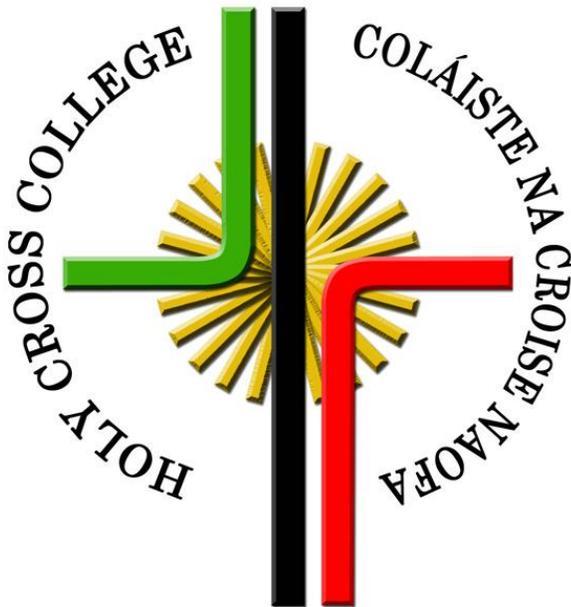

Child Protection Policy

Holy Cross College, Strabane

Updated December 2012



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1.0 Introduction

The Board of Governors of Holy Cross College, following consultation with the teaching and non-teaching staff, will operate the following policy in relation to child protection and accept that "the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration."

1.1 Mission Statement

The Child Protection Policy seeks to support the child's development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence. It should be regarded as central to the well-being of the individual and is therefore seen to be an intrinsic part of all aspects of the curriculum. It is a reflection for the school mission statement which includes 'Care for All' as a central aim.

2.0 Principles of the Child Protection Policy

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection (DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy 'a child' is any young person under the age of 18.
- 2.2 It is the child's right to be heard, listened to, taken seriously, and to be consulted according to his/her age and understanding about the proposed action.
- 2.3 This college has a pastoral responsibility towards the young people in its charge and should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- 2.4 In all matters relating to child protection procedures and policies the best interests of the child must be the paramount consideration
- 2.5 This college will designate the two vice-principals to have specific responsibilities for child protection matters. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should know who these are.
- 2.6 There will be clear procedures in place to be followed where the college has been alerted to possible abuse, drawing on the D.E.N.I guidance (1999/2010) and as appropriate, on that provided by C.C.M.S., W.E.L.B. and A.C.P.C. (Area Child Protection Committee 2005)
- 2.7 All staff should be alert to the signs of possible abuse, and should know the procedures to be followed.
- 2.8 Where child abuse is suspected, it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the appropriate recording and reporting procedures are followed, involving referral to the Gateway Team followed by completion of UNOCINI Assessment/referral form. The local Diocesan Administrator (C.C.M.S.) and designated officer (W.E.L.B.) should also be informed.
- 2.9 Preliminary enquiries should be made carefully and sensitively.
- 2.10 Where a serious allegation is made against a member of staff, the Principal shall inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors immediately, and the member of staff shall be removed from direct contact with children or be suspended as a precautionary measure pending further investigation.
- 2.11 Where a complaint is made against the Principal, the other designated teachers should follow the recording and reporting procedures; the Chairman of the Board of Governors should be informed immediately and the employing authority consulted.
- 2.12 This college will maintain a summary of child protection arrangements, within the pastoral care policy, including arrangements as to how parents can make known to the college any concerns they may have about their child's safety. The summary will be circulated to parents.
- 2.13 Child protection arrangements will be made known and made accessible to all students attending this college
- 2.14 Keeping in mind that the school's main duty of care is to the pupil; arrangements should be such as to maintain a balance between protecting students and respecting the rights of parents, families and members of staff.

3.0 Categories of abuse

Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and it also occurs in agencies and organizations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. Children may be abused by parents, a sibling or other relative, a carer, custodian or foster parent, an acquaintance or a stranger who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both.

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- 3.1 *The abuse may take a number of forms including:*
- 3.1 (i) **neglect**: the actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in a significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non- organic failure to thrive;
 - 3.1 (ii) **physical injury**: actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child;
 - 3.1 (iii) **sexual abuse**: actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child, the involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles;
 - 3.1 (iv) **emotional abuse**: actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse affects on the emotional, physical and /or behavioral development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. (Definitions from ACPC (2005))
 - 3.1 (v) **domestic abuse**: 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.

4.0 Procedures

- 4.1 The person receiving the complaint or noticing signs of possible abuse must notify the designated teacher for child protection in the college.
The designated teacher must notify the Principal, and together they will decide if the matter should be referred immediately to the Gateway Team. In the event of some doubt the matter will still be referred.
- 4.2 The Principal, or other designated teacher, will notify the matter to the Gateway Team or the PSNI, the designated officer for C.C.M.S. and the officer for child protection at W.E.L.B.
- 4.3 The Gateway Team and the Principal will agree how, when and by whom the parent(s) will be informed. Should a referral not be made, the parent(s) will be informed as soon as possible of this decision, of the information received by the college, and the reason(s) for not referring the matter further. Parents will then be free to refer directly to the Gateway Team.
- 4.4 If the information about possible abuse by someone outside the college is given to a member of staff by a student, whether or not the student is the subject of the alleged abuse, the procedures described above will apply, except that the parent of the student reporting the information will be involved at the earliest possible stage, and will be present when the college seeks clarification from the child regarding the information.

5.0 Record Keeping

- 5.1 Proper records of all complaints or information, dated and signed, will be kept by the college, and all concerns about the possible abuse noted by staff. Staff will issue the Principal with a written account of the information received or of concerns about possible abuse. This information will consist of the nature of the complaint, the name of the person who provided the information, the time, date, circumstances, and a description of signs or symptoms of possible abuse. The college will provide a pro-forma for this information. (*It can be found on RMStaff*).
- 5.2 The designated teacher or principal should make a record of all discussions held and actions taken within 24 hours of a referral.
- 5.3 The Principal or designated teacher will add to the records any advice sought, from whom and when, whether the case is to be referred to the Gateway Team, the time, date and by whom this was referred, or reasons for not referring the matter to the Gateway Team. The principal will also keep a record of the UNOCINI Assessment referral form sent to the Gateway Team.
- 5.4 A record will be kept of when the person who made the complaint has been informed about whether or not the complaint is being referred to an investigating body. The record will show who informed the person, how this was done and when.
- 5.5 All records will be kept by principal/designated teachers.
Records will be kept in locked filing cabinets, in folders marked 'Confidential'.

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6.0 Links with other agencies and support services

- 6.1 This college will develop effective links with other relevant agencies and support services. In particular, the Gateway Team will assist by providing guidance and advice regarding specific cases.
6.2 The designated officers of WELB and CCMS will be kept fully informed of any action on child protection. The Principal may seek clarification or advice, and consult with designated officers of WELB and/or CCMS.
6.3 This college will give full support to the Gateway Team and PSNI in investigating and dealing with any child protection cases.
6.4 The staff of Holy Cross College will co-operate (when invited) to contribute to Child Protection Case Conferences

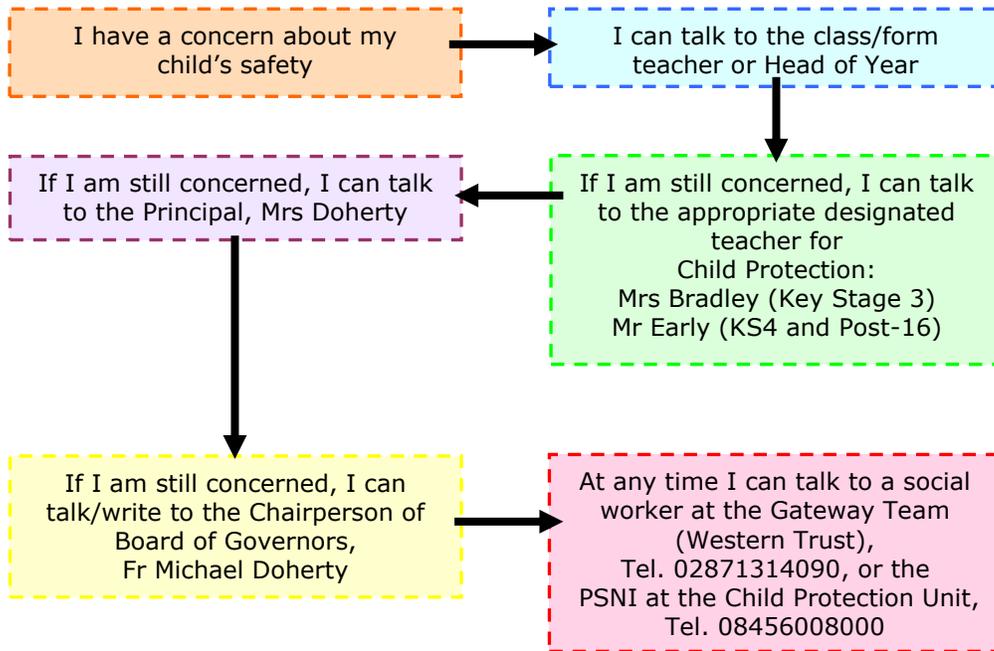
Designated teachers:

Key Stage Three: Mrs C Bradley
Key Stage Four & Post-16: Mr M Early

Child Protection Procedures

One of the college aims is "Care for All." Every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and to have proper care given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. It is the duty of all members of staff to protect children from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and from neglect. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.

HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT



Holy Cross College Safeguarding Team

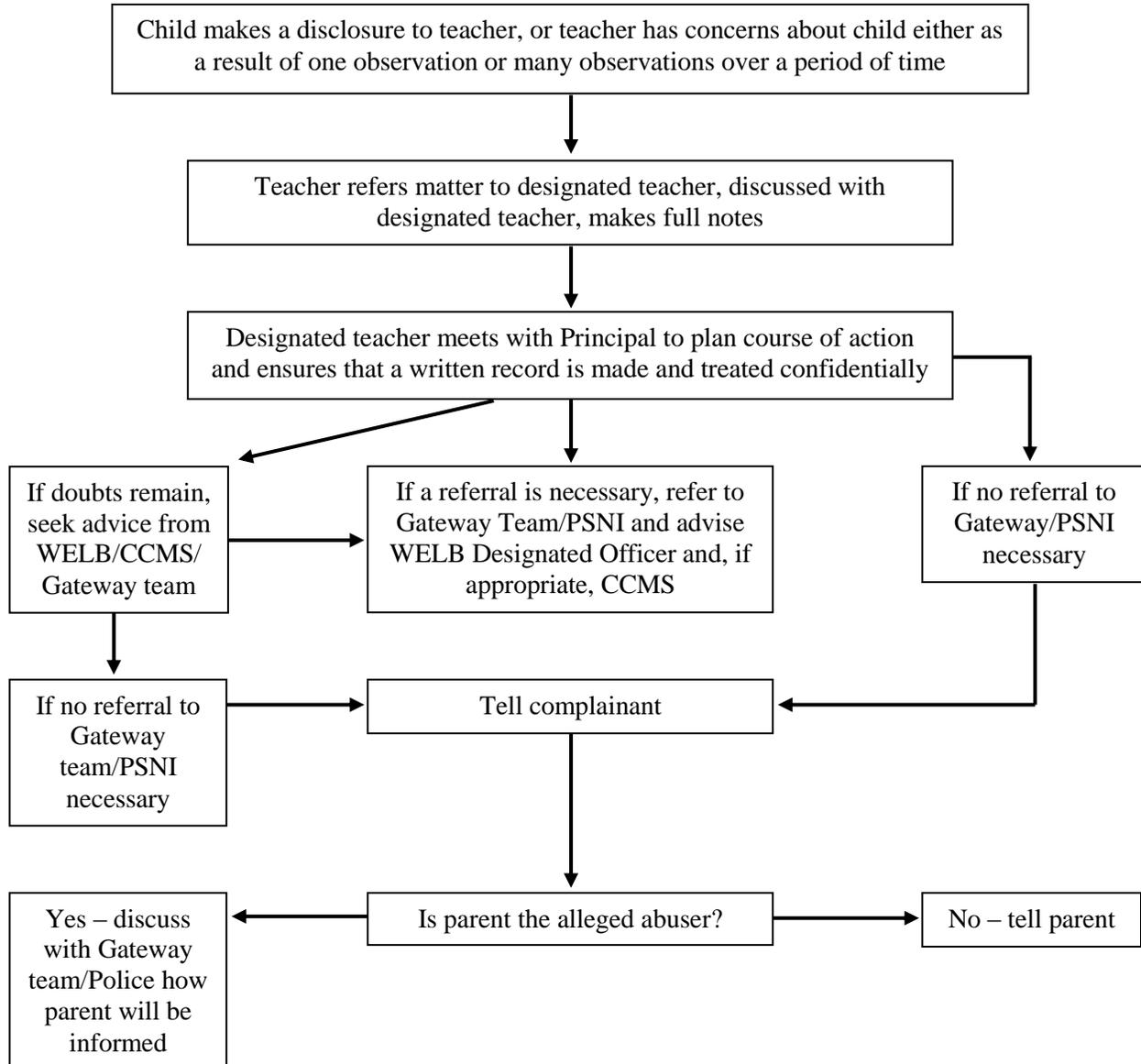
PrincipalMrs Maria Doherty
Designated teachers for Child ProtectionMrs Clare Bradley, VP (KS3)
.....Mr Michael Early, VP (KS4 & Post-16)
Chairperson, the Board of Governors.....Fr Michael Doherty
Designated Governor for Child ProtectionMrs Mary Cunningham

CHILD PROTECTION

“Every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and to have proper care given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well being.”

