



## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Principal: Claire Donnelly

Chairperson: Alden Henderson

Date of Last Review: May 2025

Date of Next Review: May 2026



## CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. General Principles
3. Related Policies
4. Procedures and The School Safeguarding Team
5. Prevention
6. Recognition
7. Response
8. Referral
9. Confidentiality, information sharing and Record keeping
10. Code of Conduct
11. Staff in service
12. Monitoring and evaluation
  
13. Appendices
  - Appendix 1 How a Parent Can Raise a Concern
  - Appendix 2 Procedure Where the School Has Concerns about Possible Abuse
  - Appendix 3 Note of Concern for staff
  - Appendix 4 Designated Staff Poster

## Cosaint an Pháisté

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

“Páistí a chothú, pobal a chruthú”  
“Nurturing children, creating community”

Scoil an Droichid is an Irish language school composed of Naíscoil an Droichid and Scoil an Droichid.

The following statements of principle, policy and procedure aim to set the conceptual framework, which underpins the practices within Scoil an Droichid. This ethos is reflected in all actions and decisions taken by staff as they follow the detailed guidance set out in DE Child Protection Procedures.

Scoil an Droichid main aims are;

that every child, from whatever background, whose parents wishes them to attend the school, should receive a high level of Irish Medium Education. The importance of parents or their representative is recognised and valued.

that Irish is a living language both within and without the classroom, that it is the language of communication at all levels – teaching, playing and management.

that opportunities for extracurricular activities such as sport, drama, music, competitions and trips are available.

that the school will act as a foundation for the revival of an Irish speaking community within Belfast and the surrounding areas.

## **2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The principles and philosophy that underpin our work with children are those set out in the '*UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*' and enshrined in the *Children (NI) Order 1995.*, "Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "*Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools*" (*DENI Circular 2017/04 updated September 2019*) and the *Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017)*.

In particular, the principle we support is that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm, with proper care by those looking after them given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection and safeguarding activity and underpin the guidance that we follow:

**2.1 The child's welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a child is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration.**

**2.2 A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is a conflict, the child's interests must always come first.**

**2.3 Children have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives. Where a child has a disability, special assistance should be sought to achieve this.**

**2.4 Parents / carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that affect their family.**

**2.5 Actions taken to protect the child (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child unnecessary distress or further harm.**

**2.6 Intervention should not deal with the child in isolation: the child's needs should be considered in the context of the family. Agencies' actions must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race, and any special needs.**

**2.7 Where it is necessary to protect the child from further abuse, alternatives that do not involve moving the child and that cause minimum disruption of the family should be explored.**

### **3. 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:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints policy
- Data protection Policy
- Educational Visits
- E-Safety Policy
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care
- Privacy Notice
- Records Management policy
- Special Educational Needs
- Safe Handling

## 4. PROCEDURES and SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Scoil an Droichid recognises its four main responsibilities in protecting children. These are in the areas of prevention, recognition, response, referral and confidentiality / record keeping. Parents will be made aware of the responsibilities and procedures of the school and we hope they will support us in our practice. See table below for details of key personnel:

### **Key personnel**

<b>The designated teacher (DT) for child protection is</b>	Aisling Nic Giolla Bhéin
Contact details: email: <a href="mailto:anicgiollabhein136@c2kni.net">anicgiollabhein136@c2kni.net</a>	tel: 02890 313283
<b>The deputy designated teacher is/are</b>	Anna Weed
Contact details : email: <a href="mailto:aweед243@c2kni.net">aweед243@c2kni.net</a>	tel: 028 90313283
<b>The designated teacher (DT) for child protection in the Naíscoil is</b> Dunla Ní Fhlanagáin	
Contact details: email: <a href="mailto:dflanagan843@c2kni.net">dflanagan843@c2kni.net</a>	tel: 02890 313283
<b>The designated child protection governor is</b> Alden Henderson	
Contact details: email: request email from <a href="mailto:info@scoilandroichid.belfast.ni.sch.uk">info@scoilandroichid.belfast.ni.sch.uk</a>	tel: 02890 313283
<b>The principal is</b> Claire Donnelly	
Contact details: email: <a href="mailto:cdonnelly247@c2kni.net">cdonnelly247@c2kni.net</a>	tel: 02890 313283

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Board of Governors must ensure that:**

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.

- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually, and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters and termly updates. This report should include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

### **Chair of Board of Governors**

The Chairperson of the BoG plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment. The chairperson of Scoil an Droichid is Mr Alden Henderson.

In the event of a safeguarding or child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures.

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the Record of Child Abuse Complaints against staff members even if there have been no entries.

### **Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The BoG delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/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 Teachers Report;

- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

### **Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

Every school is required to have a DT and DDT with responsibility for child protection. These are highly skilled roles developed and supported through a structured training programme, requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues. The role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Having responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- 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.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- The 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.

### **The School Principal**

The principal, as the Secretary to the BoG, will assist the BoG to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from DE are shared promptly, and termly inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. In addition, the principal takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of DT and DDT Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.

It is essential that there is protected time and support to allow the DTs to carry out this important role effectively and that DTs are selected based on knowledge and skills required to fulfil the role.

The principal must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

### **Other Members of School Staff**

- Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Deputy Designated Teacher if he/she is not available.
- Class teachers should complete the Note of Concern if there are safeguarding concerns such as: 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 and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.
- **Staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions

### **Support Staff**

- If any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member, they should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher if he/she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made, and any further necessary action will be taken.

### **Parents**

**The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.**

- Parents can feel confident that procedures are in place to ensure that all staff have undergone procedures to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. All voluntary helpers undergo similar procedures including a police check
- Parents are expected to help their children to behave in non-violent and non-abusive ways towards both staff and other pupils. Parents will be informed if it was necessary to use minimal force to protect a pupil from injury or to prevent a pupil from harming others.
- Parents should always inform the school of any accidental bruising or other injuries that might otherwise be misinterpreted. They should also inform the school of any changes in home circumstances, such as the death of a member of the family, separation or divorce, ...that might lead to otherwise unexplained changes in behaviour or characteristics.
- If parents have any complaints about staff behaviour, they should initiate the complaints procedure.
- If the child has a medical condition or educational need.
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.

- If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- If their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: [www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection) or telephone 02895985590

## 5. PREVENTION

We offer a supportive environment to children. The school has developed and provides a 'child protection' ethos and a preventative curriculum. We offer children an alternative model to violent or abusive behaviour and alternative methods of responding.

The school offers prevention and protection on three levels:

- creating a listening environment that makes it easier to for children to share their concerns
- responding appropriately to child protection concerns according to procedures laid down in DENI Circular 17/04 Safeguarding and 'Child Protection – a guide for schools' (updated version September 2019)
- enhancing self-esteem and encouraging pro-social skills, breaking any cycle of abusive behaviour.

The Board of Governors ensures that the school curriculum includes a programme for pupils on personal protection. Some programmes currently in use are Circle Time and School assemblies.

The Board of Governors ensures that the school has in place an anti-bullying policy that has been drawn up in consultation with parents and children.

The curriculum programme provides the children with general prevention and protection strategies but sometimes it is of limited help to individual children with more sensitive and extreme needs. The management team has reactive strategies in place for individual needs e.g., bereavement, bullying (see anti-bullying policy) and other sensitive issues. These cases are handled on a need-to-know basis within the school and support agencies are used when required.

The Board of Governors ensures that the school has and follows the Code of Conduct of all staff, teaching and non-teaching.

The Code of Conduct covers all activities organised in and by the school, whether on school premises or elsewhere.

The Board of Governors ensures that all persons beyond the school staff who are invited to be involved as helpers/leaders on trips, residential visits, or other activities, either within or without school are subject to **vetting procedures** in keeping with the current arrangements for the care and protection of young people. Teachers are vetted as part of their registration with GTCNI (general teaching Council of NI)

Notices in the school will inform children of the identity of the designated and deputy designated teachers.

