



Dunclug College

Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Version	Date	Revision Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	June 2026	Mr Oliver Pastoral Directors VP Pastoral Safeguarding Team	June 2024: Reviewed August 2025: Reviewed June 2026: Reviewed August 2026: alignment with DE Circular 2026/17 - Child Protection and Safeguarding in Education Review Date: Annual & June 2027

Contents

Introduction	Ethos & Safeguarding Team
Section 1	Underlying Principles of Child Protection
Section 2	Possible Abuse
Section 3	Complaints Against School Staff
Section 4	Reports and Record Keeping
Section 5	Staff
Section 6	Displaying Bullying Behaviours
Section 7	Newcomers, SEN and Additional Needs
Section 8	Parents
Section 9	Preventative Curriculum
Section 10	Collaboration
Section 11	Monitoring and Review

Dunclug College - Safeguarding Policy

ETHOS

“We provide a high quality, child-centred education in a caring environment, built upon good personal relationships and honest partnership. Through achievement and the development of mutual respect, all pupils are challenged and encouraged to become valued citizens”.

Dunclug College is committed to safeguarding the children in its care: to promoting pupils’ health, safety and well-being and to acting sensitively, promptly and appropriately to concerns which may arise. In consultation with staff and in accordance with guidelines left down by the Department of Education, the Education Authority and the Northern Health and Social Services Board, the Board of Governors has adapted the following Policy and procedures for safeguarding children in our school.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all staff on matters relating to child protection, to explain how they can make known to the school, any concerns they have regarding the safety of their pupils or others and the action they should take in response.

There are five main elements to this policy:

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

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

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

Attendance Policy	Intimate Care
Positive Behaviour Policy	E-Safety Policy
Addressing Bullying Policy	Educational Visits

Special Educational Needs	Staff Code of Conduct
Health and Safety Policy	Joint Declaration of Protection
Relationships & Sexuality Education	

The Safeguarding Team in Dunclug College

Key Designated Personnel

Designated Teacher (DT)	Mr A McNeilly
Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT)	Mr A McKillop
Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT)	Mrs J Tuff
School Nurse/Home Link	Mrs K Coulter
Principal	Mr N Oliver
Chair of Governors	Mr D Millar
Designated Governor	Mr M Roberts

Other members maybe co-opted to address specific issues, for example the SENCo, ICT Co-Ordinator or School Nurse.

Rationale for Safeguarding Team (chaired by the Principal)

This team meets termly. The purpose of the School Safeguarding Team is to inform, through periodic review, best practice, ensure the best interests of the children in our care and support the Designated Teachers on matters relating to safeguarding and child protection. A vital strand of oversight ensures attendance of Governors and Staff at relevant training – including refresher training.

Child Protection and Safeguarding practices will be reviewed annually using the ETI pro-forma entitled, 'Guidance for the evaluation of child protection/safeguarding'.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The DT and DDT with responsibility for child protection involve:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff before they commence their role
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Ensuring staff are aware that Notes of Concern should be completed using the template provided in DE circular 2020/07
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g. Family Support Hubs
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Keeping the school Principal informed
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school
- Compiling written reports to the BoG regarding child protection

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The role of the DDT is to work co-operatively with the DT in fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

It is important that the DDT works in partnership with the DT so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the DT when required. DDTs are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSS to help them in their role.

Wider Pastoral Structure to support Pastoral Care:

Head of Year and Assistant for each Year Group.

Form Teacher for each class.

A Peer Mentoring Programme – Senior Pupils (trained).

School Counsellor (External).

The School Care Team – comprising Heads of Year, Head of SEN, SEN Core

Teacher, Pathways' Leader, & SLT - linked to outside agencies.

All staff at all levels has a pastoral role in the school and must be alert to the needs of the children.

All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circulars

Section 1: Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

1.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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, "Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DHSSPSNI, 2017 and 2024), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" Circular 2017/04 (and subsequent amendments) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy:

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together
- Partnership
- Prevention
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances
- Protection
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

1.2 Adult Safeguarding

For further information see: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document>

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Maximising the student's choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights.
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over.

1.3 The Children Order – Principle of Paramountcy

The central thrust of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which came into effect on 4 November 1996, is that ***the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration***, and it is this essential principle which underpins the advice which follows.

Definition of 'a child'?

For the purposes of this guidance, the term 'child' has the same meaning as in 'Co-operating to Protect Children', ie any child or young person under the age of 18.

1.3i Other Legislation relating to Child Welfare and Protection – this policy takes awareness of:

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011
- The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020 and subsequent action plans
- Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Prevention in Partnership

1.4 Categories of Abuse

Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and it also occurs in agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. The following is an extract from “Co-operating to Protect Children”; the definitions it contains are all comprehended in the term ‘child abuse’ as it appears in this guidance:

“Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (ie a person who has actual custody of a child such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), 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. The abuse may take a number of forms, including:

- **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 or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive;
- **Physical Injury:** Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child;
- **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;
- **Emotional Abuse:** Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.
- **Exploitation:** The intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Child exploitation is a form of modern slavery and human trafficking. Where a pupil is suspected of being a victim of exploitation, the Designated Teacher will ensure a referral is made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) via a recognised and designated First Responder organisation (such as the PSNI, HSC Trusts, or Youth Work Alliance) to secure statutory protection and legal support.

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities, but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.

Annually, the school provides training using scenarios – this supports staff in the outworking of the policy whilst providing opportunity for focused discussion and sharing of information. (see safeguarding file)

1.5 Support for Members of Staff Making Referrals to Social Services/Police

Any teacher or other member of staff who follows the procedures in this guidance, and those of the Education Authority, in making a report of suspected child abuse by any person (whether or not connected with the school), is acting within the course of his/her employment, and in such circumstances, where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the full support of his/her employing authorities and will not be legally or financially liable should any consequential action be brought against him/her.

Section 2: Types of Abuse

2.1 Identifying Signs and symptoms of Possible Abuse

It is always preferable to prevent abuse, or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff - especially teachers, but also non-teaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff and canteen staff – are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances, or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse. For example, the following may be noticeable:

- **Physical Abuse** - particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks or burns, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities, or when very young children or children with special educational needs are helped with toileting.
- **Physical Neglect** - is the 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 also suffer from other types of abuse.
- **Emotional Abuse** - is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

- **Sexual Abuse** – occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Young People may display physical signs or a substantial behavioural change including withdrawal;
- **Exploitation:** the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain.

