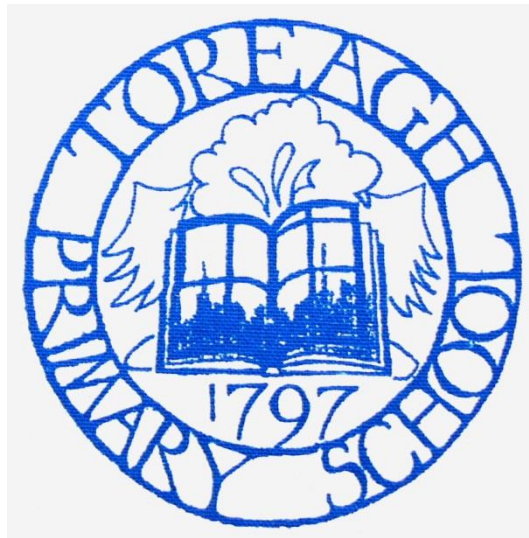


TOREAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Date: October 2020

Review Date: October 2024 (updated when required)

Child Protection Ethos

We in Toreagh Primary School have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school

Principles

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).

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

- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.

Other Relevant Policies

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

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Accessibility
- First Aid
- Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E Safety
- Intimate Care

Any parent requiring a copy of these policies, should contact the School Principal or visit the school website: www.toreaghprimaryschool.co.uk

School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team

- Designated Teacher :[Miss Lyn Morrow](#)
- Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Yvonne Wells
- Principal: Miss Lyn Morrow
- Designated Governor for Child Protection: Mrs Hilary Apsley
- Chair of the Board of Governors: Mrs Geraldine Anderson

Roles And Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher

The designated teacher and deputy designated teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and roles
- Organise training for all staff (induction and 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 Education Authority's (EA) 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
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg. Family support hubs
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.

The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:-

- DE Guidance – Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools 2017 (SCPS) is implemented within the school
- She attends and keeps updated her training on Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection and that of the Deputy Designated Teacher
- A designated teacher and deputy designated teacher are appointed
- All staff receive child protection training
- All necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- The Chair of the Board of Governors is kept informed of any changes to guidance, procedures or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided

- The school's child protection policy is reviewed annually and parents receive a copy/summary of this policy at least once every 2 years
- Confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.
- Takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Designated Governor will avail of child protection awareness training delivered by CPSSS and will take the lead in child protection issues 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 Teacher's Report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair of the Board of Governors will:

- Ensure that she has received appropriate Education Authority training
- 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 Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) and the Governor Support and Human Resource departments.
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity

Other Members of School Staff

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

They should remember the 5 Rs: *Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer*

The member of staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal
- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child (**Appendix 1**)

- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- **Not** investigate
- **Not** ask leading questions

In addition the Class Teacher should:

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self-harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts.

The Designated/Deputy Designated teacher will immediately follow the school's child protection procedures.

Parents

Parents should play their part in safeguarding by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
- letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
- familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors will ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance including

- having a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually
- having a staff code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- attendance at relevant training by governors and that up-to-date training records are maintained
- the vetting of all staff and volunteers

What Is Child Abuse?

Definition of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (revised 2017).

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of forms including, hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

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.

Neglect is the persistent failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often suffer from other types of abuse.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include

non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or 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.

Specific Types of Abuse

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 Toreagh we take our e-safety responsibilities very seriously and e-safety lessons form a regular part of our teaching.

The associated risks around online safety can be identified under four categories:

- **Content risks:** the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.
- **Contact risks:** the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.
- **Conduct risks:** the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.
- **Commercial risks:** the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

In Toreagh Primary School any work involving internet access is done under close adult supervision or on the interactive whiteboards/ active panels. Firewalls are in place and I pads are locked when in use. Pupils are informed of the need for adult supervision if homework requires internet research. Further details are available in the E Safety and Acceptable Use policy.

6.9 Sexting

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

6.9.1 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.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record.

