

LARNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND
PROCEDURES



Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mr P McAuley
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection	Mr B Kirkpatrick Ms P Weir
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Rev Dr C McClure

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Introduction

The Governors and Staff of Larne Grammar School fully recognise the contribution the school makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by the DHSSPS “Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” Policy (March 2016), the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland’s (SBNI) Policies and Procedures, DE ‘Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999), DE Circular 2020/07, DE Circular 2016/27, the Area Child Protection Committees’ (ACPC) regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and DE “Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools” (2019), including the revisions made to this guidance in Update No 1 – June 2020.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration*. The ‘paramourncy’ of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and Procedures.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teaching staff, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue 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.

There are five main elements to our policy:

- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues with children and their parents/guardians and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, members of staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include within the school’s curriculum, information about dangers which they may encounter, and procedures they should adopt to ensure their safety.

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- Include opportunities in the PD (Personal Development) curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- Ensure we have a designated and a deputy designated teacher for child protection who have received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely and separately from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We will carry out these responsibilities through our pastoral care system. This system 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.

The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child.

Key Roles within the Safeguarding Team at Larne Grammar School

Chair of Governors: Mr R Logan

Designated Governor for Child Protection: Rev Dr C McClure

Principal: Mr J Wylie

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mr P McAuley

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection: Mr B Kirkpatrick & Ms P Weir

What is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse occurs when ‘a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings; in a family, in an institution or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.’ (APCP, 2005)

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful 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. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies, including self-harming
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

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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 another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse (ACPC, 2005). Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones.

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

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 to look at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

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. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing / begging

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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 a 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of 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. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI. DHSSPS 2016 Revised May 2017*)

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

Other Safeguarding Issues

The Safeguarding issues facing young people are constantly changing and the Governors and staff of Larne Grammar School have a duty to be aware of, be vigilant regarding and educate our pupils in relation to new or emerging dangers to their well-being.

The school will take a proactive approach to safeguarding pupils in relation to issues such as:

- Drug use (see Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy);
- E-safety – including extortion, bullying, sexting, grooming, access to inappropriate materials (see ICT Acceptable Use, eSafety and Digital Media Policy and Ant-Bullying Policy);
- Domestic Violence and Abuse – threatening, controlling, 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 (*Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016*);
- Sexual Violence and Abuse – any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) (*Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland A Seven Year Strategy: March 2016*);
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life (*Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation; DFP 2014*);
- Child/Forced marriage;
- Self-Harm – an expression of personal distress usually made in private, by an individual who hurts him/herself. The nature and meaning of self-harm, however, vary greatly from person to person. In addition, the reason a person harms him/herself may be different on each occasion and should not be presumed to be the same. (*National Institute for Clinical Excellence 2004*).

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Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and follow the guidelines set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or Disclosed) Child Abuse

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT) is Mr P McAuley. In his absence **the Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection (DDT)**, Mr B Kirkpatrick & Ms P Weir, will assume responsibility for child protection. On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDT is in the school the Principal, Mr J Wylie, will assume responsibility for child protection.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT or DDT. In all cases where symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or about the welfare of the child, the member of staff should report these concerns to the DT or DDT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly, without delay**. The child should be made aware that any disclosure may need to be passed on to the DT.

Children whose first language is not English/Newcomer pupils should be given the opportunity to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred.

The member of staff should not investigate – this is a matter for social services or PSNI – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with him, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.

The DT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services**. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately. The DT/Deputy DT will report back to the member of staff that the matter has been dealt with.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection in the Education

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Authority, or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the DT will inform:

- Social Services
- Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection

(This may be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION').

