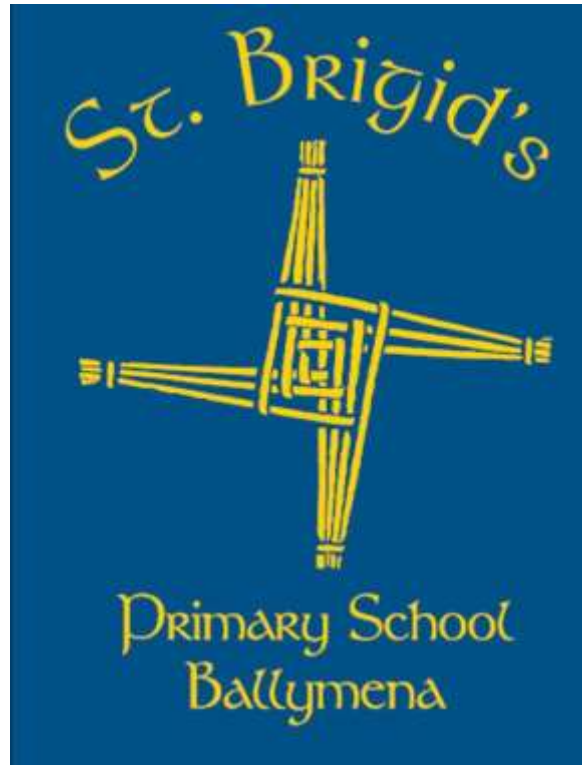


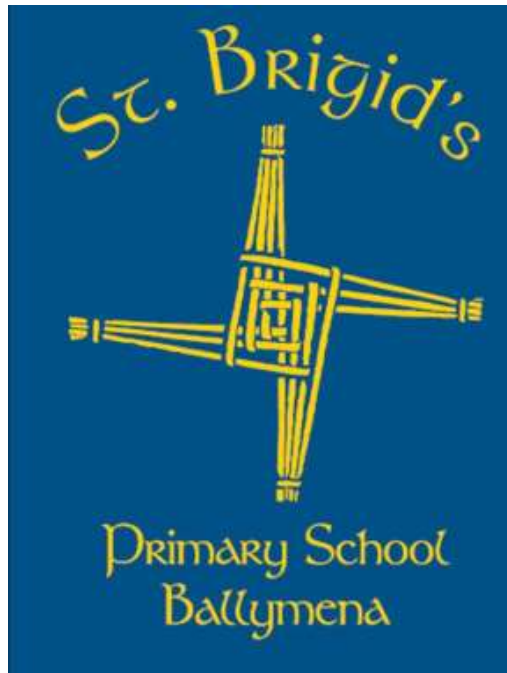
St. Brigid's Primary School



"Growing in Mind, Body and Spirit"

Child Protection Policy

Reviewed September 2016



“Growing in Mind, Body and Spirit”

School Mission Statement

“St. Brigid’s Primary School aims to develop each child to their fullest potential. High expectations and effective teaching and learning will enable all children to achieve and develop as life long learners, fully prepared for the ever changing world of today. As a Catholic school we will develop within the children values of respect, compassion for others and a genuine celebration of cultural diversity. We will strive to help each and every child grow into greater wholeness in Mind, Body and Spirit using St. Brigid as our example. We realise that we are a central part of our community and strive to involve all parish partners in our work, especially our parents.”

POLICY STATEMENT

The following statements of principle, policy and procedure aim to set the conceptual framework which underpins the practices within St Brigid's Primary School. This ethos is reflected in all actions and decisions taken by staff as they follow the detailed guidance set out in the EA Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 1999/10, Children (NI) Order 1995 Guidance and the Child Protection Committee Procedures, The Sexual Offence Act 2003, Education and Libraries Order 2003- Welfare and Protection of Pupils, Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 and Circulars 2006/6, 7, 8, 9 and 25.

GUIDING 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 all children have the fundamental right to be safe from harm and to proper care from those looking after their physical, emotional and spiritual well being.

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

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Protection of the child is a shared responsibility between the home and the school.
- At all times there must be a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.
- Each agency involved must have an understanding of each other's professional values and accept each other's role, powers and responsibilities.
- Any actions taken by agencies must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child's sex, age, stage of development, religious culture, wishes and race.
- The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

CHILD ABUSE

The following is an extract from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children', DHSS and Public Safety 2003 and defines abuse and its various categories.

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 guidance are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by parents, carers or others with a duty of care towards the child.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the willful 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.

Emotional Abuse

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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. 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 children to emotional abuse.

Sexual 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 the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet the 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 foods, 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. The school will monitor attendance as one of the indicators of neglect.

BULLYING

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St Brigid's. 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 deal with the bullying behaviour. We appreciate the importance of dealing with both victim and bully and therefore ensure that parents of both are personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified. We work closely with the victim to support them with due emphasis placed on ensuring they know they were correct to report the incident(s), that staff will work hard to ensure that the behaviour is dealt with and monitored in the future and in rebuilding their trust of peers and feelings of safety in and out of school. We also recognise that the bully has needs as well. They require support to help them see that their behaviour is unacceptable, has repercussions for the victim and for themselves and to enable them to learn from the experience, display empathy and greatly reduce the possibility of them becoming involved in such activity again. At all times the bullying activity will be monitored by a range of people almost certainly involving the class teacher at all times and possibly some of those listed here: Vice-principal and Principal, Key Stage Heads, Pastoral Care coordinator and other staff such as lunchtime supervisors and classroom assistants.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the school principal in consultation with the designated teacher for child protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports, during the school day, the child being bullied.

A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the principal or designated teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken. This contact is usually made by phone and a record kept.

The sanctions taken against the pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case but will include the loss of privileges or position of responsibility s/he holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff is satisfied that the problem has stopped. At all times the approach will be to deal with the behaviour and not the child. It may be an indication of a deeper problem. Procedures for dealing with bullying are set out in more detail in our Anti-bullying Policy.

ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

- St. Brigid's P.S. has designated a teacher who will have responsibility for:
 - Ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures, including internal school arrangements;
 - Co-ordinating action by teachers in cases of suspected child abuse and reporting to the appropriate agencies (Gateway Team for Central Sector) and the Diocesan CCMS Senior Management Officer;
 - Ensuring that the teaching staff and the school's Education Welfare Officer are aware of the children in care or on the Child Protection Register;
 - Implementing the UNOCINI assessment Framework to refer a case of child abuse or a child in need.
 - Review policy and procedures annually and keep staff updated
 - Keeping records of incidents, details of those involved, actions taken and follow-up (see Appendix 1);
 - Ensure that all records and reports are confidential and kept in a secure place:
 - Undertake training, as required, regarding the role of designated teacher every 2 years.
 - Ensure, in consultation with school management, that the deputy designated Teacher receives appropriate training every 2 years.

In our school we recognise the importance of the role played by the designated teacher. We will strive at all times to enable her to carry out the duties of the role effectively — and with appropriate training. Designated teachers, and indeed all teachers, need to know:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral;
- The CCMS Child Protection Procedures (see Appendix 2,3,4) and the Education and Library Board's Policy and procedures and the designated teacher's role within them;
- The role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them;
- The requirements on record keeping and confidentiality;
- The purpose and conduct of a Child Protection conference and how the designated teacher or other member of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it.

In St. Brigid's Primary School the Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mrs. C. Kerr. Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs. M. Brady.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Maintaining Awareness

Teachers are in a unique position to detect early signs of child abuse because of their day-to-day contact with individual children.

Abuse may be revealed by the child making an allegation; by the behaviour/change of behaviour of the child; through inappropriate language or because injuries or signs of neglect are observed.

The guidance offered in the following section provides brief advice for teachers about what to do if they suspect that a child has been abused. (See appendix 2)

What action shall I take?

You are skilled at communicating with children, but dealing with a suspected case of child abuse may affect your confidence and upset you. Do not worry — your skills are still very valid.

You have an appointed designated teacher in the school. This person has responsibility for liaison with social services departments and other agencies about cases of abuse. You must speak to this person if you are concerned that a child may be abused.

The designated teacher will have received training to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral to another agency.

The child needs your help and support, so do not over react and try to keep calm. Show the child that you are treating the matter seriously. However do not make promises which you are unable to keep such as promising total confidentiality. Explain to the child that you may have to share the information you have been given and who will be told. If you suspect that a child is being abused do not ask needless questions. Keep your questions to the minimum necessary to clarify whether or not you think there is a cause for concern. More intensive questioning should be left to other professionals skilled in carrying out child abuse inquiries.

It is not your job, nor the job of the Designated Teacher, to investigate the case.

Listen carefully to what the child has to say. Allow the child to proceed at his/her own pace without interruption. Reassure the child that it was right to tell you about the abuse and they are not to blame.

Role of the Board of Governors (BOG)

Chairperson:

The Chairperson of the BOG plays a pivotal role in creating the safeguarding ethos within the school environment. The Chairperson must attend initial Child Protection training following their appointment and updated training as necessary during their term of office. This training will include that provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for schools (CPSSS) and in relation to recruitment and selection procedures from NEELB Human Resources. In addition the Chairperson must also ensure that at least one other governor has recruitment and selection training in compliance with DENI Circular 2006/ 08.

The Chairperson must assume the lead role in managing any child protection complaint/ allegation made against the school principal. In doing so the Chairperson must follow latest DENI Guidance and school policy and procedures. The current Chairperson of the BOG is Mrs. Esther Martin.

Members of the BOG:

The BOG will designate one governor as the lead governor for Child Protection. This person will attend relevant EA training and take the lead role in advising the BOG on the role of the Designated Teacher, the content of Child Protection policies, the content of a code of conduct for adults within the school, the content of regular child

protection reports made to the BOG and recruitment, selection and vetting of staff, including training required for those sitting on selection panels. The current lead governor for Child Protection is Mrs. Paula Murphy.

RECORD KEEPING

Once you have reported your concern to the designated teacher, make a comprehensive written report of the incident which should include date, time, details of what the child said (as far as possible in the child's own words), the child's demeanor and any action you took. This record may be required for a case conference and subsequent legal proceedings. The designated teacher will make a record of her conversation with the concerned member of staff. (see appendix 1) The following sections entitled 'Code of Conduct' and 'Guidelines for Self Protection' are included as advice for all staff both teaching and non-teaching.

CODE OF CONDUCT - for all staff

Private meetings with pupils

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place but where possible such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, with the door open or in a room or area that is likely to be frequented by other people. All windows in the area should remain uncovered.

- Where such conditions cannot apply staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- Where possible another pupil or adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

Physical Contact with Pupils

- As a general rule teachers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils. This is particularly the case with maturing children of primary school age.
- Physical contact which could be misconstrued by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. Such contact can include well-intentioned informal gestures, such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which if repeated with an individual pupil could be misconstrued. More obvious or more intimate contact should never occur.

- There may be times when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical contact such as a caring parent would give. Teachers should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that it is normal and natural contact. They should be wary of unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.
- Staff should be aware of any 'negative' withdrawing reaction by a child when touched 'normally'. A child should never be touched if the touch is obviously unwelcome.
- Some teachers are likely to come into physical contact with their pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching e.g. when showing a pupil how to use a piece of equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during P.E. Teachers should be aware of the limits within which such contact should take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the pupil.
- Staff who have to administer First Aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions could be misconstrued a written report of the incident should be submitted to the Principal/ designated teacher immediately. This applies particularly where a teacher has had to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury.
- Teachers should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting where more informal relationships tend to develop and where teachers may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment (see below).

Out of School Visits

All pupils visiting any venue need prior written permission from their parents. The school will organise the visit very carefully ensuring the venue is suitable for the pupils. The group leader will issue parents with all relevant information regarding the trip in good time for proper preparations to be made. This information may include some or all of the following:

- Dates, times and places of leaving and returning;
- Transport arrangements;
- Name, address, telephone number and any other relevant information regarding the venue;
- Details of the purpose for the visit-itinerary with dates, times and activities;
- Cost incurred by parents and recommendation on pocket money;
- List of the supervisory staff;

- Copy of guidelines drawn up for the trip e.g. no child will be left unsupervised, no mobile phones, clothing required etc.

The group leader must find out all relevant information from the parents regarding the children e.g. medical details, special dietary requirements etc.

Any venue, which the school visits, must be vetted prior to its use to ensure the safety of all the pupils. In some cases children may need prior teaching/preparation in self-protection, without being alarmist. An evaluation of the trip should be carried out afterwards to ensure quality control.

Choice and use of Teaching Materials

- Teachers should avoid using materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect on the motives for the choice.
- When using materials of a sensitive nature, teachers should be aware of the danger that their use, either by pupils or the teacher, might be. Teachers should seek advice and consult school Policy when teaching sensitive aspects of the curriculum e.g. R.S.E.

Relationships and Attitudes -

Teachers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language require careful thought particularly when teachers of either sex are dealing with maturing boys and girls. Teachers' language should be positive and encouraging. No 'put-downs' should be used nor demeaning and embarrassing comments. Children must always be treated with respect and their feelings taken into consideration.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which teachers inter-relate with pupils and where opportunities may occur for their conduct to be misconstrued. In all circumstances teachers' professional judgment will be exercised and for the vast majority of teachers this Code of Conduct confirms what has always been their practice.

However, from time to time it is wise for all teachers to review their teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual pupils to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions in the minds of colleagues, pupils or parents.

STAFF GUIDELINES FOR SELF-PROTECTION

- In the event of injury to a child ensure that it is recorded and an Accident Report completed by a witness. Accident reporting documentation is available in the school office.
- Keep records of any false allegations a child makes against you or other staff including comments such as 'You're always picking on me'; 'You hit me'; 'Don't touch me'. Record dates and times and any adult witnesses to the incident.
- If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way, record what happened and tell another adult. Do not make the child feel guilty as it may have been totally innocent. However, ignoring it or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable position. Neither is it good for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage.
- If you have to take children in your car always acquire parental permission unless it is an emergency. Make sure you carry at least two children at the same time. If practical place children in the rear seats of the car. On a residential trip always check bedrooms in pairs. Never take a child into your room under any circumstances.
- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child. If you must speak one-to-one make sure the door is open and that you are not blocking the child's route to it. Tell another member of staff that you are going to see the child on your own.
- If a child displays sexually inappropriate behaviour, explain that this is unacceptable and could get the child into difficulty but do not make the child feel guilty. The behaviour may be an imitation of the abuse the child has suffered and is not his/her fault.
- If the situation arises where a young child needs a change of clothing have another person present or contact the child's parent.
- Never do something of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves.
- Do not go into the toilet area alone with a child.
- Be mindful how and where you touch children. Never pat a child on the bottom, allow them to sit on your lap or kiss you.
- When taking children on an outing think how your actions may appear to others. This may mean that disruptive pupils cannot go on outings for their own safety and the safety of others.
- If you must physically restrain a child do so only as recommended in the school's Policy on the Use of Reasonable Force.
- Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour about a colleague to yourself. Your silence may implicate you.

VETTING PROCEDURES

No one will have unsupervised access to children unless they have had a police check/ a criminal history background checks by Access NI. This includes all voluntary staff, classroom assistants, work experience students, ancillary and auxiliary staff etc. All persons joining the staff from April 2008 will require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate. No teacher will be employed in the school unless they appear on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher register (NISTR).

Only those authorised by the Principal may address the pupils and no guest speakers will be left alone with pupils. Those who wish to address the pupils must have prior permission and have given the Principal an outline of what they intend to speak about. The Principal or a delegated member of staff will monitor their talk.

INTERNET

All teachers are aware of the dangers of the Internet. We have introduced a Policy for the Acceptable Use of the Internet. All parents have been issued with a copy and all staff have signed a statement of agreement that the Internet will be used only for educational purposes. The children are supervised during the use of the Internet and have been made aware of the rules governing its use, a copy of which is displayed near each work station.

DRUGS EDUCATION

Drugs education is promoted within our school curriculum particularly within learning areas such as PDMU, The World Around Us and Religious Education etc. We invite guest speakers to discuss the safe use and dangers associated with Drugs with our pupils at a level appropriate to their age. Parents are informed about our work in drugs education and we offer opportunities for them to increase their knowledge of the subject and dealing with the issue at home through involvement in programmes such as the EA Tough Issues programme. Further detail on drugs education can be found in our Drugs Education Policy.

IN-SERVICE

All members of the Board of Governors are offered training in Child Protection through EA. This training is available annually. The Designated Teacher and her Deputy have both received training. Their training is up-dated every two years and the Designated Teacher disseminates the information to the rest of the staff.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

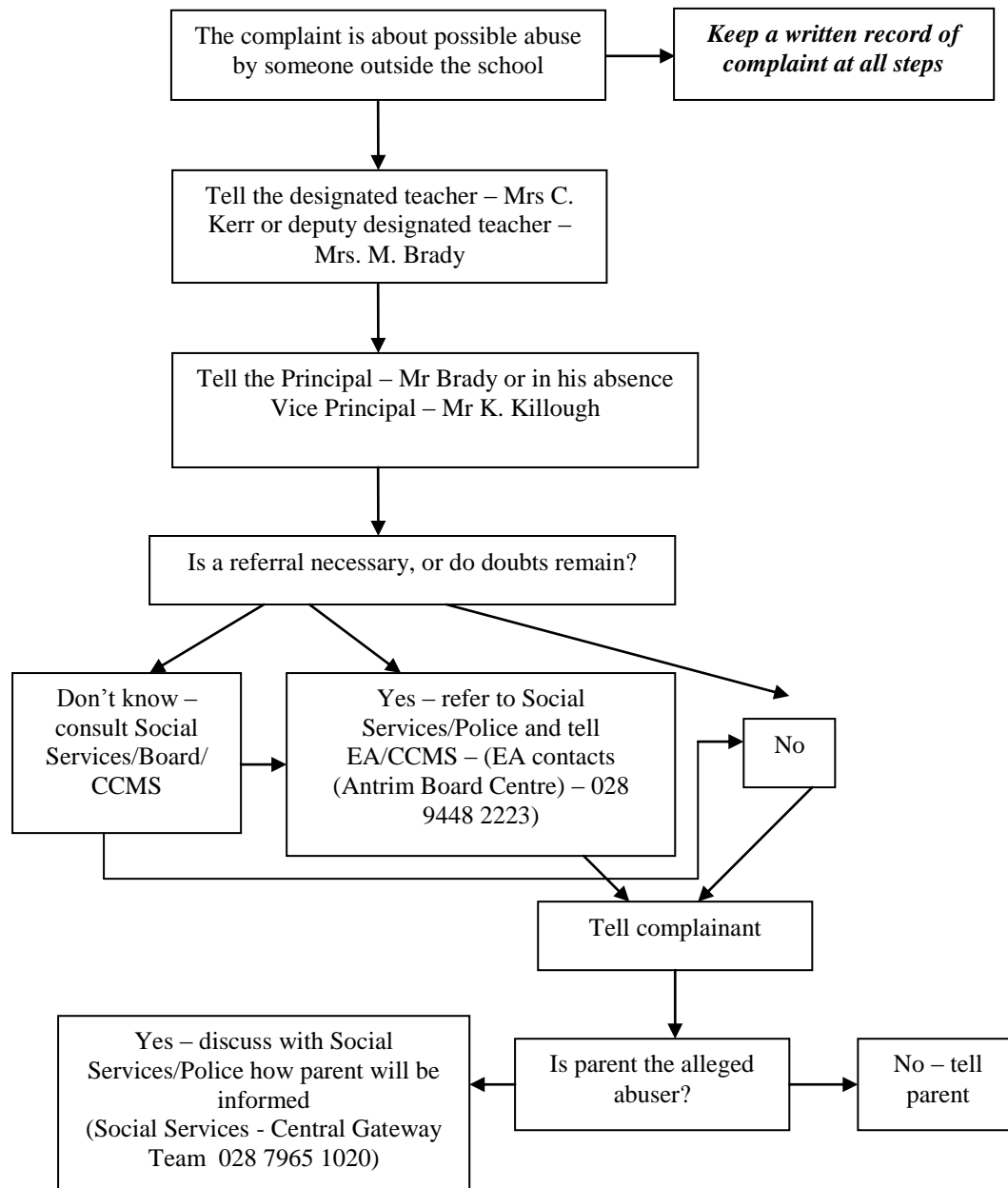
The school will update this Policy and Procedures as necessary in the light of any further guidance and legislation and will review it annually. Parents will be issued with a leaflet outlining the main points of this policy and will be made aware that the full text is available in the school for consultation.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, permanent and temporary, will be issued with a copy of this policy.

St. Brigid's Primary School

Child Protection

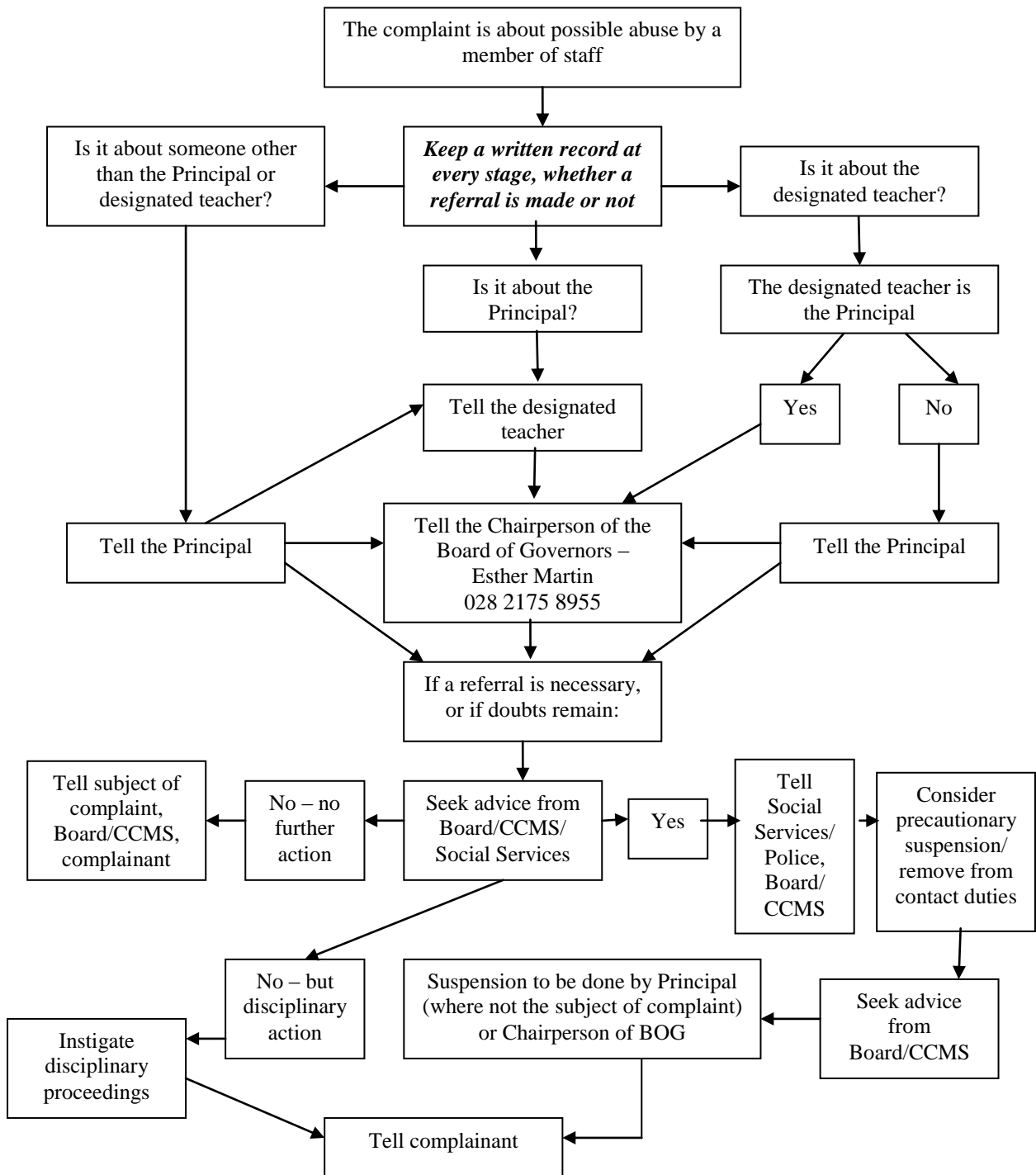
Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff



St Brigid's Primary School

Child Protection

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



St. Brigid's Primary School

Child Protection

How a parent can make a complaint:

