawn; lacks concentration;</li> <li>• misses school medicals;</li> <li>• reports that no carer is at home;</li> <li>• low self-esteem;</li> <li>• persistent non-attendance at school;</li> <li>• exposure to violence including unsuitable images / DVDs / computer games.</li> </ul>



**Sexual Abuse**

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs;</li> <li>• bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes;</li> <li>• chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches;</li> <li>• difficulty in walking or sitting;</li> <li>• frequent urinary infections;</li> <li>• avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers;</li> <li>• unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague;</li> <li>• anorexia/gross over- eating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the child tells you;</li> <li>• Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness;</li> <li>• children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality;</li> <li>• parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings;</li> <li>• poor self esteem; self devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement;</li> <li>• massive weight change;</li> <li>• suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts;</li> <li>• lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour;</li> <li>• inappropriate sex play;</li> <li>• repeated attempts to run away from home;</li> <li>• unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children’s art work or stories;</li> <li>• vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity;</li> <li>• exposure to pornographic material.</li> </ul>

**Exploitation** – potential indicators can include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc without plausible explanation;
- Leaving home/care without permission;
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving;
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care;
- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances;
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return;
- Truancing from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Concerning use of the internet;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis;
- New peer groups;
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend';
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Low self-esteem;
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less);
- Self harm and other expressions of despair;
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse.

Whilst these indicators can be usefully used to identify potential risk, it is important to note that their presence does not necessarily mean that Child Sexual Exploitation is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence, mean that it is not.

## **11. Procedures for raising concerns in relation to child abuse**

### **11.1 How a Parent/Guardian can raise a concern**

At Ballycastle High School we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns parents/guardians may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If parents/guardians have a concern they can talk to the class teacher or the Principal/Designated Teacher for Child Protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent/guardian

may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Contact details are shown in the flowchart in Appendix 2.

### **11.2 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**

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate – this is a matter for Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher and full notes should be made. These notes or records should be factual and 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 Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The Designated Teacher will notify cases of suspected abuse to the Principal and if deemed necessary, may refer them to Social Services and/or the Police and the EA Chief Educational Welfare Officer. 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 parent will be informed immediately.

The Designated Teacher may consult with the EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. 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 prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. He/she will also notify the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team.

If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of the volunteer will be suspended immediately, pending an investigation.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in Appendix 3.

### **11.3 Where a concern has been raised about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff**

If a concern about possible child abuse is raised against a member of staff, the Principal {or Designated Teacher if he/she is not available} must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated Teacher).

If a concern is raised against the Principal the Designated Teacher will inform the Chairman of The Board of Governors who will ensure that necessary action is taken.





Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Child Protection procedures as outlined in Appendix 4 will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in Appendix 4.

### **12. Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings**

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group 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 the Child Protection plan.

### **13. 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. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a “need to know” basis.

### **14. Record Keeping**

All Child Protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current Child Protection concerns these will be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

### **15. Vetting Procedures**

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the school are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.



## **16. Code Of Conduct For all Staff Paid or Unpaid**

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 child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. The school's Code of Conduct is available on request.

## **17. Staff Training**

Ballycastle High School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic Child Protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chairman of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant Child Protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

When new staff, substitute teachers or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies.

## **18. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Safeguarding Team in Ballycastle High School will update this policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor Child Protection activity and the implementation of the Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

## **19. Preventative Curriculum**

In recent years, the use of 'keeping safe messages' and the term 'preventative curriculum' have become more widely used to denote the proactive promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils within and across the broader school community. This is achieved by raising awareness of social emotional, and health issues, developing the confidence, resiliencies and coping skills of pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing problems.

In Ballycastle High School the personal development curriculum and wellbeing of pupils has a high priority in the school development plan and keeping safe messages are embedded throughout the school.



## 20. Related School Policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care
- Anti-bullying
- Promoting Positive Behaviour
- ICT (including - Acceptable Use of the Internet)
- Use of Reasonable Force.
- Educational Visits
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Code of Conduct

These policies are available to parents/guardians and any parent/guardian requiring a copy should contact the School Principal or visit the school website.

**Appendix 1**

**Ballycastle High School  
Child Protection Incident Report**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of Incident/Disclosure\*

Name of Person completing the report: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Record actual words used by the child/young person

Appendix 2

How a Parent can make a Concern

I have a concern about my / a child's safety

I can talk to the Head of Year

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Miss J. Elliott), the Deputy Designated Teacher / Vice Principal (Mrs. C. Stewart) or the Principal (Mr. I. Williamson)

If I am still concerned, I can talk / write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors (Rev. P. Barton)

If I am still concerned, I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman  
Tel: 0800 343 424

At any time a parent can talk to a social worker at the Gateway Team

Tel: 0300 1234333

(or out of hours – 028 95049999)

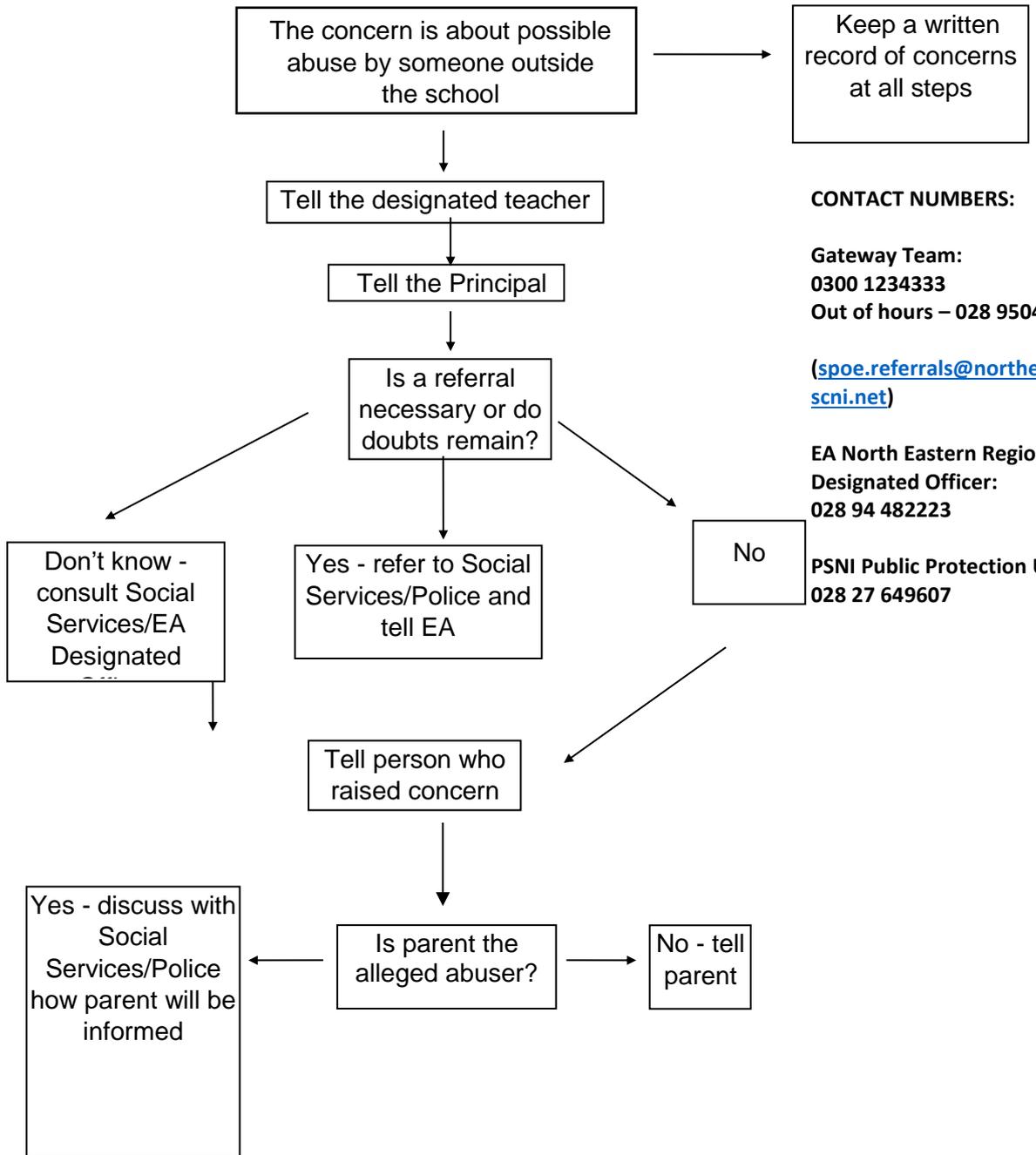
Or the PSNI Public Protection Unit

Tel: 028 276 49607



**Appendix 3**

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



**CONTACT NUMBERS:**

**Gateway Team:**  
**0300 1234333**  
**Out of hours – 028 95049999**

[spoe.referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:spoe.referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net)

**EA North Eastern Region**  
**Designated Officer:**  
**028 94 482223**

**PSNI Public Protection Unit:**  
**028 27 649607**



**Appendix 4**

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

