Integrated College Dungannon

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Reviewed by Vice Principal for Pastoral Care: February 2026

Agreed by Governors: 18th February 2026

1. CHILD PROTECTION ETHOS

We in Integrated College Dungannon have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all the students in our care. We will carry out this duty through our student-centred ethos and our various-policies and procedures which aim to provide by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, gender and sexual orientation. All our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and nonteaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our College. This policy considers the most recent safeguarding advice issued to Colleges through circulars 2016/20 Child Protection: Recording Keeping in Schools and 2017/04 Safeguarding & Child Protection advice for Schools.

Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, "Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (DHSSPSNI, 2017 and 2024), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" Circular 2017/04 (and subsequent amendments) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

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

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount;
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard;
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together;
- Partnership;
- Prevention;
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- Protection; and
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

Adult Safeguarding

For further information see: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protection-partnership-key-document

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage

their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Maximising the student's choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights.
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.
- We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over.

2. OTHER RELATED POLICIES

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

- Safe Handling
- Addressing Bullying
- Intimate Care
- Educational Visits
- Positive Behaviour for Learning
- Attendance for Students
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Whistleblowing
- Special Educational Needs
- Health and Safety
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Critical Incidents
- Data Protection and GDPR
- Drugs
- RSE

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the College office.

3. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Board of Governors (BoG) must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher(s) are appointed in their school
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- Relevant safeguarding information and guidance is disseminated to all staff and governors with the opportunity to discuss requirements and impact on roles and responsibilities.
- The College has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of this along with the complaints procedure every two years.
- The College has an Addressing-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. See the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.
- The College ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 3 years or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a Code of Conduct for all adults working in the College
- All College staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19.
- They receive a full annual report on all Child Protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of Child Protection activities). This report should include details of the Preventative Curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the College, including training for staff.
- The College maintains the following Child Protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools: Safeguarding and child

protection concerns; disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff and actions taken to investigate and deal with outcomes; staff induction and training.

The College Safeguarding Team

As best practice, in the best interests of the children, and as a support for the Designated Teachers, the College has an established Safeguarding Team. This team includes the Chair of the BoG, the Designated Governor for Child Protection, the Principal (as Chair), the Designated Teacher (DT) and the Deputy Designated Teachers (DDT's). The team may co-opt other members as required to help address specific issues, for example the SENCO, ICT Co-ordinator, etc.

This Safeguarding Team is a vehicle for ensuring effective co-ordination and co-operation between the key individuals responsible for safeguarding throughout the school.

The Education Authority (EA) Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) provides child protection training in relation to the specific responsibilities of each member of the team.
The responsibilities of the team should include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school.
- Support for the DT in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.

The College Safeguarding Team in College meets weekly and an up-date is provided on any student about whom there are concerns of a child protection nature. Discussion takes place about further intervention or support needed and the outcome of Child Protection conferences and up-dates in relation to policy and procedures are tabled. Minutes are retained by the DT.

The following are members of the College Safeguarding Team:

- Chair of the Board of Governors: Mrs Ann Tate
- Designated Governor for Child Protection: Mrs Eileen Donnelly
- Principal: Mr Andrew Sleeth
- Designated Teacher: Miss Maura McKenna
- Deputy Designated Teacher(s): Mrs Wendy Botha, Mrs Lynda Ford, Mrs Lisa McAliskey, Mrs Deirdre McCarroll, Mrs Deirdre McShane and Mrs Elizabeth Seale.

See Appendix 1

Chairperson of Board of Governors

The Chairperson of the BoG plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the Safeguarding ethos within the College environment. In the event of a Safeguarding or Child Protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with guidance issued by the Department (and relevant guidance from other Departments when it comes to other early years settings), employing authorities, and the College's own policies and procedures.
The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring Child Protection records are kept and for signing and dating annually the 'Record of Child Abuse Complaints' against staff members even if there have been no entries.

Designated Governor for Child Protection

The BoG delegates a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in Safeguarding/Child Protection issues in order to advise the governors on:

- The role of the designated teachers;
- The content of child protection policies;
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the College;
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report;
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

The College Principal

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

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

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

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

Designated Teacher (DT) for Child Protection

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

- Induction and training of all College staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or Child Protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for record keeping of all Child Protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services eg Family Support Hub.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA/CPSSS Designated Officer for Child Protection.
- Keeping the College Principal informed of all Safeguarding/Child protection matters.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the College's Safeguarding/Child Protection policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the College.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection.

Deputy Designated Teacher(s)(DDT) for Child Protection

Responsibilities include:

- Work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required.
- Attend relevant specialist training provided by CPSS.
- Assist in the review and development of the College's Safeguarding/Child protection policy.
- Promotion of a Safeguarding and Child Protection ethos in the College.

Parents

The primary responsibility for Safeguarding and Protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school of any of the following:

- If their child has a medical condition or educational need.

- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- If their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

Other Members of College Staff

- Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Deputy Designated Teacher if he/she is not available using agreed College procedures.
- Class teachers, Heads of Achievement and all other relevant College staff should complete a Note of Concern/add CPOMS incident if there are Safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about student abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse. It is good practice to speak to the Designated Teacher/DDT as well as providing a written record via CPOMS.
- **Staff should not** give students a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions.
- If any member of the staff has concerns about a staff member, they should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher if he/she is not available or directly to the Principal. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made and any further necessary action will be taken. If the concern is about a member of the Safeguarding team, the concern should go directly to the Principal. If the concern is about the Principal, the concern should go directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

4. CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

Definition of Harm

(*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and young People in Northern Ireland August 2017*)
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 ongoing 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.

Harm can be caused by the following types of abuse:

- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

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.

Possible Physical Indicators
Well below average height and weight; "failure to thrive"; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self-mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).

Possible Behavioural Indicators
Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional response to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.

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.

Possible Physical Indicators
Well below average height and weight; "failure to thrive"; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; signs of self-mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).

Possible Behavioural Indicators
Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional response to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment; reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.

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.

Possible Physical indicators
Unexplained bruises - in various stages of healing - grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained, untreated burns; especially cigarette burns or immersion burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear - symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday.

Possible Behavioural Indicators
Self-destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; comes to College early or stays late as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather - to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or creative writing/stories.

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.

Possible Physical Indicators
Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress, poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.

Possible Behavioural Indicators
Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive stealing; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses College medicals; reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at College; exposure to violence including unsuitable images/videos/media.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, and 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.

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.

Specific Types of Abuse and Potential Harm

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse and potential harm that we in Integrated College Dungannon are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy. Some examples of specific areas of concern that staff are aware of are below:

- Self–Harm
- Grooming
- Grooming: signs and symptoms
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse
- Mental Health & Suicide
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour
- Online Behaviours & Safety (including use of Mobile Phones & Electronic Devices, sexting and sharing images online)

For more information and how to address the above specific issues, see **Appendix 1**

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English or sexual orientation. This must be taken into consideration when dealing with safeguarding concerns. See **Appendix 2**

Adult Safeguarding

An 'Adult at risk of harm' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

a) Personal characteristics and/or
b) Life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.

Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An 'Adult in need of protection' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

a) Personal characteristics and/or
b) Life circumstances and
c) Who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and
d) Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

For more information see **Appendix 3**

Should you have a concern about a student aged 18, please complete a Note of Concern/CPOMS incident and report to the DT/DDT/Principal as soon as possible.

Concerns can be discussed with the Adult Safeguarding Team in the Southern Trust:

Telephone: 028 375 64423
Outside normal working hours: 028 950 49999

5. OPERATION ENCOMPASS

Operation Encompass was introduced within the Southern Trust Area in 2022. Operation Encompass focuses on the routine sharing of information relating to domestic violence or abuse in line with the Domestic Abuse Information-Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (NI)

2022. If the PSNI attends an incident of domestic violence where a child is present, they will make contact with the child's school as early as possible the next day to share information with the school's Designated Teacher.

The aim is to help schools provide timely support to child victims of domestic violence. The PSNI will only give schools the information that will enable them to provide the necessary pastoral care and support to the child. The type of information that may be received could include: the timing of the incident; the child or children involved and where the incident took place, if relevant; who was involved in the incident; their relationship to the child and, where appropriate, the level of the incident (offence type, injuries etc.); and whether the child would have been present, in the vicinity or a witness to the incident.

At ICD, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them. Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse. As an Operation Encompass school, when the PSNI 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 ICD Safeguarding Team. This will allow the ICD Safeguarding Team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the Designated Teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns. This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' and a note will be made in the child's child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the PSNI will only be shared outside of the Safeguarding Team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the Safeguarding Team have completed the Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

6. RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS AND/OR DISCLOSURES

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

If a parent has a potential child protection concern within the College:

In Integrated College Dungannon, we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.

If a parent has a concern they can talk to the Class Teacher, Form Teacher or Head of Achievement. If the matter is specifically a child protection or safeguarding concern, they should speak to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the College Principal.

If they are still concerned, they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team (**028 3756 7100)** or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit (**Phone: 101** ask to be directed to the Central Referral Unit or **Email:** cru@psni.police.uk)

See also **Appendix 4** for student and parent guide on reporting

Where the College has concerns or has been given information about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff:

In Integrated College Dungannon, if a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member 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 will speak to the DT/DDT/Principal and complete a Note of Concern/add incident on CPOMS (see **Appendix 10**) and act promptly. **They will not investigate** - this is a matter for Social Services.

The Designated Teacher will consult with the Principal or other relevant staff **always taking care to avoid due delay.** If required, advice may be sought from the EA CPSS. The Designated Teacher may also seek clarification from the child or young person, their parent/carer.

If a child protection referral is not required the College may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent.
If a child protection referral is required, the Designated Teacher will seek consent from the parent/carer and/or the child {if they are competent to give this} unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.

The Designated Teacher will phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form.

If the concern relates to a student over the age of 18, the Designated Teacher may discuss the concerns with the Trust Adult Safeguarding Team or the Team with responsibility for Vulnerable Adults which will assess the level of risk.

Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

For further detail please see **Appendix 5 (Procedure Where the School Has Concerns, or Has Been Given Information, about Possible Abuse by Someone Other Than a Member of Staff)**

Where a Complaint Has Been Made about Possible Abuse by a Member of the School's Staff or a Volunteer

Where a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the College, the procedures set out in DE Circular 2015/13 will be followed. When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal, then the Designated Teacher should be informed, and he/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority. The procedure as outlined in **Appendix 6** will be followed.

In all decisions the student's welfare is the paramount consideration and the student should be listened to and his/her concerns taken seriously. The possible risk of harm to children posed by a member of staff must be evaluated and managed and in some cases this will require consideration of suspension as a precautionary measure.

The Designated Teacher will be informed (if they are not the subject of the complaint) and they will record details.

The Principal will consult with and seek advice from the CPSS Education Authority Southern Region Designated Officers and Social Services Armagh/Dungannon Trust to assess the situation.

If no further action is indicated the subject of the complaint will be advised accordingly.

If there is a decision to refer to Social Services and/or the Police, they will begin their investigations of the complaint.

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

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher (or their deputy, if they are not available) must be **informed immediately**. They will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Deputy Chairperson, Designated Governor for Child Protection and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken as for the above procedure.

All allegations of a child abuse nature will be recorded in the hard backed and bound Record of Child Abuse Complaints book, which is retained securely by the Principal. A record of this should be placed on the relevant student's Child Protection File.

Note of Concern

The member of staff who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a student or young person should - record/add an incident on CPOMS. CPOMS is the software used in the College to record and monitor any concerns of a child protection nature. Notes must be made as soon as possible after the incident to ensure an expedient response, and certainly within 24 hours, to maintain the accuracy and content of the report. They should be added to CPOMS as soon as possible and appropriate staff members alerted. Recording an incident on CPOMS will not replace a conversation with DT/DDT. Staff member logging concern must ensure they speak to DT/DDT as well as logging, particularly in situations where immediate action may be required. *For some children a one-off serious incident or concern may occur and staff will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported. More often, however, it is the accumulation of a number of small incidents, events or observations that can provide the evidence of harm being caused to a child*. The staff member should report the concern to **the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT)** at an early stage, immediately if the concern is of a serious nature, as the DT may be aware of other circumstances which would influence steps to be taken. The Note of Concern and any further details discussed, or action taken should be placed in the student's **Child Protection File on CPOMS.**

Making a Referral

Where a referral is to be made, the Designated Teacher will immediately contact the Duty Social Worker at the Gateway Team. The referral will be confirmed in writing using the UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours and a copy sent to one of the CPSS Designated Officers for Child Protection at the Education Authority Southern Region.

The parent/carer of the child will be informed by the College that a referral is to be made to Social Services unless the parent/carer is the subject of the allegation.

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/ or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person, or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

There is a difficult balance between gaining consent for a referral into Adult Protection Gateway and also ensuring a vulnerable adult is protected from harm. Consent will always be sought from the person for a referral to statutory agencies. If consent is withheld, then a referral will not be made into the Adult Protection Gateway unless there is reasonable doubt regarding the capacity of the adult to give/withhold consent. In this case contact will be made with the local Adult Protection Gateway to seek further advice.

In situations where there is reasonable doubt regarding an individual's capacity, they will be informed of the referral, unless to do so would put them at any further risk. The principle of consent may be overridden if there is an overriding public interest, for example in the following circumstances:

- the person causing the harm is a member of staff, a volunteer or someone who only has contact with the adult at risk because they both use the service; or
- consent has been provided under undue influence, coercion or duress;
- other people are at risk from the person causing harm;
- or a crime is alleged or suspected

Non-urgent referrals i.e. child in need/family support referrals must have the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) and should be made in writing using the UNOCINI referral form.

- The welfare of the student is paramount and, if unable to contact the parent/ carers, we should not delay but progress the referral with Social Services.
- Issues of consent (including when consent is not forthcoming) must always be clearly recorded.

The Designated Teacher will make a record of all the discussions held and actions taken within **24 hours**. A safeguarding checklist can be referred to. This is to ensure all required tasks are complete (**Appendix 7**).

If an acknowledgement of the referral is not received from Social Services within 5 working days, the Designated Teacher will follow this up.

The Principal will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD KEEPING

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the number of people advised of any concern/incident or who have access to this recorded information will be strictly limited **on a need to know basis**.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a student who transfers to another school we will follow DE guidance in determining what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children, information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

In accordance with DE guidance, we have developed clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in our College are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

If a student from our College attends an EOTAS provision, a member of the safeguarding team will share any child protection concerns they have with the DT in the centre. If child protection concerns arise when the pupil is attending an EOTAS provision the designated teacher in EOTAS will follow child protection procedures and will advise a member of the school's safeguarding team of the concerns and any actions taken. It is the responsibility of EOTAS staff to maintain their records in accordance with DE Circular 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools and any subsequent updates.
The College uses 'CPOMS' online secure platform to record, store and share information confidentially.

Child Protection File

The DT should store each Note of Concern/reported incident and copy UNOCINI documents in the child's **Child Protection File on CPOMS** and supplement it with all other records created and acquired as the management of the concern progresses. **A Child Protection File is separate to the College's Student/ Educational Record and must be stored securely**.

A child protection file could include:

- Chronology of events/ action taken;
- All records of concern;
- Any notes initially recorded, including in the form of notebooks/diaries which should be kept securely with the child protection file;
- Records of discussions and telephone calls (with colleagues, parents and children/young people and other agencies or services);
- Correspondence with other organisations - sent and received;
- Referral forms – both for support services and specialist services (irrespective of outcome);

- Formal plans linked to the child e.g. child protection plan, child in need plan;
- Risk assessments;
- Risk Assessment Management Plans/ Individual Safety and Support Plans;
- College reports to interagency meetings and conferences;
- Minutes of interagency meetings e.g. child in need, strategy, child protection case conference, core group meeting;
- Any other relevant notes/ papers.

Relevant and accurate records are essential to inform effective decision making and assist in the sharing of appropriate information. **They should contain factual information or be clearly specified as unsubstantiated** and should include all relevant information even if it appears contradictory.

Any decisions made must be recorded together with reasons for the agreed action, this will be vital to any future processes, such as retrospective or historical allegations and Case Management Reviews. It is vitally important to record all relevant details, regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with either the police or social services. When Social Services inform the College that a student's name has been placed on the Trusts' **Child Protection Register (CPR)**, the College must maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's Child Protection file.

Record Keeping

All records, information and confidential notes are stored securely on CPOMS. Only the Designated Teacher and Principal have access to the filing cabinet. These only identify the student by their name. These records are kept separate from any other file which is held on the student.

Child Protection Records must not be removed from the College premises, except when taken to a case planning meeting in respect of the student, or on foot of a court order. If information needs to be taken out of the College, it **must be transported securely** and a record kept of when it was removed, by whom, for what purpose, and when it was returned (See **Appendix 8)**

There are inherent dangers in keeping sensitive information electronically and extra care must be taken. Such information should never be held on computers to which staff or students could have free access, including SIMS.net. If information is held electronically, whether on a laptop or on a portable memory device, **all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected**.

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

Sharing Information within the College

Child Protection information is confidential and often highly sensitive and decisions to share, or not to share, must always be made in the interest of protecting the student if at risk of significant harm. There is also a duty to protect individuals therefore information will only be shared with staff who require access to it, in order to work in a safe and informed way with the student and family. The DT will record who information is shared with, when, and the reasons for this.

Sharing Information with Others

Access to child protection records should be strictly on a need-to-know basis, and a record should be kept to identify who has requested access, when and for what purpose. Where requests are made the College may refer to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) "Dealing with subject access requests involving other people's information". Advice will also be sought from the Information Manager in the Education Authority Southern Region.

Information must always be shared with other agencies where there is a legal duty to do so e.g. PSNI and Social Services. It should, however, be noted that the PSNI have no automatic right to access data and must complete Form 81, stating the data they require and the specific case to which it relates.

Consent to share information should be sought where possible, however, sharing, even without consent, will normally be justified, if there is evidence of reasonable cause to believe that a student is suffering, or is at risk of suffering harm. Only information will be shared which is necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, and is shared securely.

Transfer of Child Protection Records

Past safeguarding concerns and the response to these can be significant, should concerns arise for the student at a later time. If the information, current or historical, is deemed to be relevant then it should be shared.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring that copies of relevant child protection records are transferred to the DT of the receiving school in the most secure and appropriate manner to minimise the risk of any data breach.

When a child on whom the College holds safeguarding or child protection information leaves the College and the College are unaware of the new provider, they must notify the Education Welfare Service at the Education Authority who will then attempt to locate the child. Social Services must be informed immediately if the child has a Child Protection Plan or is a Looked After Child. The College must retain the student's child protection records and forward the relevant information to the receiving school when the child has been traced.

When a student **whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school**, the Designated Teacher will inform the receiving school immediately that his/her name is on the Register and pass on contact details for the social worker. The College should then destroy all child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences, and should inform the child's Case Co-ordinator in Social Services. The remaining child protection record should be copied, as relevant, to the new school. When considering what information is relevant, advice can be sought from the CPSS. The school to which the child is transferring should contact the child's social worker for relevant information. The leaving school can retain original copies of their own documents.

The DT will discuss concerns directly with the DT from the receiving school in advance of sending the child protection record.

Retention of Child Protection Records

In order to determine how long child protection records should be kept there are a number of guiding principles. The Data Protection Act 1998 requires that personal information should be:

- Adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose(s) for which they are held (third principle)
- Accurate and where necessary kept up to date (fourth principle)
- Not kept for longer than is necessary for its purpose(s) (fifth principle)

Our College will ensure that the Act is complied with.

Retention Periods for Child Protection Records

It is recommended that, in general, child protection records should be retained by the College for the following periods:

Record	Retention Period
Student Child Protection Case Files	DOB + 30 years
The College's confidential Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely*
If Social Services inform the College that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register	Maintain a record of this fact and associated documentation from Social Services on the child's file while he/she continues to attend. On transfer, the College should inform the new school and destroy all social services records. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until DOB + 30 years.
If Social Services inform the College that a child's name is removed from the Child Protection Register	On transfer to a new school, the College should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences. The record on the Child Protection File will remain until DOB + 30 years.
Complaint against a member of staff Staff members file* Child's Child Protection File Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely* until totally exonerated DOB + 30 years Indefinitely*

Complaint to be pursued under the College's disciplinary procedure	
Staff members file	5 years
Child's Child Protection File	DOB + 30 years
Record of Child Abuse Complaints	Indefinitely*

* as a general guide 'indefinitely' should be a minimum of 40 years

Disposal

At the end of the agreed retention period, records should be securely disposed of, for example, incinerated or shredded in the presence of a member of the College or entrusted to a firm specialising in the destruction of confidential material. Information held electronically within private folders on the C2k system should also be deleted within the timescales set. Following deletion, the electronic records will be held securely on the centralised backup for a period of time but in due course will be overwritten and the documents removed. No evidence will remain on the C2k system.

The National Archives has issued guidance based on the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse stressing that any information which may be required by the Inquiry should not be destroyed. This principle should be applied in all cases and careful review before destruction of documents.

https://www.csa-inquiry.independent.gov.uk/news/chair-of-the-inquiry-issues-guidance-on-destruction-of-documents

8. SAFE RECRUITMENT AND VETTING PROCEDURES

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate if they are engaged in regulated activity. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.
All staff (permanent, teaching, non-teaching, casual, volunteers, sports coaches etc.) are vetted through the Access N.I. system and following guidelines clearly set out in the DE Circular 2013/01(up-dated September 2015) and 2012/19. Substitute Teachers have Access N.I. compliance verified through the NISTR Register.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF- PAID OR UNPAID

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors. See **Appendix 9** for Staff Code of Conduct.

10. PREVENTION AND THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

We offer a supportive environment to children and young people. All children and young people are valued and will receive our support.

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. (DE guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" Circular 2017/04 and subsequent amendments) The Board of Governors ensures that the curriculum and Preventative Education includes a programme for students on personal protection. Where it is appropriate to deliver Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE), leadership ensure that the programme is consistent with the Department of Education's circular on this topic. Where the curricular programme in RSE forms part of several subjects, there is careful co-ordination and planning of what is provided.

The College seeks to promote students' awareness and understanding of Safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the College's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

Throughout the College year child protection issues are addressed through assemblies and relevant child protection notices and relevant information which provides advice are displayed in classrooms or communal areas e.g. child helpline numbers.

11. COLLABORATION

If a student from any collaborative College makes a disclosure to a member of ICD staff, the member of staff should refer the matter immediately to the Safeguarding Team in ICD. The Designated Teacher will then refer the matter to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in the home school.

12. WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience placements provide insights into the world of work and are an invaluable educational opportunity. During the work placement the Health and Safety of the young person and those working with them is paramount. In preparing students for work experience, personal safety issues will be addressed. Students will be advised on the procedures to be followed in the event of a student having concerns or feeling unsafe, uneasy or uncomfortable through the use of inappropriate language or behaviour or if anything untoward occurs to them during work experience placements.

In the event of a student having concerns they should contact a member of staff or speak to a parent who should then refer to DT/DTT who will follow the College's Child Protection Policy and Procedures. A written record should be made. Teacher in charge of Work Experience and

Careers will ensure that employers are aware of child protection procedures and what to do in the event of a concern or a disclosure.

13. STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The College is committed to in-service training for all staff. Each member of staff annually will receive general training on Safeguarding and Child Protection and will be issued with the College Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers will attend specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All new members of staff will be inducted on the College Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. A record of attendance will be recorded.

14. REPORTING TO BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Child Protection is a standing agenda item for every Board of Governor meeting and the Designated Teacher prepares a report for the meeting of all child protection activities and a full annual report for the Board of Governors on all Child Protection matters.

The annual report includes information such as what child protection training has been provided for staff/volunteers, statistics in relation to child protection concerns e.g. the number of referrals to Social Services and number of children on the child protection register, the number of complaints against staff, any safeguarding/child protection initiatives delivered as part of the Colleges preventative curriculum, policy reviews undertaken. All reports **are anonymised** in keeping with the principle of confidentiality. The College's Record of Child Abuse Complaints is made available to the Board of Governors at least annually. If an allegation is recorded, anonymised information will be shared with Governors including what action was taken and the outcome of the complaint. The Chairperson signs and dates the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries. The Education Training Inspectorate will ask to see the Record and Chairperson's signature during inspections, but not the content or detail of complaints.

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The College will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary, and review and renew it annually. Participation and consultation with CPSS, College staff, students and parents will be undertaken. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team and approved by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the staff induction and training programme and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team. The Board of Governors will also monitor child protection activity and the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher.

Appendix 1	**Types of Abuse**
Appendix 2	**Children with Increased Vulnerabilities**
Appendix 3	**Adult Safeguarding**
Appendix 4	**Parent & Student Guide on how to report**
Appendix 5	**Flowchart 1**
Appendix 6	**Flowchart 2**
Appendix 7	**Safeguarding Checklist**
Appendix 8	**Child Protection Records Removal Form**
Appendix 9	**Staff Code of Conduct**
Appendix 10	**Note of Concern**
Appendix 11	**Useful Contact Numbers**