



# WELLINGTON COLLEGE BELFAST

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

With Addendum to policy in relation to Covid-19 Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements

Reviewed by Board of Governors November 2020

## 1. Key points of policy

- 1.1 It is College policy to provide a safe, secure and caring environment for pupils and staff and to meet the requirements of the Department of Education Circular 2017/04.
- 1.2 The key principles of safeguarding and child protection that underpin all policies, procedures, practices and services relating to safeguarding and child protection are: the welfare of the pupil is paramount; the pupil should be heard; parents will be supported; the school will work in partnership with all agencies to support the pupil; timely support measures will prevent further harm; responses will be proportionate to the circumstances; pupils will be protected; decisions and actions will be informed by evidence and pupils' needs.
- 1.3 It is policy to prevent abuse and to bring abuse, or well-founded suspicion of abuse, to the attention of the proper authorities. Governors are to be compelled to take disciplinary action should an allegation of abuse against a member of staff be upheld. Staff who fail to comply with the College's policies and procedures may also be liable to disciplinary action.
- 1.4 In discharging the duty of care and complying with statutory requirements, the College has published this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and an Employees' Code of Conduct, as well as other documentation. Training will be given to raise employees' awareness, clarify their obligations in relation to child protection and to explain how they can shield themselves against unfounded or malicious allegations.

It is recognised that this policy addresses sensitive and controversial issues and that staff may feel uncomfortable about some of the requirements. However, given the unfortunate experiences of other Northern Ireland schools, the outcomes of several official enquiries, public perspectives and statutory requirements, staff should see this policy and the accompanying documents as both pragmatic and supportive.

- 1.5 The Designated Teacher is Mrs Karen Latimer (Senior Teacher) Room 211

The Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs Lynne Anderson (Senior Teacher) Room 208

The College's Safeguarding Team consists of the Designated and Deputy Designated Governors, the Principal, the Deputy and Deputy Designated Teacher) who will meet termly to discuss all matters relating to safeguarding and Child Protection. The Designated Teacher will provide a monthly report to the Board of Governors.

- 1.6 The Role of the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher's role **"is to act as the final step in the process of identifying and reporting abuse."** The Designated Teacher must be mindful that this is a very sensitive area, but the procedure is mandatory. The Designated Teacher:

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties

of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff

- is appropriately trained, with regular updates
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- has a working knowledge of SBNI procedures
- makes staff aware of SBNI latest policies on safeguarding
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually liaises with the nominated governor and Principal as appropriate
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means.

#### 1.7 The Role of the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher

Is/are trained to the same level as the DT and, in the absence of the DT, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DT, the deputy will assume all of the functions above. Best practice now sees the DT and DDT acting as a team.

## 2. Policy Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- 2.1 Maintain a safe, secure and caring environment for all pupils.
- 2.2 Prevent abuse, and where it occurs to facilitate speedy identification and reporting.
- 2.3 Protect staff from erroneous or malicious allegations.
- 2.4 Meet legal obligations in relation to pupil protection matters.

## 3. Achieving this Policy

Governors and Staff are committed to:

- 3.1 Securing an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and pupils amongst staff.

- 3.2 Maintaining an orderly and affirmative learning environment which enhances pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem and their willingness to discuss problems with teaching staff.
- 3.3 Sustaining high professional standards, in and out of the classroom, including all aspects of pastoral care.
- 3.4 Establishing a clear referral procedure.
- 3.5 Publishing an Employees' Code of Conduct in relation to child protection.
- 3.6 Training staff in the provisions of this policy and the Employees' Code of Conduct.
- 3.7 Implementing appropriate protocols for constructive use of information and communication technology.
- 3.8 Keeping accurate records and co-operating with other agencies, including the PSNI.

#### 4. Definitions

- 4.1 Protection: Actions which prevent harm or which bring harmful activity to an end.
- 4.2 Abuse: The actions of another person or persons that result in a child or young person being neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care.
- 4.3 Negligence: The failure to provide care or to take effective measures to prevent harm.
- 4.4 Allegation: An explicit statement that an individual has perpetrated abuse, or that a child has been the victim of abuse. It may not be accompanied by names, dates, times etc.
- 4.5 Concern: A more general, non-explicit statement that something unspecified is having a detrimental effect on a child or that the behaviour of an individual may not comply with the provisions of this policy.

#### 5. Safety and Preventing Abuse, self-injurious behaviour and criminal activity.

- 5.1 Access to the premises is restricted: site security is the responsibility of Facilities Maintenance Provider.
- 5.2 Visitors to the College must report to reception where they will be issued with a pass which they must display at all times.
- 5.3 The policy adheres to the 2017/04 requirement that all College employees and volunteers, as well as FM staff are Criminally Record Checked before beginning work.

- 5.4 Personal safety is included in PSE curriculum from Year 8. Other curricular opportunities, including assemblies and visiting speakers, will be taken as they arise.
- 5.5 The protocol for ICT usage will encourage good practice with regard to pupil protection matters.
- 5.6 Training off all staff will include consideration and discussion of this policy, the Employees' Code of Conduct, awareness of signs of abuse including domestic abuse and ways in which staff can shield themselves against unfounded or malicious allegations of abuse.

## 6. The Issue of Abuse, self-injurious behaviour and criminal activity

- 6.1 This policy asserts the primacy of our young people. Actual abuse must be reported without delay but the policy also seeks to reduce the chances of an unfounded allegation of abuse gaining credence. It is morally and legally indefensible to prolong a child's exposure to harm.
- 6.2 The College's well proven pastoral system, including the PSE curriculum, is central to our efforts to make pupils aware of the issue, to enable them to develop self-protection strategies and know how to report concerns they may have for themselves or others.
- 6.3 Where a member of the teaching staff is concerned about a pupil, without having any reason to include abuse in their concerns, they can speak to the pupil, but they should also pass on their concern to the appropriate Head of Year. If abuse is seen as a possibility at this stage, they must not undertake any investigation whatsoever. They should immediately contact the Designated Teacher.
- 6.4 If an explicit allegation of abuse is made at any time, from any source, or if there is a strong suspicion that abuse has occurred, it is the legal responsibility of all employees to report the matter immediately to the Designated Teacher (or Deputy).
- 6.5 Observed signs of abuse should be described in detail or sketched. Under no circumstances should clothing be removed or a pupil asked to remove clothing except an outer layer such as a blazer or jumper. Staff should exercise caution if a pupil offers to remove clothing. It is permissible to ask a pupil to roll up a sleeve or to show markings on their ankle or lower leg. Staff are not qualified medical practitioners and must not undertake any physical examination.
- 6.6 No promise of confidentiality can or should be given where actual or alleged abuse is concerned.
- 6.7 A pupil can contact any member of staff (teaching or non-teaching) directly in order to report a child protection concern or make a disclosure.

6.8 A parent can contact any member of staff (teaching or non-teaching) directly in order to report a child protection concern or to make a disclosure. If the parent remains concerned he/she can speak to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher.

6.9 If a pupil or parent reports a concern or makes a disclosure to a member of staff (teaching or non-teaching), the member of staff must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher (or Deputy).

## 7. Reporting of actual or alleged abuse should take place without delay

7.1 If an allegation of abuse is made at any time, from any course, regardless of who is implicated, or if there is a strong suspicion that abuse has occurred, or may occur in the near future, it is the legal responsibility of all employees to report the matter to the Designated Teacher.

7.2 There may or may not have been abuse in such cases; in the absence of any signs of abuse, direct disclosure by the victim, confession by the perpetrator or allegation by another party, staff should not conduct their own investigation or rush to conclusions. They should provide the Designated Teacher with all the relevant information and documentation.

7.3 DENI Circular 2017/04 identifies types of abuse as follows:

Physical abuse – deliberately physically hurting a child, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Signs of physical abuse include bruises, lacerations, bite marks and burns.

Sexual abuse – when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve penetrative or non-penetrative acts. 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 a sexually inappropriate way or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Signs of sexual abuse may include: physical signs or behaviour including precocity, withdrawal, inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Emotional abuse – persistent maltreatment of a child. It may also be called psychological abuse and can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve telling a child that they are worthless or unloved or inadequate. It may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers. Signs of emotional abuse may include: excessive dependence or attention-seeking

Neglect – 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 suffer from other types of abuse. Signs of neglect may include: inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparent deficient nutrition

Exploitation – 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.

Specific types of abuse include:

Grooming – grooming involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of a child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins.

Child Sexual Exploitation - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse – domestic abuse is where threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse inflicted on anyone by a current or former intimate partner or family member. Sexual abuse is any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone.

Female Genital Mutilation – 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.

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 anyone with knowledge of a forced marriage must report it to the PSNI immediately.

Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour – it is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours; these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'.

E-Safety/Internet Abuse and Sexting – online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It includes internet technology, text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. Risks include content, contact, conduct and commercial risks. Pupils need to become ‘Internet Wise’ in order to protect them from the dangers the internet can pose. They should also be made aware that it is illegal under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share ‘indecent images’ of anyone under 18.

7.4 Staff will also be made aware of the signs of domestic abuse which is defined as:

‘Threatening, controlling and coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation’

‘Tackling Violence at Home: A strategy for tackling domestic violence and abuse in NI’ 2005 DHSSPSNI

7.5 The signs and impact of domestic violence upon children can be exhibited as follows:

<b>Self</b>	Physical injuries, feelings ranging from fear, responsibility, anger, depression, embarrassment, guilt Have to cope with tension, change, ‘unexplained situation’ Unable to talk about experience/secretive/silent Loss of space for self as a ‘child’ Sense of powerlessness to initiate change Sense of confusion and emotional turmoil Do not readily admit to what they have seen, heard and felt Advanced in maturity and sense of responsibility Disruption in living and educational arrangements
<b>Relationship with parents</b>	Confused about feelings towards mother/father Protective of mother/siblings, won’t leave mother alone Sense of responsibility for the situation Mixed feelings towards perpetrator Adopts role of caretaker, confidante, referee, colluder, perfect child, scapegoat
<b>Relationship with others</b>	Sense of shame as family business becomes public knowledge View violence as appropriate behaviour Becomes passive, withdrawn when conflict/disagreement occurs Fear of external agency involvement School life disrupted by behaviour or change Challenging behaviours in school

7.6 Where a member of the non-teaching staff notices apparent signs of abuse, or becomes aware of direct disclosures or allegations of abuse, or suspects for some other reason that abuse has taken place or may occur, the concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher, or in case of their absence, to the Principal.

- 7.7 This policy does not cut across the legal responsibility of all citizens to report arrestable offences. Anyone who knows or believes that an arrestable offence has been committed and has information which is likely to contribute to the arrest of a perpetrator has a duty to give that information to the police. Failure to do so is in itself an offence under the provisions of the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967.
- 7.8 It is preferable that reporting is done through the Designated Teacher who is in a position to help and support individuals from external agencies such as PSNI, social services or EA.

## 8. Acting on Reports of Abuse

Whilst seeking to uphold pupil interests and deal with abuse quickly and effectively, Governors are mindful that precipitate action on unfounded or malicious allegations can be seriously damaging to the lives of those involved. The implementation of this policy is essential, but it will be carried out carefully and humanely. Staff are directed to the Professional Code of Practice as a way of shielding themselves against such allegations.