Any Combination of the above may be accompanied by or solely manifested in marked deterioration in performance and/or increased absenteeism.

2.1i Specific Types of Abuse

2.1.i.i Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the 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.

2.1.i.ii Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

2.1.i.iii Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:

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.'

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).’

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual’s incapacity to give informed consent.

2.1i.iv Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. 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. The procedure is also referred to as ‘cutting’, ‘female circumcision’ and ‘initiation’. 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.

2.1i.v 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 in Northern Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with support needs, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

Section 2.1i.v.a: Honour-Based Abuse and Violence

Honour-Based Abuse is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs or 'honour'. It is a violation of human rights and is a form of domestic abuse, violence, or exploitation.

If any member of staff suspects or has concerns that a pupil is experiencing or is at risk of Honour-Based Abuse, the school will seek immediate advice and support from the Education Authority CPSS, the PSNI, or the specialist national support organisation Karma Nirvana, to ensure the pupil is safeguarded and appropriate protective pathways are established.

2.1i.vi Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child’s development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers

are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise. It must also be borne in mind that sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern. There may remain issues to be addressed through the school's positive behaviour policy but it is important to always apply principles that remain child centered.

2.1i vii E-Safety/Internet Abuse

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

In accordance with DE Circular 2026/17, Dunclug College operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils are prohibited from using personal mobile devices on school grounds during the school day, with any exceptions permitted only for agreed medical or educational needs.

2.1i.viii Sexting - Between individuals in a relationship

As adults we can question the wisdom of this but the reality is that children and young people consider this to be normal. Clearly pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases you should contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance.

or

Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that you do not forward it to anyone else. Please remember that schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted) to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individual's consent - see Articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail. By contacting the police, you could help prevent further such incidents. If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress', the child protection procedures should be followed. This includes AI-generated or AI-manipulated indecent images. In any incident involving nudes/semi-nudes, the school's priority is to safeguard and support the child, avoid criminalising them, and immediately contact the EA CPSS, the PSNI, or seek assistance via Childline's 'Report Remove' tool to block further distribution.

2.1i.ix: Mental Health, Self-Harm, and Suicide Concerns

Dunclug College recognises that emotional health and wellbeing are fundamental to safeguarding. Any disclosure or indicator of self-harm or suicidal ideation must be treated immediately as a safeguarding concern, and the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. The school will not treat these concerns as standard behavioural issues.

School practice will be aligned with the Education Authority's documents: 'Listen, Support, Connect: Guidance on Self-Harm and Suicide in Educational Settings' and 'Supporting through a Watchful Wait'. In urgent situations, immediate medical or emergency services must be contacted without delay.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. Also, it must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described above, (for example bruises to the legs may be accidental).

Pupils who are the victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties. In cases of children or young people who are felt to have long term behavioural problems, the school may wish to seek advice from local support services, for example on the availability of counselling or other systematic therapy, or indeed the need for a statutory assessment, the outcome of which may be the maintenance of a statement of special educational needs. In any event, the school should also monitor and review the child's needs, having due regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Signs such as those described above, and others, can do no more than give rise to concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. However, teachers and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and be alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated.

Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he/she must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher who has specific responsibility for safeguarding. *The designation of a teacher for this purpose should not, however, be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff in being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed*, including those in cases where an allegation is made against any member of the school's staff, teaching or non-teaching.

2.2 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. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will follow DE guidance in determining what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children, information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

In accordance with DE guidance, we have developed clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in our school are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

If a pupil from our school attends an EOTAS provision, a member of the safeguarding team will share any child protection concerns they have with the DT in the centre. If child protection concerns arise when the pupil is attending an EOTAS provision the designated teacher in EOTAS will follow child protection procedures and will advise a member of the school's safeguarding team of the concerns and any actions taken. It is the responsibility of EOTAS staff to maintain their records in accordance with DE Circular 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools and any subsequent updates.

2.3 Talking to Children where there are concerns about possible abuse

Where **teachers/auxiliary staff/learning support assistants** see signs which give rise to concern, they should, as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding.

He/she should immediately bring them to the attention of either **the designated teachers**, and it may be appropriate for some necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher with key responsibility for safeguarding.

Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family is in need of some form of intervention, for example, external agency support.

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some circumstances, talking to the child will quickly crystallise initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred, and point to the need for an immediate referral.

Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore, be kept to a minimum.

Care should be taken to:

- **To listen carefully to the child.** Do not interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is freely recalling significant events, and as soon as possible afterwards to make a note of the discussion to pass on to the designated teacher, using for example, the template 'Note for Concern', Annex A. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but *under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed.*
- **Staff should not ask** the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.
- **To reassure the child** that help is available and that information will be disclosed to those professionals who need to know, only. It is important not to give the child or young person undertakings of confidentiality. It is also important not to ask the child leading questions, which might later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind. It is also important not to ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?"
- **To note down any comments by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult,** about how an injury occurred as soon as possible afterwards, preferably quoting the words actually used.
- **To understand that** their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings. ***It is therefore essential that proper, of that period, records are kept.*** (see Annex B)

2.4 Child displaying symptoms of, or school alerted to, possible abuse

The member of staff should advise the person making the complaint that the matter will be brought to the attention of the teacher responsible for safeguarding matters in the school.

The Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated teacher or Principal may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information, or from others who may have relevant information.

If the Designated teacher, is unsure about whether a case should be referred, or has a general concern about a child's health or development, he/she may wish to seek advice or information in the first instance from class teachers who are familiar with the child. The Social Services Trust Gateway Team may be contacted for advice.

Advice and support can also be sought from the designated officers of the Education Authority.

A child who is neither being abused nor at risk of abuse may nevertheless be in need of help from Social Services, and such cases need to be made known to Social

Services. Social Services welcome indications of concern at an early stage and often can provide assistance or services to a family and prevent circumstances reaching a stage when child protection proceedings become necessary.

When assessing safeguarding and welfare concerns, Dunclug College will triage student needs using the regional Hardiker Model of Thresholds of Need. Staff will identify concerns along a four-tier continuum:

- Level 1 (Universal Provision - general pastoral support),
- Level 2 (Universal Plus - emerging needs managed via school support or Family Support Hubs),
- Level 3 (Targeted Support - Child in Need), and
- Level 4 (Specialist Child Protection - significant risk of harm requiring immediate social services/PSNI referral).

Staff are reminded not to investigate or determine thresholds independently, but to direct all concerns immediately to the Deputy/Designated Teacher.

