



Victoria College Belfast

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Policy Date – August 2023

VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Rationale

Victoria College is committed to providing a safe, caring environment which promotes the protection and safeguarding of each individual child. In accordance with the aims of the College and in order to fulfil our statutory obligation under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which requires schools to play their part in the prevention and reporting of child abuse, this Policy aims to ensure the protection and safeguarding of all our pupils. The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 stresses that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration and it is this essential principle which underpins the Policy which follows. This Policy also reflects the guidance and procedures set out in Safeguarding and Child Protection - A Guide for Schools (circular 2017/04) and the best practice contained in 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016).

2. Related VCB policies (available from website/school office)

- Anti-bullying
- Positive Behaviour for Learning
- Complaint Handling
- E- Safety/ ICT Acceptable Use/Digital Media
- Pastoral Care
- Pupil Attendance
- Recruitment
- Relationships and Sexual Education
- Retention and Disposal of Records
- Staff Code of Conduct

3. Aims of this policy

- To ensure consistent good practice where the welfare of the child is paramount
- To provide all staff and volunteers with definitions of abuse and the potential signs and symptoms of abuse
- To inform all staff and volunteers of statutory requirements regarding suspected or alleged child abuse
- To enable pupils, staff and parents to make a complaint or report of child abuse if they have any concerns
- To help create a protective and supportive environment for all pupils, staff and volunteers.

4. Designated Teachers and Governors for Child Protection

The Principal is ultimately in charge of Safeguarding: Mrs K Quinn

Teachers	Mrs F Cromie	Designated Teacher
	Mrs M Murray	Deputy Designated Teacher
	Mrs M Nugent	Deputy Designated Teacher
Governors	Dr M Johnston	Designated Governor
	Dr B Callender	Deputy Designated Governor

5. The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- To promote a positive child protection/safeguarding ethos in the College
- To raise awareness of child protection policy and procedures with all staff and volunteers
- To take the lead in the development of the College's Child Protection Policy and chair the College's Safeguarding Committee
- To train all staff on child protection issues and procedures at the beginning of each academic year and during staff development days
- To manage the Child Protection concerns of any member of teaching and support staff, including all record keeping
- To liaise with the Education Authority (EA) Designated Officers for Child Protection
- To collaborate with the Principal in making referrals to Social Services or the PSNI Public Protection Unit
- To notify the Chairperson of the Board of Governors in the event of an allegation against the Principal
- To maintain all child protection records in a secure location
- To provide a regular written report and a summative annual report to the Board of Governors on child protection issues
- To ensure that safeguarding lessons from the personal development curriculum are being delivered by liaising with the Head of Learning for Life and Work
- To attend Child Protection Support Service for Schools' (CPSSS) Child Protection/Safeguarding training as appropriate.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- To support the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in all aspects of her role as outlined above
- To undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

6. College Expectations

The College is committed to practices which protect children from harm and requires all staff of the College to:

- accept and recognise the responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm
- recognise the pastoral responsibility to undertake whatever is necessary to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare and safety, including the reporting of inappropriate behaviour by colleagues.
- endeavour to achieve this by:
 - (i) adopting child protection guidelines including a code of behaviour for all staff
 - (ii) sharing information about child protection and good practice with pupils, parents, staff and volunteers
 - (iii) sharing information about concerns with the agencies who "need to know" and involving parents and pupils as appropriate
 - (iv) following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers and
 - (v) providing staff and volunteers with appropriate supervision, support and training.

Regular liaison will be maintained with staff of the Education Authority and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust who have designated staff available for consultation.

7. Definitions

What is Safeguarding?

Promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

What is Child Protection?

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect all children and help identify those who may be suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

For the purpose of this policy, a child is a person under the age of 18 years of age as defined in The Children (N.I.) Order 1995.

8. Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse is deliberate physical injury of 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, inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour, or any other behaviour that may result in physical harm.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing, manipulating or enticing a child to take part in any form of sexual activity. Sexual activity may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production or sharing of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate sexual ways. It may also involve grooming a child or young person in order to sexually abuse them. Sexual activity involving a child or young person who is capable of giving informed consent on the matter, while not illegal, may constitute sexual abuse as defined for the purpose of this policy. Sexual abuse is often combined with exploitation, whereby the perpetrator utilises an imbalance of power to exercise control over their victim.

Emotional Abuse is the emotional ill-treatment of a child that may cause severe and or persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person, taking 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 or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs. It can be characterised by the absence of proactive steps to protect and promote the welfare of the child. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect

a child from harm, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include and/or result in a failure to develop, for example it may lead to faltering growth.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

9. Categories of Abuse

The four categories of abuse which are used for registration purposes on the Child Protection Register are physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Exploitation is not mentioned in this regard as it can cut across all four categories.