All substitute teachers and visitors who will have contact with the children will be provided with a summary of the child protection and safeguarding procedures and with the Code of Conduct.

## 6. RECOGNITION

Being mistreated or abused (sometimes called 'Significant Harm') is defined as sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect or emotional abuse.

RECOGNITION	SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE
<p><b>Physical Abuse</b></p> <p>When an adult deliberately hurts a child, such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning or suffocating</p>	<p><b>PHYSICAL ABUSE</b></p> <p><b>Physical indicators:</b> scratches bite marks or welts bruises in places difficult to mark e.g. behind ears, groin burns, especially cigarette burns untreated injuries</p> <p><b>Behavioural indicators:</b> self-mutilation tendencies chronic runaway aggressive or withdrawn fear of returning home undue fear of adults fearful watchfulness</p>
<p><b>Emotional Abuse</b></p> <p>This would happen, for instance, when a child is all the time being unfairly blamed for everything, or told they are stupid and made to feel unhappy.</p>	<p><b>EMOTIONAL ABUSE</b></p> <p><b>Physical indicators:</b> sudden speech disorders wetting and soiling signs of mutilation attention seeking behaviour frequent vomiting</p> <p><b>Behavioural indicators:</b> rocking, thumb sucking fear of change chronic runaway poor peer relationships</p>

<p><b>Neglect</b></p> <p>Where a child is not being looked after properly, for example, not getting enough to eat or being left alone in dangerous situations.</p> <p>Physical Neglect</p> <p>Emotional Neglect</p> <p>Medical Neglect</p> <p>Educational Neglect</p> <p>Nutritional Neglect</p> <p>Lack of Supervision or Guidance</p>	<p><b>NEGLECT</b></p> <p><b>Physical indicators:</b> constant hunger exposed to danger; lack of supervision inadequate/ inappropriate clothing poor hygiene untreated illness</p> <p><b>Behavioural indicators:</b> tiredness, listlessness lack of peer relationships low self-esteem compulsive stealing/ begging</p> <p>see full list at  <a href="https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/6%20Categories%20of%20Neglect_1.pdf">https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/6%20Categories%20of%20Neglect_1.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p> <p>Examples of sexual abuse would be where a child has been forced to take part in sexual activities or in the taking of rude photos.</p>	<p><b>SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p> <p><b>Physical indicators:</b> soreness, bleeding in genital or anal areas itching in genital area stained or bloody underwear stomach pains or headaches pain on urination difficulty in walking or sitting bruises on inner thighs or buttocks anorexic/ bulimic</p> <p><b>Behavioural indicators:</b> chronic depression inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group making sexual advances to adults or other children low self-esteem afraid of dark wariness of being approached by anyone substance/ drug abuse</p>

<p><b>Sexual Exploitation</b></p> <p>This is a form of abuse in which young people (boys or girls) are tricked or exploited into taking part in sexual activity for something. The something could be attention, love, food, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol or money.</p> <p><b>Exploitation</b><sup>1</sup> 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. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.</p>	<p>Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as <b>children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.</b></p>
<p><b>Bullying</b></p> <p>E.g. calling names, damaging property, stealing, spreading rumours, cyberbullying, hurting, getting people into trouble.</p>	<p>Effects on physical health (e.g. raised blood pressure)</p> <p>Effects on mental health (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression)</p> <p>School based anxiety, not wanting to come to school</p> <p>Isolation</p> <p>Low morale</p>
<p><b>Domestic Violence</b></p> <p>When one adult in a family or relationship threatens, bullies or hurts another adult e.g. physically, emotionally, sexually or financially</p> <p>*we are an Operation Encompass school and will work alongside PSNI in incidents of</p>	<p><b>Psychological effects</b> of experiencing domestic abuse can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aggression and challenging behaviour</li> <li>• depression</li> <li>• anxiety - including worrying about a parent's or carer's safety</li> </ul>