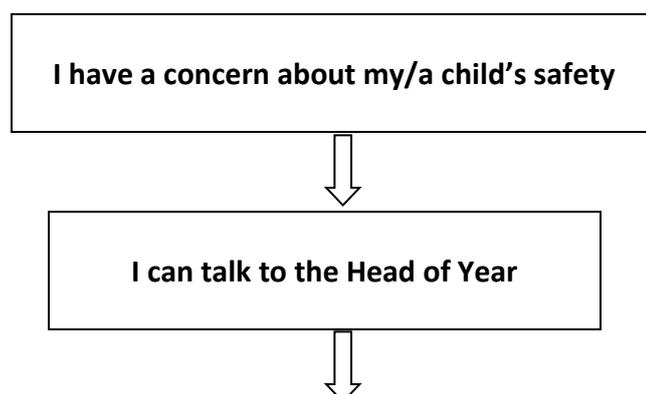
- 8.1 The Designated Teacher is Mrs. K. Latimer and the Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs. L. Anderson.
- 8.2 The Senior Management Team will monitor and review the effectiveness and the implementation of this policy and report to Governors with a view to adapting it where necessary.
- 8.3 If the Designated Teacher is informed of any direct allegation or confession of abuse, self-injurious behaviour or criminal activity, or apparent signs of abuse on a pupil, or of a member of staff's suspicion that abuse, self-injurious behaviour or criminal activity may have taken place, the Designated Teacher will carry out preliminary clarifications as needed.
- 8.4 The Designated Teacher will seek advice from one of the EA Designated Officers. If the Designated Teacher then forms the opinion that, on the balance of probability, abuse or criminal activity may be indicated, she is legally obliged to inform Social Services, the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Designated Officer in the Education Authority. The Designated Teacher will complete an Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) form. Thereafter, the procedure will be directed by these agencies; for example, Social Services will inform the PSNI and there may be Police involvement at an early stage. The Principal will also be informed.
- 8.5 If the Designated Teacher forms the opinion that, on the balance of probability, abuse is not indicated, she will, after consultation with appropriate members of the School's Pastoral Care Team, determine what further action (e.g. support), if any, should be taken. The matter will still be reported to the Principal, recorded confidentially and guidance from EA Designated Officers sought.

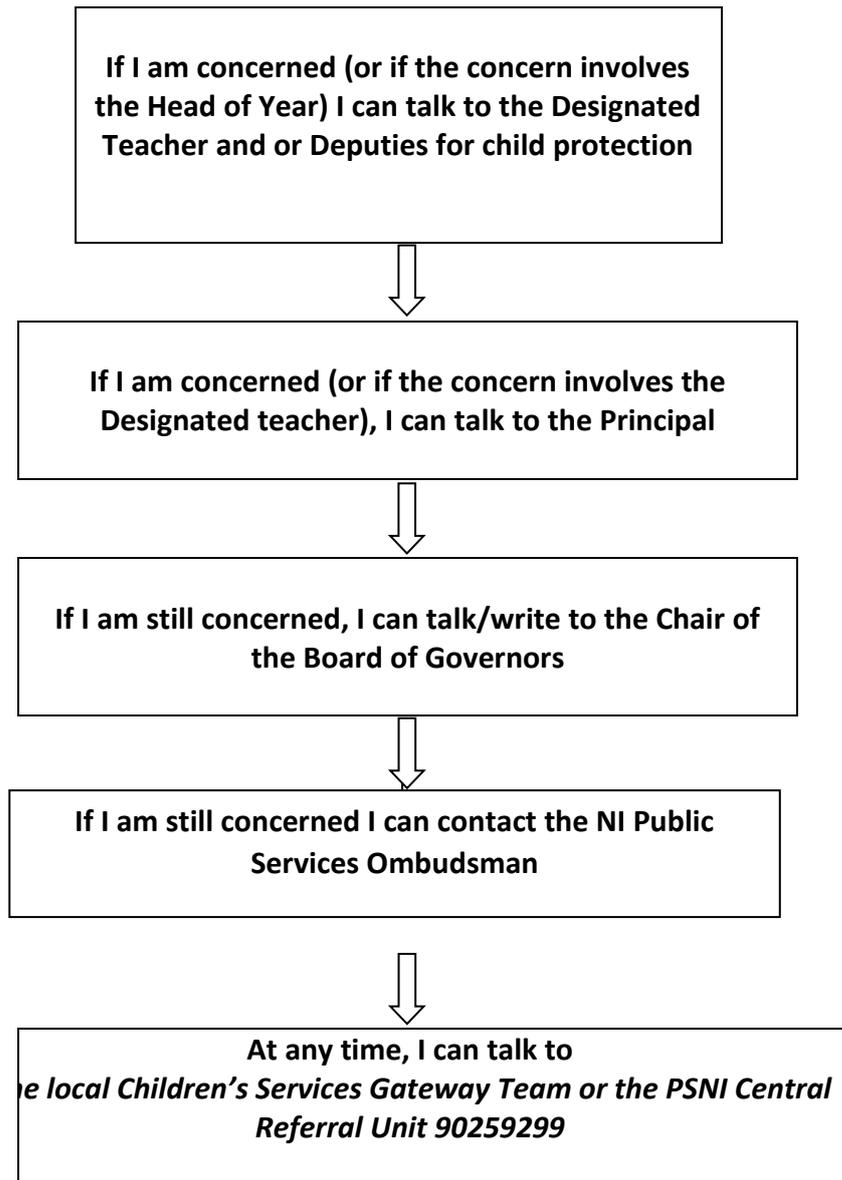
- 8.6 Where the abuse (as opposed to bullying) is peer abuse, i.e. by another pupil, both the victim and the alleged abuser must be reported. In all cases in which abuse is suspected, a written record of all details must be kept, and file in a suitable location, appropriate to the confidential and sensitive nature of the material. All records will be stored in accordance with DE Circular 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools. The School will co-operate fully with all investigations or processes as required by the properly constituted authorities and will try to accommodate parental/guardians' requests for information/interviews.
- 8.7 Where child protection procedures have been implemented, the school will facilitate support measures (where appropriate) for the pupil concerned; for example, counselling from either the Independent Counselling Service for Schools and/or support from external agencies.
- 8.8 A confidential list of pupils who are on the Child Protection Register will be kept.
- 8.9 The Designated Teacher will make an annual formal report to the Board of Governors.  
If the allegation or suspicion of abuse is against a member of staff, the allegation should be reported to the Designated Teacher, who will report it to the Principal who will then follow the procedures outlined in DE Circular 2015/13 *Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff*.
- 8.10 Written records of interviews & discussions, descriptions of signs of abuse etc. must be kept and will be stored under the direction of the Designated Teacher in a secure location appropriate to the sensitivity and importance of such material. Such records and notes may be used as evidence in the event of legal action.
- 8.11 If the allegation or suspicion of abuse is against the Designated Teacher, the initial report should be made to the Principal, who will then follow the above procedures.
- 8.12 If the allegation involves the Principal, the Designated Teacher liaises directly with the EA Designated Officer, Human Resources, Social Services and the BoG Chair.