It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of sexual images. Advice should be sought from CPSS.

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 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 distribution of the image and further such incidents contain the damage it can cause.

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, child protection procedures should be followed.

Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People

Child sexual exploitation 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. Child sexual exploitation doesn't 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.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person, this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information to Social Services.

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. Grooming is, “when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.” NSPCC. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know eg. a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female, of any age. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse. Grooming may take place face to face, online and/or through social media. If the staff in Toreagh become aware of signs that may indicate grooming, they will take early action and follow the school’s child protection policies and procedures.

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’. Staff have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed established procedures set out in our school policy.

Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour

As a school we support children, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise. It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as ‘healthy’, ‘problematic’ or ‘sexually harmful’. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. We will also take guidance from DE Circular 2016/05 to address concerns about harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children and young people.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse is defined as, “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)

If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher who has an obligation to share the information to Social Services.

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

Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

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

Neglect

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

Signs and symptoms of abuse ~ Possible Indicators

Sexual Abuse

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

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

Do:	Do not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Listen to what the child says ❖ Assure the child they are not at fault ❖ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret ❖ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words ❖ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality ❖ Stay calm ❖ Listen ❖ Accept ❖ Reassure ❖ Explain what you are going to do ❖ Record accurately ❖ Seek support for yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ask leading questions. ❖ Put words into the child's mouth. ❖ Ignore the child's behaviour. ❖ Remove any clothing. ❖ Panic ❖ Promise to keep secrets ❖ Ask leading questions ❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily ❖ Delay ❖ Start to investigate ❖ Do Nothing

Procedures for making complaints in relation to child abuse

How a Parent can make a Complaint

We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or any member of the school's safeguarding team: the Principal, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in **Appendix 2**.

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

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate as this is the responsibility of Social Services and/or PSNI. Staff should report these concerns immediately to the Designated/Deputy Teacher and full notes should be made. 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.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher may consult with members of the school's safeguarding team, the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Social Services Gateway Team before a referral is made. During consultation with the Education Authority's Designated Officer the child's details will be shared. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will telephone Social Services Gateway Team. He/she will also notify the EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team and a copy will be kept in the school's child protection file.

If the Principal has concerns that a child may be at immediate risk from a volunteer, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 3**.

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

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) **must be informed immediately**. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher)

If a complaint is made against the Principal the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will ensure that necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils or may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities. The Chair of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Child protection procedures as outlined in Appendix will be followed in keeping with current Department of Education guidance.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in **Appendix 4**

Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. Where abuse is suspected schools have a legal duty to refer to the Statutory Agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns, we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Record Keeping

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person and are only accessible by members of the safeguarding team.

Vetting Procedures

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the School are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

Code Of Conduct For all Staff Paid Or Unpaid

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

The school's code of conduct is available on request.

Staff Training

Toreagh Primary School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies.

The Preventative Curriculum

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through PDMU, "Look After Yourself" week, WAU and class assemblies. There is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in the staff room.

Monitoring And Evaluation

The Safeguarding Team in Toreagh will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

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.

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.

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.](#)

Code of Conduct

Introduction

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

Code of Conduct

1. *Private Meetings with Pupils*

- a. Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognized that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use. (it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room)
- c. Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

2. *Physical Contact with Pupils*

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education Northern Ireland Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils*)).
- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e. 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.

- f Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- g 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 the Principal.
- h 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.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- a Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticized.
- c If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with older boys and girls.

All staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils and their attitudes towards pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils. They should also take care that their conduct and language do not give rise to any comment or speculation regarding impropriety.

Staff should therefore not:-

- use any form of inappropriate language (foul, sexualised or discriminatory) on school premises or when accompanying children outside school or allow children to use such language unchallenged;
- make sexualised or suggestive comments to children, even in fun;
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control;
- allow allegations made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon.