<p>domestic abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes in mood</li> <li>• difficulty interacting with others</li> <li>• withdrawal</li> <li>• fearfulness, including fear of conflict</li> <li>• suicidal thoughts or feelings</li> </ul> <p>(Diez, et al 2018).</p> <p>Domestic abuse can cause confusing relationships with parents and carers. Children might experience conflicting feelings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not having a strong bond with their parents or carers</li> <li>• hoping an abused parent will leave for safety reasons</li> <li>• worrying about what might happen if their parents or carers separate</li> <li>• being afraid of their parents or carers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>(SBNI - <a href="http://www.safeguardingni.org/cyp/abuse">http://www.safeguardingni.org/cyp/abuse</a> last accessed 2019)</p>	<p>Indicators that FGM is imminent Indicators that it might be about to take place include;</p> <p>being a girl between the ages of 5 to 8 within a community where FGM is practised when a female family elder visits, particularly if she arrives from another country a girl talking about a 'special procedure' or saying that she is attending a special ceremony to become a woman</p> <p>a girl being taken out of the country for a prolonged period.</p> <p>Indicators that it has taken place Indications that FGM has already taken place include;</p> <p>a girl having difficulty walking, sitting or standing she spends longer than normal going to the toilet she spends long periods of time away from the classroom during the day because of bladder or menstrual problems</p>
	<p>prolonged or repeated absences from school or college withdrawal or depression when a girl returns to school after a prolonged period of absence reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.</p>

It is important to realize that these signs are not a checklist and even for the experts it is often very hard to decide if a child has been abused.

It is important to remember:

- record and date all observations of worrying marks/ behaviour.
- seek advice.
- you have a supportive not investigative role.
- Judgment about abuse must be left to the professionals

Staff will complete continuous monitoring for any pupil deemed to be at risk of neglect. Monitoring forms can be found in staff shared files.

## 7. RESPONSE

In the event of a disclosure of child abuse, the member of school staff will:

- Listen to the child and accept what is said
- Record statements
- Explain what they have to do next and to whom they have to talk
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing to talk about it
- Report information, promptly, to the Designated Teacher

6.2 In the event of any member of staff having concerns other than through disclosure, he/she will;

- Record, confidentially, dates, times, frequency of certain behaviours
- Report and pass records to the Designated Teacher

## 7. REFERRAL

Procedures for reporting suspected or disclosed child abuse

7.1 The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Aisling Nic Giolla Bhéin. The Deputy Designated teacher for Child Protection is Anna Weed. In Naíscoil an Droichid the 'named' designated person is Dunla Flanagan.

The Board of Governors also has a designated officer who may be contacted in relation to reporting a suspected or disclosed case of child abuse – Designated officer is Alden Henderson

- 7.2 Upon receipt of a report of disclosure or other concerns, the Designated Teacher will act promptly.
- 7.3 The Designated Teacher will seek more available information. This may involve talking to the child, the parent/s, any other relevant staff members.
- 7.4 The Designated Teacher does not have the power to investigate allegations: this is a matter for Social Services or the PSNI
- 7.5 The Designated Teacher may seek advice from the Designated Officer in the EA.
- 7.6 The Designated Teacher, in consultation with the principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services or PSNI. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral without delay.
- 7.7 No decision to refer a case to either Social Services or the PSNI will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.
- 7.8 The Designated Teacher or Principal will inform the parent/s immediately of any referral to Social Services or PSNI, unless there are concerns that the parent may be the possible abuser.
- 7.9 The Designated Teacher will keep a written, confidential record of all the stages of the process.
- 7.10 Allegations against a member of staff will be dealt with under DENI circular 2015/13

Referral Procedures to be followed re: complaint or allegation about the conduct or activities of a member of staff towards a child:

A complaint or allegation may be made, in the context of child protection, about the conduct or activities of a member of staff of the school towards a child or children. If the complaint has not been made directly to the principal and he/she is not the subject of the complaint, it will be referred directly to him / her by the person to whom it was made.