## Complaints

Where a parent is concerned about their child's safety in terms of child protection issues the following process should be followed:

**If a parent has a potential child protection concern:**





If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school's complaint policy. This policy should culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

## Pastoral Care in Schools CHILD PROTECTION

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.

All staff appointments will have rigorously followed EA employment and vetting procedures e.g. use of photo ID, references etc. as part of the recruitment process.

All new appointments (both teaching and support staff as well as volunteers) will receive a Child Protection/safeguarding awareness raising session as part of their induction programme in August of the new academic year.

Any appointments made during the year are facilitated on an individual basis.

The awareness/refresher sessions cover the following:

- An outline of role of the Designated Teacher and Deputies
- All relevant policies and their importance for pastoral support are identified
- EA and DE guidance on good practice
- EA and DE guidance in relation to Safeguarding with a specific focus on Child Protection
- How to respond to disclosures – roles and responsibilities
- The different types of abuse including domestic abuse and grooming
- Guidance on Social Networking sites and appropriate professional conduct

### Safety and preventing abuse, self-injurious behaviour and criminal activity

All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Staff must be familiar with the system of authorized controlled access and visitor passes that is in place. Adults on school premises who are not employees/volunteers of the School should have visitor passes. Staff should ask those who do not have such identification to proceed to Reception; additionally, it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that the

person(s) is/are escorted to Reception. If the individual refuses to co-operate, a member of the Senior Leadership Team / GFM staff must be informed immediately. Staff who are working with visitors in school should ensure that their visitors have passes.

Criminal Record Checking (of all employees, including those working on temporary or voluntary basis) is the responsibility of the EA and will be triggered by a request from the Principal. A request for an AOTT must be completed on the relevant pro forma and submitted to the Principal giving as much notice as possible. **An employee / volunteer will not be allowed to undertake paid / voluntary work until they present an “Enhanced Disclosure Certificate” to the Principal.**

At all times, staff should be aware of measures they can take to protect themselves from the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse. They should be aware of the following:

### 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. Do not spend excessive amounts of time with one pupil, away from other people
- 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.
- c) Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. DENI Circular 1999/9, 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 presence 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) All accidents and injuries involving pupils must be reported, using the official EA Forms, available from the Office. Written witness statements should be taken from pupils as well as adults, where possible.
- h) Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- i) 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.
- j) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, 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.