2.5 Procedures to be followed

To support a culture of vigilance and ensure a consistent response to safeguarding concerns, all staff and volunteers at Dunclug College must operate in accordance with the Department of Education's five-step procedural framework: 'Recognise, Respond, Report, Record, Refer':

1. **RECOGNISE:** Staff must remain alert to signs and indicators of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation (including online harms, child-on-child abuse, self-harm, and honour-based abuse). Any change in a pupil's behaviour, appearance, or attendance must be treated with professional curiosity.
2. **RESPOND:** If a pupil makes a disclosure, staff must listen carefully and take it seriously. Reassure the pupil, make no promises of confidentiality, avoid asking leading questions, and take immediate action if the child is at risk of acute or immediate harm.
3. **REPORT:** Staff must never investigate concerns independently or delay action. All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, or suspicions must be reported immediately to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher.
4. **RECORD:** A Note of Concern (NoC) must be completed factual, objectively, and in the child's own words where possible, within 24 hours of the concern being raised, and handed directly to the Designated Teacher.
5. **REFER:** The Designated Teacher will triage the concern using the Hardiker Thresholds of Need. Where the statutory threshold is met, the school will refer the matter within 24 hours to Social Services via a formal UNOCINI referral, contact the PSNI, or coordinate early intervention support through a local Family Support Hub.

The person receiving the complaint (or information), or noticing signs of possible abuse, **must notify the Designated Teacher** for child protection/safeguarding in the school;

The Designated Teacher must notify the Principal, and together they will decide, taking advice as necessary, if the information is such that the matter should be

referred immediately to the Social Services (if agreement cannot be reached, the decision should be made by the Principal; but where there is doubt, a referral should be made).

If the school considers that a referral is necessary, it is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that the following are immediately notified:

- the Social Services or the PSNI; and
- the designated officer for safeguarding in the Education Authority

Where the Principal decides not to make a referral, the parent(s) and the complainant (if different) should be informed as soon as possible of this decision, of the information which the school was given, and that it has been decided that a referral is not warranted; they should also be advised that, if they still have concerns, they may raise the matter directly with Social Services.

If the information about possible abuse by someone outside the school is given to a member of staff by a pupil, whether or not the pupil is the subject of the alleged abuse, the procedures described above apply, except that the parent of the pupil giving the information (unless he/she is the possible abuser) should be involved at the earliest possible stage, and should, where possible, be present while the school is seeking any preliminary clarification from the child to assess whether a referral is necessary.

The school does not investigate adult safeguarding concerns. If a safeguarding concern arises regarding a student over the age of 18 (or an adult at risk of harm), the Designated Teacher will contact the EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) in the first instance for guidance, advice, and referral support

2.6 Record Keeping

The Principal or Designated Teacher should ensure that proper records, dated and signed, are kept of all complaints or information received, and all concerns about possible abuse noted by staff. As soon as possible he/she should obtain a written record from the member of staff who received the information, or otherwise has concerns about possible abuse, setting out:

- the nature of the information
- who gave it
- the time, date and circumstances
- where the concern relates to signs or symptoms of possible abuse, a description of these

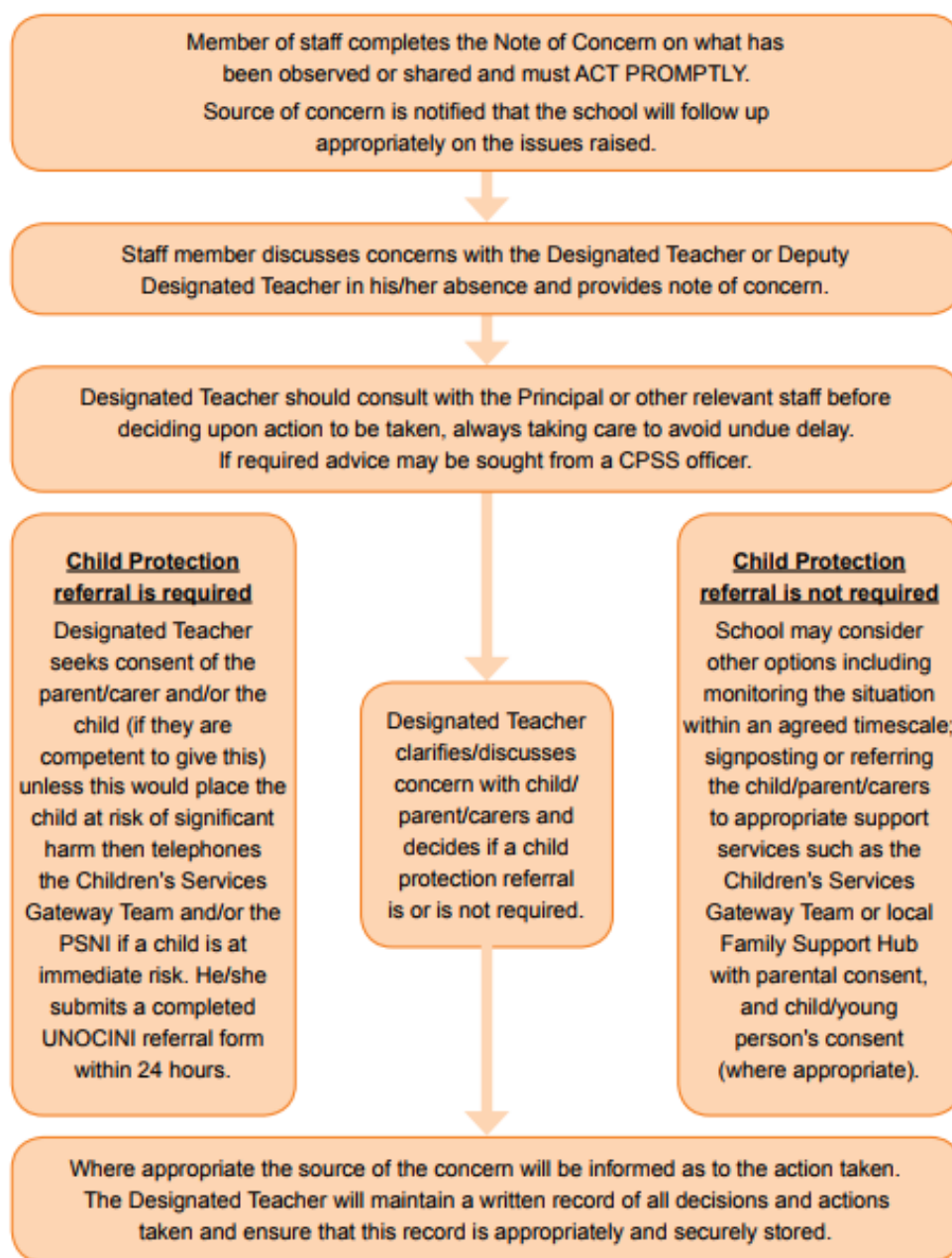
The Principal or Designated Teacher should supplement the record with:

- details of any advice sought, from whom and when.
- the decision reached as to whether the case should be referred to Social Services; and, if so, how, when and by whom this was done.
- reasons should be given for not referring to Social Services.