5. Use of Mobile Phones/Personal Devices

Staff should be discreet when using mobile phones and calls/text messages should not be made or received when children are present (except in an emergency situation involving children/staff). If possible, usage should be restricted to break and lunchtimes. Staff should also not use mobile devices in sensitive areas outside school e.g. swimming pool or in pupils' accommodation on residential trips.

Staff are advised not to give their mobile phone numbers or personal email addresses to pupils or parents. Staff should not correspond with pupils on social networking sites e.g. Facebook. Privacy settings should be in place so that pupils cannot access a member of staff's personal site; Staff should not take or have photographs of pupils on their personal devices.

Site security and Access

Toreagh Primary School aims to provide a secure site, which is controlled by precise management directives, but the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all people on the site have to adhere to the rules, which govern it. Laxity can cause potential problems to safeguarding. At Toreagh Primary School we appreciate and encourage positive and active partnerships with parents however the safety and welfare of the children in our care is of paramount importance. Therefore:

- Entrance doors are kept locked.
- Doors should be closed to prevent intrusion but to facilitate smooth exits.
- Visitors, volunteers and students should report to the Secretary, Mrs Wilson or Principal, Miss Morrow. Visitor book should be completed on entering and a visitor lanyard worn.
- All gates remain closed when children are outside.
- If you wish to discuss a matter with your child's teacher, an appointment agreed by both parties should be made.
- Children will only be allowed home with adults with parental responsibility or confirmed permission.
- Empty classrooms should have closed windows.
- Children should never be allowed to leave school alone during school hours and must be collected by an adult.
- Should a child leave the school premises without permission, staff have been informed never to chase after a child, but rather to report this immediately to Miss Morrow. Then parents and police will be informed of the circumstances.
- Parents should not interrupt class teaching time unless it is deemed urgent and essential.
- All children should enter and exit from the school, via the main door.

Your cooperation and support with this matter is essential so that together we can provide a safe environment for our children to learn.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to

ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

Appendix 1

TOREAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIAL

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:
Action taken at the time:

Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:	
Any further action taken:	
Written report passed to Designated Teacher: If 'No' state reason:	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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:	<input type="checkbox"/>

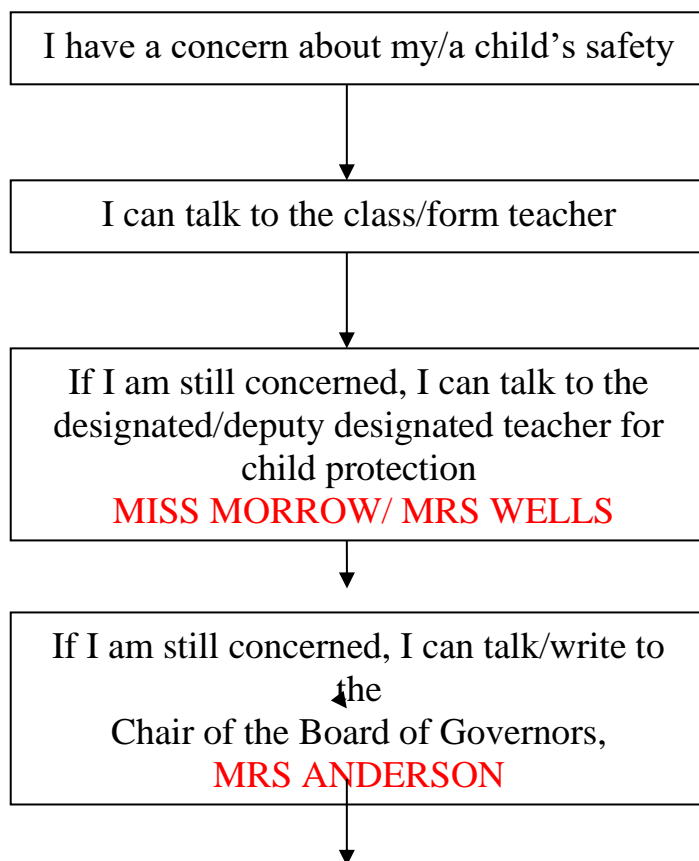
Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2

How a Parent can make a Complaint



At any time a parent can talk to a Social Worker
at the Gateway Team

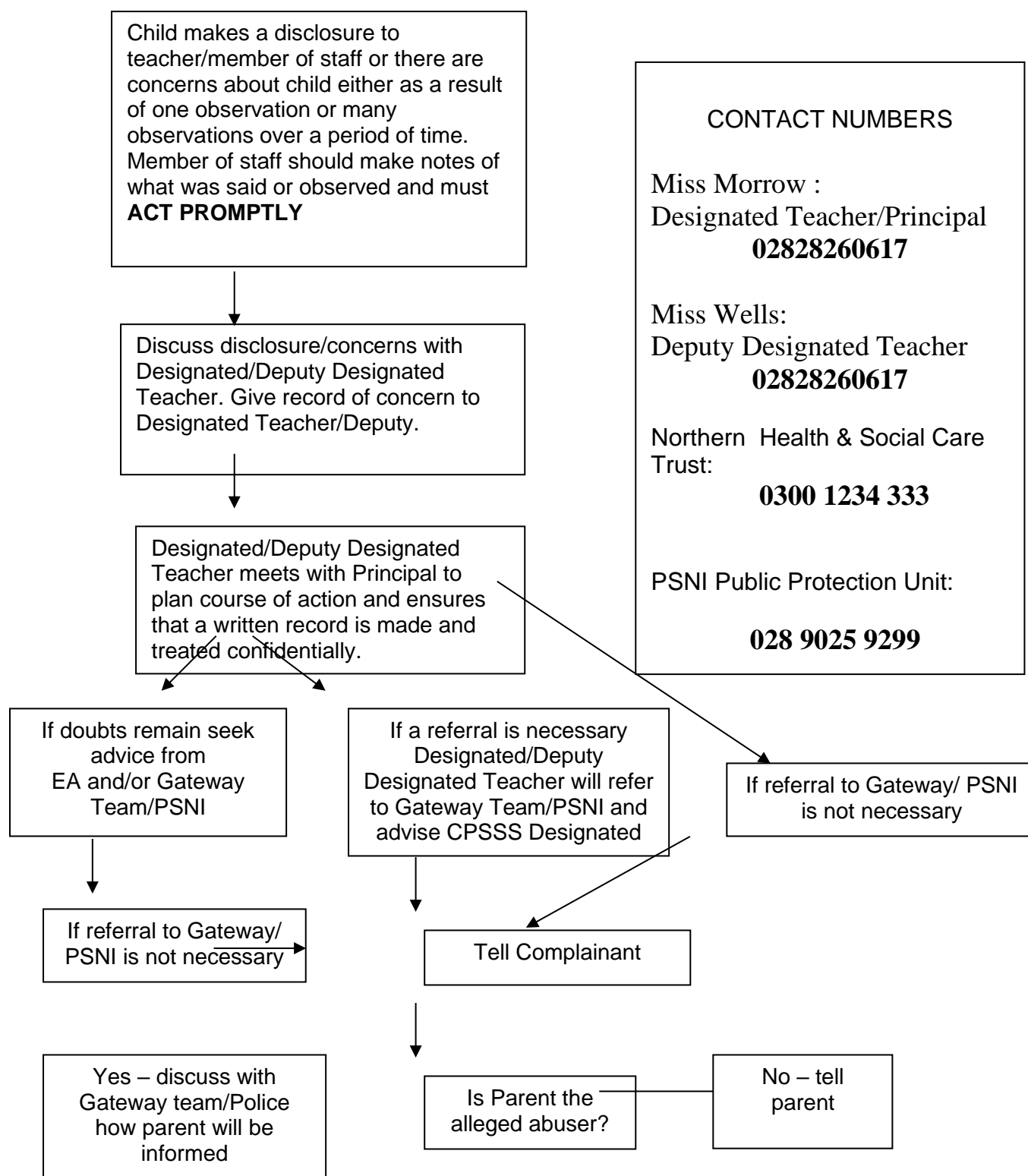
Tel: 0300 1234 333 (Free Phone from a Landline)

Or can contact the PSNI Public Protection Unit

Tel: 101 (Ask for PPU in 'E' District)

Appendix 3

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



Dealing With Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff

Key Points

Lead Individual learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of BOG as appropriate

Guidance on next steps

Lead Individual then:
Establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion

Possible Outcomes

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or the BOG to agree way forward from the options below

Precautionary suspension is not appropriate and the matter is concluded

Allegation addressed through relevant Disciplinary Procedures

Precautionary suspension under Child Protection Procedures imposed

Alternatives to Precautionary Suspension imposed

TOREAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Annex to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Covid-19 Arrangements

Context

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak of Covid-19.

Despite the changes, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT in line with our established safeguarding procedures.**

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

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following advice from government and local agencies.

We continue to adhere to government guidelines and keep abreast of any updated advice from the Education Authority Child Protection Support Service.

Procedures

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy. The Designated Teacher is: **Miss Morrow**
The Deputy Designated Teacher is: Mrs Wells
Also trained: Mrs Ellison

The school's approach ensures the DT or a DDT is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance that this is not possible, a member of the Senior Management Team will advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role.

Staff will continue to follow Child Protection procedures and advise the safeguarding team immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Should a child, in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will take advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

Attendance

Staff will continue to follow our Attendance Policy and Procedures.

The DT will attempt a range of methods to contact the parents/carers of children whose absence is causing concern. A risk assessment will be undertaken if necessary to consider managing the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child.

The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

The DT will liaise with the Education Welfare Service if contact proves impossible with children at home.

Blended Learning

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety in the event of **pupils having to spend time at home in the event of the school having to close for a period ('Lockdown')** or a pupil having to self isolate:

- The school email address and main school phone number have been made available to all parents;
- Teachers will provide online learning via the school website with procedures in place to minimise risk.

Prolonged School Closure

In the event of a **prolonged school closure ('Lockdown')** we have put in place specific arrangements:

- Regular check-ins will be made by the DT with vulnerable families. Parents will be asked to let us know if they are managing or if they need any support and they will be signposted to the appropriate service e.g. Family Support Hub;
- Regular check-ins will be made with parents of children with Special Educational Needs and. Any concerns will be followed up by the SENCO.

Online Safety

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed **if** staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing

- An adult should be in attendance during any video conferencing.
-
- Teachers and pupils should dress appropriately during the session;

- Pupils cannot participate from a bedroom;
- The teacher arranges the session and password/PIN and shares this with parents/guardians only;
- Parents must agree not to share the password/PIN with anyone else;
- Pupils and parents/guardians will also be reminded of acceptable use at this point;
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school;
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children, parents and teachers.

If there is a breach to any of these procedures e.g. pupil gives the password/PIN to someone else who joins the group, the teacher should immediately terminate the session/remove those individuals and advise the Principal.

How a parent can raise an issue or express a concern

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

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

If school is open during COVID-19 closures

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

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

How a child can raise a concern

We understand that while many children will be enjoying their time at home during a Covid-19 closure and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

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

- Interaction via website;
- Respond (DT) to any concerning comments our children may post on social media;
- All our children, parents and guardians will be able to contact school via the Principal's account Imorrow225@c2kni.net or their teacher's C2K email address (already communicated);
- Children will be made aware of the Childline phone number.

Other Agencies

- CEOP/Thinkuknow
- Childnet
- Safer Schools App

SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: –

Gateway 028 9050 7000 (ask for the Duty Social Worker)

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stresspanic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Safeguarding Team will review and amend these arrangements regularly in line with Departmental guidance and advice.