

# **Donaghmore Primary School Child Protection Policy**

The health, safety and well-being of all our pupils are of paramount importance to the adults who work in this school. Our children have the right to protection regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in school.

This policy ensures that all staff in our school is clear about the actions necessary with regard to reporting a child protection issue/concern.

All actions and decisions taken by the staff follow the detailed guidance set out in the EA(Southern) Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 1999/10 Children (NI) Order Guidance, Regional Area Child Protection Committee Procedures and Safeguarding and Child Protection in School- A guide for Schools 2017.

## **School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team

- Designated Teacher – Mrs J Parks
- Deputy Designated Teacher/Principal – Mrs L Watt
- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs A Hayes
- Chair of the Board of Governors – Mrs Karen Rainey

## **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 role
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training)
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents
- Make referrals to Gateway/PSNI
- Liaise with the EA's Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Maintain records of all Child Protection concerns
- Report to Board of Governors regarding Child Protection

### **The Principal**

The Principal must ensure that:

- DENI 1999/10 is implemented within the school
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed
- That all staff receive Child Protection training
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed
- That Child Protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided
- That the school Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents are made aware that the updated policy is available on the school website.
- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

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

The Designated Governor will provide the child protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

- The role of the designated teachers
- The content of child protection policies
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report

## **The Chair of the Board of Governors**

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Child Protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the EA 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

## **Policy Aims**

- To raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse which may include neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse.
- To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues.
- To lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.
- To lay down correct procedures for vetting and selection of staff and volunteers.

## **General Principles**

The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in the 'UN Convention on Rights of the Child' (UK Agreement in 1991) and enshrined in the Children (NI) Order 1995. In particular, the principle we support is that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and 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 activity and underpin the guidance which we follow:

- The child or young person's welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a child or young person is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration.
- 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 or young person's interests must always come first.
- 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 which may affect their lives. Where a child or young person has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family.
- Actions taken to protect the child or young person (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child or young person unnecessary distress or further harm.
- Intervention should not deal with the child or young person in isolation; the child or young person'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 or young person's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race, and any special needs.
- Where it is necessary to protect the child or young person from further abuse, alternatives which do not involve moving the child or young person and which minimise disruption of the family should be explored.

All staff has been trained in recognising signs of abuse and the procedures to be followed when something is suspected. All staff adhere to the Code of Conduct, Child Protection, section 5 paragraph 69-72 DENI 99 Pastoral Care.

## **Procedures**

It is important that we work together to protect all our children from abuse and recognise that we have five main responsibilities in the area of Child Protection. These are in areas of prevention, recognition, response, referral and confidentiality/record keeping. Parents will be made aware of these responsibilities and procedures when their child begins school and updated if any changes occur.

### **1. Prevention**

In Donaghmore Primary School we will respect our pupils. The atmosphere within school is one that will encourage all children to do their best. We will provide opportunities that enable children to both take and make decisions. We will aim to create a listening environment that makes it easy for all to share their concerns and encourage values such as openness, honesty, tolerance, respect and caring for oneself and others.

Our teaching of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding as part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum will help to develop appropriate attitudes in our children and make them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We will also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.

Each year the PSNI will be invited to speak to children about personal safety and saying 'No' to strangers.

Circle time may be used as a strategy to encourage listening and promote self-esteem.

Parents/guardians of new children starting school will be made aware of the school's Child Protection policy and procedures. This may be done during a private meeting with the Principal or during the Primary one induction meeting. When a child is enrolled parents will be asked to complete a Child Protection Record on which they will indicate whether or not they give permission for

- their child to be included in photographs taken by members of staff (or by a photographer invited by the school) which may be displayed in school, on the school website and/or published in local newspapers.
- their child to be included in videos taken by members of staff which may be taken during class activities, on school trips or during special services or performances and which may be used on the school website.
- sticky plasters to be used on their child.

New parents will be told that spectators at school events are not permitted to take photographs/videos of children. Spectators will be informed of this at school events. A list of children on whom sticky plasters are not to be used, will be kept in the staffroom. Parents will be asked to contact the school if any of the information on the Child Protection Record changes. This Record will be kept in the child's personal folder.

All doors in school will be locked, unless manned by an adult, from 9am until all children have left the premises.