To form a clearer view on the complaint, the 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.

*It is not, however, the responsibility of the school to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse, or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child's family or other carers.*

The school should not take action beyond that set out in the procedures established by their Education Authority and SBNI to be followed in handling cases of suspected abuse.

Having satisfied him / herself that a complaint has indeed been made, the principal should immediately

- inform the designated teacher if he / she is not the subject of the complaint), who will initiate the record of the complaint.
- consult, as a matter of urgency and in confidence, with the designated officer of the Education Authority, to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action; and
- consult the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Deciding what to do when such an allegation is made is a difficult and sensitive matter. The need to protect children must be paramount, but the need to protect members of staff against unfounded, but nonetheless potentially damaging, allegations must also be considered. Officers of the Education and Library Boards are experienced in dealing with such cases and are willing to give advice to any school facing these circumstances.

In the light of any advice taken, the principal (where he / she is not the subject of the complaint), in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of the Governors, will decide that:

- 1) the allegation is apparently without substance, and no further action is necessary; or
- 2) an immediate referral to the Social Services or the police is warranted; or

- 3) the allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedures.

7.11 If an allegation is made against the Designated Teacher, it will be referred to the principal or to the Deputy Designated Teacher, who will initiate the above process.

7.12 Where an allegation is deemed serious enough to warrant a referral to Social Services or PSNI, a risk assessment will be carried out, following which it may be necessary to remove the member of staff from direct contact duties or to place on precautionary suspension pending the outcome of investigations.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY, INFORMATION SHARING AND RECORD KEEPING**

- 8.1 A child will never be promised complete confidentiality. Where there are concerns that a child has been or is being abused, the matter must be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- 8.2 In the best interests of the child, information will be shared with other agency personnel working with the child. However, this will be on a 'need to know' basis. Information will be shared with other staff in school only on a 'need to know' basis.
- 8.3 All records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. The files only identify the children by their initials and date of birth. These records are kept separate from the child's individual report. Digital records are kept in a locked folder which only the safeguarding team have access to.
- 8.4 Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal child protection procedure or under a disciplinary procedure, a summary is entered on a Record of Abuse Complaints. This record, which will contain details of the complaint, will be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually.
- 8.5 In accordance with DE guidance we must consider and develop 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 Scoil an Droichid** are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher 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.

## **9. CODE OF CONDUCT**

Staff are aware of and adhere to the **Code of Conduct** which has been drawn up and agreed through internal processes

## **10. STAFF IN-SERVICE**

The school is committed to on-going in-service training for all staff. All staff (teaching and non-teaching) will receive general training on Child Protection and safeguarding awareness, Policy and Procedures, delivered in school by the Designated Teacher.

## **11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The school will review this policy annually, will evaluate its practical effectiveness and will update it in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary. When it is deemed advisable to introduce new regulations (e.g. use of mobile phones), parents and children will be consulted.

Useful contacts

EA Designated Officers for Child Protection  
Therese Moran, Sean Monaghan, Lorraine O'Neill  
Tel: 02895 985590  
Academy Street  
BT2 1NQ

Police service of Northern Ireland Tel: 999 in an emergency or  
101 for non-emergency

Childline 08001111  
NSPCC 0800 800 500

## **12. STAFF PROCEDURES IN CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING**

Based on the principle of the paramountcy of the welfare of the child, all staff (teaching and non-teaching) at Scoil an Droichid seek to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards pupils as part of their responsibility for pastoral care.

Staff trust that parents and pupils feel free to talk about any concerns and see school as a safe place. Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously if they seek help from a member of staff. However, staff cannot guarantee confidentiality if concerns are such that referral must be made to the appropriate agencies in order to safeguard the child's welfare.