Where the Principal has concerns about a child which he does not feel have been satisfactorily resolved, he should:

- (a) *contact the Designated Officer for Child Protection in the Education Authority.*
- (b) *raise the issue with the Assistant Director of Children's Services in the Health and Social Services. This is now performed through the Gateway Team for the South Eastern Sector*

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the DT if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The procedures outlined in DE Circular 2015/13 will be followed. Where the matter is referred to social services and/or PSNI, 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 investigations by Social Services and/or PSNI. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. He will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

Role of the Designated Teacher (DT) and Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT)

The DT is responsible for:

- Providing training to all school staff including support staff
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Recordkeeping of all child protection concerns
 - *A careful record will be made of all observations/comments/discussions held and actions taken. (Original notes should be retained).*
- Maintaining all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and the School Principal as appropriate)
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI Public Protection Units
 - *Local Health and Social Services Department will be notified initially by telephone; this will be followed up in writing within 24 hours. This should be done using the UNOCINI form and should be emailed in encrypted format.*
- Liaising with Education Authority Designated Officers for Child Protection
 - *(A copy of the referral can be sent to the Designated Officer for Child Protection in the Education Authority. The referral should be marked 'Confidential', 'For the Personal Attention of ').*
- Keeping the school Principal informed
 - *The Principal will be notified in the event of child abuse coming to light or being reported to a member of staff.*

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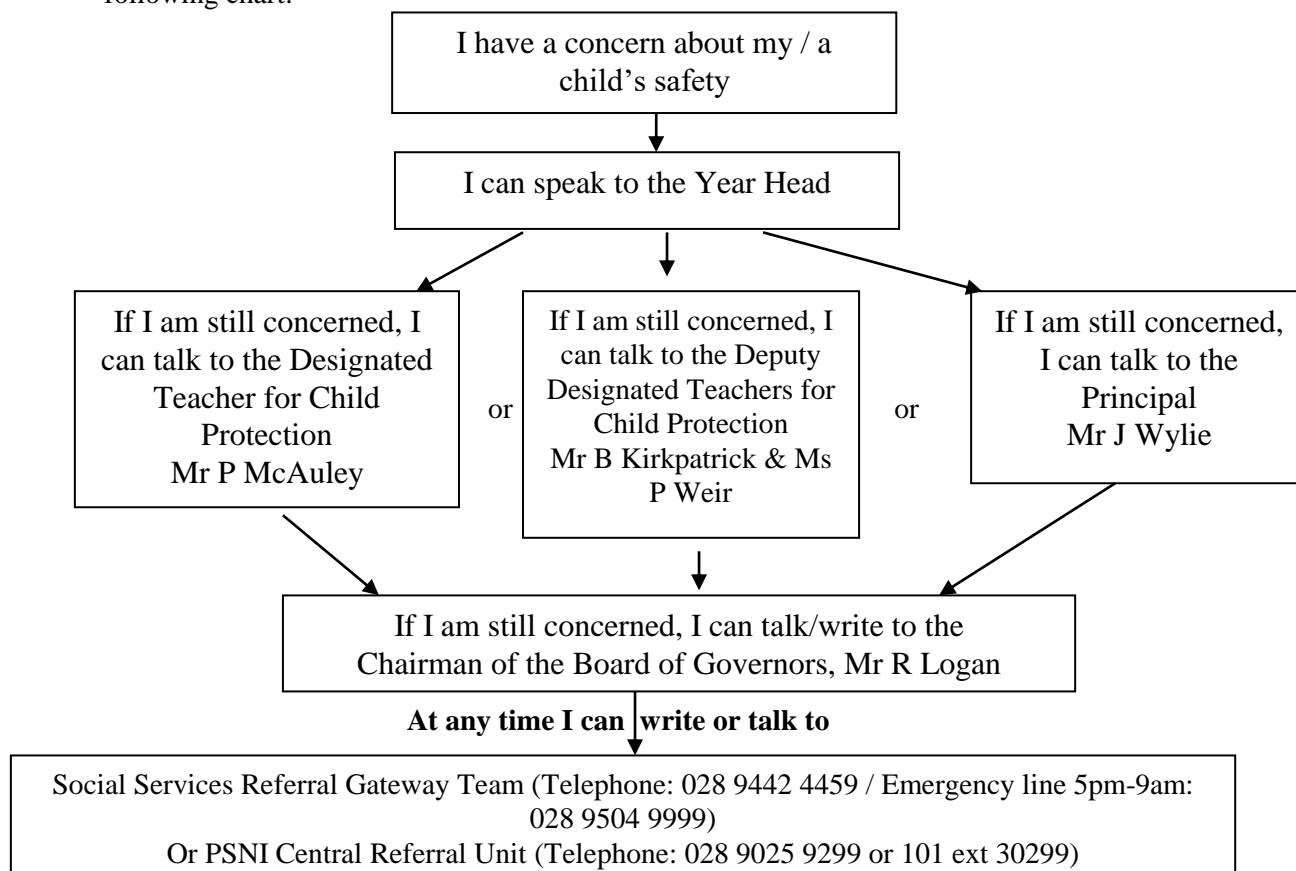
- Taking the lead in the development and updating of the school's Safeguarding Policy
- Attending all Case Conferences as appropriate and constructing a written report which should be made available to the Chair of the Case Conference prior to the Case Conference being held.
- Ensuring that the Principal and those members of staff 'with a need to know' (eg Heads of Year) are aware of children in care or of Child Protection Conference minutes and information with regard to a child's name on the Child Protection Register
- Ensuring parents receive a copy of the Safeguarding policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made to Social Services and the role of the school regarding this
- Promoting a Child Protection ethos in the school
- Presenting written reports to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection

The DDT is responsible for:

- Supporting and undertaking the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

How a parent can raise a concern

All parents need to know how to raise a concern, and the recourse that they have if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The arrangements for parents to make known to staff any concerns they may have about the safety of their (or another) child are set out in the following chart:



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We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils know that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service and Independent Schools Counselling Service.
- Ensuring that, when a pupil on the Child Protection Register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

For further information, please refer to the Department of Education's Circular Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection 1999/10.

Larne Grammar School's Vetting Procedures

The school's vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in DE circulars 2006/06, 2006/07, 2006/08, 2006/09, 2008/03, 2012/19 and 2013/01 and the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2012. Copies of the Department of Education circulars are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

The Safeguarding Code of Conduct is known to all staff – permanent and non-permanent and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is set out in Appendix 1.

Safeguarding Team

The School Safeguarding Team consists of the Principal, Deputy and Designated Teachers, the Chair of the Board of Governors, the Designated Governor for Child Protection, other members of the Board of Governors and the Bursar. The Team will meet on at least three occasions each year and will take responsibility for ensuring that all Safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate, up-to-date and adhered to and for ensuring that all stakeholders receive regular, relevant training in Safeguarding and Child Protection.

The Safeguarding Curriculum

Larne Grammar School has a vital role to play in educating children about risks of harm, how to prevent harm occurring and also how to be alert to and respond appropriately to concerns.

Age-appropriate education programmes will be built into the school curriculum to make children and young people aware of risk factors, where support can be obtained and empower them to seek assistance when they are at risk of harm or being harmed.

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The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that all children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include within the school's curriculum, information about dangers which they may encounter, including those in relation to online activity, and procedures they should adopt to ensure their safety.
- Include opportunities in the PD (Personal Development) and ICT curricula for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Physical Restraint

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in a separate policy, Safe Handling and Reasonable Force, in accordance with guidelines from the Education Authority. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

Intimate Care

Our policy on intimate care is included within a separate policy, Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs Policy. It acknowledges that all pupils must be treated with dignity and their medical needs provided by staff who have been appropriately trained.

Health and Safety, including educational trips and visits

Other school policies and procedures, including but not limited to the Health & Safety Policy and the Educational Visits Policy, reflect the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits and when undertaking Work Experience.