Obtain the Principal's permission and complete all the relevant documentation before taking pupils off school premises. Written parental permission should be sought in advance; in the absence of such permission you must not take that pupil with you. This should be made clear to pupils and parents well in advance.

- k) Avoid being alone in a car with a pupil.
- l) On school trips, especially in a residential setting, never, under any circumstances, take a pupil into your room and, where possible, check pupil rooms along with another member of staff.
- m) Never, under any circumstances, take a pupil alone into a toilet.
- n) Keep a record (date, time, nature) of any false allegations made against you or other staff, such as 'he's always picking on me' or 'you hit me' or comments such as 'don't touch me'. Get another adult to witness the allegation, if possible.
- o) If a pupil touches you, or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be an innocent act, do not make the pupil feel guilty but remember that ignoring this sort of behaviour, or allowing it to go unchecked, may place you in a vulnerable situation, and could also leave the pupil open to molestation by another party prepared to exploit such innocence. Equally, if it is not an innocent act, it should certainly not be allowed to continue, and you should not give even tacit consent.
- p) If you suspect or know about abuse or inappropriate behaviour by another member of staff, you must inform the Principal. Your silence implicates you in a 'cover up'.

### 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. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials such as AIDS education for schools and in connection with 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 with adolescent boys and girls.

### 5. Use of Social Media/Mobile Phones

- a) Staff are advised to follow EA guidance and not have contact with students using any form of Social Media platform. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology/phones and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.
- b) Contact with pupils must be through school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils. If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.
- c) Photographs or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should only be transparent and only occur when parental consent has been given.

### 6. The Procedure for handling allegations of abuse against staff is:

- a) The Principal will follow the guidance outlined in DE Circular 2015/13 *Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff*. Once the Principal has formed the considered opinion that, on the balance of probabilities, abuse of a pupil by a member of staff is indicated, s/he is legally obliged to inform all of the following: Social Services, the PSNI, the Chair of the Board of Governors, the Designated Officer in the Education Authority. Thereafter, the procedure will be directed by these agencies.
- b) In the case of less well-defined indications of abuse of a pupil by a member of Staff, the Principal will then take immediate advice from the EA Designated

Officer, and any other EA official to whom s/he is referred, with a view to conducting preliminary clarifications.

- c) The Principal will then act in accordance with the advice given from these sources.
- d) Following preliminary investigation, if the indications of abuse are held to be sufficiently strong, the teacher will be suspended on full pay with immediate effect and until further notice. In such a case the procedure will be to:
- withdraw the teacher from class and arrange that supervisory teachers are allocated;
  - in front of a witness, preferably a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the same sex as the teacher concerned, the Principal will inform the teacher that:
    - an allegation of abuse has been made against her/him;
    - following preliminary investigation the authorities have been informed;
    - (s)he is suspended from their employment with immediate effect and until further notice;
    - (s)he must not, under any circumstances, return to school premises without prior permission;
    - there should not, under any circumstances, be any attempt to contact pupils.
- e) If the indications of abuse are not held to be sufficiently strong to merit referral to external authorities, the Principal will discuss the process to follow with the Chair of the Board of Governors. A properly documented record will be kept in all cases. In the College, all complaints of abuse will be recorded against both pupils and staff names. If such allegations are not substantiated, the record against the teacher will clearly indicate that fact, and the record in the pupil's file amended to show that an unsubstantiated allegation was made. In the case of the teacher, the record involving alleged abuse will be kept in a highly confidential file, in the safe in the Principal's Office. Access to this file will be restricted to the Principal. A note, placed in the teacher's ordinary record file, will indicate the existence of this other unspecified record. Information on this record will be divulged only to the relevant authorities or at the direction of a court. In the case of the pupil, the record involving alleged abuse will be kept in a highly confidential file, in the safe in the Principal's Office. Access to this file will be restricted to the Principal. A note, placed in the pupil's ordinary file, will indicate the existence of this other unspecified record. Information on this record will be divulged only to the relevant authorities or at the direction of a court. In keeping with DE regulations, the compilation of reports relating to abuse, such as for a Child Protection Conference, will be done under the direction of the Designated Teacher and will be co-ordinated with the SENCO.
- f) If a pupil's name is entered on the Child Protection Register (CPR), the School will be notified and will record this in the confidential record kept on the pupil. A yellow form, placed in the pupil's ordinary file, will indicate the existence of this other unspecified record. When a child on the CPR leaves for another school, that school must be notified that the pupil's name is on the

CPR and all child protection records pertaining to that pupil will be destroyed. When a pupil on the CPR joins the school and the previous school has notified us, the Designated Teacher will contact Social Services for relevant information, which will then be kept in the relevant file. A yellow form, placed in the pupil's ordinary file, will indicate the existence of this other unspecified record. The school will monitor pupils whose names are on the CPR and will alert the relevant personnel when there is absence of three days or more, a sporadic attendance pattern, or any other causes of serious concern for the pupil's wellbeing.

- g) Where there is an allegation against the Designated Teacher, or good grounds for believing the Designated Teacher has abused a pupil the following procedure will be followed:
- The staff member will report the matter to the Principal who is legally obliged to inform Social Services, the Chair of the Board of Governors, and the Designated Officer in the Education Authority.
  - It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that all records are kept safely pending further investigation.
- h) If the allegation involves the Principal, the Designated Teacher liaises directly with the EA Designated Officer, Human Resources, Social Services and the BoG Chair.

## Associated Policies and School Publications

- ☐ Attendance Policy
- ☐ Anti-bullying Policy
- ☐ Positive Behaviour Policy
- ☐ Educational Trips and Visits Procedures
- ☐ Health and Safety Policy
- ☐ Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- ☐ Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy
- ☐ Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- ☐ E-Safety, ICT Acceptable Use and Digital Media Policy
- ☐ Prospectus and Annual Report

## Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate 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 judgment 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 manager 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 their parent/guardians.

## Addendum to Wellington College Belfast Child Protection Policy Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

### 1. Context

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

### 2. Procedures

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website. In addition the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety:

- Parents have been informed via Schoolcomms of key contacts within the Safeguarding Team, the school email address and main school phone number
- Teachers provide online learning via the school website/C2K platform with strict procedures in place to minimise risk
- The website provides parents with a range of resources and links to additional online learning, support and guidance
- We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the Safeguarding Team
- The school counsellor (ICSS) remains available for phone consultation and parents have been made aware of this via the website
- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the EA CPSS, teachers may make phone calls to parents. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding Team

### 3. Online Safety

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing or platforms recommended by and available via C2K.

- Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleep wear during the session
- Pupils cannot participate from a bedroom
- The teacher arranges the session and password and shares this only with pupils
- Pupils must agree not to share the password with anyone else
- Parental consent will be sought before their child attends online sessions
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers

If there is a breach to any of these procedures eg. a pupil gives the password to someone else who joins the group, the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.

### 4. How a Parent Can Rise and Issue or Express a Concern

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and request for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the Safeguarding Team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

### 5. If School is Open During Covid-19 Closures

If school is open for vulnerable pupils and key worker's children, the school should adhere to the EA guidance.

In any event, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

### 6. How a Child Can Raise a Concern

We know that while many children will be enjoying their time at home and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our children and young people:

- Respond to emails via the C2K email addresses only
- When contacting parents via phone we will always ask to speak to their child or young person
- Pupils will be given an email address as one way to connect with school
- Pupils will be made aware of other agencies which can offer advice/support including NSPCC, Childline, CEOP and the Safer Schools App

## 7. Some Useful Links and Contact Telephone Numbers

College telephone number: 02890642539

College email: [info@wellingtoncollegebelfast.org](mailto:info@wellingtoncollegebelfast.org)

College website: [www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org](http://www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org) (this includes many resources for keeping safe during online learning and telephone support lines for young people)

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>

<https://www.safeinternet.org.uk/helpine/report-harmful-content>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

## 8. Monitoring and Review

The Safeguarding Team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the period of Covid-19 school closure in line with Departmental guidance and advice.

Signed:	Designated Teacher:	Date:
Signed:	Principal:	Date: