

ROSSMAR SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT

Child Protection

Date Written: August 2026

Update Due: August 2027

Date Ratified:

Chair of BOG:

TOGETHER WE GROW, LEARN, SUCCEED



Marjorie Boxall
Quality Mark
Award 2023



Child Protection/Safeguarding Ethos

We in Rossmar School have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This policy sets out guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school

Principles

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

- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.
- In any incident the child's welfare must be paramount; this overrides all other considerations.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.

Other Relevant Policies

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

- Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force
- Learning Support
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships/Sex Education
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- eSafety and Acceptable Use
- Intimate Care
- Critical Incident
- Complaints
- Whistleblower
- Record Retention and Destruction Policy and a Disposal of Records Schedule including a Retention and Storage Policy for Child Protection Records

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing a copy should contact the School Principal.

School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding team

- Chair of the Board of Governors- Mr David Poston

- Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mr Nigel Monteith
- Principal- Mrs Caroline Clements
- Designated Teacher- Miss Laura Fisher
- Deputy Designated Teacher and Head of Pastoral Care- Mrs Joanne McCallion
- Deputy Designated Teacher and Head of Positive Relationships and Pupil Development – Mrs Karen Haslet

It is essential that pupils, parents and staff are made aware of any changes to this team. Pupils will be informed of changes by their class teacher, in assemblies and using the Child Protection posters around school. Parents will be informed via our social networks, on the school website and via Seesaw. Staff will be informed by staff email, at briefings and at the annual Child Protection training led by the designated teacher. The CP leaflet will be distributed annually.

Roles and Responsibilities

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 undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment & selection training provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the EA Governor Support and Human Resource departments;
- 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 full written annual report in relation to child protection activity.
- That the school has an Anti-Bullying policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying.
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circulars

The Designated Governor For Child Protection

The Designated Governor will provide the Child Protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

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

The Board of Governors

Board of Governors must ensure:

- That the school has a Child Protection Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
- Relevant Child Protection training is kept up-to-date by at least one governor and a record kept of the same;
- That confidentiality is paramount. Information should only be passed to an entire Board of Governors on a need-to-know basis.

The Principal

The Principal must ensure that:-

- DENI 2017/4 is implemented within the school;
- That a designated teacher and deputy are appointed;
- That all staff receive child protection training;

- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner;
- That the Chair of the Board of Governors (and the Board of Governors) is kept informed;
- That child protection activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings (termly updates & annual report);
- 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 passed to the entire Board of Governors on a need to know basis.

The Designated Teacher (And Deputy)

The designated teacher and deputy must:-

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role;
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training);
- Ensuring staff are aware of how to access and complete Notes of Concern.
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy;
- Act as a point of contact for staff, pupils and parents;
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents;
- Make referrals to Social Services (Gateway team) or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate;
- Liaise with the EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) designated officers for Child Protection;
- Maintain records of all child protection concerns;
- Keep the School Principal informed;
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding child protection. It is good practice to also provide a termly update on Child Protection activities and initiatives.

School Staff

School staff members see children over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse. Staff should be alert to all types of abuse and to their legal obligations including reporting of offences - Section 5 of the **Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** makes it an offence to fail to disclose an arrestable offence. This includes crimes against children.

School Staff members must:

- refer concerns to the Designated/deputy teacher for Child Protection;
- listen to what is being said and support the child;
- act promptly;
- make a concise written record of a child's disclosure using the actual words of the child. The staff member should use the Pupil Disclosure Form/Record of Concern;
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed through the written Record of Concern pro-forma or verbally about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions;
- 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.
- Staff should **not** ask the child to write an account of their disclosure for the record.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers should play their part in Child Protection by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence or inform the school via Seesaw, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation;

- informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child school for appointments etc;
- arranging a meeting before entering the school premises should they wish to speak to a teacher;
- reporting to the office when they visit the school;
- raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

Adult Safeguarding

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

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount at all times.
- Maximising the student's choice, control and inclusion, and protecting their human rights.
- Working in partnership with others in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

We will follow the procedures outlined in this policy when responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to our students who are 18 years or over.

What is Child 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.

We use the following definitions:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth). Class teachers use the 'Continuous monitoring form for pupils at risk of neglect.'

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour. School staff should also be aware that female genital mutilation (FGM) is becoming an increasingly common form of physical abuse in the UK. The procedure has no health benefits and can cause severe bleeding, infection, problems urinating and potential childbirth complications leading to deaths of new born babies. The impact of undergoing FGM is not only physical; the fact that the procedure has been inflicted on the girl by her family makes it particularly traumatic. More detailed information about FGM is available upon request from the Vice Principal. Also - see *Appendix 1*

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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.

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. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

For signs and symptoms of abuse and specific types of abuse– see Appendix 1

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.

Specific Types of Abuse

In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in Rossmar School are aware of and have therefore included them in our policy. Please see *Appendix 1*

Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Some children have increased risk of abuse due to specific vulnerabilities such as disability, lack of fluency in English or sexual orientation. We have included information about children with increased vulnerabilities in our policy. Please see *Appendix 1*.

Procedures for Making Complaints in Relation to Child Abuse

How a Parent can make a Complaint

At Rossmar School we aim to work closely with the parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of the child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If a parent has a concern they can talk to the class teacher or the Principal/Designated teacher for child protection. If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors. At any time a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Public Protection Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart in *Appendix 2*. Parents are also informed about this annually at transition days, via Seesaw and on notices around the school.

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

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child they should not investigate – this is a matter for the Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with her and make full notes. These notes or records should be factual, objective in nature and include what was seen, said, heard or reported, the place and time of who was present and should be given to the designated teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

The designated teacher may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information or from others who may have relevant information. The designated teacher may also consult with the CPSS or Social Services (Gateway Team) before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.

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

Where consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person is sought to make a referral to Social Services we will explain at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be, shared and why, and seek their agreement to making the referral. In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person is withheld we will consider and, where possible respect, their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made, the designated teacher will telephone the Western Health & Social Services Gateway Team. She will also notify the Education Authority's designated officer for child protection (CPSS). A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team. *This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown in Appendix 3.*

Consent

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

In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person has been sought and is withheld we will consider and where possible respect their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

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

Guidelines for Staff

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

Do's

- Do listen to what the child says.
- Do assure the child they are not at fault.
- Do explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret.
- Do document exactly what the child says, using his/her exact words.
- Do remember not to promise the child confidentiality.

Don'ts

- Don't ask leading questions.
- Don't put words into the child's mouth.
- Don't ignore the child's behaviour.
- Don't remove any clothing.

The Designated Teacher will work with the class teachers to ensure that children who are not fluent in English are 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. The Designated Teacher will work with the class teachers to seek advice from the EA's Inclusion and Diversity Service to identify and respond to any particular communication needs that a newcomer pupil may have. We try to create an atmosphere in which our pupils, all of whom have special educational needs, have some means to communicate if they feel worried or upset about anything.

Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal/Designated teacher (or the deputy designated teacher if she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/Designated teacher). If a complaint is made against the Principal/Designated teacher the Chairperson of The Board of Governors will be informed and he will ensure that necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to the Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chair of the Board of Governors will also be informed immediately.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the agreed disciplinary procedures for teachers, a detailed record of the complaint, signed by the Principal, shall be retained on the child's file and the file of the member of staff concerned. An entry will also be made in the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints which is held by the Principal.

If, on foot of a subsequent investigation by one of the investigating agencies, the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record on the file of the member of staff concerned shall be expunged, and the entry in the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints deleted or struck through. However, where disciplinary investigation or action is undertaken in the context of child protection, all details relating to the complaint and disciplinary sanction shall be maintained on the teachers file for a period of 5 years. The record on the child's file should be noted accordingly, and should be maintained indefinitely* in case there should be subsequent complaints. In all other cases, the record on both the child's file and the staff member's file should be maintained indefinitely.

An update on the school's Record of Child Abuse complaints will be made available to the Board of Governors/Management Committee at least annually. The record will be signed annually by the Chair of the Board of Governors.

This procedure with names and contact numbers is shown *in Appendix 4*.

** as a general guide 'indefinitely' should be a minimum of 40 years (DENI guidance 2016).*

Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a volunteer

Any complaint about the conduct of a person working in the school in a voluntary capacity should be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is on the school's staff, and the above procedures followed. If the Principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer should be terminated immediately.

Safe Recruitment Measures

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate.

At Rossmar School we follow the safe recruitment responsibilities and processes as set out in:

DE Circular 2013/01 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Vetting Requirements for Paid Staff working in or Providing a Service in Schools':

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201301-guidance-schools-and-employing-authorities-pre-employment-safer

DE Circular 2012/19 'Disclosure and Barring Arrangements: Changes to Pre-Employment Vetting Checks for Volunteers Working in Schools from 10 September 2012:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201219-changes-pre-employment-vetting-checks-volunteers-working-schools

Volunteers, Guest Speakers and Visitors

From time to time, volunteers may be used to assist in school. This could be in the classroom, on school trips, by transporting children to events or assisting with school teams and clubs. Employees are requested to complete a risk assessment (*appendix 5*) with the volunteer. Copies of this should be given to the volunteer, line manager and to the Vice Principal. All staff, including volunteers who are appointed to positions in the School, are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

Teachers who arrange for guest speakers to visit the school are responsible for the full supervision of the guest and must ensure that they sign in and out at the front desk. Visitor lanyards must be worn.

Visitors should be:

- Met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school by school staff.
- If appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school.
- Where possible, escorted by a member of staff/representative.
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- If delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

Attendance at Child protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings

The Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal may be invited to attend an Initial and/or Review Child Protection Case Conference or Core Group meeting convened by the Health & Social Care Trust and where possible a school representative will be in attendance. A written report will be provided for these meetings and will be compiled after discussion 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 in line with what has been agreed in each child's protection plan.

The approach to child protection **Case Conference** has changed recently across all Trusts. This new approach is called *Signs of Safety*. The model is grounded in partnership and collaboration, and was developed in Australia. It is now widely used across parts of the USA, the UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Japan and Ireland. From January 2020 all 5 health and Social Care Trusts in NI have adopted the *Signs of Safety* model at all Case Conferences.

In collaboration with the signs of Safety Implementation Team, the EA has produced a series of 5 short videos to help designated teachers prepare for the changes, understand the process, and know their role in contributing to the conference.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/safeguarding-and-child-protection/e-learning/signs-of-safety-model-for-case>

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies and where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, they have a legal duty to report this. However, only those who need to know will be told.

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

Record Keeping

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked cabinet. These records are kept separate from any other file that is held on the child or young person. If a complaint about possible child abuse is received by the school and is not referred to Social Services – or if it is referred and Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register – a record on the child's file will be preserved for DOB + 30 years and a confidential copy will be sent to any school to which the child subsequently transfers. Files must not be removed from the school premises except when taken to a case planning meeting or on foot of a court order. A book for recording when files are removed and returned is on top of the secure cabinet.

If the Social Services inform the school that a child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, a record of this fact and associated documentation from the Social Services will be maintained on the child's file while he or she continues to attend our school. Should a child transfer to another school whilst their name is on the Child Protection Register then we will inform the receiving school that his/her name is on the Register and the name of the child's Social Worker will be forwarded as well. All Social Services records held by us in relation to the child will then be destroyed. The school's own child protection records in relation to the child will be held in secure and confidential storage for DOB + 30 years.

Appendix 6 Example of Record-keeping Proforma

Code of Conduct for all Staff Paid or Unpaid

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. The school has a code of conduct

for staff which is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. *The school's code of conduct is included as Appendix 7.*

Staff Training

Rossmar School is committed to in-service training for its entire staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their role and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher; Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses. When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school Child Protection Policy and code of conduct and given a copy of *Child Protection Procedures booklet (Appendix 8)* which includes what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused.

Work Experience, School Trips and Educational Visits

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE and EA guidance on educational visits, school trips and work experience to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

The Preventative Curriculum

Rossmar School takes a proactive, not reactive approach to the Preventative Curriculum. Our aim in this respect is to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resilience of pupils so that they can develop coping strategies and make more positive choices in a range of situations.

During lessons, children are encouraged to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates. At the beginning of each school year class teachers provide guidance to pupils on where to find help, in or out of school, if they are experiencing abuse of any kind. The class teachers revisit this at the beginning of each new term.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies. A flow diagram of how a parent may make a complaint is on display in the front foyer. An enlarged flow diagram is in the school staff room.

Rossmar School Parent Teacher Association (Friends of Rossmar)

PTAs provide a great way to build the whole school community, including links with the wider society, all of which benefits the school and offers a positive influence within the local area.

PTA members provide a willing workforce for the school when extra hands are needed; hold social events to bond the school community; run extra-curricular clubs for children and adults, and support parents through times of change.

Members are knowledgeable about the school and enthuse about it to enhance its reputation to the wider community.

The PTA are volunteers not employees and as such, the policy requirements for the use of volunteers apply. Members of the PTA will at no time be left unsupervised with pupils. All members, as parents, are issued with the school's Child Protection policy annually and are therefore familiar with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Support for Parents

Both parents and professionals can access the SBNI App. The App provides regular ongoing up-dates and short videos on new, emerging themes and risks in the on-line world. It also provides access to Regional Policy and Procedure. The app can be downloaded for free in The APP Store for IOS and Android. The school also regularly uses See Saw and its social media platforms to promote support and links to organisations etc.

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.

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 safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It 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 the online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

PSNI Central Referral Unit (CRU)

Following consultation with EA CPSS, the school may make a referral to the PSNI Central Referral Unit (CRU). This is the single point of contact for all agencies and partners making referrals for suspected child abuse cases with a potential criminal aspect. cru@psni.police.uk

This policy document takes on board the best practice set out in the circulars 2017/04 and 2003/13, The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and the Department's "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools". The policy will be reviewed annually by the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) and in the light of any incidents and additional DENI requirements. This policy is one of the school's overall pastoral policies and should not be read in isolation.

Appendix 1

Signs and Symptoms of abuse – possible indicators

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Unexplained bruises – in various stages of healing – grip marks on arms; slap marks; human bite marks; welts; bald spots; unexplained/untreated burns; especially cigarette burns (glove like); unexplained fractures; lacerations; or abrasions; untreated injuries; bruising on both sides of the ear – symmetrical bruising should be treated with suspicion; injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday	Self-destructive tendencies; aggressive to other children; behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive); appears frightened or cowed in presence of adults; improbable excuses to explain injuries; chronic runaway; uncomfortable with physical contact; come to school early or stays last as if afraid to be at home; clothing inappropriate to weather – to hide part of body; violent themes in art work or stories

Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Looks very thin, poorly and sad; constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems; special needs of child not being met; constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene; repeatedly unwashed; smelly; repeated accidents, especially burns.	Tired or listless (falls asleep in class); steals food; compulsive eating; begging from class friends; withdrawn; lacks concentration; misses school medicals; reports that no carer is at home; low self-esteem; persistent non-attendance at school; exposure to violence including unsuitable videos.

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Well below average in height and weight; “failing to thrive”; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet; recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders; Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; rocking/head banging; inability to play; indifference to separation from family indiscriminate attachment;	reluctance for parental liaison; fear of new situation; chronic runaway; attention seeking/needing behaviour; poor peer relationships.

signs of self mutilation; signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness); extremes of physical, mental and emotional development (e.g. anorexia, vomiting, stooping).	
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Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas; torn, stained or bloody underclothes; chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches; difficulty in walking or sitting; frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers; unexplained pregnancies where the identify of the father is vague; anorexia/gross over-eating.	What the child tells you; Withdrawn; chronic depression; excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young child who can describe details of adult sexuality; parent/child role reversal; over concerned for siblings; poor self esteem; self devaluation; lack of confidence; peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents); hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control; sudden school difficulties e.g. deterioration in school work or behaviour; inappropriate sex play; repeated attempts to run away from home; unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's art work or stories; vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation; promiscuity; exposure to pornographic material

Specific Types of Abuse

How to identify FGM

The time when FGM is most likely to take place is at the start of the summer holidays, as there is then sufficient time for the girl to recover before returning to school.

Risk factors

Schools should be particularly alert for signs when a girl comes from a community where FGM is practised. Other risk factors include:

- where the family is less integrated within UK society
- where the mother or other women in the extended family have also been subject to FGM
- where a girl has been withdrawn from sex education lessons and there is a reluctance for her to be informed about her body and her rights.

Indicators that FGM is imminent

Indicators that it might be about to take place include:

- being a girl between the ages of 5 to 8 within a community where FGM is practised
- when a female family elder visits, particularly if she arrives from another country
- a girl talking about a 'special procedure' or saying that she is attending a special ceremony to become a woman
- a girl being taken out of the country for a prolonged period.

Indicators that it has taken place

Indications that FGM has already taken place include:

- a girl having difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- she spends longer than normal going to the toilet
- she spends long periods of time away from the classroom during the day because of bladder or menstrual problems
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college
- withdrawal or depression when a girl returns to school after a prolonged period of absence
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.'

The something received by the child or young person can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging. Fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor. The gain for those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse can include financial benefit, status or control.

CSE can take a variety of different forms. It can take place in person or online and involve both contact and non-contact sexual activities, including the production and distribution of sexual images or exposure to such images. Whilst CSE is not a specific criminal offence in itself, it does encompass a range of sexual offences and other forms of serious criminal misconduct that can be used to disrupt and prosecute this form of abuse.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis. CSE can be difficult to identify. Many children and young people – and professionals – can misinterpret such experiences as consensual and fail to recognise the exploitation involved. This can contribute to misplaced feelings of loyalty or shame on the part of victims, many of whom will consequently not self-disclose, and a potential failure to identify abusive situations on the part of professionals. However, the fact that all such scenarios are typified by a power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse and/or some form of vulnerability or limited availability of choice on the part of the young person clearly delineates/distinguishes the experiences as abusive.

As a result of the complexity of the transactional interaction outlined above, and the often conflicting feelings this engenders in victims, young people are frequently reluctant to disclose experiences of CSE. Because of this and because of the hidden nature of much of the abuse – CSE can be very difficult to identify.

A key element of this is awareness of the potential indicators of CSE. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc. without plausible explanation;
- Leaving home/care without permission;
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving;
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care;
- Returning distraught/ dishevelled or under the influence of substances;
- Requesting the morning after pill upon return;
- Truanting from school;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age;
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections;
- Concerning use of the internet;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by 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 misuse.

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has developed a public information campaign on CSE – “The More You Know, The More You See.” For further information go to www.safertoknow.info

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.

Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

Adults may misuse online settings eg chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms of digital communications, to try and establish contact with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared.

Those working or volunteering with children or young people should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming, and take early action in line with their child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs.

Practitioners should be aware that those involved in grooming may themselves be children or young people, and be acting under the coercion or influence of adults. Such young people must be considered victims of those holding power over them. Careful consideration should always be given to any punitive approach or 'criminalising' young people who may, themselves, still be victims and/or acting under duress, control,

threat, the fear of, or actual violence. In consultation with the PSNI and where necessary the PPS, HSC professionals must consider whether children used to groom others should be considered a child in need or requiring protection from significant harm.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:-

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.’

Sexual Violence and Abuse

‘any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).’

Statistics available for Northern Ireland in 2016 indicated an increase in the number of calls to PSNI and deaths due to domestic abuse, with approximately 27,628 calls made and six deaths recorded. At least 15,000 children are estimated to be living in a culture of/or are survivors of violence in the home.

NSPCC research carried out in 2009 ‘Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships’ highlights partner violence as a significant concern for young people’s wellbeing, providing unequivocal evidence for the need to develop more effective safeguards in this area of child welfare. The survey identified that three-quarters of girls in a relationship experienced emotional violence of some form, a third reported sexual violence and a quarter experienced physical violence with one in 10 girls the physical violence was defined as severe. Half of boys in a relationship reported emotional violence, 18 per cent experienced physical violence and 16 per cent sexual violence. Thus, a substantial number of young people will experience some form of violence from their partner before they reach adulthood.

Schools should ensure that:

- Training for Designated Teachers (DTs) for Child protection includes awareness of domestic violence and its impact on children;
- The Child Protection Policy includes recognition of the impact on children of an abusive family setting and states that cases will be reported to the appropriate statutory agency;
- Domestic and sexual violence and abuse is included in the school’s preventative curriculum

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.

There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with support needs, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

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.

Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Rossmar School support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to consider if behaviour is within the normal continuum or otherwise. It must also be borne in mind that sexually harmful behaviour is primarily a child protection concern.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'sexually harmful'. Healthy sexual behaviour will normally have no need for intervention, however consideration may be required as to appropriateness within a school setting. 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. Alternatively, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the EA CPSS may be required. The CPSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

Harmful sexualised behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when:

- There is no informed consent by the victim; and/or
- The perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim

Harmful sexualised behaviour can include:

- Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Using sexual violence or threats.
- Sexual behaviour between children 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.
- However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

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.

The SBNi published a report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

- **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.

For further information see: [Online Safety Hub - Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland \(safeguardingni.org\)](https://safeguardingni.org/)

Sexting/Sharing Nudes

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:

Sexting between individuals in a relationship

The reality is that children and young people consider this to be normal. 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).

It is important to remember that adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of sexual images.

Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet, **do not forward it to anyone else**. If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further whether or not it is intended to cause distress', the child protection procedures should be followed.



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

How to Raise a Concern—Information for Parents

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



I can talk to the Class Teacher / Head of Key Stage



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Miss Fisher (Vice Principal)



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Principal, Mrs Clements



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of the Board of Governors (Mr Poston) c/o Rossmar School



If I am still concerned, I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman
Tel: 0800 343 424

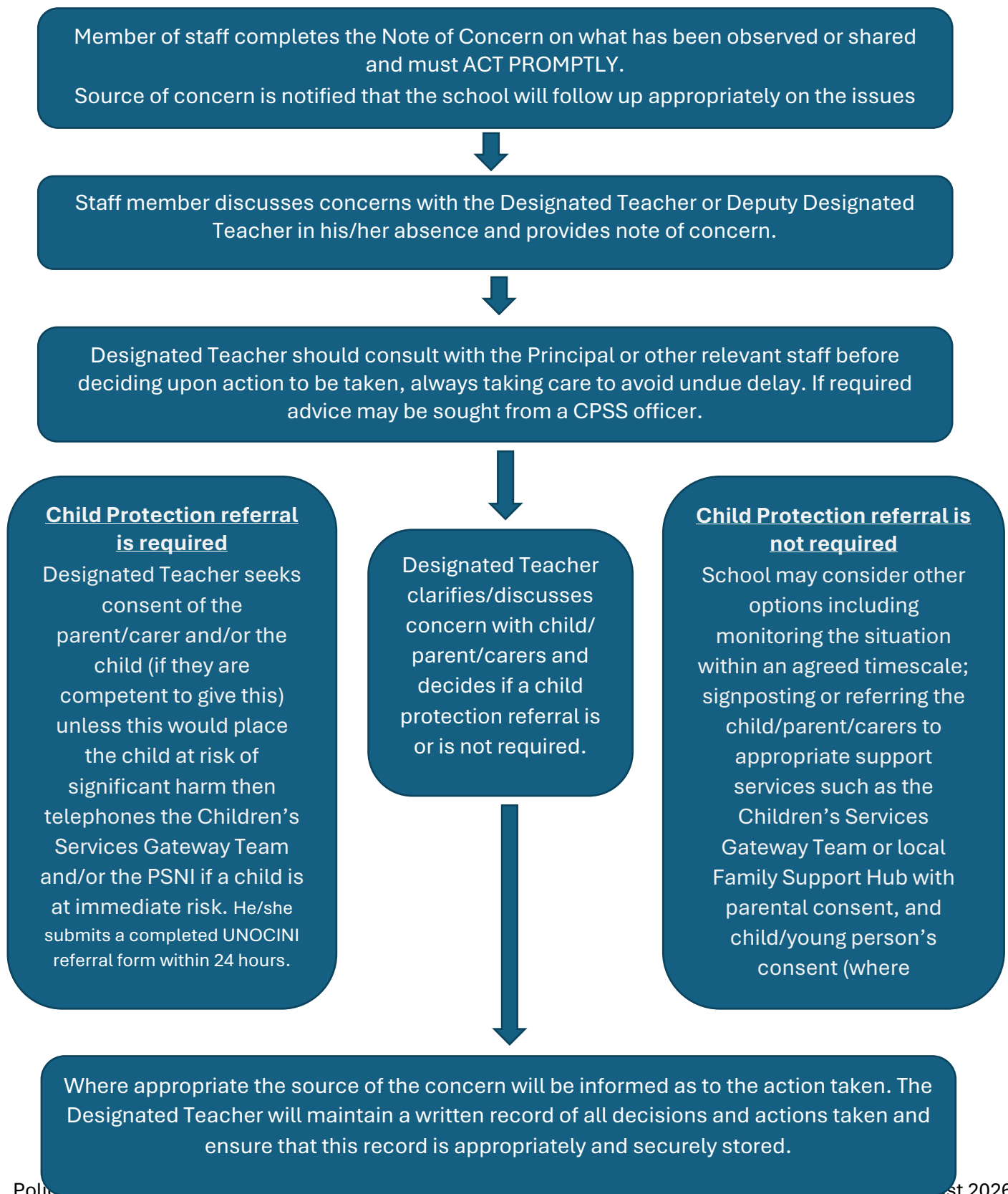


At any stage I can contact:

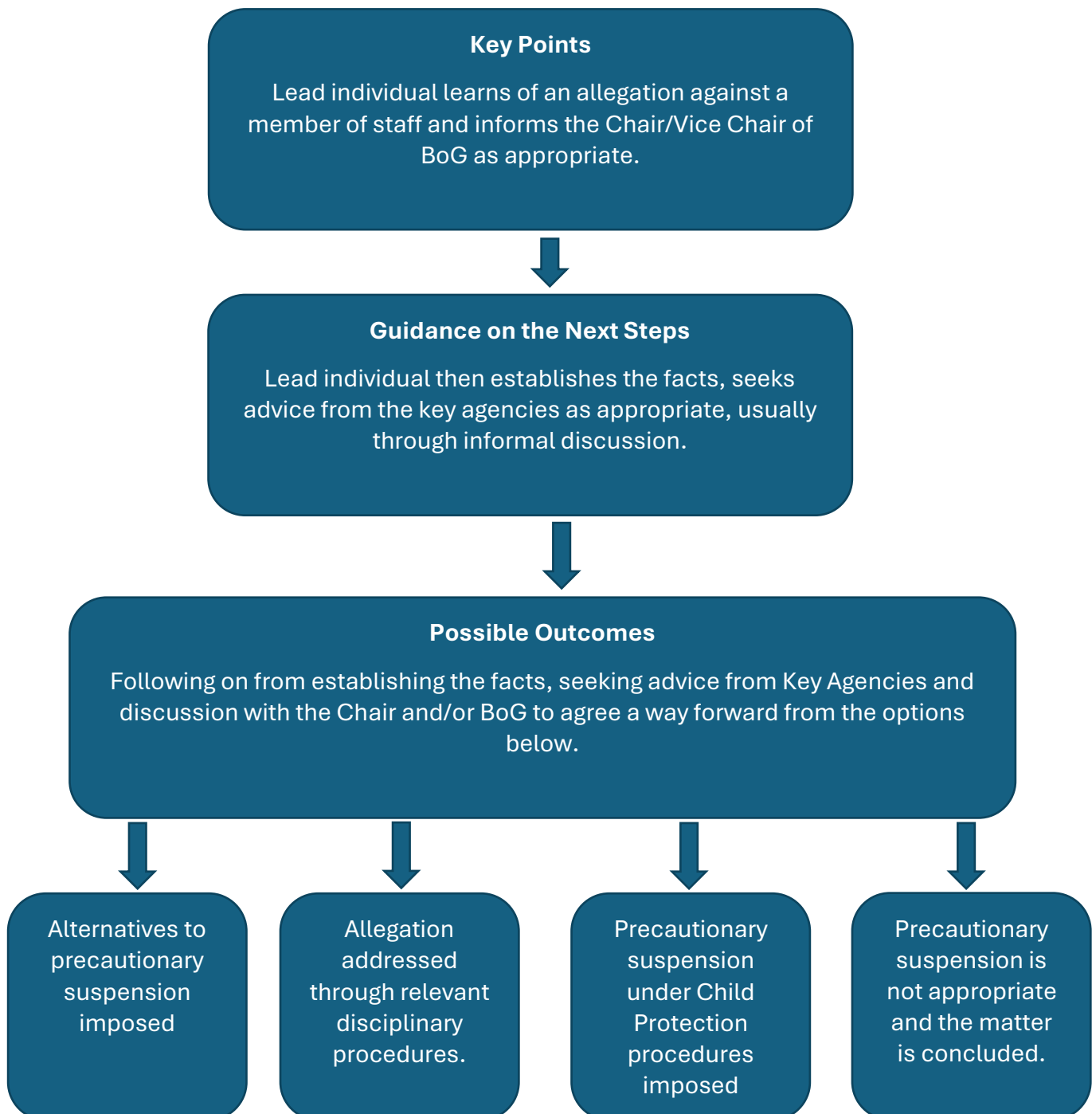
- EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) 028 9598 5590
- Gateway Social Services (Western Team) 028 7134 090
- PSNI (Western Public Protection Unit) 101
- The Regional Emergency Social Work Service: Tel. 028 9504 9999 (5.00pm to 9.00am and Public Holidays)
- Adult Protection Gateway Team: Tel. 028 7161 1366



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



Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff





Rossmar School

	Reason for the Risk Assessment
	Volunteer will be working in a classroom
	Volunteer will be supporting a class on a school trip or visit- may be responsible for a small group
	Volunteer transports children to events organised by school staff
	Other- please specify:

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Risk Ratings
Please tick relevant row	Specify significant hazards or risks that arise	Identify people potentially at risk	What control measures and mitigation will be put in place to minimise any risk?	High/Medium/Low
	Volunteer with regular contact working with children with significant unsupervised contact e.g. takes children for one to one or group work.	Children in class	Volunteer must be vetted – AccessNI check required	Low
	Volunteer will be working in a classroom with children, supporting groups and individuals under the general guidance and <u>full supervision</u> of the class teacher or member of staff.	Children in class	Volunteer will not be left alone with children, class will always have an employee present who has been fully vetted.	Low
	Volunteer will be supporting a class on a school trip and may be responsible for a small group under the general guidance and <u>full supervision</u> of the class teacher.	Children on trip	Volunteer will not be left alone with children. Overall supervision will rest with the lead teacher on the visit or trip. Teacher will take groups to the toilet or organise two adults to take the children.	Low
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Risk Ratings
	Volunteer for a one off event. Volunteer often supports trips and activities and takes responsibility for leading a small party of children with minimum or no supervision.	Children on trip	Volunteer must be vetted – AccessNI check required	Low
	Volunteer for a one off event. Not regular-	Children in car being transported	Where possible, two adults to be in the car.	Medium

	transporting a child in a car to a school organised event.		Children sit in the back seats of the car. Parental permission required. If in doubt, volunteer should be vetted.	
	Other- please specify:			

This risk assessment should be completed with the volunteer who will agree to control measures and mitigation. A copy of the risk assessment should be kept by the employee completing the document and further copies given to the volunteer and the Vice Principal.

Employee completing the risk assessment: _____

Agreed by: -

Volunteer: _____ Date: _____

Line Manager: _____ Date: _____

Vice Principal: _____ Date: _____

Child Protection Record of Concern or Disclosure

Pupils Name:	Class/Year Group :			
	DoB:			
Concern identified by:	Date:			
	Time:			am/pm
Nature of Concern / details of disclosure / other relevant information. If a disclosure has been made record actual words used by the child/young person				
Continue on reverse if needed				
Passed to:	Received by:	Date:		
Action taken by DT/DDT /Principal				
Signed: _____		Date:_____		
(DT/DDT/Principal)				
This form to be filed in pupil CP file				



Rossmar School

Code of Conduct – STAFF

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school whether they are on school property, on school trips, EA / Private buses, at school authorised events or activities or any event where Rossmar is being represented.

Introduction

Rossmar School is a place that promotes responsibility, respect and civility in a safe learning and teaching environment.

All pupils, parents, teachers, staff and volunteers have the right to be safe and feel safe and to be treated with dignity and respect in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety of others or oneself.

The school Positive Behaviour Policy sets clear standards of behaviour for pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors: provide direction to the school that ensure opportunity, excellence and accountability in the education system. Governors:

- Review policies regularly with staff. They ensure that Rossmar implements and enforces the Code of Conduct and all other rules to ensure standards are set for respect, civility and physical safety of all.
- Establish a process that clearly communicates the Code of Conduct to all parents, students and staff in a manner that ensures their commitment and support;
- Provide opportunities for all staff to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain the highest possible standards of education and a safe learning and teaching environment.

The Principal: is accountable to the Board of Governors. Under the direction of the Governors, she takes a leadership role in the daily operation of the school. She provides this leadership by:

- Demonstrating care and commitment to high standards of education and a safe teaching and learning environment;

- Holding everyone, under her authority, accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- Communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of the school community.

School Staff: under the leadership of the Principal, maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, staff and volunteers uphold these high standards when they:

- help pupils work to their full potential and develop their self-worth;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all pupils;
- demonstrate respect for all pupils, staff and parents;

Pupils: are to be treated with respect and dignity and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a pupil

- shows respect for themselves, for others and for those in authority;
- follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own action.

Parents: play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all pupils fulfil this responsibility when they:

- show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- become familiar with the Code of Conduct for Family Members and Visitors;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues.

Standards of Behaviour

Setting an Example

- All staff and volunteers who work in school set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff and volunteers must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- All staff and volunteers must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.

- All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- This Code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by EA.
- All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

All school members must:

- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- respect persons who are in a position of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching.

Physical Safety

No school members should:

- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- cause injury to any person with an object.
- be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol or illegal drugs.
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;

Staff should always seek assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully.

Dress Code

- Our work environment encourages employees to dress comfortably for work. Please do not wear anything that other employees might find offensive or that might make pupils, co-workers, parents or visitors uncomfortable.
- This includes clothing with profane language statements or clothing that promotes causes that include, but are not limited to, politics, religion, sexuality, race, age, gender, and ethnicity.
- Our goal is to provide a workplace environment that is comfortable and inclusive for all.

- We expect that your attire, although casual, will exhibit common sense and professionalism.
- Employees are expected to demonstrate good judgment and professional taste. Courtesy towards all and your professional image are the factors you need to use to assess whether you are dressing in attire that is appropriate.
- No aspect of an employee's dress or appearance should be politically motivated, sexually provocative, discriminatory, insensitive or offensive.

Therefore, staff should not:

- wear football tops
- wear clothes which are revealing or sexually provocative

Staff should:

- cover tattoos which may be deemed offensive to other people
- as a health and safety measure, piercings other than small ear studs are not permitted, and these should be removed for PE lessons
- keep hair tidy and out of their face
- keep nails at a length where they are unlikely to amount to a risk or cause harm to pupils.

Social Media

- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the school's E-Safety Policy and Child Protection Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.
- Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter pupils / parents either with their own profile or acting covertly.
- Contact with pupils must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.
- If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.

Links to E Safety Policy

The points below are directly from the E Safety Policy and are relevant to this Code of Conduct.

6.1 School email accounts and appropriate use

Each pupil and member of staff will have a user name and password allocated to them by C2K which will allow them to log on to the school network and also send and receive emails. If any member of staff or pupil is not using the system appropriately as set out in this policy and the ICT policy, then they can lose their access from C2K.

Staff should be aware of the following when using email in school:

- Staff should only use official school-provided email accounts to communicate with pupils, parents or carers. Personal email accounts should not be used to contact any of these people and should not be accessed during school hours.
- Staff must not share their password with others and must never let pupils access computer through their sign in.
- Emails sent from school accounts should be professionally and carefully written. Staff are representing the school at all times and should take this into account when entering into any email communications.

8. Mobile phone or personal device misuse

- Under no circumstances should staff use their own personal devices to contact pupils.
- Staff are encouraged to contact parents/carers via the school's phones where possible. However sometimes this may be impossible due to the being on a trip or out of school so a personal phone may be required to get in touch with parents/carers.
- It is preferable for staff not to use personal mobile phones to take photos of pupils for Seesaw and are strongly encouraged to use the school equipment where possible. However, this may not be avoided due to technical issues or being off school premises without school equipment. If staff are taking a photo of pupils, it must be witnessed by another staff member and then deleted as soon as possible, such as when it has been uploaded on to Seesaw.
- The school expects staff to lead by example. Personal use of mobile phones is prohibited during working hours.
- Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff. More information on this can be found in the child protection and safeguarding policy, or in the staff contract of employment.
- Staff must tell the C2k manager or a member of the Leadership Team if they receive any offensive, threatening or unsuitable emails either from within the school or from an external account. They should not attempt to deal with this themselves.
- The forwarding of chain messages is not permitted in school.

Links to Generative AI Policy

The points below are directly from the Generative AI Policy and are relevant to this Code of Conduct.

5.2 Risks for Staff

- **Misuse in assessment preparation:** Teachers must ensure work is authentic and monitor for AI-generated plagiarism.
- **Security:** Staff must avoid inputting sensitive data into AI tools without proper approval, reflecting good practice outlined in AI governance guidance.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

- **Transparency:** Pupils should understand when and how AI is being used.
- **Fairness:** AI tools must not disadvantage or discriminate against vulnerable learners.
- **Human Oversight:** AI must augment—not replace—professional judgement or teacher interaction, consistent with sector recommendations. Copilot not Autopilot!

6. Acceptable Use of Generative AI

The school encourages responsible, learning-focused use of AI:

- AI may support learning activities, brainstorming, drafting, accessibility tools, and personalisation.
- Any AI use in assessments requiring JCQ compliance must be fully acknowledged and must not replace independent pupil work.
- Staff may use AI for resource creation but must verify accuracy and avoid sharing personal data.
- AI cannot be used to generate final versions of controlled assessments, coursework, or NEAs, unless explicitly permitted by awarding bodies.
- Staff may only use approved Gen AI for their work. At present, use of ChatGPT is not approved by EA.

Safeguarding Pupils/Students

- All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal).
- The school's DT is Miss Laura Fisher and the DDTs are Mrs Caroline Clements, Mrs Joanne McCallion and Mrs Karen Haslett.
- All staff and volunteers must be familiar with this document and other relevant school policies e.g. E-Safety, Child Protection Policy. All Policies are under STAFF (School Policies)
- All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.
- All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
- All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

All children and young people linked to Rossmar School, wherever they are, whoever they are with, whatever they are doing, have these fundamental rights while in our care.

To be valued as an individual

To be treated with dignity and respect

To be cared for as a child first

To be safe

Being valued as an individual means:

- * being cared for and treated as unique
- * being talked to and about by their own name
- * being consistently cared for across settings
- * being encouraged to be themselves
- * being given enough time to take part, to do things for themselves, to understand and be understood.

Being treated with dignity and respect means:

- * being addressed with respect; never referred to or about as if they are their disability, nor as if they are one of their needs
- * being involved in conversations, never being talked about as if they are not there
- * having their privacy respected at all times and in all places
- * having all information about them treated carefully, kept safe and shared only with those people who need to know
- * being given the best possible care that can be provided
- * being involved in decisions that affect them: being actively encouraged to express their views and where these cannot be taken into account, then told why.

Being cared for as a child first means:

- having the same rights and choices and as far as possible the same kind of life as other children of their age and culture, taking into account their understanding
- being given opportunities, help and support to work, to play and to pursue leisure activities
- being actively supported as part of a family: as far as possible having their parents fully involved in any planning for them and acknowledged as ultimately responsible for them
- having access to communication equipment at all times, and as far as possible being listened to and heard when they need to communicate, even if it takes a long time.
- being given information about what is happening before it happens,
- being given explanations of procedures before they occur.
- gaining knowledge and information about relationships in response to their individual needs.
- being supported to develop self-esteem, positive body image self-confidence.
- being helped to understand sexual feelings and behaviour as appropriate to their age and understanding.
- being supported to develop skills such as decision making and assertiveness and an understanding of personal safety.
- being enabled to learn about acceptable and appropriate behaviour and respect for others.
- having their cultural and religious background acknowledged and respected.

Being safe means:

- having the opportunity to take appropriate risks, but not being exposed to unnecessary risks

- being protected from abuse:
- ensuring that all of the important adults in a child's life are aware of these basic rights and being clear about what they can do if these rights are infringed or not respected.

Relationships with Students

- All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in **Appendix 1** of this document.
- Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

Honesty and Integrity

- All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

Code of Conduct for Meetings:

- Come to the meeting with a positive attitude.
- Be prompt in arriving to the meeting and in returning from breaks.
- Turn mobile phones off or to vibrate.
- If you must take urgent calls on the mobile phone, take your conversation outside.
- Talk one at a time.
- No side conversations.
- Be patient when listening to others speak and do not interrupt them.
- Stay on the topic being discussed.
- When a topic or agenda item has been discussed fully, do not bring the same subject back up.
- Address any concerns about the discussion or the meeting with the Chairperson. It is the Chairperson's job to bring the meeting to order.
- Be respectful of other people's ideas or situations when they talk.

Conduct Outside of Work

- All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.

- Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

Confidentiality

- Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their every-day responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.
- Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
- Staff should be mindful of the confidentiality of 'class team business'. Information about issues or challenges within a class team should not be discussed casually with other staff, family or friends.
- There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.
- If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.
- Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.
- Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a member of the Leadership Team without delay.

Disciplinary Action

Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Compliance

All staff and volunteers must complete the form in Appendix 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Code of Conduct policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through consultation with pupils, staff, parents and external support agencies.

A sub-committee of the Board of Governors will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy as part of a timetabled, on-going process.

LF June 26

Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or Respite arrangements.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring / offering respite to a student outside of school, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring.
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school.
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally.
- No private tutoring / Respite (Looking after) is to take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school aware of any relationships.

Name: _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Vice Principal.

Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name _____

Position/Post Held _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Vice Principal.

Procedures

In order to protect our pupils, all at Rossmar School will adhere to the following procedures:

All new parents will be given a full copy of our Child Protection policy when their child joins the school. All parents are given this summary leaflet every year.

Our Child Protection Policy is available on the school website.

All staff, students and volunteers will have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect is suspected.

All staff, students and volunteers will undergo a vetting procedure in order to maintain the highest standard of professional care towards our children.

All staff will be trained in Safeguarding procedures.

Pupils will be supervised at all times in school.

When it is necessary to change the child's normal travel arrangements permission will only be given on receipt of a written request or telephone call by a parent/guardian.

Visitors should go to Reception to sign in.

Any parent visiting the school should wait in Reception for a member of staff to meet them. Parents should not walk around the school building or site unaccompanied or spend prolonged time waiting in the school car park.

Parents can request a full copy of our safeguarding policy at any time by contacting Miss Fisher.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will be responded to promptly by our staff. Staff will be vigilant at all times and will aim to prevent bullying by raising awareness with pupils, within circle time, assemblies, and personal development programmes. All bullying incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with in line with school policies.

Responding to Concerns

In all cases of Child Protection concerns the action that will be taken in Rossmar is as outlined below:

A child makes a disclosure to staff or staff have concerns about a child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time. Staff should make notes of what was said or observed and must **ACT PROMPTLY**

Staff refer the matter to Designated Teacher. There will be a discussion with the Designated Teacher Miss Fisher who keeps full notes. The Designated Teacher meets with Principal to plan course of action and ensures that a written record is made and treated confidentially.

If concerns/ doubts remain school will seek advice from an EA CPSS Officer. If a referral is necessary, they will refer to the Gateway team or PSNI and advise the EA CPSS Officer

If concerns are in relation to the parent, school will discuss with the Gateway team how the parent will be informed.

If no referral to Gateway is necessary, the Designated Teacher and Principal will decide the most appropriate course of action.

Operation Encompass

We are an Operation Encompass School

When the Police attend and incident of domestic violence or abuse where one of our pupils is present, they will inform the school's Designated Teacher or Principal at the start of the next school day. This information is shared in strict confidence and school staff are only told on a need-to-know basis. Following any notification from the PSNI, our staff will provide immediate support to any child who has been the victim of or witness to domestic abuse.




Phone: 028777 62351
Email: info@rossmar.limsavady.ni.sch.uk

ROSSMAR SCHOOL



CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES 2026/27

Updated June 2026





LET EVERY CHILD SHINE

www.rossmar.co.uk