- All members of staff have a duty to protect children from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and from neglect.
- The staff of Holy Cross College complies with the requirements of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland. We will refer any concerns about the well being of our pupils to the local Social Services Department. We will co-operate fully with the Gateway Team.

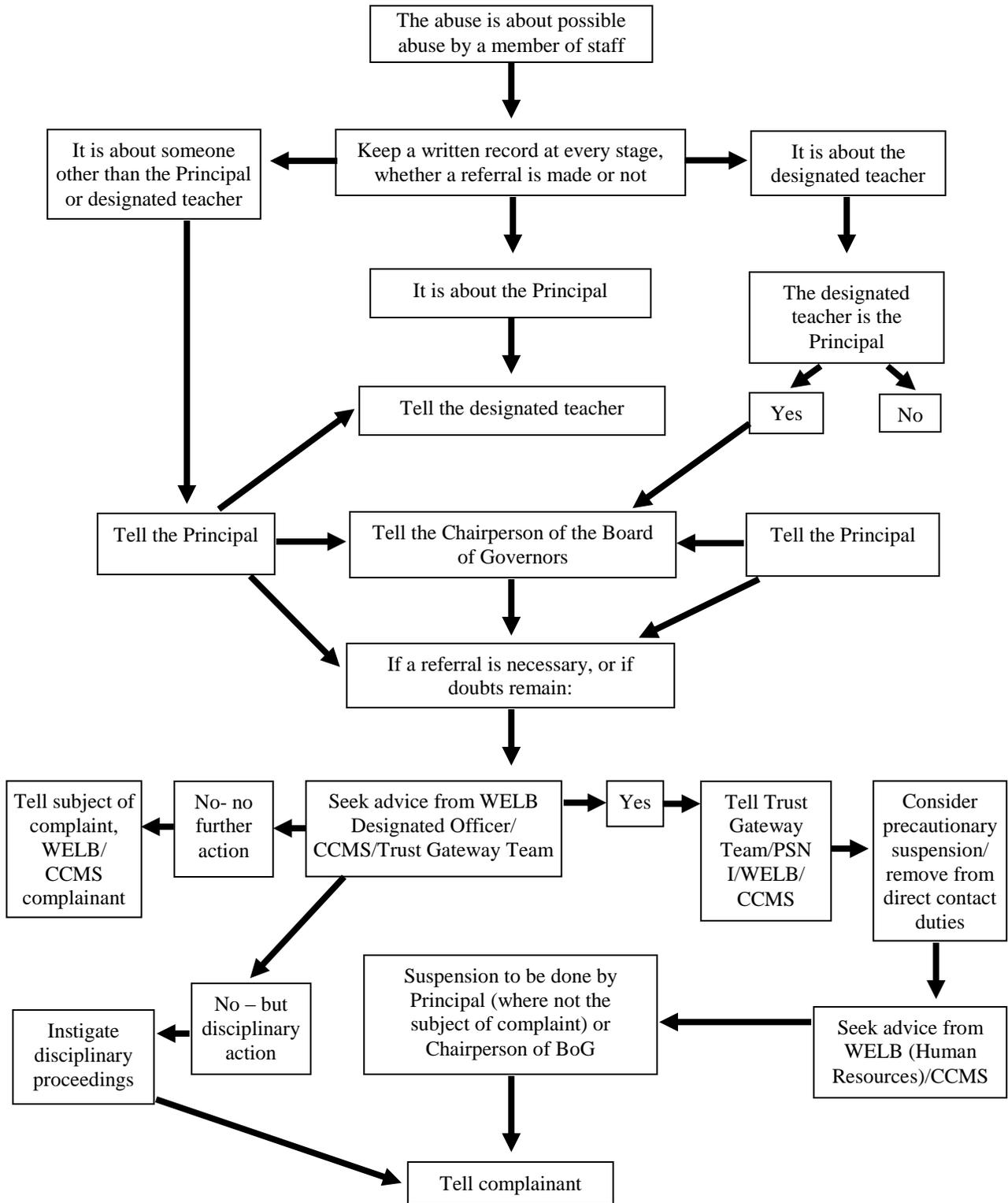
PROCEDURE WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS CONCERNS, OR HAS BEEN GIVEN INFORMATION, ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF STAFF



Designated Teacher Key Stage Three
Designated Teacher Key Stage Four/Sixth Form
Designated Governor

Mrs Clare Bradley, VP
Mr Michael Early, VP
Mrs Mary Cunningham

PROCEDURE WHERE A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL’S STAFF



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 receives 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.

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 designated teachers 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

The designated teacher must:-

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role;
- Organise training for all staff (whole-school training);
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy;
- Act as a point of contact for staff (and parents);
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents;
- Make referrals to Social Services (Gateway team) or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate;
- Liaise with the 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.