Staff who observe injuries which appear to be non-accidental, or who are told anything significant by a child must report their concerns to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection Laura Mistéil or, in her absence, to Anna Weed our deputy designated officers in the school and Dunla Flanagan the Deputy Designated teacher in the Naíscail.

If staff have significant concerns about any pupil which **may** be symptomatic of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, they must discuss these with the Designated Child Protection Teacher who will contact the agencies responsible for investigation and Child Protection. No member of the school staff has authority to carry out investigations themselves, nor do they decide whether children have been abused. That is a matter for the specialist agencies.

All staff are aware of the procedures for keeping a confidential written record of any incidents, according to the requirements of DENI Circular 17/04 and 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools' (updated Setember 2019) folder.

Information provided by a parent who has contacted a member of staff about abusive behaviour in their family or another pupil's family, should be treated in the same manner. If a member of staff is unsure about a parent's account of an injury or challenging behaviour, they should still pass this information to the Designated teacher.

### **How a parent can raise a concern**

I have a concern about my / a child's safety.



I can talk to the class teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to Laura Mistéil  
(Designated teacher for Child Protection DT). or  
Anna Weed  
(Deputy Designated Officer DDT) or  
Dunla Flanagan  
(Deputy Designated Officer for Naíscail DDT)



If I am still concerned, I can talk / write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors (Mr Alden Henderson).



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman  
**Tel 0800 343 424**



At any time, I can talk to the Local children's Services GATEWAY (028 9050 7000)  
Or the PSNI Central Referral Unit (028 9025 9299)

**Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff.**

Keep a written record of complaint at all steps.

The complaint is about possible abuse by someone outside the school.



Tell the designated teacher.



Tell the Principal.

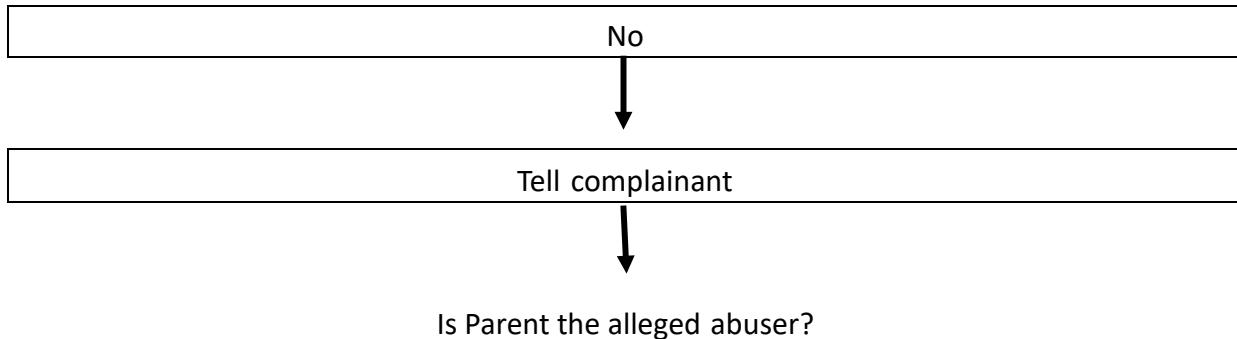


Is a referral necessary, or do doubts remain?



Don't know - consult Social Services / Board.

Yes – refer to Social Services / Police and tell ELB



If Yes – discuss with Social Services / Police how parent will be informed.

If no – tell parent.

**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:

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Role of staff member making the report: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Designated Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Foireann Cosaint an Pháiste Scoil an Droichid *Safeguarding and Child protection Team*

**Dunla Ní Fhlanagáin** – Múinteoir ainmnithe sa Naísccoil/*Designated Teacher in Naísccoil*

**Aisling Nic Giolla Bhéin** – Múinteoir ainmnithe/*Designated Teacher*

**Anna Weed** – Múinteoir leas-ainmnithe/*Deputy Designated Teacher*

**Alden Henderson** – *Child Protection officer on Board of Governors*



Seo Dunla



Seo Aisling



Seo Anna