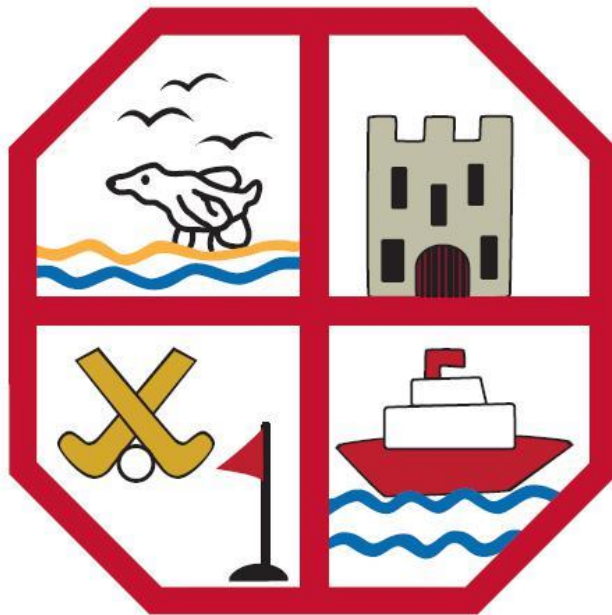


# St Joseph's Primary School



## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

May 2021



## ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, STRANGFORD



### CHILD PROTECTION

We in St Joseph's School have a suite of policies, which safeguard our children. Our Child Protection Policy is central to this. We have a responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we carry out this duty through our pastoral care programme. We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment that values individuals for their unique talents and abilities and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. We seek to protect our pupils by educating them about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of our school have agreed a **Code of Conduct (Appendix A)** for how we behave towards our pupils. This code is set out in the Appendix to this policy statement.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must focus on the welfare and safety of the child, and the interest of each child is our paramount consideration. Suspected child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we acknowledge that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

#### **What is child abuse?**

##### **Types of Abuse**

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and on-going information sharing is key between professionals.

**Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.**

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

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

**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.

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

**Exploitation**<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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

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## Specific Types of Abuse

### Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify. Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them

### Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. Any child under the age of 18 can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited. Young males can also be victims of CSE. CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males. While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, **the majority of CSE victims are living at home.**

### Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed and established school procedures. In the UK, FGM has been a specific criminal offence since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Serious Crime Act 2015 further strengthened the law on FGM. FGM is a complex issue with many men and women from practising communities considering it to be normal to protect their cultural identity. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of five and eight, putting children in this age bracket at highest risk.

### Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately. There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with support needs, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

## Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- The perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

- Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention

## 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 January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

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

We have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and should be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like. Internet safety is integrated into our online safety policy, ICT code of practice, anti-bullying policies and PDMU lessons in line with the Preventative Curriculum.

## 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:

### **Sexting between individuals in a relationship**

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.

### **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**. If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress', the child protection procedures should be followed.

## **Dealing with Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**

### **Children with a Disability**

Children and young people with disabilities (ie any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition<sup>15</sup>) may be more vulnerable to abuse and individuals and organisations working with children with disabilities should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues. Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult. Staff and volunteers working with children should receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early, to allow preventative action to be taken.

Physical contact may be a necessary part of teaching some pupils with special educational needs, for example visually impaired children, or those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. We inform staff, parents and pupils about their Code of Conduct and Intimate Care Policy.

### **Children with limited fluency in English**

As with children with a special educational need, children who are not fluent in English should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills, especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred. Designated teachers should work with their SEN co-ordinators along with school staff with responsibility for newcomer pupils, seeking advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a child may have. All schools should try to create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

### **Gender Identity Issues/Sexual Orientation (see RSE policy)**

We strive to provide a happy environment where all young people feel safe and secure. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Our Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) covers issues relating to relationships and sexuality, including those affecting LGB&T children and young people.

### **Residential Situations**

In St. Joseph's we ensure the welfare of their pupils on residential trips carrying out relevant risk assessments before and during the trip.

