



Holy Child Primary and Nursery School

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect and mistreatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them' Article 19,

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



Child Protection Policy

Reviewed: June 2015

We, the staff of Holy Child Primary and Nursery School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. Every young person has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well being, by those looking after them. We also seek to support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents will have an understanding of different forms of abuse.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know the school's policy in relation child protection, and follow the procedures laid down in it when reporting suspected abuse.
- All pupils and parents should know what school policy is concerning child protection, and what they should do if either they are the subject of abuse personally or suspect abuse of another individual.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

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

- Positive Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- Education Visits Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Use of Mobile Phone Policy
- ICT and Internet Safety Policies
- Intimate Care Policy

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the school Principal.



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SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The following are members of the school safeguarding team

Chair of board of Governors - Mr T McCallion

Designated Governor for child protection - Mrs Caroline Harkin

Principal and Designated Teacher - Miss O McDonnell

Deputy Designated Teacher - Mrs N Cullen

Nursery Designated Teacher - Mrs P Concannon

Social Guardians

Mrs N Cullen and Mrs P Concannon have been trained as Social Guardians to deliver Helping Hands Programme within Holy Child. This is a Preventive Education Programme devised by Women's Aid and the Department of Education.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair 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 WELB Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the WELB 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

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 Teachers Report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff



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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;
- that confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:-

- DENI 1999 / 10 is implemented within the school
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed
- That all staff receive child protection training
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and the Board of Governors) is kept informed
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings (termly updates & annual report)
- That 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.
- That confidentiality is paramount, information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

The Designated Teacher (And Deputies)

The designated teacher and deputy 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 Western Education & Library Board 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



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Staff

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

The teacher must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/ deputy teacher for Child Protection;
- listen to what is being said and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (appendix 2a)
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed through the written "Record of Concern" proforma (appendix 2b) or verbally 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
- 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

The Parents

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
- 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, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.



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ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCES AND CORE GROUP MEETINGS

The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated teacher may be invited to attend an initial and review child protection Case Conferences or core group meeting convened by the Western Health & Social Care Trust and where possible a school representative will be in attendance. A written report will be provided for these meetings and will be compiled after discussion 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 in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan.

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 and where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. However, only those who need to know will be told.

FOUR MAIN AREAS

Holy Child recognises four main responsibilities in the areas of Child Protection.

These are

- 1. Prevention**
- 2. Recognition**
- 3. Response**
- 4. Referral**

1. Prevention

In every classroom, regular Circle Time sessions are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the foyer and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is



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also on display in the foyer. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in staff room.

We ensure that persons other than our school staff who are invited as leaders/helpers on educational visits, residential visits or other out of school educational activities are subject to appropriate background checks. The school will not be easily accessed by unwanted visitors. Access, morning and afternoon routines are outlined in Appendix 1

2. Recognition

We use the following definition:

- **Neglect:** the persistent or severe neglect of a young person, or the failure to protect a young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the young person's health or development, including non organic failure to thrive.
- **Physical abuse:** physical injury to a young person, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- **Sexual abuse:** the sexual exploitation of a young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.
- **Emotional abuse:** Persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a young person.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim. See [Anti Bullying Policy](#)

Domestic Abuse impacts on the well-being of our children. This is defined as: 'threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation'

Signs and symptoms of abuse (these are outlined in Appendix 2)



3. Response

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.

If a disclosure is made the member of staff must: Listen to the young person and accept what is said, record statements, explain what they have to do next and to whom they have to talk, reassure the young person they have done the right thing to talk about it

The member of staff should not investigate - this is a matter for Social Services - but should report immediately to the designated member of staff to discuss the matter with her and make full notes.

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

Table with 2 columns: Do's and Don'ts. Do's include: Listen to child, assure child, explain secrets, document exactly, confidentiality. Don'ts include: leading questions, words in mouth, ignore behavior, remove clothing.

Table with 2 columns: Do's and Don'ts. Do's include: Stay calm, Listen, Accept, Reassure, Explain, Record, Seek support. Don'ts include: Panic, Promise secrets, Ask leading questions, Repeat story unnecessarily, Delay, Start to investigate, Do Nothing.