- The person who made the complaint, or gave the information, should be advised as soon as possible by the Principal or designated teacher about whether or not the complaint has been referred to an investigating agency. How this is done, when and by whom, should also be included in the record.

Processes for Referral are set out in the Flowcharts below

Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff^{7,8}



Source: Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools

2.7 Complaint against a member of the Board of Governors

Where a member of staff receives a complaint concerning possible child abuse by a member of the Board of Governors, all aspects of the above procedures for complaints against a person other than a member of staff should be followed. The Principal should immediately inform the Chairperson, unless he/she is the subject of the complaint, in which case the Chairperson's role should be exercised by the Vice-Chairperson. In the case of a controlled school, the designated officer of the Education Authority should be informed immediately.

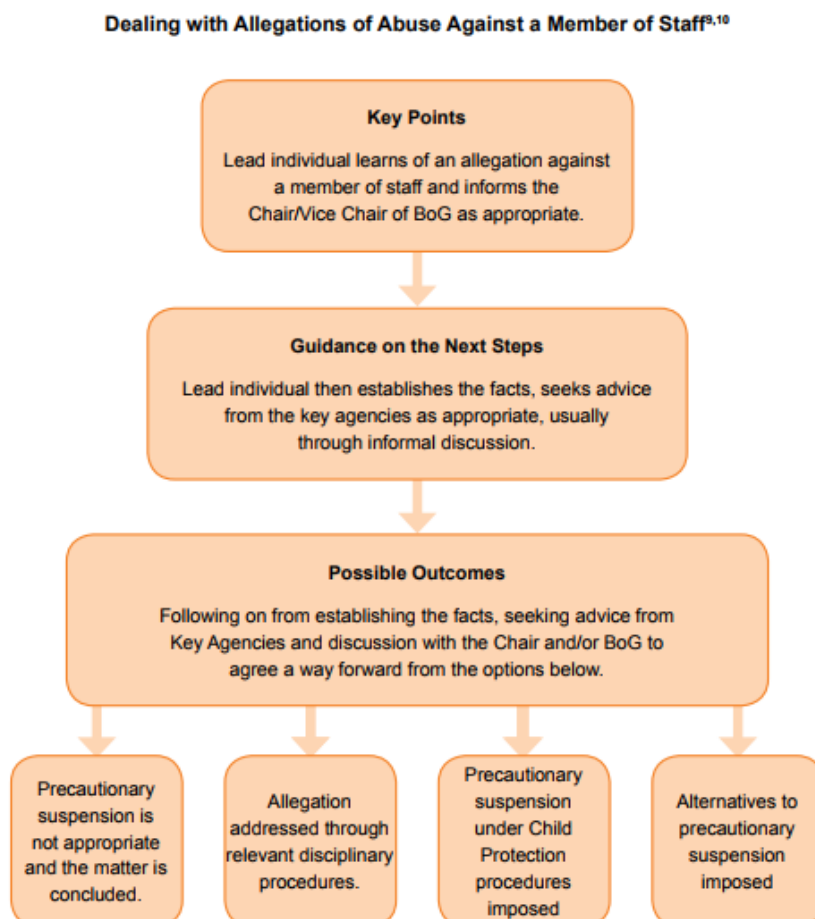
2.8 Complaint against a Volunteer

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.

Section 3: Complaints Against School Staff

3.1 Where a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the school. All allegations should be reported immediately, to the Principal, Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for safeguarding.

Detailed procedures are set out in DE Circular 2016/20 & 2015/13



3.2: Management of Low-Level Concerns (Code of Conduct Concerns)

The school actively promotes a culture of openness, trust, and professional challenge.

. A low-level concern is any concern—no matter how small, and even if it is no more than a nagging doubt or a sense of unease—that an adult working in or volunteering on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct (Annex D)

. This includes behaviours such as being overly familiar with pupils, using inappropriate language/tone, or failing to maintain professional boundaries

. All low-level concerns must be shared responsibly with the Principal within 24 hours. The Principal will record, review, and address these concerns in a factual and secure manner to identify patterns of behaviour, mitigate risks, and safeguard staff against potential misunderstandings.

Vetting of school staff

All staff, including student teachers, are vetted through Access NI.

Section 4: Reports and Record Keeping

4.1 Maintaining records

If the school receives a complaint about possible child abuse which is not referred to Social Services - or if it is referred, and the Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register - the school will maintain the record on the child's file until their DOB + 30 years (strictly in accordance with DE Circular 2020/07 and the regional retention schedule) and send a confidential copy to any school to which the child subsequently transfers. If Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, the school will maintain a record of this fact, and associated documentation from Social Services, on the child's file while he/she continues to attend, the record on the child protection file will remain D.O.B + 30 years (Annex C). When a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school, the school will inform the receiving school immediately that his/her name is on the Register, and destroy all child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences, and should inform the child's Case Co-ordinator in Social Services. The school to which the child is transferring should contact Social Services for relevant information. If the Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been removed from the Register, the school will destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences.

4.2 The School's Record of Child Abuse Complaints

Where a complaint is made about a member of staff, and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a short summary of the record should also be entered by the Principal on a Record of Child Abuse Complaints, maintained for the purpose and kept in a secure place. The summary will include:

- the date and brief details of the nature of the complaint;
- by whom and against whom it was made;
- if the complaint was formally referred, to whom it was referred, and

- if the complaint was dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.

The school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints will be made available to the Board of Governors annually. This is also available to the Education and Training Inspectorate who will ask to see the Record during inspections. (Annex C).

4.3 Child Protection Conferences

When a referral has been made of a case of suspected or alleged abuse, a member of staff, either the designated teacher or the member of staff who knows the child best, may be asked to contribute the school's knowledge of the child to the Child Protection Conference convened by Social Services to assess the child's circumstances and decide on further action. The school may also be asked to prepare a report. Reports prepared for Child Protection Conferences will focus on the child's educational progress and achievements, attendance, behaviour, participation, relationships with other children and adults within the school and, where appropriate, the child's appearance. If relevant, reports will include what is known (without making specific investigation) about the child's relations with his/her family and the family structure.