10. Potential Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

Since they are in regular and frequent contact with pupils, school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs and symptoms of child abuse or unexplained changes in behaviour or performance, which may indicate abuse. Symptoms may cross over various types of abuse.

It is not possible to give complete lists of signs and symptoms. The following signs and symptoms may not necessarily point to abuse as they can be due to other medical or social reasons. However, in all cases where signs and symptoms displayed by a child give rise to concerns about possible abuse, or about the welfare of the child, the teacher or other member of staff/volunteer should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher.

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries (scratches, bite marks, welts) particularly if they are recurrent
- Bruises in places difficult to mark
- Burns
- Bald patches
- Discrepancy between an injury and the explanation
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive
- Undue fear of adults
- Fearful watchfulness
- Fear of medical help
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Fear of returning home
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Chronic running away

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Distrust of familiar adults. Anxiety of being left with relatives, a child minder or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Being withdrawn
- Fear of undressing for PE
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Fire setting

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional developmental delay
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Continual self-deprecation
- Neurotic behaviour
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of change/new situations
- Self-mutilation
- Wetting or soiling
- Frequent vomiting
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Poor peer relationships
- Chronic running away

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Exploitation (Barnardo's)

- Going missing for periods of time
- Regularly returning home late
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections

- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Emaciation
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging or begging
- Poor personal hygiene
- Persistent tiredness/listlessness
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems/illnesses
- Exposure to danger/lack of supervision
- Low self-esteem
- Destructive tendencies
- Lack of peer relationships
- Chronic running away

11. Domestic abuse and violence is threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.

Reports of domestic violence and/or abuse will be referred to Social Services/PSNI.

The College is 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. For more information see Appendix 8.

12. Female Genital Mutilation is defined as involving procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. 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.

13. Young person whose behaviour places them at risk of significant harm:

A child whose own behaviours, such as alcohol consumption or consumption of drugs, whilst placing them at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse as defined for the purposes of this policy. If there are concerns these should be raised with the Designated Teacher who will make a professional judgement whether or not to initiate Child Protection

procedures. Each case will be considered individually by the Designated Teacher. The PSNI will be informed as appropriate.

Students Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Issues of concern, including inappropriate sexual behaviour, should be notified to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Problematic or harmful sexualised behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, the Designated Teacher will contact the Education Authority's CPSS for support and advice on the appropriate action to take. The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

14. Bullying and Cyber Bullying

Bullying is a form of abuse which should be dealt with as seriously as any other form of abuse. In its persistent form it should lead to the invoking of child protection procedures. Please see the College's Anti-Bullying and E-Safety policies.

15. Helping children to keep themselves safe

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through Learning for Life and Work, Relationships and Sex Education lessons, assembly, tutor time and through all aspects of school life. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff, work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about E-Safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. The College continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any concerns they may have. The first point of contact is usually the form teacher.

16. Parents

Parents should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. Parents are expected to read policies pertaining to safeguarding and child protection and inform the College if there is:

- a medical condition or educational need
- a Court Order relating to the safety or well-being of a parent or child
- any change in a child's circumstances
- a period of absence

Procedures for a parent/guardian to follow if they have a potential child protection concern:

1. If I have a concern about my/a child's safety I can talk to the class/form teacher
2. If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal
3. If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors
4. If I continue to be concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman. Tel: 0800343424
5. At any time I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team. Tel: 028 9050 7000

17. Procedures to be followed where a member of staff has concern about a pupil

1. Member of staff must act promptly to complete a report on My Concern (secure online software) on what has been observed or shared. The source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised. If there are any issues with accessing My Concern, a note of concern should be completed (Appendix 2). The member of staff will be required to make the report on My Concern at the earliest opportunity.
2. Staff members discuss concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in her absence and provide Note of Concern.
3. Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always avoiding undue delay. If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer.
4. Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.
5. If a child protection referral is required the Designated Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at significant risk of harm. A telephone call is then made to the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. A completed UNOCINI referral form should be submitted within 24 hours.
6. If a child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate services such as the Children's Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent and child/young person's consent (where appropriate).
7. Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

18. What Should Happen when Child Abuse is Reported?

Immediately a referral is received by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust or the PSNI it will be communicated by telephone to the other agencies. A social worker will consult the child's doctor or other people with relevant knowledge

of the child and her family. There is consultation between the organisations to achieve an agreed process for inquiries. The Joint Protocol between Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the police aims to make the process as sensitive and as unobtrusive as possible. The over-riding aim is to do what is in the child's best interest. It is important to remember that a teacher checking out concerns does not necessarily lead to an investigation.

19. Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a member of staff

The College follows Circular 2015/13 'Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff'. This can be found online - www.education-ni.gov.uk.

20. Vetting Procedures

The College acknowledges that pre-employment vetting remains a key preventative measure in denying an unsuitable individual access to children through the education system. Vetting is only one of a number of important elements in the recruitment process and will be considered with other key aspects such as a candidate's application form, interview, proof of identity and qualifications, references and knowledge of his/her employment history and experience. (See the College's Recruitment Policy for further details).

21. Visitors to the College

All visitors to the College are required to report to reception on arrival at the campus which they are visiting. Any visitors who need to move beyond the reception area will have their details recorded by the office staff. This includes their name, organisation (if relevant), car registration (if relevant), arrival time, departure time and the name of the supervising member of staff. A visitor badge will be issued to be worn for the duration of the visit. Visitors will not be left alone with pupils but will be accompanied by a relevant member of staff at all times. The member of staff is responsible for ensuring the visitor(s) is not left alone with pupils and that they have left the campus when the visit is over.

Past pupils who return to the College to see teachers or to sit external examinations are also required to follow this process. Having signed in, they are to be met in reception by the relevant member of staff and are to leave the premises as soon as they have completed the purpose of the visit.

Peripatetic music teachers must follow the protocol above. At the start of the academic year they will arrive at reception to collect the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. They must read this carefully and return their signed slip to the office staff to say they will uphold it. Unlike visitors to College, peripatetic music teachers must be vetted and can therefore be unaccompanied with pupils. They should teach in rooms with glass windows which afford clear visibility into the teaching space.

22. Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers

A duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the students in their charge rests with all members of staff, teaching and support, and volunteers. The conduct of staff /volunteers towards pupils must be above reproach. Please see the College's Staff Code of Conduct Policy which supplements the following recommended safeguarding guidelines:

- Teachers should ensure all teaching materials and lessons are age appropriate.
- Staff/volunteers should engage professionally with pupils and ensure they are setting a good example of behaviour to pupils.
- Staff/volunteers are not to socialise with pupils who currently attend the College.
- Staff/volunteers are not to engage in any regard with a pupil or recent past pupils on social media. Any social media accounts must be on a private setting and should not be accessible for pupils.
- Staff/Volunteers should communicate with pupils via email, Teams, a College work phone or through parents.
- Staff/volunteers who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other pupils or another adult. **However, no member of staff/volunteer should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.**
- Staff must be aware of the dangers which arise from private interviews with individual pupils. There are occasions when confidential interviews must take place, but such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door opened, or in a room or area which is frequented by other people. Vision panels should not be obstructed. When appropriate, another member of staff should be aware the meeting is taking place.
- Staff/volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. If, on occasion, a teacher/volunteer must physically restrain a student to protect the pupil him/herself, or another pupil, no more than minimum force should be used.
- Staff/volunteers must ensure their feedback to pupils is fair and consistent.
- Staff/volunteers should be particularly careful when supervising children in a residential setting, such as a ski-trip, outdoor education camp, or external visit away from home, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal environment.
- Following any incident where a member of staff/volunteer feels that his/her actions have been or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal. This would apply especially in a case where a member of staff had been obliged to restrain a pupil physically to prevent them inflicting injury on others or on themselves.
- Staff/volunteers should be aware of the rules governing photographs

and videos of students as permitted by parents. Staff must consult the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher if they wish to take photographs or videos of students for any use which is not outlined in these rules. Photos should not be taken or held on a personal phone or device.

- All allegations against a member of staff should be reported immediately, normally to the Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Private Tutoring

Staff must not conduct private tutoring on school premises.

23. Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Teacher, Principal or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will only be made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file.

The Designated Teacher will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the College or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the Designated Teacher may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Principal

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

Please refer to the College's Retention and Disposal of Records Policy for further information.

24. Photographs of Children

Parents are required to complete and sign a form stating that they do not wish their daughter's photograph to be taken or published in any school associated publicity including the website. Parents should be aware that photographs are taken internally for school records and administration purposes. These photographs are not for public/external use and are not accessible via the internet. See Appendix 4.

25. Review and Evaluation

The pastoral care provision and practice in child protection will be open to inspection. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Board of Governors (or sooner in accordance with released circulars) and kept under review by senior members of staff who will keep Governors informed of any difficulties that may arise.

APPENDIX 1

ADVICE TO STAFF WHEN DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES

When dealing with a disclosure from a child, the member of staff should employ the 5 R's:

- Receive
 - Reassure ("You did the right thing to come and tell me.")
 - Respond (let the child know who will now be told and what happens next "I am going to talk to <name of Designated Teacher>. She has helped other people in the past with this type of problem and will know what to do.")
 - Record (Date , time and brief notes using the child's own words)
 - Report (following the procedures outlined above)
1. Approach the pupil with tact and understanding avoiding asking leading questions or imposing adult assumption, such as "did they do XXX to you"? Rather seek clarification such as "tell me what has happened?"
 2. Make it clear from the outset that no promise of confidentiality can be given. It will be necessary to pass on the information to the designated teacher and in turn to other professionals whose responsibility it is to investigate allegations of child abuse.
 3. If the pupil is recounting information freely do not interrupt.
 4. It is important to promote an environment in which the student feels comfortable to disclose. The quality of the relationship between staff and pupil is paramount in supporting this. It may not always be appropriate to have another person present in a note taking capacity and it is often better to promote a listening environment. Observe signs of physical injury but do not disturb or remove clothing. Any indication of distress should also be noted.
 5. After the disclosure, the teacher must act promptly and complete the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared. Describe in detail signs of physical injury observed. If two teachers were present the written notes should be agreed as an accurate record of the discussion.
 6. Remember that the notes of discussion with the pupil may be used in subsequent court proceedings. Report objectively and accurately.
 7. Do not carry out an investigation into the case of suspected abuse or make extensive inquiries of a pupil's family, but where comments are made by a parent, carer or another person about where injury has occurred these comments should be recorded.

8. Report the information to the Designated Teacher immediately. The Designated Teacher will inform the Principal immediately.
As exceptions to the above, if the incident involves
- (i) the Designated Teacher, the matter should be reported directly to the Principal;
 - (ii) the Principal, the matter should be reported directly to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

If abuse is suspected or an allegation has been made, the Principal will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors (or such Governor who may be nominated by the Board of Governors to act in his/her absence) and the Designated Governor and the Designated Teacher will refer the case to the Principal Social Worker, Family and Child Care, of the Belfast Health and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust using a UNOCINI pro forma or the Inspector in charge of the CARE unit of the PSNI. The Senior Education Welfare Officer of the Education Authority will also be advised. The Protocol for Joint Investigation of Alleged and Suspected Child Abuse, between the police and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust entails that whichever organisation first receives information it is automatically passed on to the other.

If abuse is disclosed or suspected the Designated Teacher will inform the parents/carer unless the parent/carer is the subject of the allegation (in accordance with section 3.98.5, 'Regional Policy and Procedures').

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated teacher for child protection in the school.

PROFORMA

APPENDIX 2
CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF CONCERN

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD – REPORTS TO DESIGNATED TEACHER

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident / disclosure:
Circumstances of incident / disclosure:
Nature and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:

Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:
Any further action taken:
Written report passed to Designated Teacher: Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> If 'No' state reason:
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:
Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file <input type="checkbox"/> If 'No' state reason.

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Sources of Advice

- Child Protection Support Service
EA Office – Belfast – 02890564289
- Duty Social Worker Gateway Team (Health & Social Care Trusts)
Belfast Gateway Team - 02890507000
- School Nurse
0289056 5915
- Education Welfare Officer
02890690363
- Educational Psychologist
02890564000
- PSNI Central Referral Unit (CRU)
02890259299

Helplines

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| • Childline | 0800 1111 |
| • NSPCC Child Protection Helpline | 0800 800500 |
| • PSNI CARE Unit - | 101 |
| • Young People's Centre - | (028) 90204601 |

Senior School

Designated Governors

Chair of Board of Governors: Mrs Wendy Blundell
Designated Governor: Dr Mary Johnston
Deputy Designated Governor: Dr Barbara Callender

APPENDIX 3

PRO FORMA



VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

Title:	
First Name:	
Surname:	
Date:	
Signature:	

Capacity	Tick
Permanent member of staff (Full-time/Part-time)	
Substitute Teacher	
Visiting Tutor	
Volunteer	
Contractor	

APPENDIX 4

VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Photographs are taken at all school events throughout the academic year to reflect the richness and diversity of school life.

I confirm that I have received and read the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

I agree / do not agree* that photographs of my child may be taken and used in
(Please delete as appropriate)

any school associated publicity, e.g. individual class photographs, Sports Day, Prize Day, School Magazine, etc. (This does not apply to the photographs for school records and administration purposes).

I agree / do not agree* that photographs of my child may be taken and used on
(Please delete as appropriate)

the school website.

Signed:

Parent's Name:

(Block Capitals)

Daughter's Name:

(Block Capitals)

Form/Preparatory Class:

Date:

Please note that any data provided or photographs taken will not be disclosed by the College to third parties outside the College under any circumstances, unless required by law or with the consent of the student or parent in question.

*Please notify your daughter if you do not agree with her photograph to be taken so she is able to inform teaching staff accordingly and return form by

APPENDIX 5

A Pupil's Guide on Raising a Concern



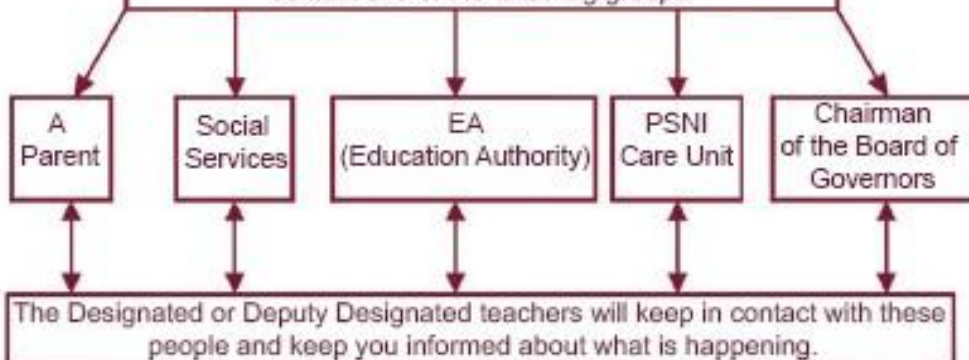
A Pupil's Guide to Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedures

This is what to do if you are worried about something happening to you or someone you know.

Talk to someone in school you are comfortable with. This might be your Form Tutor, Head of Year, the School Counsellor or the School Nurse. Or it could be any other member of staff.

These people will listen but if they are concerned about your safety, they may need to share this with the Designated or Deputy Designated teachers who are responsible for Child protection/Safeguarding. They will always tell you this first.

The Designated or Deputy Designated teachers may then contact one of the following groups.



You may prefer instead to contact childline 0800 11 11

Victoria College Belfast

APPENDIX 6

A Parent's Guide to Raising a Concern



Who should a parent/guardian contact in the school if they have a Child Protection concern?



At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team or the PSNI Central Referral Unit at 02890259299

Victoria College Belfast

APPENDIX 7

Addendum to Victoria College Belfast Child Protection Policy Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

1. CONTEXT

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

2. PROCEDURES

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety:

- The school email address, main school phone number and have been made available to all parents. Parents have been informed that the DT is available during school hours on this number.
- Teachers provide online learning via the school website/ C2k platform with strict procedures in place to minimise risk.
- The website provides parents with a range of resources and links to additional online learning, support and guidance.
- We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.
- The School Counsellor (Family works) remains available for phone consultation and parents are made aware of this via the website.

- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the EA CPSS, teachers may make phone calls to parents. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding team.
- If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff

3. ONLINE SAFETY

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing or platforms recommended by and available via C2K.

- Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleep wear during the session.
- Pupils cannot participate from a bedroom.
- The teacher arranges the session and password and shares this only with pupils.
- Pupils must agree not to share the password with anyone else.
- Parental consent will be sought before their child attends online sessions.
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school.
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

If there is a breach to any of these procedures e.g. pupil gives the password to someone else who joins the group the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.

4. HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the safeguarding team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

5. IF SCHOOL IS OPEN DURING COVID-19 CLOSURES

If school is open for vulnerable pupils and key workers children the school should adhere to the EA guidance .

If our school is part of a cluster of schools which are open we will share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Teacher and/or Principal. In accordance with our Child Protection procedures this information will be shared on a need to know basis.

In any event, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

6. HOW A CHILD CAN RAISE A CONCERN

We know that while many children will be enjoying their time at home and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our children and young people:

- Respond to emails via the c2k email addresses only.
- Respond to any concerning comments our young people post on social media.
- When contacting parents via phone we will always ask to speak to their child or young person.
- All our children will be given an email address as one way to connect with school.

Other Agencies

- NSPCC Childline
- CEOP
- Safer Schools App

APPENDIX 8

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.

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 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 school safeguarding team. This will allow the school 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 Police 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 online 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.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

7. SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: –

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Safeguarding team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the period of Covid-19 school closure in line with Departmental guidance and advice.

SIGNED:	Designated Teacher
SIGNED:	Principal
SIGNED:	Chair of Board of Governors
DATE:	