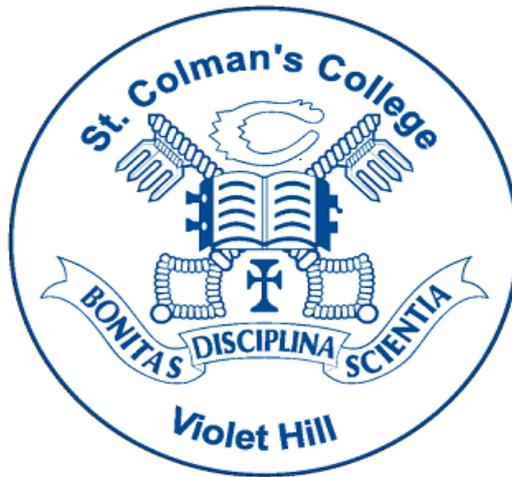


***ST. COLMAN'S COLLEGE
VIOLET HILL***



***CHILD PROTECTION &
SAFEGUARDING
POLICY***

*Last Reviewed: May 2018
Reviewed by: Mr M Doyle
Date of next Review: September 2020*

1. INTRODUCTION

The following statements of principle, policy and procedure aim to set the conceptual framework which underpins the practices within St. Colman's College. This ethos is reflected in all actions and decisions taken by staff as they follow the detailed guidance set out in the EA's Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 2017/04, Children (NI) Order 1995 Guidance and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005)

1.1 General Principles

The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' (UK Agreement in 1991) and enshrined in the Children (NI) Order 1995 (effective from November 1996). In particular, the principle we support is that every child or young person has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care by those looking after them given to their physical, emotional, spiritual well being.

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection activity and underpin the guidance which we follow:

- The pupil's welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a pupil is disabled or has special needs these must also be taken into consideration.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting pupils and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is a conflict, the pupil's interests must always come first.
- Pupils have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. Where a pupil has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this.
- Actions taken to protect the pupil should not in themselves be abusive by causing the pupil unnecessary distress or further harm.

2. CONTEXT

St. Colman's College as an educational institution is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all its pupils. Positive action is being taken to ensure this. The College acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and through the general ethos of the College is totally committed to the protection of all its pupils. Every young person is treated as an individual and every effort is made to ensure that he achieves his full potential.

3. PROCEDURES

St. Colman's College recognises its five main responsibilities in the areas of Child Protection. These are in the areas of prevention, recognition, response, referral and confidentiality/record keeping. Parents will be made aware of St. Colman's responsibilities and procedures and we expect they will support us in our practice.

3.1 School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding Team

- Designated Teacher (Mr Michael Doyle)
- Deputy Designated Teachers (Mr Ciaran O'Hare, Dr Patrick Collins, Mr Kevin Franklin and Mrs Helen Doherty)
- Principal (Mr Cormac McKinney)
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Mrs Ciara McKeown)
- Vice Chair/Acting Chair of the Board of Governors (Mr Liam Quinn)

3.2 Prevention

We offer a supportive environment to children and young people who are being abused, have been abused and may in the future be abused. Pupils are vulnerable.

St. Colman's has developed and provides a 'child protection ethos' and a preventative curriculum. We offer children an alternative model to violent or abusive behaviour and alternative methods of responding. We aim to involve the whole College community in creating a 'listening educational establishment'.

The College offers protection on two levels:

- Immediate protection - creating a listening environment that makes it easier for pupils to share their concerns.
- Long term protection, enhancing self esteem and encouraging pro social skills, helping to break the cycle of abusive behaviour.

The Staff and Board of Governors ensures that the curriculum includes a programme for pupils on personal safety. Management ensures the Relationships and Sexuality Programme is consistent with the Department of Education's circular on this topic. Where the programme in Relationships and Sexuality forms part of several subjects, there is careful co-ordination and planning of what is provided.

The Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Governors ensures that St. Colman's College follows the Code of Conduct for the conduct of all members of staff towards the pupils attending the College. The Code of Conduct covers all activities organised in, and by St. Colman's College whether on the College premises or elsewhere.

We ensure that persons beyond St. Colman's staff who are invited to be involved as helpers/leaders on educational visits, residential visits, or other out of school educational activities are subject to vetting procedures in keeping with current arrangements for the care and protection of children and young people.

We ensure that we provide effective management for our staff through adequate training and supervision.

6. What Is Child Abuse?

6.1 Definition of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. The procedures outlined in this document are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with a duty of care towards a child.

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from ‘Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016’.

6.2 Types of Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying-including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones-by a child’s peers.

Neglect is the persistent 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 suffer from other types of abuse.

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.

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, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking.

6.3 Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People

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.

6.4 Children Who Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in **section 7** of this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from the Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved. The above guidance follows DE Circular 2016/05 subject Children Who Display Harmful Sexualized Behaviour.

Domestic Violence

It is now recognised that children who live in an atmosphere of domestic violence may be at risk. Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Symptoms which young people may display and which are indicators only include:

- Nervousness
- Low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nightmares / flashbacks
- Physiological – stress / nerves
- Stomach pain
- Bed wetting
- Immature / needy behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Aggression
- Internalising distress or withdrawal
- Truancy
- Alcohol and drugs
- Bullying

These symptoms can lead to a child/ young person being misdiagnosed as having an illness, learning difficulties, or being naughty or disruptive.

If it comes to the attention of school staff that domestic abuse is or may be a factor for a child/young person this must be passed to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teachers who have an obligation to share the information with Social Services.

We will take seriously any concerns which are raised about a pupil in our school who has self-harmed and/or has expressed suicidal thoughts.

The Designated/Deputy Designated teachers will immediately follow the school's child protection procedures.

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.

6.2 Specific Types of Abuse

Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People

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.

Potential indicators of CSE:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation
- Truancy/leaving school without permission
- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Receiving lots of texts/ phone calls prior to leaving
- Change in mood - agitated/stressed
- Appearing distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age
- Physical symptoms e.g. bruising; bite marks
- Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis
- New peer groups
- Significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Low self-esteem
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)
- Self harm and other expressions of despair
- Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse

While these indicators can be useful in identifying potential risk, their presence does not necessarily mean CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence mean it is not.

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM involves 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.

FGM is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM a report should be made to the PSNI without delay. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, a referral should be made to the relevant HSCT Gateway Services.

Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between normal childhood and adolescent sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate abusive or aggressive behaviour. Professional judgement may be required. However, any cause for concern should be reported to the Designated Teacher who will seek advice.

Problematic Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Not age appropriate
- One off incident of low key touching over clothes
- Result of peer pressure
- Spontaneous rather than planned
- Lacking in other balancing factors e.g. no intent to cause harm, level of understanding, acceptance of responsibility
- Targeting other children, to irritate and make feel uncomfortable. Often the children are not scared and can feel free to tell someone
- Concerning to parents / carers, supportive
- Sometimes involving substances which disinhibit behaviours

Problematic sexual 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, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the Education Authority CPSS may be required. The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Lacks the consent of the victim
- When the perpetrator uses threats or violence (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce or intimidate the victim
- Uses age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
- Involves inappropriate touching
- Involves sexual behaviour between children – it is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older – particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- Involves a younger child abusing an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and school must seek the support that is available from the CPSS.

Abusive Images of Children

The production of abusive images of children can involve contact sexual abuse of children and/or the manipulation of innocent images, including video, film or photographic data. Such images are often distributed for sexual gratification and sometimes for financial gain. Modern technology has become a key mechanism for distributing abusive images of children and/or young people. Where abusive images or images intended for sexual gratification are identified as that of a child or young person, this must be referred to the Gateway Service in the relevant HSCT and/or the PSNI

E-Safety/Internet Abuse

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

Four categories have been identified

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

Please refer to e safety policy and safer internet use policy

Sexting

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

1. Sexting between individuals in a relationship

Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases the school should contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance. Advice should be sought from CPSS.

Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where an agency, organisation or practitioner has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately

Warning signs within the school environment:

- Absence and persistent absence.
- Request for extended leave of absence/failure to return from visits to country of origin.
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins.
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.
- Poor exam results.
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility and not being provided with suitable education at home.
- Not allowed to attend extracurricular activities.
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger.
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education.

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)

Harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Fabricated or induced illness by parents or carers can cause significant harm to children.

The Concepts of Harm and Significant Harm

The Children Order defines 'harm' as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. The Order states that 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse, forms of ill-treatment which are physical and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; 'health' means physical and / or mental health; and 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

There is no absolute definition of ‘significant harm’, as this will be assessed on a case by case basis. Article 50(3) of the Children Order states that “where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child”.

Where we suspect harm a referral will be made to the local Gateway Team

Dealing with Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Children with a Disability

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

Children / Young People Who Go Missing

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risks of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family, or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child or young person returns, having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children and young people may have been abused.

Young people in Supported Accommodation

Staff should be aware of and adhere to additional guidance for young people leaving care and those living in supported accommodation.

Children of Parents with Additional Support Needs

Children and young people can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action taken to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm in these circumstances encompasses joint working between specialist disability and children’s social workers and other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members. This will assist in ensuring the welfare of the children and young people in the family is promoted and they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, consideration should be given to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

Children with limited fluency in English

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

Gender Identity issues and Sexual orientation

Young people from the LGBTQ community may face particular difficulties which could make them more vulnerable to harm. These difficulties could range from intolerance and homophobic bullying from others to difficulties for the young person themselves in exploring and understanding their sexuality. At such times young people may be more vulnerable to predatory advances from adults seeking to exploit or abuse them. This could impede a young person's ability or willingness to raise concerns if they feel they are at risk or leave young people exposed to contact with people who would exploit them.

As a staff working with young people from the LGBT community we will support them to appropriately access information and support on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation

Children / Young People's Behaviours

Peer Abuse

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child or young person has been harmed by another, all professionals should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both children and young people who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

Self-harm

Self-harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours and things that people do to themselves in a deliberate, and usually hidden way, which are damaging. It may indicate a temporary period of emotional pain or distress, or deeper mental health issues which may result in the development of a progressive pattern of worsening self-harm that may ultimately result in death by misadventure or suicide. Self-harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and/or prescribed drugs. Self-harming behaviours may indicate that a child or young person has suffered abuse; however this is not always the case. Appropriate advice should be sought from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals including those in the non-statutory sector to make informed assessments of risk in relation to self-harming behaviours.

Suicidal Ideation

It is important that children and young people who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in parasuicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the non-statutory sector, to ensure they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risk and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.

POSSIBLE 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 of abuse or unexplained changes in behaviour or performance, which may indicate abuse.

In all cases where 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 should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher/DDT. A parent or other carer may also give information to a member of staff of the school which gives rise to concern about possible child abuse by someone outside the school, or by a person working in the school in a volunteer capacity. The member of staff should advise the person making the complaint that the matter will be brought to the attention of the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teachers.

It is not possible to give complete lists of symptoms, only indicators of abuse. The following signs do not necessarily point to abuse, as they can be due to other medical or social reasons, but if staff are concerned by any or a combination of these signs they should pass on their concerns to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teachers.

A child who is neither being abused nor at risk of abuse may nevertheless be in need of help from Social Services and/ other support services (eg Hub, Behavioural Support Team etc) and in such cases a referral, with Parental consent, will be made to Social Services. Social Services welcome indications of concern at an early stage, and often can provide assistance to a family and prevent circumstances from reaching a stage when child protection proceedings become necessary.

1. Signs of Physical Abuse

- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Unexplained injuries or burns particularly if they are recurrent
- refusal to discuss injuries
- untreated injuries
- disclosure of punishment which appears excessive
- fear of parents being contacted
- bald patches
- withdrawal from physical contact
- arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- fear of returning home
- fear of medical help
- self-destructive tendencies
- aggression towards others
- chronic running away

2. Signs of Emotional Abuse

- physical, mental and emotional development delay
- disclosure of punishment which appears excessive
- over-reaction to mistakes
- continual self-deprecation
- sudden speech disorders
- fear of new situations
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- neurotic behaviour
- self- mutilation
- fear of parents being contacted
- extremes of passivity or aggression
- drugs/solvent abuse
- chronic running away
- compulsive stealing/scavenging

3. Signs of Neglect

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene
- constant tiredness
- poor state of clothing
- emaciation
- frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- untreated medical problems
- destructive/tendencies
- low self-esteem
- neurotic behaviour
- no social relationships
- chronic running away
- compulsive stealing or scavenging

4. Signs of Sexual Abuse

- being chronically depressed/suicidal
- using drugs/drink excessively/self-mutilation
- unexplained pregnancies
- being anorexic/bulimic
- chronic running away
- being inappropriately seductive
- being fearful about certain people like relatives and friends
- not being allowed to go out on dates or have friends around
- soreness, bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- excuses not to go home or to a particular place
- recurring nightmares/being afraid of the dark
- being unable to concentrate/playing truant
- a sudden change in school/work habits
- having a friend who has 'a problem'
- chronic ailments such as stomach pains/upsets and headaches
- sexually abusing a child sibling or friend
- being withdrawn, isolated/becoming excessively worried
- outbursts of anger or irritability
- being fearful of undressing for PE
- having unexplained sums of money

The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a child protection nature.

Do:	Do not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Listen to what the child says ❖ Assure the child they are not at fault ❖ Explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret ❖ Document exactly what the child says using his/her exact words ❖ Remember not to promise the child confidentiality ❖ Stay calm ❖ Listen ❖ Accept ❖ Reassure ❖ Explain what you are going to do ❖ Record accurately ❖ Seek support for yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ask leading questions. ❖ Put words into the child's mouth. ❖ Ignore the child's behaviour. ❖ Remove any clothing. ❖ Panic ❖ Promise to keep secrets ❖ Ask leading questions ❖ Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily ❖ Delay ❖ Start to investigate ❖ Do Nothing

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St. Colman's College. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

More specific guidelines are contained in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy

3.4 Response

In the event of an allegation of child abuse the member of staff will:

- ◆ Listen to the pupil and accept what is said
- ◆ Record statements using "Note of concern" Appendix 1
- ◆ Explain what they have to do next and to whom they have to talk
- ◆ Reassure the pupil they have done the right thing to talk about it
- ◆ Refer information to the designated member of staff

RECORDING NOTES

3.4.1 Record Keeping

Proper records, dated and signed, must be kept of all complaints or information received. All concerns about possible abuse must be noted. Notes should be factual and in neutral language. The note taker's personal feelings or reactions to the information should not be recorded. Notes must not be written on computer for reasons of security. Records of all cases of suspected or possible child abuse showing dates, events and actions taken, are kept in a locked cabinet accessed only by members of the Safeguarding Team.

Why take Notes?

- aid to memory
- protection for the note taker if the other party alleges something different was said during the meeting
- protection and information for the College.

What to Record:

- the nature of the information
- who gave it
- the time, date and circumstances
- where the concern relates to signs or symptoms of possible abuse, a description of these, if they are visible.

When to record:

- as soon after the meeting as possible
- during the meeting if all parties are comfortable with that

The Principal or Designated Teacher/DDT's should also record:

- details of any advice sought, from whom and when
- the decision reached as to whether the case should be referred to Social Services and, if so, how, when and by whom this was done; otherwise, reasons for not referring to Social Services

All records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These only identify the pupil by their initials and date of birth. These records are kept separate from any other file which is held on the pupil.

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

The DT/DDT will give a report on Child Protection activity at a full Board of Governors each term. No details will be shared with the Governors that could identify a young person or his family.

Should a child transfer to another school whilst there are current child protection concerns, we will share these concerns with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

3.5 CP procedure for visiting students:

If a student from a visiting school makes a disclosure to any member of staff in the host school, then that staff member will immediately inform the DT/DDT for the Host School. The DT/DDT from the host school will then immediately contact the DT/DDT for the visiting Student.

Please inform your students who the DT and the DDT are for the schools they are visiting.

3.6 Referral - Co-operating to Safeguard and protect Children and Young People

Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse

The designated member of staff for child protection is Mr Michael Doyle -Vice-Principal. In his absence the Deputy Designated Teachers are Mr Ciaran O'Hare, Dr Patrick Collins, Mr Kevin Franklin and Mrs Helen Doherty (all SLT members) who will assume responsibility for child protection matters in the absence of Mr Doyle

If a pupil 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 pupil, **the member of staff must act promptly.**

He/she should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to the designated member of staff, discuss the matter with him/her and make full notes.

The designated member of staff will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made. If the Principal is not available, then advice will be sought and appropriate action taken.

The DT/DDT, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the pupil, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the pupil may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The DT/DDT/Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Designated Officer from the Education Authority (EA) or the Senior Social Gateway team. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the pupil is our first priority.**

3.6.1 Allegations against a member of staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated member of staff, if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply unless the complaint is about the designated member of staff or Principal. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

3.6.2 Allegations against the Principal

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated member of staff (or his deputy, if he is not available) must be informed immediately. He will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken, in keeping with the current DE guidelines.

3.6.3 Allegations against the designated member of staff

Any complaints must be referred to the Principal. The above procedure will apply.

3.6.4 Suspension from duties

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

3.6.5 How A Parent Can Make A Complaint About A Possible Child Protection Issue

If a parent or guardian has a concern about the safety of his/her own child or any other child, the parent/guardian is expected to contact the Designated Teacher (DT) for Child Protection or Deputy Designated Teachers (DDT's) without delay.

The DT/DDT's will inform the Principal and will carry out a discreet preliminary clarification. The Designated Teacher/DDT's will refer the matter to Social Services if it is deemed necessary and will report back to the parent/guardian on the progress and outcome of the complaint as soon as possible. If a parent/guardian is still concerned he/she may contact the Principal directly. If the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the outcome he/she may refer the complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. If a parent/ guardian has exhausted all these steps, he/she may contact the NI Public Services ombudsman. At any stage a parent/guardian can contact Social Services or PSNI, see Appendix 2.

Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher(s) or Principal may be invited to attend an initial and review Child Protection Case Conferences and/or core group meetings convened by the Health & Social Care Trust. They will provide a written report which will be compiled following consultation with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the 'need to know' principle on a case-by-case basis. Children whose names are on the Child Protection register will be monitored and supported in accordance with the child protection plan.

4. STAFF IN-SERVICE

St. Colman's College is committed to in-service training for all staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and Procedures with other members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities.

4.1 The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher

The designated teacher and deputy designated teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role. Organise training for all staff (whole school training)
- Lead in the development of the school's Child protection policy
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child protection arrangements for parent
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI (Central referral Unit) where appropriate
- Liaise with the EA's Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Maintain records of all child protection concerns.
- Keep the School Principal informed
- Provide written report to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection activity.

4.2 The Principal

The Principal must ensure that: -

- DENI 2017/04 is implemented within the school
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed
- That all staff receives child protection training.
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner.
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed.
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates & annual report are provided
- That the School's child protection policy is reviewed annually and that parents and pupils receive a copy of this policy at least once every 2 years.
- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be shared with Governors on a need to know basis.

4.3 The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
- Ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
- Ensure that Governors, including the Chair, undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the EA's Child Protection Support Service(CPSS) and School Development Service (SDS).
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal.

- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates and a written annual report in relation to child protection activity

4.4 Other Members of School Staff

Staff in school see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse.

They should remember the 5 Rs: *Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record* and *Refer*

The member of staff must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Child Protection/Principal
- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the child
- act promptly
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child "Note of concern" (**Appendix 1**)
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children
- **Not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures
- **Not** investigate
- **Not** ask leading questions

In addition, the Class Teacher should:

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about 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 pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

Code of Conduct

(See also separate document)

- All staff in St Colman's College are aware of, and adheres to the Code of Conduct.
- If any member of staff is concerned at the treatment of any pupil by another member of staff, he/she will inform the Designated Teacher/DDT'S, who will take appropriate action.

4.5 Parents

Parents should play their part in safeguarding by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;
- letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
- familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school
- **raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.**

5. RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

The school will observe the guidelines outlined in DENI Circulars 2006/06, 2006/07, 2006/08 and 2006/09 and subsequent DE circulars.

VISITORS TO THE COLLEGE

All visitors to the College are required to report to Reception. Visitors passing beyond the Reception area will have their details recorded at Reception and identity badges will be issued. Any member of staff who arranges any visit to the College must ensure that this is completed and that the visitor wears the identity badge and is accompanied at all times.

The Preventative Curriculum

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice boards at school entrances and relevant information in each resource area, which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is also on display. An enlarged flow diagram for a teacher allegation is in staff room.

Staff should ensure that all materials/content delivered in classes or performances are age-appropriate. Some examples of the topics that are delivered across the year groups at various stages throughout the year are: Anti-bullying seminars, Child Sexual Exploitation, (Crashing), Internet safety, Drug addiction, Gambling, Taking risks, positive mental health. The list is not exhaustive.

Some of the bodies delivering these programs are: PiPs, Start 360, REIM, PSNI.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

St. Colman's College will update this Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary, and review it annually.

A monitoring instrument has been drawn up to be used to ensure that the agreed Policy and Procedures have been implemented. On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

A noticeboard in a prominent area of the school bears all the phone numbers of the following organisations: Samaritans (028) 3026 6366, Relate Teen (028) 9032 3454, AA (028) 3026 5406, NI Childline (0870) 3362945 and NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (0800) 8005000.

Appendix 1

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:

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:

I have a concern about my/a child's safety



I can talk to the class/form teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman

Tel: 0800 343 424



At any time I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team [insert local Gateway telephone] or the PSNI Central Referral Unit at 028 9025 9299

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

Member of staff completes the Note of Concern on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY.
Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised.

Staff member discusses concerns with the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence and provides note of concern.

Designated Teacher should consult with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay. If required advice may be sought from a CPSS officer

Child Protection referral is required

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 risk of significant harm then telephones the Children's Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/ parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.

Child Protection referral is not required

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support 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).

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.

Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff

