

School

AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Approved By Board of Governors –
March 2017

Signed

: _____

—

(Chair of Governors)



Review Date	Amendment

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Child Protection Policy & Procedures

Introduction

The School subscribes to the principles and guidelines set out in the DENI document 'Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection' (1999), 'The Area Child Protection Committee, Regional Policy and Procedures' (2005) and DHSSPS 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (2016), which are deemed to be incorporated herein. The Policy and Appendices set out below are drawn substantially from these documents, the full text of which is freely available within the School and accessible by every member of staff. All members of staff have been issued with a copy of this Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Safeguarding Policy

We in Strathearn School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. We work to establish an inclusive community where all pupils and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual or gender orientation, appearance and personal capability. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn 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 also have adopted a Code of Conduct for our behaviour towards pupils. This Code is set out in a separate document: *Strathearn School - Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers*.

The purpose of the following procedures on Safeguarding and 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 welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration** of all caring adults. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our School, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

Signed _____ (Chairman) _____ (Principal)
Date _____

STRATHEARN SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM 2016-17

Chairman of Board of Governors:	Mrs P Stewart
Designated Governor for Child Protection:	Mrs R Bailie
Principal:	Mrs N Connery
Designated Teacher (DT):	Mrs L Myers
Deputy Designated Teachers (DDT):	Mrs A McCracken
	Mrs K Quinn
	Mrs N Connery
	Mr A Anderson
	Miss J Stewart

If you suspect a pupil might be at risk and in the absence of the DT or DDTs or any other member of staff from whom you could take advice, you should contact:

Belfast Gateway Service:

Emergency 'Out of Hours' number: **028 95049999**

Additional Contacts & Personnel

Vice Chairmen of Board:	Mr N McKeown, Mr P White
Secretary to the Board:	Mrs Ann Flannigan
Child Protection Panel:	Mrs Myers, Mrs N Connery, Mrs R Bailie
EA Designated Officers:	Ms Therese Moran Ms Christine Graham Mr Sean Monaghan Ms Patricia O'Hare Ms Lorraine O'Neill
(028 90) 564000	

If you want to contact a Health and Social Services Care Trust about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person then you should contact the Trust in which the pupil resides. The following cover the majority of the School's pupils:-

Trusts:

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.	028 9050 7000 (Office Hours)
(Gateway Service)	028 95049999 (Emergency, out of hours)

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	0300 1000 300 (Office Hours)
(Gateway Service)	028 95049999 (Emergency, out of hours)

Any person may make contact with the Chairman or Vice Chairmen of the Board of Governors through the Secretary to the Board, Mrs Ann Flannigan. The School phone number is **(028) 9047 1595** and all contacts will be dealt with in a strictly confidential manner.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and it also occurs in agencies and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life and all occupations and professions. The following is an extract from “Co-operating to Protect Children”:

“Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e., a person who has actual custody of a child such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both.

The following 4 categories of child abuse are defined by The Area Child Protection Committee, Regional Policy and Procedures (ACPC 2005) and DHSSPS ‘Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland’ (2016):

1. **Neglect**: the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to cause significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision.
2. **Physical abuse**: the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.
3. **Sexual abuse**: the forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The sexual activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
4. **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.

In March 2016, DHSSPSNI identified a new type of abuse – **exploitation**. It 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 may be sexual in nature. Children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

Bullying (including Cyberbullying) is also a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is the subject of a separate School policy and procedural document (Anti-Bullying Policy 2014, currently under review).

The Role of All Staff

All staff who work in Strathearn, both teaching and non-teaching, and any volunteers accepted to work in the school need to know:

- how to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse;
- what the School's Child Protection procedures are, and, in particular, what the reporting procedures are;
- how to talk to children about whom there are concerns in an appropriate way, and how to record the information they have acquired; and
- who the Designated Teacher is and who will carry out her responsibilities if she is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint.

Signs and Symptoms of Possible Abuse

Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff - especially teachers, but also non-teaching staff, including supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary staff - are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances, or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse. For example:

- bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities, or children with special educational needs are helped with toileting;
- possible indicators or physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition, and of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention-seeking, may be noticeable;
- sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive (see Appendix B for further examples). Also, it must be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described above.

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

Pupil Interviews and Record Keeping

If a complaint of abuse arises, it is important that the adult takes the situation seriously and responds using the advice below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Listen to the pupil sensitively and carefully. Support the child for telling you. ✓ Give reassurance but tactfully explain you will have to tell someone else, but only those who need to know. ✓ Say, for example, "Tell me what happened." ✓ If possible establish what happened, where it happened, when it happened and who did it. ✓ Immediately afterwards make notes especially actual words used. ✓ Immediately afterwards talk to the Designated Teacher who will inform the Principal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Do not ask leading questions which can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the pupil's mind × Do not give a promise of confidentiality – it cannot be kept. × Do not make suggestions, for example, "Did they do X to you?" × Do not interrogate and do not dwell too much on the alleged perpetrator. × Do not write as the pupil talks to you. Give your whole attention to the pupil. × Any information received from the child should be held in strict confidence. |
|---|---|

It is important that detailed and factual records are kept of all suspected or disclosed cases of possible child abuse.

A sample proforma (as in Appendix D) is readily available in the staffroom, from reception or from our website www.strathearn.org.uk (under Parental Information – School Policies). Reports, including rough notes, shall be given to the Designated Teacher who will hold them securely with access available only to the members of the Child Protection Panel.

Those submitting a report should keep a record of the date, time and to whom the record was passed. **They should not keep copies of any such report.**

Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse

If, at anytime, a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff that 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.**

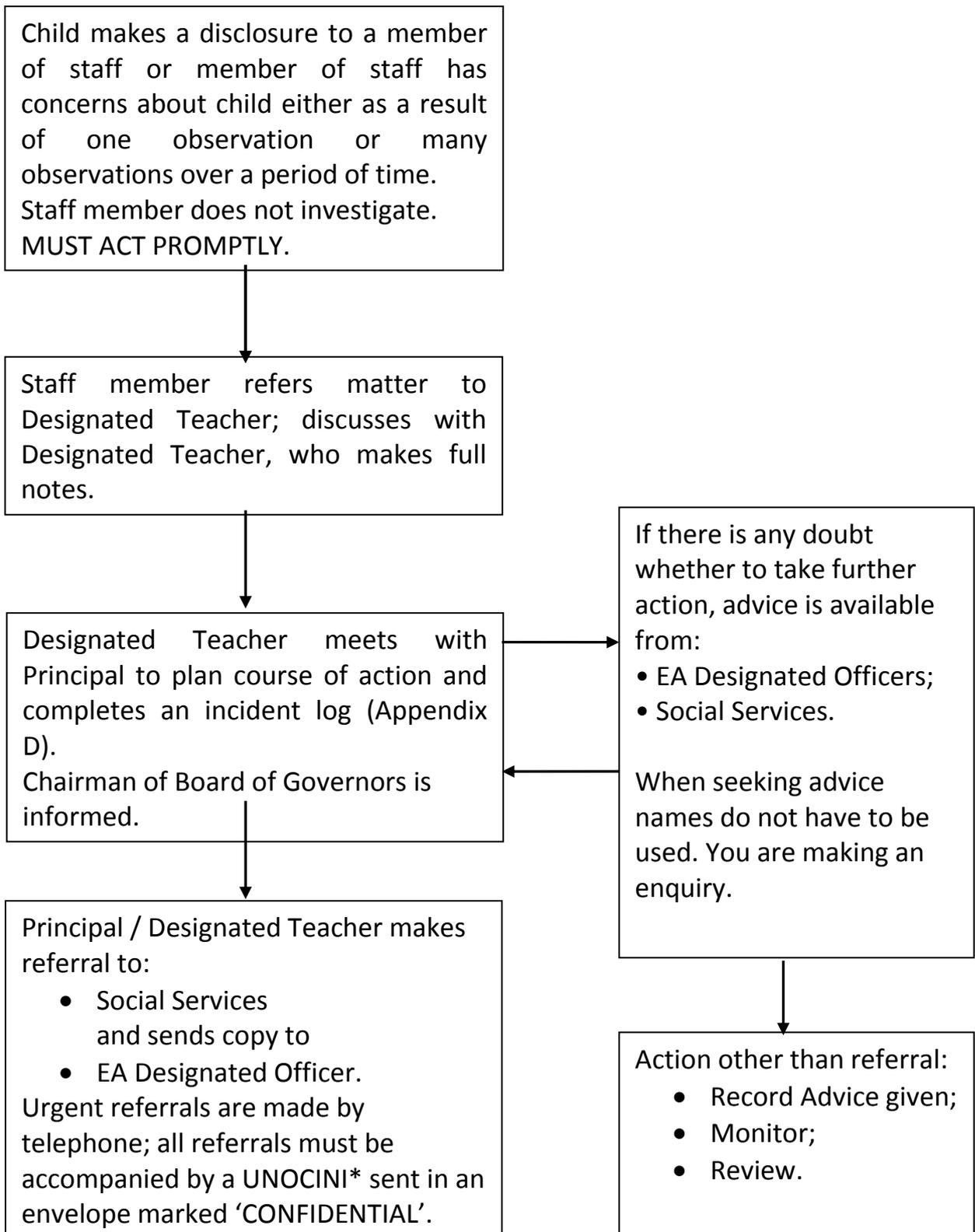
- He/she should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.
- If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the Designated Teacher.
- 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. The informant should be advised accordingly, but assured that only those who need to know will be told.
- The Designated Teacher will discuss any concerns about the safety of the pupil with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, including whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services and to ensure that a written record is made. The Chairman of the Board ('The Chairman') is consulted if required and is kept informed of the course of action taken. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the School is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
- The Principal / Designated Teacher / Chairman may seek clarification or advice and consult with one of the Belfast Area Education Authority Designated Officers or a 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 safety of the child is our first priority.
- Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Designated Teacher / Principal will inform the
 - Social Services and
 - the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection

This may be done initially by telephone, if urgent, and in writing by means of a UNOCINI (*Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland*), sent in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL'.

- The above procedures will apply unless the complaint is against the Designated Teacher, her Deputy, the Principal, or the Chairman, in which case the remaining members of the Child Protection Panel will be informed and take the necessary action.

The Chairman shall ensure that the application of the Policy is monitored, that confidential records are maintained, and that regular reports are made to the Board of Governors.

Procedure for Reporting an Incident of Child Abuse



*Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland

Appendix A

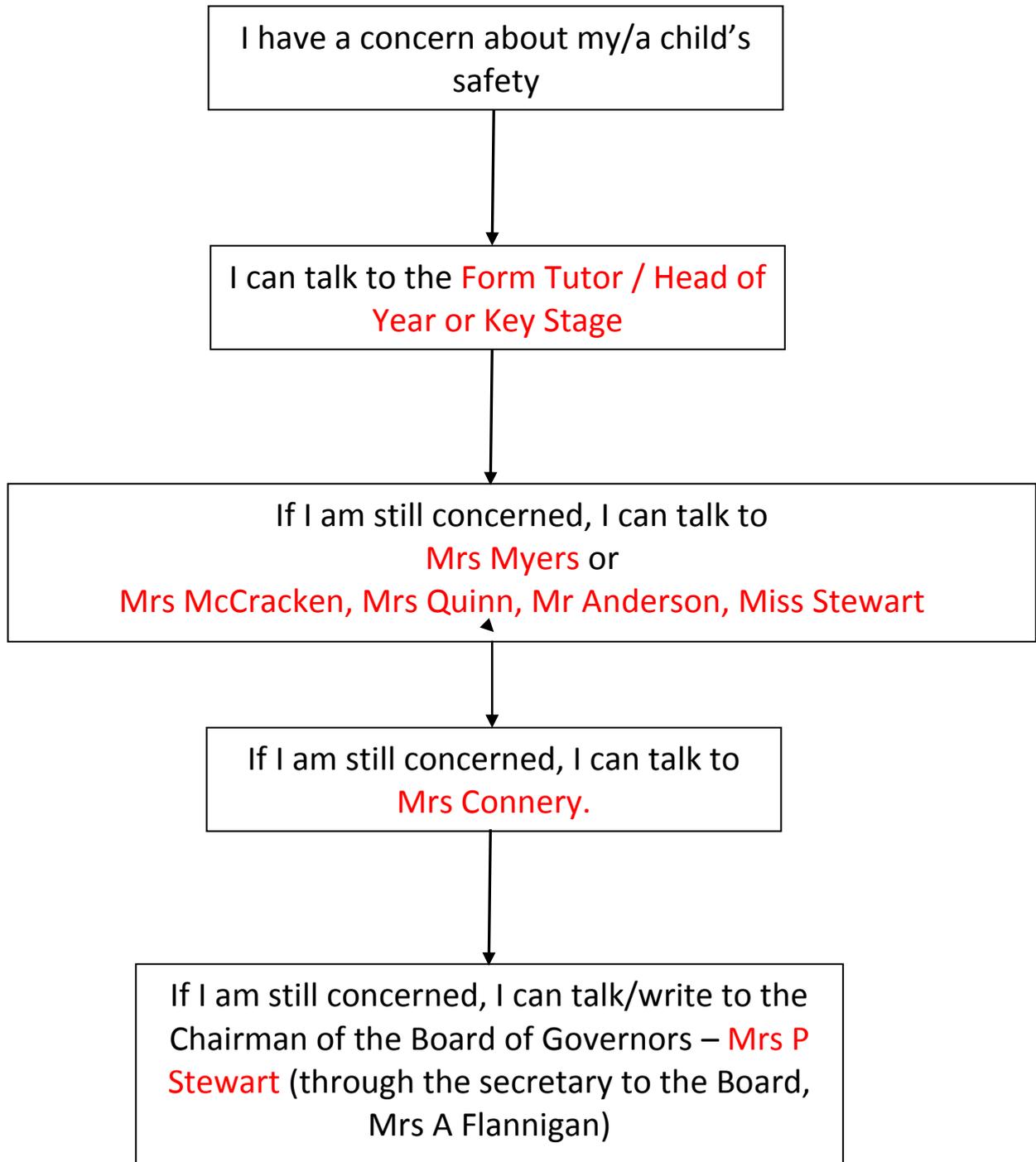
Partnership with Parents

1. The School will help parents to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the children and young people in its charge. This is an aspect of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents. Parents will be made aware, through the School prospectus, website, parents' meetings or by letter, of the School's child protection arrangements, within its pastoral care policy, and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child. Parents will be reminded, at least annually, of the importance of notifying the School when someone other than the parent or usual carer will be picking the child up from School.
2. If a case of suspected abuse is referred to the investigative agencies, the School will continue to inform parents of the educational progress of the child.

How a parent can make a complaint about possible child abuse

3. Parents also need to know how they can make a complaint, and the recourse that they have if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The School will include in its prospectus a summary of its arrangements for parents to make known to staff any concerns they may have about the safety of their (or another) child: often, this will be by speaking directly to the Principal, but other arrangements, such as informing the Designated Teacher, the Deputy Designated Teacher, Form Tutor or Head of Year or Key Stage may also be appropriate. The names of at least two people within the school whom parents may contact will always be given. The statement will also make clear what will happen when any such concerns or complaints are reported, indicating:
 - which members of staff or other professionals will need to be informed;
 - who will report back to the parents on the progress and outcome of their complaint, and (approximately) by when; and
 - what further avenues are open to them to pursue their complaint if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome and how they may do this. If the Principal has already been involved, this will normally involve referring their complaint onward to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
4. As well as inclusion in the prospectus, the School will make these arrangements known directly to the parents annually.

How a parent can express a concern



Appendix B

Signs and symptoms of possible abuse

Physical Abuse – Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries

Physical Abuse – Behavioural Indicators

- Self-destructive behaviours
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body

Neglect – Physical Indicators

- Constant hunger
- Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Emaciation / distended stomach
- Constant tiredness

Neglect – Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Lack of social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self-esteem

Signs and symptoms of possible abuse (continued)

Emotional Abuse – Physical Indicators

- Sudden speech disorders
- Signs of mutilation
- Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)
- Wetting and/or soiling
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relationships

Emotional Abuse – Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Reluctance for parental liaison
- Fear of new situations
- Chronic runaway
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

Sexual Abuse – Physical Indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Unexplained pregnancies

Sexual Abuse – Behavioural Indicators

- Be chronically depressed
- Inappropriately seductive or precocious
- Sexually explicit language
- Low self-esteem, self de-valuation, lack of confidence
- Recurring nightmares / fear of the dark
- Outbursts of anger / hysteria
- Overly protective to siblings

Appendix C

The use of images of pupils

The Data Protection Act (DPA) and Human Rights Legislation require that the school take care in the use of photographs, videos and web cams in the school environment.

- All photographs held on file (both electronic and paper) of the pupils exist in accordance with the DPA.
- Photographs and videos of the pupils taken during the year to promote the school for publicity use in the prospectus or in other printed material will be subject to consent by the parents. Images being used will portray the pupils appropriately attired.
- Digital video recordings may be made at various functions or of class activities. These can help encourage creativity, motivate and enthuse pupils and improve communication, team-working skills and may be used for assessment purposes.
- Photographs of school staff will only be used with the consent of that staff member.
- Photographs taken for the purpose of journalism are exempt from the DPA and on all occasions the pupils will be aware that their photograph may be used.
- Photographs or film footage by parents or guardians of their children at school events is permitted under an exemption in the DPA.
- The use of camera phones or the internet to send offensive pictures to other pupils is not permitted and will be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Any incident of improper use of photographs should be reported to the Designated Teacher (Mrs Myers) immediately.



To Parents of All Pupils

Dear Parent

Re: The storage and use of visual images.

You will have no doubt noticed how in Strathearn we are delighted to celebrate the activities and achievements of our pupils in many ways and not least through photographs and video. On our website: www.strathearn.org.uk, in classrooms and corridors, and in publications, we display photographic records from a wide range of activities including; class presentations, form charity events, sporting activities or success of any nature. For your daughter to be involved we need to have your consent and I would ask you to read the following information and return the completed Consent Form to your daughter's form tutor within the first week of term.

Background

In line with our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (available at reception or on our website) we issue to all new pupils Appendix C, which deals with the storage and use of visual images. Through the policy we wish to take a pragmatic approach and allow the pupils and School to celebrate success and give credit and recognition for achievement.

Below is some background information to the policy.

A school photograph is taken in Form 1, Form 4 and Form 6, and a copy of this is held on file (both electronic and paper) in accordance with the Data Protection Act. A copy is also available for you to purchase. Other official photographs include a Form Class photo and membership of any music groups or sports teams.

In addition to 'official' photographs, photographs and video may be taken at various times throughout the year, for example, pupils putting on class dramas or recording sporting or musical events.

On each occasion the pupils will be aware why video or photographs are being taken and if for publication in newspapers, the papers in which they may appear. We also use photographs and/or video recordings in our school magazine and prospectus, on Open Morning and on other public occasions to recognise and enjoy the work of the pupils. The celebration of the success of our pupils is very natural and the girls are delighted to see video or photographs of themselves used in this way.

I hope you find this useful with regard to images taken by the school as well as any you may wish to take yourself. If you have any questions please do contact Mrs Myers (VP Pastoral) or myself.

Yours sincerely

N Connery

Principal



Consent Form

Conditions for Using Images of Pupils

Name of Pupil: _____ Form _____

Having read the School's policy on 'The use of images of pupils'

1. I give consent for my daughter's image to be used in the school prospectus and other printed material such as the school magazine in order to record and celebrate her success.

Yes / No

2. I give consent for my daughter's image to be used on the school website or video recordings which may be used to record and celebrate occasions in the school year. This may also include recordings taken for assessment and teaching purposes

Yes / No

3. I give consent for my daughter's photograph to appear in the media including newspapers.

Yes / No

Parent/Guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this to your daughter's Form Tutor

Appendix D

STRATHEARN SCHOOL - INCIDENT LOG

Date of incident Person reporting

Time of incident Relationship to School

Place of incident

Details of incident:

continue overleaf if necessary

Person completing report (signature) Date:

Referred to On date

Action taken:

Signature: Date:

Note to Staff: Please complete this report and hand it into the Designated Teacher or the Principal.

Signed: Date: Recorded Yes/No
L Myers / N Connery