## **SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

The roles and responsibilities of key agencies, organisations and professionals specifically relating to safeguarding children and young people are outlined in this section.

Recent high profile cases have shone the spotlight on domestic violence as a key consideration in the safeguarding of our children. Whilst domestic violence may not in itself impact physically or directly on a child, staff at St. Joseph's should always relay any fears that they may have to the designated teacher. Witness to violent behaviour of any sort poses danger of lasting psychological and emotional damage as well as presenting a real risk of actual or threatened violence towards a vulnerable child.

Whilst a child's own behaviour, which places them at risk to themselves, may not necessarily constitute abuse in our classic understanding of child protection, they most certainly are of a safeguarding nature and staff should always report injuries which appear self inflicted to Mrs McDermott. Self-harming behaviour can be indicative of other underlying issues and form part of a larger picture. Advice should always be sought from relevant external sources e.g. EA designated advisors Colum Boal or Alison Casey or directly to 'Gateway' services (South Eastern Team).

Bullying is also a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St Joseph's. All staff are 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. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the designated teacher or Mrs Fitzsimons, and action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher, or Mrs Fitzsimons within one week of making the complaint. An update on the investigation which has been carried out so far and the action being taken will be given to the parent.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case but may include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

### **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.

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 safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It 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 the online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

### **The Preventative Curriculum**

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. In recent years, the use of "keeping safe messages" and the term "preventative curriculum" have become more widely used to denote the proactive promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils within and across the broader school community. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional, and health issues, developing the confidence, resiliencies and coping skills of pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing certain difficulties.

Schools are well-placed to teach pupils how to develop healthy relationships, and to make informed choices in their lives so that they can protect themselves. In St. Joseph's the personal development curriculum and wellbeing of pupils has a high priority in the school development plan (2018-2021) and keeping safe messages are embedded throughout the school. The teachers delivering the programme are highly skilled in both pastoral care and personal development and there are effective links across the wider curriculum. These schools consult

extensively with parents, pupils and community organisations and external providers are carefully selected and evaluated prior to delivering their programmes in the school. We have a PDMU co-ordinator appointed from September 2018 and work with various groups and organisations to support our Preventative Curriculum e.g. ALPS NI promoting positive well-being. We have also taken on the 'Daily Mile' to help encourage good health and wellbeing.

The Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum is covered at a primary level within the 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' (PDMU) area of learning. We also cover elements of RSE through the Religious Education Programme taught throughout the school 'Grow in Love'. We also teach the programme 'Wonder of My Being' programme on a rolling cycle annually which covers RSE in a 6-8wk block for each class in line with our RSE policy.

At St. Joseph's we include the preventative curriculum throughout our World Around Us curriculum where possible e.g visits to the pharmacy (drugs education), school nurse and dental nurse visits, NSPCC talks and regular reference to relevant issues when appropriate in weekly assemblies.

#### **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse** (within the Preventative Curriculum)

While it is important that those at risk are identified and interventions are put in place, it is equally important that children and young people are provided with information and skills in building healthy behaviours and relationships. In St. Joseph's we provide children with the opportunity to develop good mental health and emotional resilience to enable them to identify abuse and exercise prevention skills.

The statutory curriculum provides the opportunity for specific attention to be given to a pupil's emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships and the development of a moral thinking and value system. It also offers a vehicle for exploring with children and young people sensitive issues such as domestic violence and sexual abuse in an age appropriate way and appropriate protective behaviours.

Teachers or other school staff who suspect that a pupil is a victim of domestic violence or sexual abuse should raise their concerns with the designated teacher (Mrs McDermott). The procedures to be followed are the same as for any other type of abuse.



**Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

(See Appendix D)

**The designated teacher for child protection in St. Joseph’s Primary School is Mrs McDermott. In her absence Mrs Fitzsimons, Principal will assume responsibility for child protection matters.**

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other members of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly.**

He/she should never investigate but should record a written factual account as told by the child using their words. Children can be asked to repeat what they say but leading questions should never be asked as this may prejudice any further investigation. Report these concerns to Mrs McDermott immediately using the school’s agreed pro-forma. Staff may wish to discuss any matter with her if they are unsure or require further Child Protection guidance.

Mrs McDermott will ensure that any written record is stored in a locked cabinet and will ensure it remains in its original state and is neither copied or altered.

Mrs McDermott will decide whether in the best interest of the child for the matter to be referred to Social Services. If there are obvious concerns that the child may be at risk the school is obliged to make a referral. Where there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will not be informed but the case reported directly to Social Services. Otherwise parents should be informed if a UNOCINI referral is being made.

Mrs McDermott may seek clarification or advice and consult with CCMS’s Designated Officer, EA SER Child Protection Advisory Team or the Gateway Duty Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.

**The safeguarding of the child is paramount.**

If a UNOCINI is completed this correspondence will be sent to the appropriate body in an envelope marked (‘PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION’)

## **Complaints against staff**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff Mrs McDermott or Mrs Fitzsimons must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about Mrs McDermott – see below).

The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately. The Board of Governors may remove the staff member from duties, which involves direct contact with pupils, and may suspend them from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services.

If a complaint is made against Mrs McDermott, Mrs Fitzsimons must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse he/she should speak to Mrs McDermott.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held ‘in confidence’. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However only those need to know will be told.

## **ANTI-BULLYING: REMINDERS**

The Legal Definition of bullying for NI as outlined in the 2016 Act is as follows:

Bullying includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of –

- = Any verbal, written or electronic communication
- = Any other act (including omission), or
- = Any combination of those,

by a pupil or group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

Non-teaching staff are often well placed to note instances of bullying-type behaviour. Bullying behaviour is best prevented by early intervention. Staff noting behaviour of this type should report immediately of staff on duty or the Principal.

## **THANKS**

Helping to create a safe, healthy environment is very much a co-operative effort. The contribution of all members of staff to creating the kind of ethos which exists is acknowledged and very much appreciated.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A** – Code of Conduct Staff and volunteers

**Appendix B** – Child Protection Reminder for staff

**Appendix C** – Guidelines for self-protection for staff

**Appendix D** – Procedure for reporting a disclosure by a child (Posters displayed around school)

**Appendix E** – Child Protection Abbreviated Policy for Parents

**Appendix F** – Procedure for Parents to report a Child Protection concern (Posters displayed around school)

**Appendix G** – Safe Guarding Team Posters



# Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools



Date Ratified by BOG: May 2019

Review Date: May 2022

## Objective, Scope and Principles

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

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

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

### 1. Setting an Example

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

### 2. Safeguarding Pupils/Students

- 2.1 All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher – Mrs McDermott (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher Mrs Fitzsimons (DDT) for Child Protection).
- 2.3 The school's DT is Mrs McDermott (Key Stage 2 Teacher) and the DDT is Mrs Fitzsimons (Principal/ Primary 3 Teacher).
- 2.4 All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents and other relevant school policies eg On-line safety and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.
- 2.5 All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.

2.6 All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.

2.7 All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

### **3. Relationships with Students**

3.1 All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in *Appendix 1* of this document.

3.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

### **4. Pupil/Student Development**

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

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

### **5. Honesty and Integrity**

5.1 All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Principal with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

### **6. Conduct Outside of Work**

6.1 All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.

6.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual’s work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

### **7. Online safety and Internet Use**

7.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools’ Online safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

7.2 Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

- 7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.
- 7.4 Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students. If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.
- 7.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

## **8. Confidentiality**

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

## **9. Dress and Appearance**

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

## **10. Disciplinary Action**

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

## **11. Compliance**

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

**Confirmation of Compliance**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Post Held \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration**

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

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Mrs McDermott or Mrs Fitzsimons.**

**CHILD PROTECTION REMINDER FOR STAFF**  
(Appendix B)

1. The attention of staff is drawn to the school Policy and Procedures on Child Protection (revised August 2015). This contains information on categories of child abuse (sexual, physical, neglect and emotional). It provides guidance on recognising signs of abuse and on responding in the event of a pupil disclosing details. The school Child Protection Policy should be considered along with the DENI publication ‘Pastoral Care in Schools; child protection’ as well as other safeguarding related school policies such as Pastoral Care, anti-bullying and behaviour policy.
2. Teachers have a responsibility to:
  - Take steps to ensure that young people in their care are protected from harm
  - Be alert for signs of abuse or neglect
  - Report instances – or suspicions – of abuse, happening inside or outside school
  - Ensure that their own professional conduct is prudent and leaves no ground for misinterpretation in relation to child protection
3. The policy offers guidance to staff in responding to a pupil disclosing information about an instance – possible instance – of child abuse.
  - A Listen and accept information. Avoid over re-action, blame, or criticism
  - B Check understanding with pupil of what happened through active listening
  - C Do not promise confidentiality. You have a responsibility to Report
  - D Avoid interrogation or investigation – do not ask leading question!
  - E Keep written notes (pro forma in staffroom)
4. Procedures to note:
  - 1 Follow guidelines, as recommended above
  - 2 Contact Designated Teacher (Mrs McDermott) or Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Fitzsimons)
  - 3 Consider need for immediate safeguarding of child
  - 4 Provide written report
- 5 All concerns and / or reports will be followed-up. Principal will decide if referral to other agencies is necessary.
- 6 It is incumbent on each member of staff to be familiar with the content of the school’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Copies are available from Principal. The DENI document ‘ Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland’ (April’17) is also available in school.



**ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL  
STRANGFORD  
(Appendix C)**

<b>GUIDELINES FOR SELF - PROTECTION</b>
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1. In the event of injury to a child, ensure that it is recorded in the incident book and have it witnessed by another adult.
2. Keep records of any allegations a child makes against you or other staff including – “you’re always picking on me”, to “you hit me”, or other comments such as “don’t touch me”. Keep records of dates and times. Get another adult to witness the allegation, if possible.
3. If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be totally innocent, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage and then say the child instigated it.
4. If you take children on journeys, always have two along. If it is an overnight trip, always check the rooms in pairs.
5. Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with one child away from other people. If it is a one-to-one, make sure the door is open. Tell another member of staff if you are going to see a child on your own.
6. If you are in a holiday or residential setting never, under any circumstances, take a child into your room.
7. Do give firm guidelines on sexually inappropriate behaviour to the child. Explain that the behaviour is unacceptable and could get the child into difficulty, but do not make the child feel guilty. The behaviour may be an imitation of the abuse the child has suffered and is not the child’s fault.
8. If you are in a care situation with children with special needs, try to have another person present when changing nappies or clothing or bathing a child.
9. Never do something of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms, etc., or any other activity that could be misconstrued (see intimate care policy).
10. Do not go into the toilet alone with children if possible.
11. If you work with young children or children with special needs who sit on your lap, get a ‘lap cushion’ which they can sit on.

12. Be careful of extended hugs from children. This might be particularly relevant to those working with children with special needs. This guideline is important not only for your protection, but for the children as well.
13. All members of staff should carry identification when on journeys with children.
14. If you must physically restrain a child for any reason be aware that it could be misinterpreted as assault.
15. Do not make sexually suggestive comments about a child even in jest.
16. Never keep suspicions of abuse of inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempted cover-up, you could be implicated in the silence.
17. Ensure that you have the opportunity to discuss your own feelings, if possible, with other members of staff.

### THANKS

Helping to create a safe, healthy environment is very much a co-operative effort. The contribution of all members of staff to creating the kind of ethos which exists in St Joseph's is acknowledged and very much appreciated.