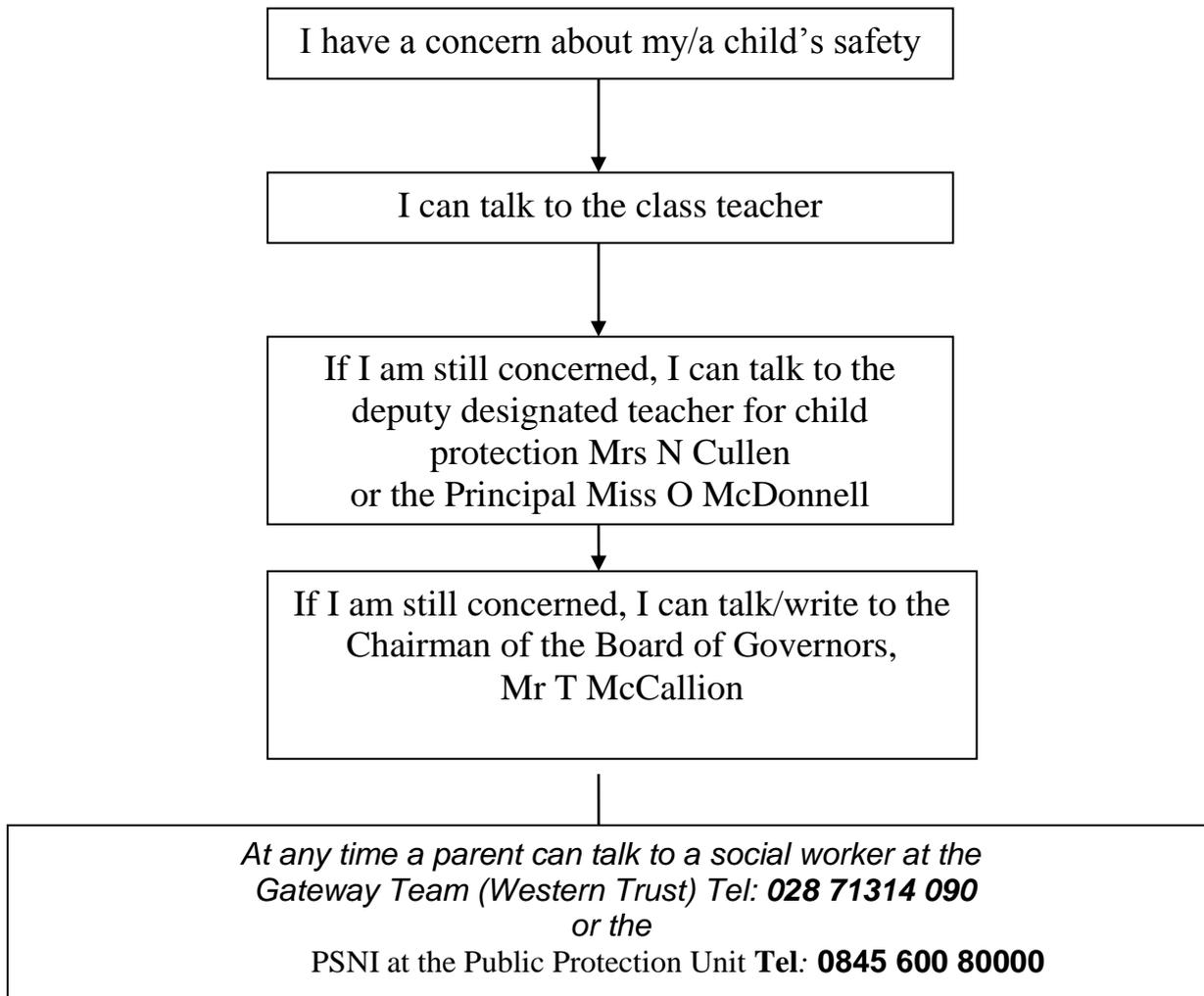
4. Referral

Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse

How a Parent can make a Complaint

At Holy Child we aim to work closely with the parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child’s development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or the Principal/Designated teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart below.

How a Parent can make a Complaint





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Where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff

The designated teacher for child protection is **Miss McDonnell (Principal)** and in her absence, deputy designated teacher **Mrs Cullen (Vice-Principal)** will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate – this is a matter for the Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the Principal, discuss the matter with her and make full notes. These notes or records should be factual, objective nature and include what was seen, said, heard or reported, the place and time of who was present and should be given to the Principal. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

After being informed of concerns by a member of staff the Principal and the deputy-designated teacher will meet as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the deputy designated teacher, 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, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the W.E.L.B. Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made.

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 first priority.**

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

- (a) Social Services and Care Unit,
- (b) W.E.L.B. Designated Officer.

This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION'

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in [Appendix 3](#).



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Allegations against a member of staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or deputy designated teacher, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply unless the complaint is about the Principal. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr T McCallion, will also be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the deputy designated teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and she will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to the 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 also be informed immediately.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the agreed disciplinary procedures for teacher's, a detailed record of the complaint, signed by the Principal, shall be retained on the child's file and the file of the member of staff concerned. An entry will also be made in the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints.

If, on foot of a subsequent investigation by one of the investigating agencies, the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record on the file of the member of staff concerned shall be expunged, and the entry in the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints deleted or struck through.

However where disciplinary investigation or action is undertaken in the context of child protection, all details relating to the complaint and disciplinary sanction shall be maintained on the teachers file for a period of 5 years. The record on the child's file should be noted accordingly, and should be maintained indefinitely in case there should be subsequent complaints. In all other cases, the record on both the child's file and the staff member's file should be maintained indefinitely

The school's record of Child Abuse complaints will be made available to the Board of Governors/Management Committee at least annually.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in [Appendix 4](#).

Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a volunteer

Any complaint about the conduct of a person working in the school in a voluntary capacity should be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is not on the school's staff, and the above procedures followed. If the Principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer should be terminated immediately.



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Record Keeping

All 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.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is received by the school and is not referred to Social Services – or if it is referred and Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register – a record on the child's file will be permanently preserved and a confidential copy will be sent to any school to which the child subsequently transfers.

If the Social Services inform the school that child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, a record of this fact and associated documentation from the Social Services will be maintained on the child's file while he or she continues to attend our school.

When the child's name is removed from the child protection register then all Social Services records will be destroyed and only the school records retained for permanent preservation. Should a child transfer to another school whilst their name is on the child protection register then we will inform the receiving school that his/her name is on the register and the name of the child's social worker. All Social Services records held by us in relation to the child will then be destroyed. The school's own child protection records in relation to the child will be held in secure and confidential storage for permanent preservation. [Please refer to Appendices 5 and 6 for recording pro-formas used to record concerns.](#)

Staff In-Service

Holy Child is committed to in service training for all staff. Each member of staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school Child Protection Policy and code of conduct and given a copy of the policy which includes what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused.



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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 has a code of conduct for staff which 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. It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector.

The schools code of conduct is included as [Appendix 7](#)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Holy Child will update this policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary, and formally review it by June 2016.

Chair of the Board of Governors: _____

Principal: _____

DATE: _____



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Appendix 1

Access to school

At Holy Child we regularly review our security arrangements in order to ensure the highest levels of child protection for all children.

To ensure this protection during morning drop off and afternoon pick up there will be no entry into the school building from the Foyer even on wet days.

Drop off

- Nursery children can be dropped off by using side access gate from Central Drive. Children in the Nursery should always be dropped off by an adult. Supervision in the Nursery currently begins at 8.30am
- P1 and P2 children can be dropped into Foundation area via the black side gate and side door of the school. Supervision for children in Foundation currently begins at 8.15am.
- P3-P7 children will enter the school via the black side gate once on the playground, they then have a choice of venues. They can remain on there, attend Breakfast Club and parents are welcome to accompany them, they can use ICT Suite and the library. Supervision for P3-7 also currently takes place from 8.15am

All children P1-7 must be in school before 9am as the side gate will then be locked and parents will not be permitted to bring children to their classrooms should they arrive late.

In the interests of promoting the highest levels of child protection all parents must leave via the same route promptly .

Pick up

- Nursery children again can be picked up using side access gate from Central Drive from 1.15 pm
- P1 and P2 children can be picked up from Foundation area at the black side gate at 2.15 pm
- P3 and P4 children will exit the school by front door at 3.00 pm
- P5-7 will exit school by black side gate at 3.00pm

All children P1-7 must be collected at the appropriate time as the side gate will then be locked.

Access to the school during the day is through the front door where the Secretary and Principal have a clear view from both offices. All visitors to both the school and Nursery Unit must report to the secretary's office.



Appendix 2

Signs and Symptoms of abuse - possible indicators

Physical Abuse

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

Neglect

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



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Emotional Abuse

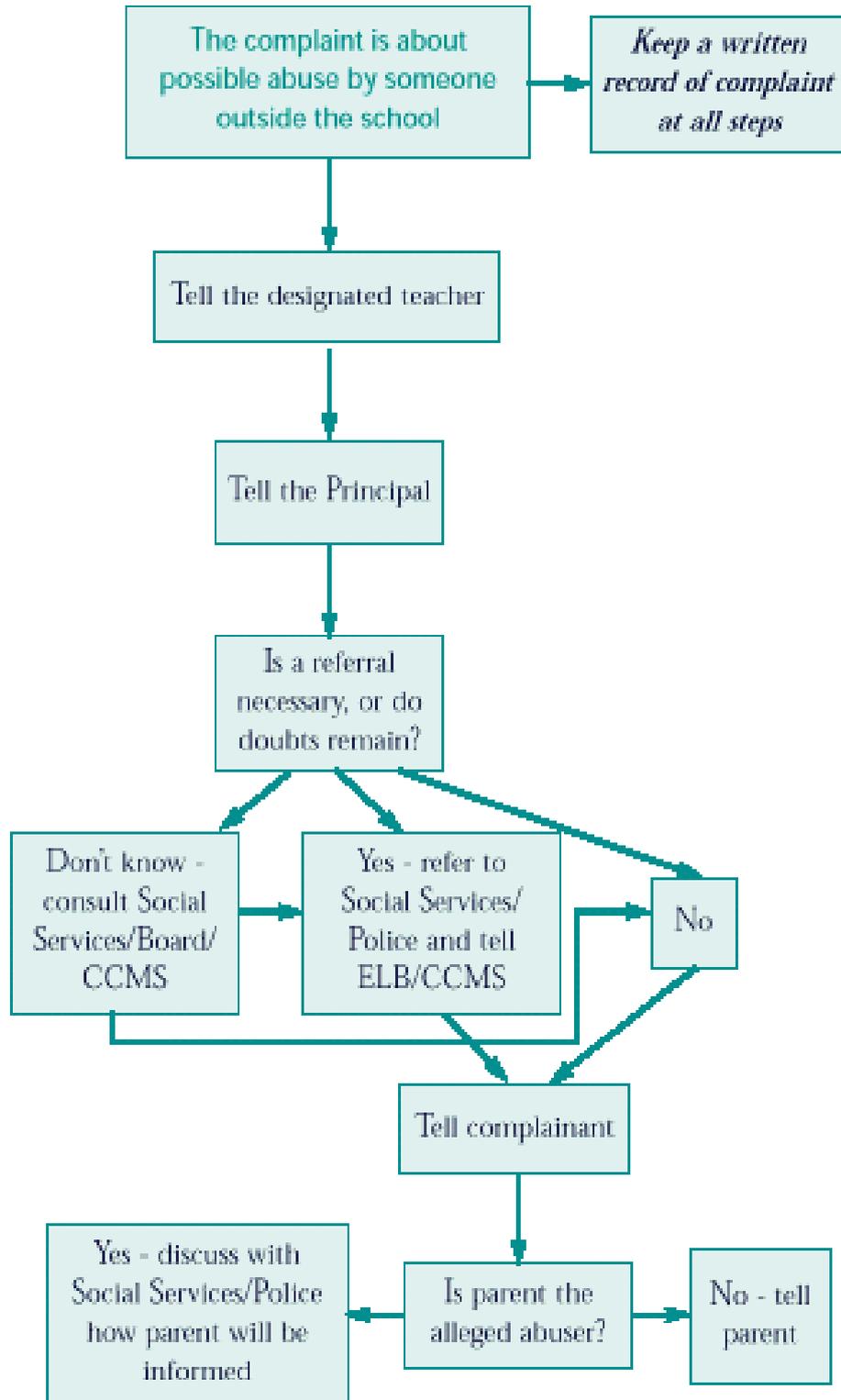
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Well below average in height and weight; "failing to thrive"; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self mutilation; signs of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

Sexual Abuse

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



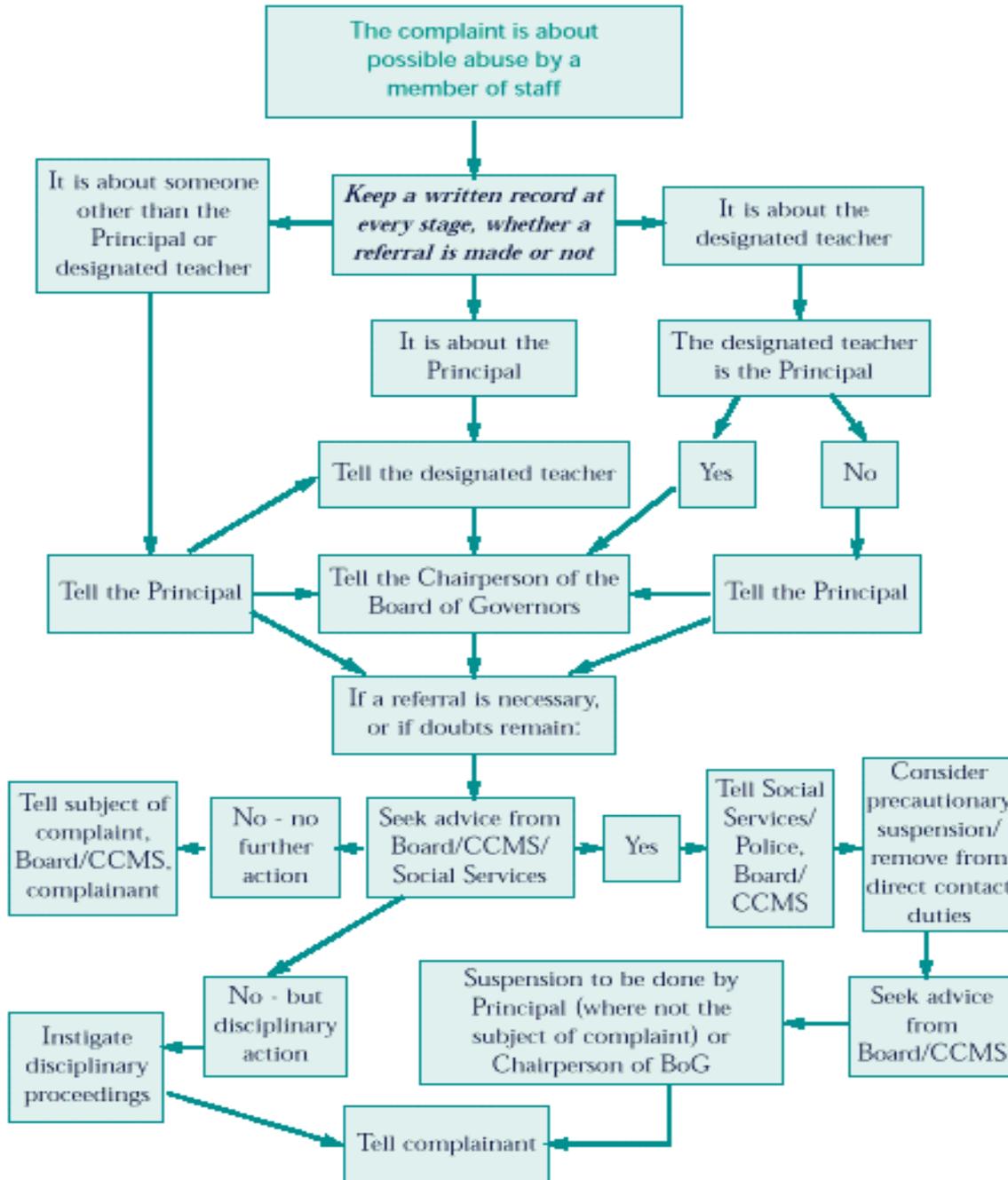
Appendix 3 Where the school has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school staff





Appendix 4 Allegations against a member of staff

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





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Appendix 6

HOLY CHILD PRIMARY SCHOOL and NURSERY UNIT

CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT - FORM B

Child's Name _____ DOB _____ Class _____

Details of Incident

Person completing the report _____

Relationship to school _____

Address (if person making the report is not known)

Signature _____

Date _____



Appendix 7

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Good practice guidelines

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain their standards of behaviour therefore acting as a role model.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Never allow yourself to be left alone with a child. There may be rare occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary and in such circumstances, the interview should be conducted in a room with an open door or visual access. Where this is not possible, the member of staff should ensure that there is another adult nearby. Never make gratuitous physical contact with a child. There may be occasions where a distressed child needs comfort which may include physical comforting and staff should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact. Be cautious about physical contact in games. Where physical contact is inescapable (e.g. to demonstrate equipment or a particular exercise/move) staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should take place and of the possibility for misinterpretation of such contact.
- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity. Holy Child will take positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people. Staff should ensure that children are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour. Activities should be designed to include all children and to promote positive attitudes towards differences.
- Be clear about what the objectives of the activity are before it begins and always put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Conducting yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the children. Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of/whilst responsible for children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.



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- Never using physical force against a child, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person or to protect property. If it is necessary to restrain a participant because they are an immediate danger to themselves or others or to property then the minimum amount of force should be used for the shortest amount of time. Remain calm and get the attention and support of other staff. The incident should be recorded in writing, with a witness statement (where possible), immediately afterwards.
- Never using physical punishment
- Securing parental consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment. First aid given should be recorded in writing and reported to Principal/Vice Principal who will inform the parent or carer.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if staff are required to transport young people in their cars.
- Always refer any problems to the Designated/ Deputy Designed child protection teacher.
- Question any unknown adult who enters the premises and/or who attempts to engage with the children.
- Always challenge children's inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour.

It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- as far as possible, be visible in working with children
- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.