Parents are responsible for their own children prior to 9am and if wishing to leave them in school, should ensure they are left with the member of staff supervising at that time.

Parents should not be in school between 9am and 3pm unless they have made a prior appointment with a teacher. Children who arrive in school after 9am will be escorted to their classroom by a member of staff.

Parents will be made aware that children must be collected by an adult if they are required to leave school premises during the school day. They will only be permitted to leave if the parent has made direct verbal contact with a member of teaching staff or has made a request in writing. During registration time class teachers will inform Mrs Watt if permission has been given for a child to leave that day and at what time. Parents collecting children should press the button to the left of the main door and wait in the entrance hall for their child to be brought to them.

All visitors to school will be vetted using the Security system. The monitor is in the principal's classroom and she will decide if a person is to be admitted to the premises. If the principal is absent Mrs Parks or Mrs Bennett will be consulted regarding the admission of visitors. Children will be taught not to open the door even if they know the visitor well.

Individuals entering school for limited periods eg. to make deliveries or visitors for a meeting will not be left unsupervised with children.

Teachers will speak to the children each year about the dangers of choosing to leave the school grounds during the day. Parents will be asked to remind children that they should remain with teachers and supervisors

Pupils will not be allowed to have mobile phones in school although exceptions to this rule can be made through consultation with Mrs Watt.

Only teachers who are members of the General Teaching Council and on the N. Ireland Substitute Teachers' Register will be appointed as substitute cover. Non-teaching staff will be employed through the Education Authority and each will possess an enhanced Accessni Disclosure Certificate. Volunteers will not be used in school.

At least one Governor, but preferably two, will be trained on Child Protection for Recruitment.

## **2. Recognition**

We will use the following definitions for Child Abuse:

**Neglect** – the persistent or significant neglect of a child or young person, or the failure to protect a child or young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child or young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

**Physical** – physical injury to a child or young person, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

**Sexual** – the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities or any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.

**Emotional** – persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child or young person.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will not be tolerated in our school. All staff will be vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Please see Anti Bullying Policy.

**Child Sexual Exploitation** is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. Child exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.

## **Domestic Violence**

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

Symptoms which young people may display and which are indicators only include:

- Nervousness
- Low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nightmares / flashbacks
- Physiological – stress / nerves
- Stomach pain
- Bed wetting
- Immature / needy behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Aggression
- Internalising distress or withdrawal
- Truancy
- Alcohol and drugs
- Bullying

These symptoms can lead to a child/ young person being misdiagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive.

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

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.

**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.**

### **3. Response**

We will have procedures in school that have to be followed if a member of staff, parent or any other adult expresses a concern, or makes a complaint that involves the possible abuse of a child.

- **Staff**

If a member of staff has a concern about a child in school that concern has to be reported to Mrs Parks, who is referred to as the designated teacher. If Mrs Parks is absent, then the concern has to be reported to Mrs Watt, who is the deputy-designated teacher. The member of staff must act promptly and must not investigate the matter any further.

If a child makes a disclosure giving rise to concerns about possible abuse the member of staff will

1. Listen to the child or young person and accept what is said.
2. Record statements.
3. Explain what he/she have to do next and to whom he/she have to talk.
4. Reassure the child or young person he/she have done the right thing to talk about it.
5. Refer information to Mrs Parks or to Mrs Watt in her absence.

- **Parent or any other adult**

Parents or any other adults are encouraged to contact the PSNI or Social Services if they think a child may be being abused. If they report the matter to Mrs Watt she will pass on the information to the appropriate authorities including details of how the information was received.

The procedures outlined in the Department of Education Child Protection guidelines will be followed. DENI 99/10 Fig 1.

1. The school may liaise with Social Services or the Board's Designated Officers for Child Protection to seek clarification or advice, Gateway Team 0800 7837745. The school will pass on concerns to the Southern Health and Social Services Trust Child Care Team. The school has no choice in this. If a child appears to be at risk, the school has a legal obligation to pass information on, whether it turns out to be true or not. Under no circumstance will any accusation be made against, about or to any person; nor will any language be used that would give a child, parent or guardian any cause for anxiety.
2. The complainant will be informed.
3. If the parent is not the alleged abuser then he/she will be informed.
4. If the parent is the alleged abuser then discussions will follow with Social Services and the PSNI to determine how the parent will be informed. Mrs Watt will generally not be involved at this stage.

If a child alleges abuse in the form of a disclosure then the school is under a legal obligation to contact Social Services following the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education.

### **Allegations against a Member of Staff**

Members of staff and parents can raise a complaint about a member of staff by writing to Mrs Watt who will promptly contact the chairman of the Board of Governors.

Members of staff and parents can raise a complaint about the Principal by writing to Mrs Parks who will inform the chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services.

### **Records**

We will regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and will treat this accordingly. We will only pass information on to appropriate persons. Any records kept in school will be stored in a non-alphabetic storage system and are exempt from Data-protection requirements. Records will only identify the child by their initials and date of birth. The records will be kept in a separate file away from any other information held about the child.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a summary will be entered on a Record of Abuse Complaints. This entry will contain details of the complaint and will be made available to the Board of Governors annually.

### **Case Conferences**

Staff will work closely with statutory agencies and will attend case conferences as required. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff will be expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held under statutory guidelines.

### **Code of Conduct**

Staff is aware of and adheres to the Code of Conduct which has been drawn up and agreed through Teachers' Negotiating Machinery and the EA Code of Conduct for its staff.

### **Physical Restraint**

There may be times when adults in our school, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children. The adult involved in any such incident will report this to Mrs Watt immediately and write a report of the incident which will be kept in school.

### **Staff In-Service Training**

The school is committed to on-going in-service training for staff. Each members of staff will receive general training on Policy and Procedures and each will have a copy of this policy. The designated teacher and the deputy designated teacher will receive more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All new staff members will receive Child Protection awareness training at induction.

### **Review**

This policy will be updated and reviewed annually or sooner if necessary in light of further guidance and legislation.

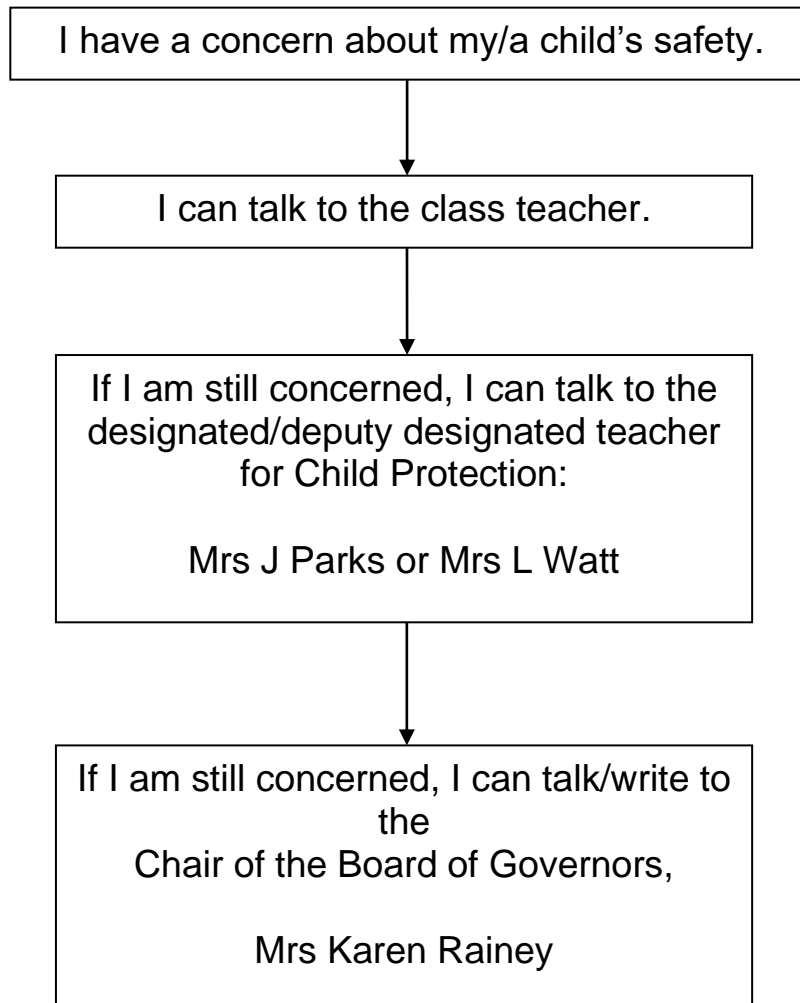
### **Other Relevant Policies**

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:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Special Educational Needs
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E Safety
- Intimate Care

**These policies are available on the school website**

## How a Parent can make a Complaint



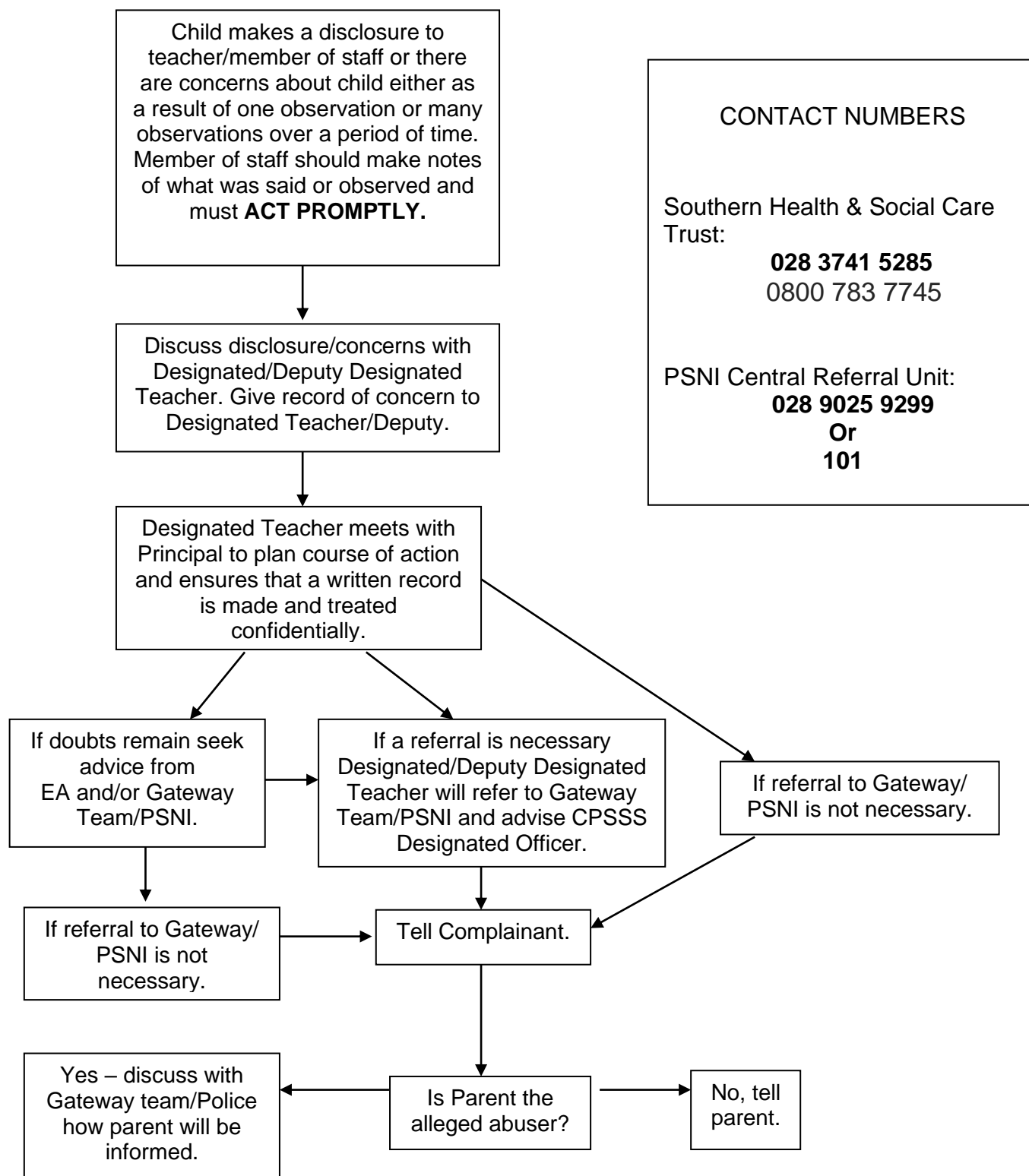
At any time a parent can talk to a Social Worker at the Gateway Team

**Tel: 0800 7837745** {Free Phone from a Landline}

Or can contact the PSNI Central Referral Unit:  
028 90259299

**Tel: 101** extension 30299

**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