- Reports will be objective and based on evidence.
- They will contain only fact, observations and reasons for concern.

Reports will be made available to the child's parents at the Child Protection Conference, and may be used in court. All reports will be checked and signed by the Designated Teacher, or by the teacher who has assumed these responsibilities in his/her absence. A model pro forma for such a report is used for guidance, although these can vary depending on nature of information required.

The school should ensure that:

- School staff are aware of the need to record and report child protection issues and the appropriate procedures to be followed. The importance of confidentiality should be highlighted.
- The Child Protection Files are held in a separate, secure confidential filing system, ideally in a fireproof cabinet. This is only accessible to the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher or the Principal.
- Files must not be removed from school premises except when taken to a case planning meeting or on foot of a court order. A record should be kept of when information is removed, by whom, for what purpose, and when it is returned.
- If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or portable memory device all must be encrypted and appropriately password-protected. (see Annex F)

4.4 Model Pro-Forma for Report to Child Protection Conference

Pupil's name: _____ DOB: _____ Year group: _____

Parents/Guardians: _____

Address: _____

Attendance in current school year: _____ days out of possible _____ days.

Attainment levels/educational performance: _____

Intellectual ability (eg below average/average/above average): _____

Performance in relation to intellectual ability: _____

Presentation of work, including homework: _____

Participation in teaching/learning activities: _____

Behaviour in class: _____

Behaviour out of class: _____

Relationships with other children: _____

Relationships with teacher/other adults in school: _____

Relationships with family (if relevant/known): _____

School's contacts with home (eg telephone calls): _____

General remarks (eg personal appearance, readiness/preparation for learning): _____

Signed on behalf of the school: _____

(Designated Teacher)

Monitoring and Supporting pupils on the Child Protection Register

The school will monitor pupils whose names are on the Child Protection Register in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan. The plan sets out the role of the child's parents and various agencies in protecting the child. For Dunclug, this would include alerting the child's Case Co-ordinator from Social Services, or the Education Welfare Officer, when a pupil on the Child Protection Register is absent for more than a few days, or on a regular basis, or to any signs which suggest a deterioration in the pupil's home circumstances.

Section 5: Staff & Visitors

5.1.i Recruitment, Vetting and Induction of Staff and Volunteers

All staff, and volunteers are vetted through Access NI (DE circular (2024/10 and 2025/06) including amendments by the Crime and Policing Act 2026. All volunteers involved in regulated activity are required to have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC).

Definition of Regulated Activity

An activity is regulated activity in relation to children if it is carried out:

- in a defined establishment (including schools, EOTAS and other education settings);
- frequently (once a week or more often, or on three or more days within a thirty-day period);
- by the same person engaged in work for, or in connection with, the purposes of the establishment; and
- where that work gives the person the opportunity to have contact with children.

5.1.ii Visitors

Visitors to the school, such as parents, suppliers of goods and services, to carry out maintenance etc. do not need to be routinely vetted. However, such visitors will be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school be restricted as needs require.

5.2 What all staff need to know

All staff who work in the school during the hours in which pupils are on the premises, including ancillary staff, and any volunteers accepted to work in the school, need to know:

- how to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse;
- what the relevant child protection procedures are, including the school's own internal procedures, where they are held in the school and how they can be referred to if necessary; and, in particular, what the reporting procedures are;
- how to talk to children about whom there are concerns in an appropriate way, and how to record the information they have acquired; and

- who the designated teacher is and who will carry out his/her responsibilities if he/she is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint.

All such members of staff should be aware of the roles played by the designated teacher, the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors respectively, and the school's internal arrangements should enable each of these to carry out the duties of their role effectively and with appropriate support and training. See Section 2, page 6.

5.3 Code of Conduct for Staff

5.3.i Private Meetings with Pupils

a. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. Young people may feel they cannot approach a member of staff if attention is to be drawn to any interview that might take place. However, staff members should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with some sort of visual access.

b. Where such conditions cannot apply, members of 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 either present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

5.3.ii Physical Contact with Pupils

d. As a general principle, members of staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.

e. 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. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.

f. 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*)).

g. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint. (Ref Policy on Use of Acceptable Force) Students would be restrained where they pose danger to themselves, others and property.

h. Schools should, in particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas like the photographic darkroom, draw up their own guidelines for these circumstances.

i. 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.*

j. Any physical contact, such as given in sympathy or by way of support, which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

k. 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.

l. 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.

5.3.iii Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

m. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

n. 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 parent, might after the event be criticised.

o. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

5.3.iv Relationships and Attitudes

p. 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. While members of staff are encouraged to be warm and friendly, they should be professional and parental in all dealings with students. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

q. Contact with pupils through social media is discouraged. However, it is recognised that creative technologies are a feature of the modern world and such features as the School Moodle and Twitter should be used with care. (Ref ICT Policy & Acceptable Use of ICT Advice).

5.4.v Further detail for the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers can be found in Annex D which includes:

1. Setting an Example
2. Safeguarding Pupils/Students
3. Relationships with Students
4. Pupil/Student Development
5. Honesty and Integrity
6. Conduct Outside of Work
7. E-Safety and Internet Use
8. Confidentiality
9. Dress and Appearance
10. Disciplinary Action
11. Compliance

5.4.vi Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration (Annex D)

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Section 6: Child-on-Child Abuse (including Harassment, Bullying, and Violence)

Please refer to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy

Dunclug College does not tolerate any form of child-on-child abuse. Abuse must never be dismissed or downplayed as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', or 'boys being boys/girls being girls'.

Child-on-child abuse includes, physical abuse, bullying, teenage relationship abuse, upskirting, and downblousing (which are criminal offences). This policy also applies to the consensual or non-consensual making, possessing, or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, including those generated or manipulated using Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The school provides clear, well-promoted pathways for students to report concerns. Support plans will be put in place immediately for those who experience abuse, perpetrators, and any other students affected by these behaviours. Interactions are often complex and require sensitivity.

The School's Anti-bullying details are set out in a separate policy and that to allow or condone bullying type behaviours may lead to consideration under safeguarding procedures.

All members of staff are vigilant at all times. Any report or occurrence of bullying type behaviours will be dealt with as detailed in the Anti-bullying policy.