Online Safety and Digital Technologies

Our policy on online safety and digital technologies is set out in a separate document (ICT Acceptable Use, eSafety & Digital Media Policy) and is informed by DE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically, it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

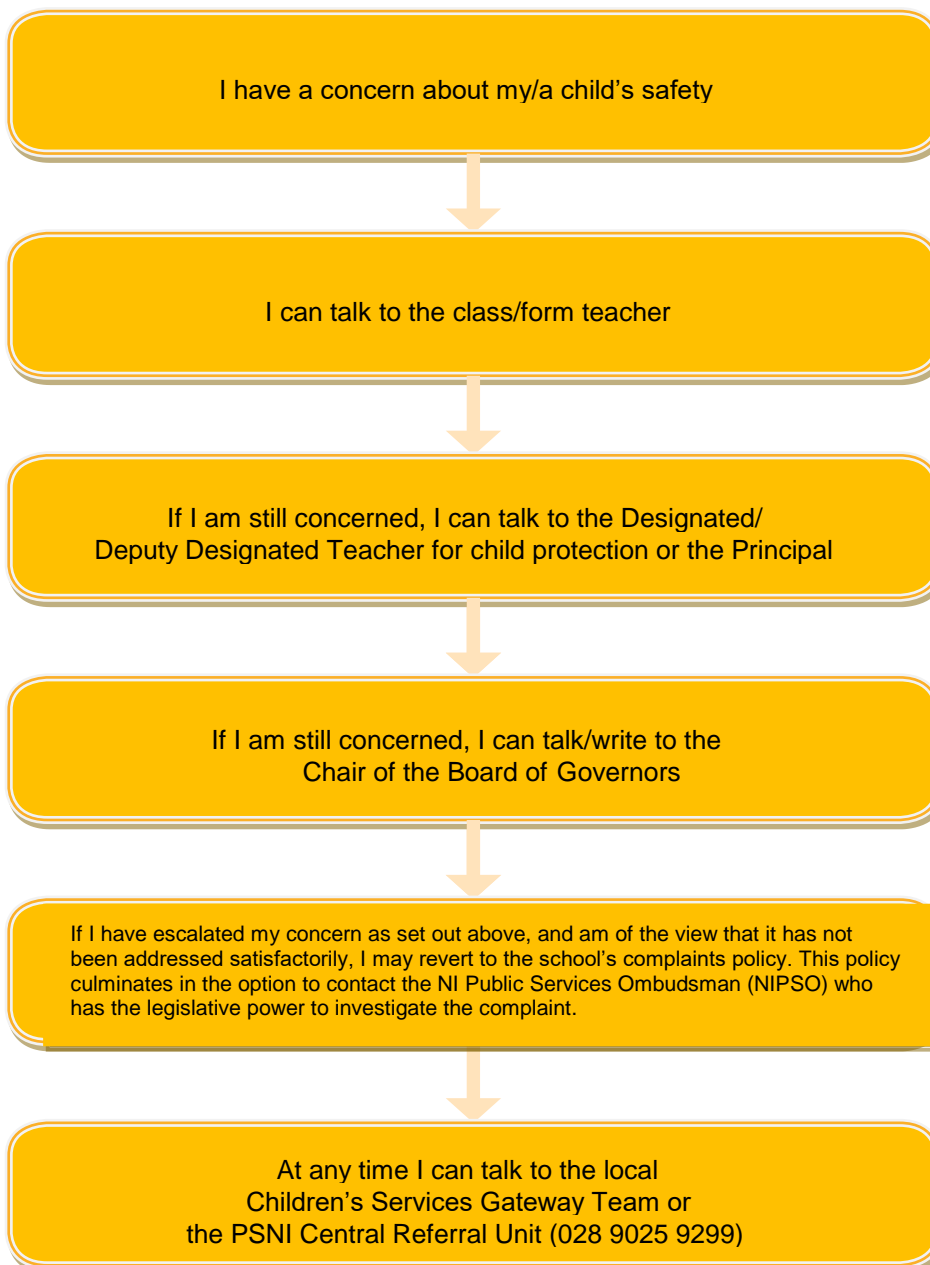
Reviewing Our Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and cognisance will be taken of new or changed legislation and guidelines.

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Appendix 1

If a parent has a potential child protection concern within the school:



If a parent has a concern about a child's safety or suspect child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.