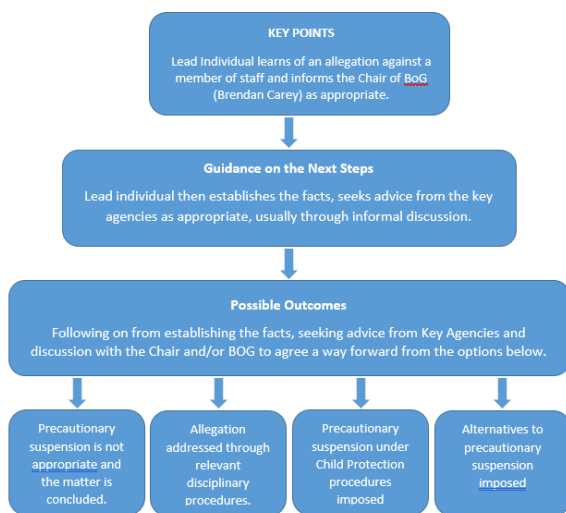


Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff

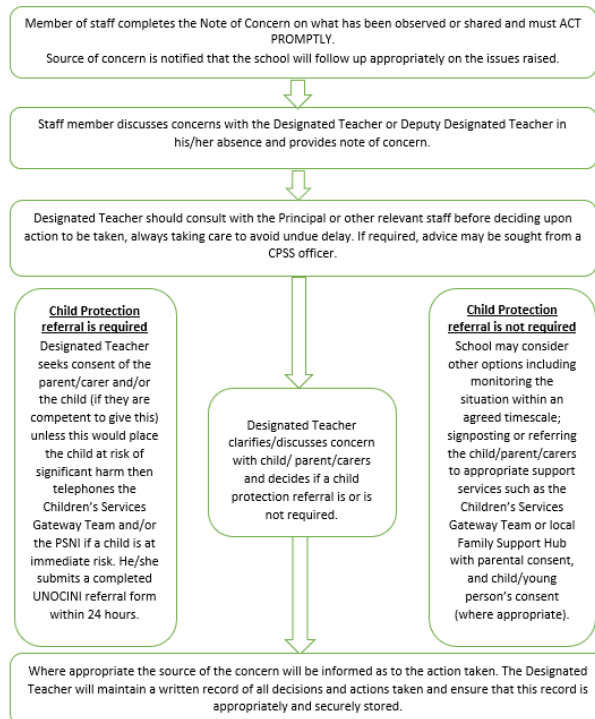


This leaflet is intended only as a summary of the main aspects of St Patrick's Child Protection Policy.

The full policy is available on the webpage

<https://stpatricksrasharkin.com/downloads>

Procedure where the School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff



St Patrick's PS Child Protection Summary

'Make me glad to have known and met you.'

Our Shared Vision

To create a learning environment where we celebrate the achievements of every child and encourage all to reach their full potential.

To live out the Gospel values and foster a community inspired by our Catholic faith.

Our aim is to embed our shared vision and create a school environment where all members of the school and the community feel safe and secure. We aim to create a safe and supportive environment where children can learn and thrive, free from harm and abuse.

Designated Teacher:
Mrs McFadden

Deputy Designated Teachers:
Mrs Cowan
Mr McCann

Designated Governor
Marie Clare McKillop

Chair of Governors
Brendan Carey

Introduction

Safeguarding children is concerned with the provision of a suitable environment for children to develop and mature, safe, as far as possible, from psychological or physical harm.

All members of staff have a duty to help protect children from abuse or the risk of abuse and must be aware of correct procedures to safeguard all those in our care.

Staff see children on a day-to-day basis over long periods of time and are in a unique position to be able to notice physical and behavioural indicators which may be evidence of abuse. We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting safeguarding any concerns raised in a professional manner.

Guiding Principles

The welfare of the child is paramount at all times. Every child has a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.

The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, members of staff and pupils will be respected in so far as legal requirements permit.

Employees and all working with pupils are subject to Enhanced Disclosure Checks by Access N.I.

Designated Teacher

Any member of staff who knows or suspects that a child is being harmed or at risk of being harmed has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Designated Teacher- Mrs McFadden or the Deputy Designated Teachers- Mrs Cowan or Mr McCann

A Safeguarding Team consisting of members of the Board of Governors, the Principal and members of the SLT is also in place, ensuring that safeguarding procedures are adhered to.

Responsibility to Report

Every possible care is taken to minimise the possibility of mistaken referrals, but this cannot be guaranteed. The consequences of not reporting suspicions if a child has been abused could be far more serious than making a report which proves to be unfounded.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Detection of abuse is seldom straightforward. The list below is not exhaustive.

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises
- Human bite marks
- Unexplained marks / injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

Emotional Abuse

- Bullying of others
- Difficulty in forming/ maintaining relationships with others
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

Neglect

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger
- Inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger
- Untreated illness
- Compulsive stealing / begging

Sexual abuse

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

Child Sexual Exploitation

- Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

Role of Staff Members

In the event that a staff member becomes aware or suspects child abuse it is important that the response is sensitive and appropriate.

In all cases, staff will act promptly, bringing concerns to the attention of the Designated Teacher, Mrs McFadden or one of the Deputy Designated Teachers.

In cases where a child makes a disclosure, staff will:

- Listen to what the child says without showing or expressing shock.
- Allow the pupil to tell what has happened in his/her own words without interrupting or interrogating.
- Reassure the child that what they have said has been understood and that their interests are paramount
- Explain the obligation to refer the matter in order to seek help for the child.
- Not give a guarantee of confidentiality
- Make written notes at the earliest opportunity but not as the pupil talks. Staff will try to write down the actual words used.
- Keep notes factual and securely stored.
- Refer the matter to the Designated Teacher as a matter of urgency.

Who needs to know?

It is not always possible to provide teachers with the full details of a child's circumstances. Information is shared in the interest of the pupil's welfare, but this is balanced against pupil and parental rights to confidentiality.

Parents will be kept informed of who is notified within school and other agencies, unless doing so would place the child at further risk.