Displaying bullying behaviours also constitutes a form of abuse by another child or young person particularly where it is repeated or despite reasonable warnings/advice having been given. It is a highly distressing and a damaging form of behaviour and should not be tolerated. Interactions are often complex and require sensitivity.

Section 7: Newcomers, SEN, Additional Needs and Increased Vulnerabilities

Children with special educational needs, and those who are not fluent in English, may be especially vulnerable to abuse, because the abuser may expect it to be difficult for these children to report what has happened. Extra care should be taken to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse. Indications of abuse of these children should be reported exactly as for other children, according to school procedures.

Children with a Disability

Children and young people with disabilities (ie any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse, particularly verbal abuse which can be persistent and subtle, and individuals and organisations working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues. Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children should receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early, to allow preventative action to be taken. Young people who belittle or undermine children with any kind of disability or vulnerability will be dealt with under the school's Anti-Bullying and Discipline Policies. Where there is an underlying cause of such behaviour this will also be addressed within school or with the help of relevant agencies.

Gender Identity Issues/Sexual Orientation

The school strives to provide a happy environment where all young people feel safe and secure. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Work Experience and Residential Situations

The school strives to ensure the welfare of their pupils on work experience and on residential trips. Guidance on organising work experience is taken from the Education Authority (EA) and from the Health and Safety Executive. See Educational Visits Policy.

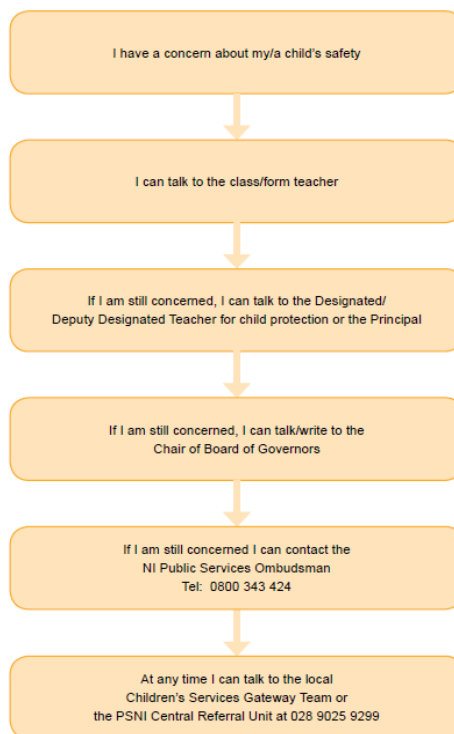
Section 8: Parents

8.1 Partnership with parents

Parents are made aware, through the school information or parents' meetings, of the school's child protection arrangements, within its pastoral care policy, and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the

interests of the child. Parents are reminded, annually, of the importance of notifying the school when someone other than the parent or usual carer will be picking the child up from school.

If a case of suspected abuse is referred to the investigative agencies, the school will continue to inform parents of the educational progress of the child.



8.2 How to Report a Concern About Abuse

Any parent who has a concern about their own child's safety or the safety of any other child, or suspects that abuse has taken place should contact Mr Oliver, the Principal, Mr McNeilly, the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, or Mr McKillop, Deputy Designated Teacher on 028 2565 3665.

Contact numbers for external agencies can be found in Annex E.

8.3 How will the School Respond?

On receiving a report of suspected or alleged abuse the Designated Teacher will conduct a discreet preliminary clarification and if necessary consult Social Services or the Police Service of Northern Ireland Care Team. Any investigation will be carried out by one or both of these agencies and will have the full support of the school in assessing the situation. The Education Authority will be immediately informed of the incident and the action taken. Where the school is uncertain whether a referral is appropriate, advice from the Education Authority will be sought.

In any event, the person reporting the concern will be kept informed by the school or Social Services or the PSNI of the progress, and the outcome, of this referral.

Any parent who is dissatisfied with the Designated Teacher's handling of a concern they have expressed, or the outcome, (or that of the deputy), should contact the Principal. They may also contact Mr D Millar, (the Chairman of the Board of Governors), Social Services or the PSNI Care Team directly. (See also Document: How to make a Complaint against school.)

Section 9: Preventative Curriculum

9.1 Contribution of the Curriculum

The Pastoral Curriculum is a proactive means of teaching children how to keep safe and happy in their environment, how to respond to others, how to build good relationships, how to deal with conflict or difference and how to seek for help when it is needed. This contributes to the experience of learning which should be rewarding, challenging and enjoyable.

9.2 The school delivers through Learning for Life and Work a programme which builds in appropriate modules of study relating to Personal Development and Citizenship including Relationships and Sexuality Education. Courses in personal and social education can help young people to develop more realistic attitudes towards the responsibilities of adult life, including consideration, respect and care for others. (Ref LLW SOW & Lesson Plans).

9.3 Through the curriculum, children can also be taught about the risks of different kinds of abuse, and can be equipped with the skills they need to help them to stay safe, by recognising unwelcome approaches or behaviour and developing the confidence to resist them as far as possible. Discussing with children possible ways to prevent or talk about abuse must be done carefully so as not to cause anxiety or upset normal, stable relationships between adults and children.

9.5 There is a procedure in place in an attached document for a process of complaint to the school by a Parent or member of the public

9.6 Parents and friends of the College are encouraged to contact the school if they wish to discuss how the policy might be improved.

Section 10: Collaboration

10.1 In the spirit of working together the school collaborates with other educational establishments with the Ballymena Together Learning Community, EOTAS, Shared Education, the Extended Schools Programme and the Signature Project. Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements can be viewed in the Partnership Agreements. This Policy will be used as a prerequisite to inform content of the partnership agreement, in discussion with the partnership school/provider. A copy will be retained by both providers.

10.2 If a pupil from our school attends other educational provision/s, a member of the safeguarding team will share any child protection concerns they have with the DT in the centre.

10.3 If child protection concerns arise when the pupil is attending an EOTAS provision the designated teacher in EOTAS will follow child protection procedures and will advise a member of the school's safeguarding team of the concerns and any actions taken. It is the responsibility of EOTAS staff to maintain their records in accordance with DE Circular 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools and any subsequent updates.

Section 11: Monitoring and review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team and approved by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the school's staff induction and training programme and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

N Oliver
Principal

NOTE OF CONCERN**CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:

Name of staff member making the report:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:
Any further action taken:
Written report passed to Designated Teacher: Yes No If 'No' state reason:
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file If 'No' state reason:

Name of staff member making the report:

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Annex B

Child Protection File

3.11 The DT should store each Note of Concern and copy UNOCINI documents in the child's **Child Protection File** and supplement it with all other records created and acquired as the management of the concern progresses. A Child Protection File is separate to the School Pupil/ Educational Record and must be stored securely. It is recommended that the School Pupil/ Educational Record is marked in some way to indicate the presence of a separate confidential file. A coloured sticker is one means of doing this and staff should be aware of who to contact in this instance.

3.12 The Child Protection File should contain:

- Chronology of events/ action taken
- All records of concern
- Any notes initially recorded, including in the form of notebooks/diaries³ which should be kept securely with the child protection file
- Records of discussions and telephone calls (with colleagues, parents and children/young people and other agencies or services)
- Correspondence with other organisations - sent and received
- Referral forms – both for support services and specialist services (irrespective of outcome)
- Formal plans linked to the child e.g. child protection plan, child in need plan
- Risk assessments
- Risk Management Plans/ Individual Safety and Support Plans
- School reports to interagency meetings and conferences
- Minutes of interagency meetings e.g. child in need, strategy, child protection conference
- Any other relevant notes/ papers

3.13 Relevant and accurate records are essential to inform effective decision making and assist in the sharing of appropriate information. **They should contain factual information or be clearly specified as unsubstantiated** and should include all relevant information even if it appears contradictory.

3.14 Any significant event or change which has an impact on the child's welfare must be included in the Child Protection File, and noted on the chronology of events/ action taken, even if it seems to be contradictory. As a guideline, although not exhaustive, the following may be relevant:

- **Change of circumstances:** changes of carer, address, legal status, school, family circumstances and household composition.
- **Issues for the child:** physical or mental health issues, incidents of abuse, losses, developmental issues, incidents of running away/going missing, incidents re bullying, offending or police involvement.
- **Family issues:** changes in family composition, loss and separation, domestic violence, financial or housing problems, physical or mental health, substance misuse, homelessness, imprisonment, victimisation.
- **Professional involvement:** referrals made, involvement of other agencies, assessments, significant decisions, interventions, social services involvement.

3.15 Any decisions made must be recorded together with reasons for the agreed action, this will be vital to any future processes, such as retrospective or historical allegations and Case Management Reviews. It is vitally important to record all relevant details, regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with either the police or social services.

3.16 When Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been placed on the Trusts' **Child Protection Register (CPR)**, the school must maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's Child Protection file. See sections 5 - 7 for further details on sharing, transfer and retention of this information.

Annex C

Retention Periods for Child Protection Records

7.6 It is recommended that, in general, child protection records should be retained by the school for the following periods:

Record	Retention Period
Pupil Child Protection Case Files	DOB + 30 years
The school's confidential Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely*
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register	Maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's file while he/she continues to attend. On transfer, the school should inform the new school and destroy all social services records. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years.
If Social Services inform the school that a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register	On transfer to a new school, the school should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until D.O.B + 30 years.
Complaint against a member of staff Staff members file ⁶ Child's Child Protection File Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely* unless totally exonerated (see para. 3.16) D.O.B + 30 years Indefinitely*
Complaint to be pursued under the school's disciplinary procedures	
Staff members file Child's Child Protection File Record of Child Abuse Complaints	5 years D.O.B + 30 years Indefinitely*

* as a general guide 'indefinitely' should be a minimum of 40 years.

Annex D

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools

Date Ratified by BOG: _____

Review Date: _____

Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff and volunteers are expected to observe. School staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school.

This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

1. Setting an Example

- 1.1 All staff and volunteers who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- 1.2 All staff and volunteers must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
- 1.3 All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- 1.4 This Code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority.
- 1.5 All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

2. Safeguarding Pupils/Students

- 2.1 All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal).
- 2.3 The school's DT is Mr A McNeilly and the DDT is Mr A McKillop.
- 2.4 All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents and other relevant school policies eg e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.
- 2.5 All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.
- 2.6 All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
- 2.7 All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

3. Relationships with Students

- 3.1 All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in Appendix 1 of this document.
- 3.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

4. Pupil/Student Development

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.

- 4.2 All staff and volunteers must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/ students.

5. Honesty and Integrity

- 5.1 All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- 5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Principal with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

6. Conduct Outside of Work

- 6.1 All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- 6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.
- 6.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual’s work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

7. E-Safety and Internet Use

- 7.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools’ E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.
- 7.2 Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by ‘liking’ certain pages

or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

- 7.4 Contact with students must be via 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 students.

If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.

- 7.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.
- 8.2 Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
- 8.3 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.
- 8.4 If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.
- 8.5 Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.

- 8.6 Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

9. Dress and Appearance

- 9.1 All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.
- 9.2 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- 9.3 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

10. Disciplinary Action

Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

11. Compliance

All staff and volunteers must complete the form in Appendix 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student outside of school, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring.

I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school.

No monies come through the school at any point, informally (eg via the child) or formally.

No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed _____ Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.

Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name _____

Position/Post Held _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.

Annex E

Free confidential 24-hour support is available from:

Childline
Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC
Tel: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

contact the 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline on:

Phone: 0808 802 1414 (Freephone)

Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Text: 'support' to 077 9780 5839

Organisations that can offer advice and support:

- Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland - www.womensaidni.org - 028 9024 9041
- Mens Advisory Project (MAP) - www.mapni.co.uk - 028 9024 1929
- Men to Men - 028 9024 7027
- Mens Aid NI - www.mensaid.co.uk/ni.html - 077 0385 8130

Other Useful Numbers

- Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre - 028 9032 9002
- Nexus - 028 9032 6803
- Victim Support - 028 9024 3133
- Citizen's Advice Bureau - 0300 1 233 233
- Law Society (Legal and Local Solicitor Advice) - 028 9023 1614
- Parents Helpline - 0808 8010 722

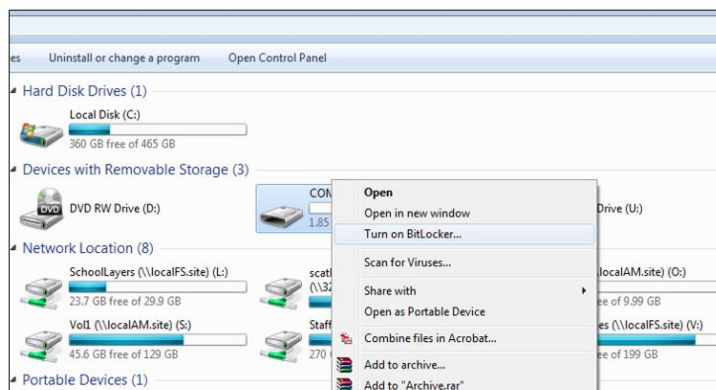
The **NSPCC** has a FGM helpline. The helpline is open 24/7 and can be called if you're worried a child is at risk of, or has had, FGM. The helpline is free and anonymous.

Phone: 0800 028 3550 Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

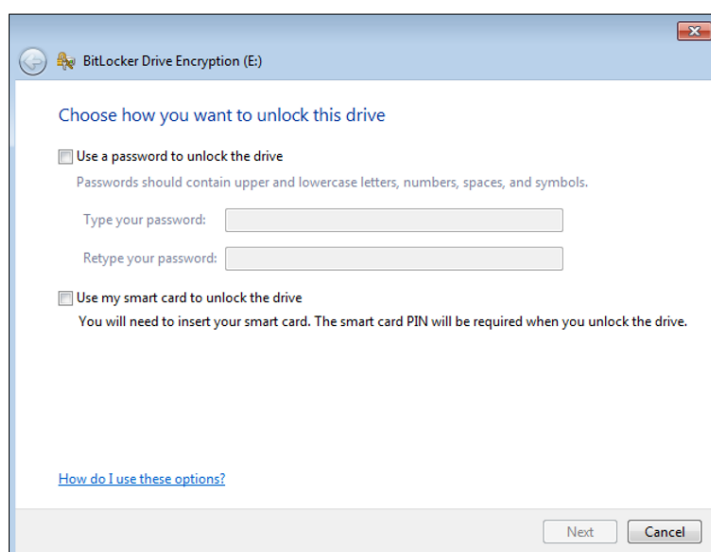
ACSONI (African and Caribbean Support Northern Ireland) can also offer support and advice on FGM, including links with the local community.

Phone: 028 9043 4090 Email: info@acsoni.org

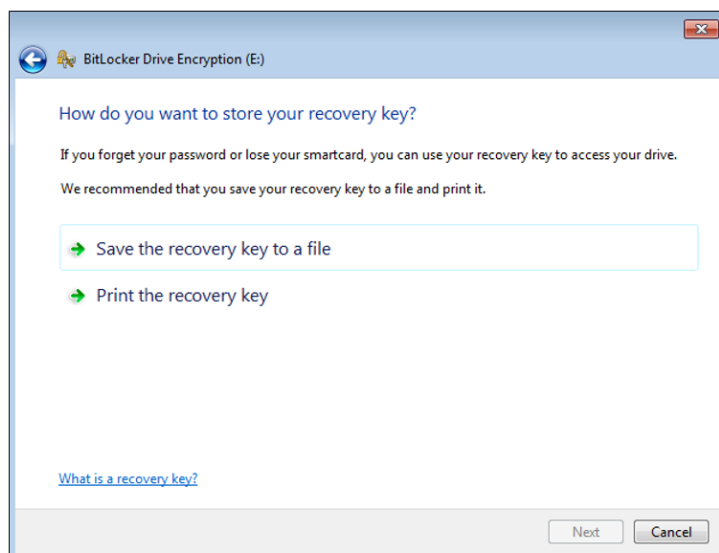
Annex F



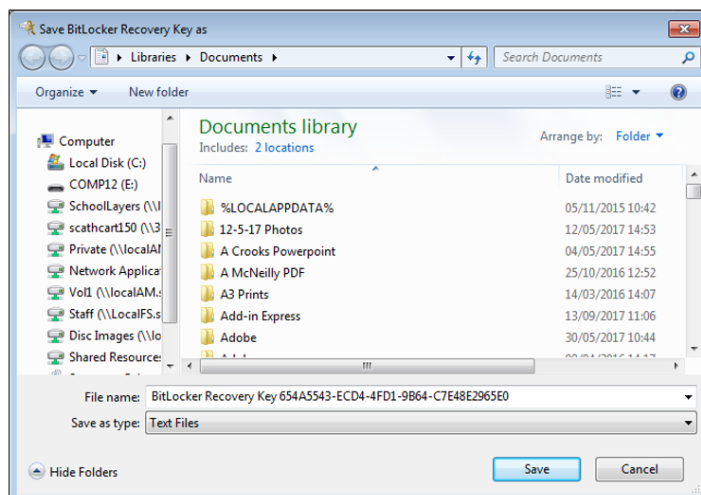
Right click on the external drive in 'My Computer' and click on 'Turn on BitLocker' to enable encryption.



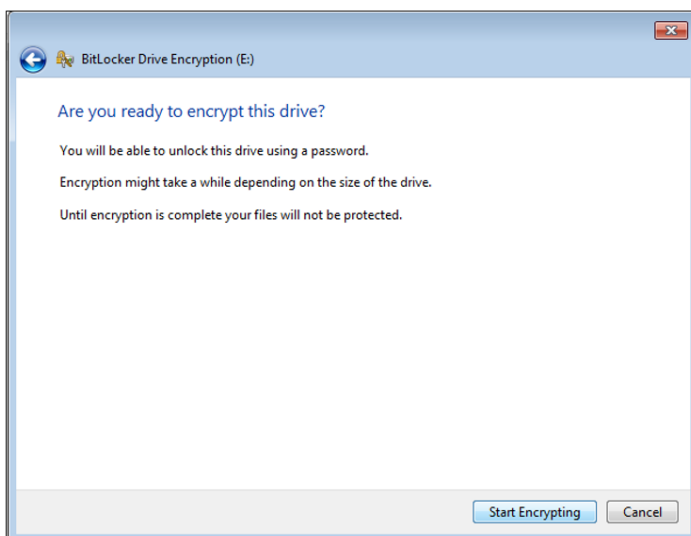
Tick 'Use a password to unlock the drive', enter a password and retype your password to confirm. You will need to remember the password every time you plug in the external drive.



Either option is workable here though best to 'Save the recovery key to a file'



Choose a suitable location (i.e. not on the same external drive about to be encrypted) and give it a name easy to distinguish what it is or use the default given.



This is the final click needed, and there will be no stopping the process until it's complete. Click 'Start Encrypting' to begin. Bear in mind that it is a fairly lengthy process and the larger the capacity of the external drive, the longer it will take.



Following encryption, every time you plug in the external drive you will need to enter the password you gave earlier in the process.

Annex G

Operation Encompass

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

All members of the school's safeguarding team must complete the mandatory online Operation Encompass 'Key Adult' training. Additionally, Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).