

# Arvalee School



## PASTORAL CARE

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Date Approved by Board of Governors: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Next review date: February 2016

## **Child Protection Ethos**

In Arvalee School we strive to support young people with learning difficulties to overcome the challenges they face in order to grow, learn and achieve so that they can be the best that they can be.

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

This policy follows the detailed guidance set out in the WELB Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 1999/10, Children (NI) 1995 Guidance and the Area Child Protection Committee Procedures.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

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

### **Guiding Principle**

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount. Where a child has special needs or is disabled, these needs must be taken into consideration.
- At all times in Child Protection responses there must be a considered and well-informed multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach, and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children/young people from harm. Parents/carers should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family.
- The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, staff and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interest of the child's/young person's welfare.
- Children/young people have the right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their learning disability age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. (Specialist assistance may be sought to achieve this).
- Actions taken to protect the child or young person (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child or young person unnecessary distress or further harm.

## **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:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Sex Education
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- ICT and access to the internet
- Intimate Care

These policies are available to parents and any parent wishing a copy should contact the School Principal or visit the school website at [www.arvaleeschool.co.uk](http://www.arvaleeschool.co.uk)

## **SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding team

- Chair of the Board of Governors (John Hall)
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Jane Nelson)
- Principal (Jonathan Gray)
- Designated Teacher (Nadine Grant)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Kathleen Gallagher)

## **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 and selection training provided by the WELB Child Protection Support Service for Schools, the WELB 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.

### **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 Teachers 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 1999/10 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 Chairman 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 and annual report)

- That the school 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)
- Lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Act as a point of contact for staff (and parents)
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Child Protection arrangements for parents
- Make referrals to Social Services (Gateway team) or PSNI Public Protection Unit where appropriate
- Liaise with the Western Education & Library Board 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.

### **The Parents**

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the child's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child's situation:
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
- Letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to any address other than their own home;
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Internet and Child Protection Policies;
- Reporting to the office when they visit the school
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school. (See Appendix 1)

### **Arvalee Staff**

We in Arvalee School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a

caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them

- to learn about the risks of possible abuse
- to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others
- to acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.
- to develop the skills to tell an adult.

The staff in Arvalee are very aware that children with special educational needs may be especially vulnerable to abuse. A significant proportion of our pupils have limited communication skills. We are, therefore, aware that extra care must be taken to correctly interpret any apparent signs of abuse and neglect.

Given the nature of the profound and multiple difficulties of a number of our pupils, it can be appreciated that physical contact is a necessary part of teaching and personal care. However, all members of staff are aware that any physical contact with pupils should be appropriate and it is implicit that the conduct of the school staff towards pupils must be above reproach.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. Staff have also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils. Staff have received 'Team Teach' training on physical intervention, however, in Arvalee emphasis is placed on 'calm' communication and defusing skills that work best for the individual child concerned, acknowledged within the care, behaviour or education plans. The individual needs of pupils are assessed and appropriate interventions put in place.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child. The welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

All staff will participate in regular Child Protection training. All volunteers and students in Arvalee will be vetted and undergo induction training on the code of practice and code of conduct in Child Protection. They will understand the following definition of child abuse.

### **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, 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".* Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2005).

Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child, such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger who may be an adult or young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide care, or both and can be grouped according to five categories:

**Neglect** – is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to cause 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 medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive.

**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, suffocation, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

**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.

**Emotional Abuse** – is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a 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 another person. It may involve causing a child to 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 harm.

**Bullying** – Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. 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 counsel and educate the bully. Arvalee has a separate anti-bullying policy.

**Domestic Abuse** – is "threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation" (DHSSPS/NIO Tackling Violence at Home 2005 p10)

### **Identification of Abuse:**

Because of our day-to-day contact with individual children, we as teachers, but also non-teaching staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms or changes in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances, or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse.

#### **Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse:**

- Multiple bruising and/or bizarre markings on the skin.
- Multiple bruising at different stages of resolution.
- Bruising and/or lacerations around the mouth.
- Finger and thumb marks on the face and/or body.
- Black eyes (particularly when both are affected)
- Burn, scalds or bites which appear to have been caused by adults.

#### **Possible Indicators of Physical Neglect:**

- Inadequate clothing
- Poor growth
- Hunger or apparently deficient nutrition.

#### **Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse:**

- Excessive dependence
- Excessive attention seeking

#### **Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse:**

- Sudden changes of mood
- Regressive behaviour – bed-wetting
- Lack of trust in men (particularly any marked fear of men)
- Hints of sexual activity in children's conversation, play or drawings (this may include sexually explicit graffiti in exercise books or elsewhere)
- Excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, including:



- Precocious knowledge or apparent experiences of adult sexual behaviour
- Persistent, obsessive sexual stimulation
- Towards adults, sexually provocative behaviour which is inappropriate to the age of the child.

Signs such as those described above, and others can do more than give rise to concern – but they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. However, teachers and other staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and be alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated. Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he/she must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher, the Deputy Designated Teacher.

### **Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

All staff will be made aware of the reporting procedure for suspected or disclosed child abuse.

(See Appendix 2)

The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs Grant (Vice-Principal for Pastoral). In her absence Mrs Flanagan (Deputy Designated Teacher and Head of Key Stage Pastoral) or Miss K Gallagher (Assistant Deputy Designated Teacher) will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child **the member of staff must act promptly.**

He/she should not investigate – This is a matter for the Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with her and make full notes.

The designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

The designated teacher in consultation with the Principal will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately. In the absence of the Principal, the acting Principal will act with the full authority of the Principal.

The designated teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Western Education and Library Board's Designated Officer (CPSSS) or the Senior Social Worker 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 safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection will inform:

- Social Services
- Western Education and Library Board's Designated Officer for Child Protection (if necessary)

(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION')

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher, if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately. (See Appendix 3)

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher (or her deputy, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feel unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interest of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

**Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that should be understood and appreciated by all staff.**

### **Record Keeping**

All records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked cabinet. These records are kept separate from any other file which is held on the child/young person.

- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings. Record only facts, not options, sign and date the information before forwarding to the Designated Teacher as soon as possible.

## RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

### Receive

- Listen to what a child says, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Take notes – elaborate – retain notes.

### Reassure

- Ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and his/her interests will come first.
- Don't promise confidentiality, you have a duty to refer. Explain to the child/young person that you will need some help to deal with what he/she has told you.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child or young person refers to it eg 'you're not to blame', 'you did the right thing to talk about this'.

### Respond

- Respond to the child/young person only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't 'interrogate' for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading questions' eg 'what did he/she do next?' or 'did he/she touch your private parts?'. Such questions may invalidate your evidence and the child/young person's in any later court proceedings.
- Do ask open questions like, 'anything else to tell me?' 'yes?', 'and?'.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator; the child/young person may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

### Record

- Make notes at the time and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy these originals.
- Record the time, date, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child/young person. If the child or young person uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words. Any injuries or bruises may be recorded on a diagram showing position and extent.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your own interpretation or assumptions.
- Note down when the suspicions were reported and by whom.
- Forward these notes to the Designated Teacher to ensure these records are placed in the students file.
- In the event of a complaint against a teacher, the appropriated file should be examined by the Chair of the Board of Governors on an annual basis.

Refer

- Refer to the designated teacher as soon as you have any concern for a child/young person.

### **ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCE 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 Western Health and 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.

### **VETTING PROCEDURES**

All staff including volunteers who are appointed to positions in the School is vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and Department guidance.

### **The Preventative Curriculum.**

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through assemblies and there is a permanent child protection notice board in the main corridor which provides advice and displays child helpline numbers etc. In the classroom, regular circle time sessions are used as a means of encouraging children to raise social and emotional concerns in a safe environment and to build self-confidence, respect and sensitivity among classmates. Each classroom has a picture of staff that children can talk to if they have concerns. Other initiatives which address child protection and safeguarding issues are

- Barnardo Counselling Service for Secondary pupils
- PSNI talks and drama workshops
- Mencap programmes
- Sex Education – Just Ask and Nexus
- Health Promotions Initiatives.
- Healthy Relationships Workshops – Crannog Lodge
- Whole School Anti-bullying programme.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Arvalee School will update this Policy and procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

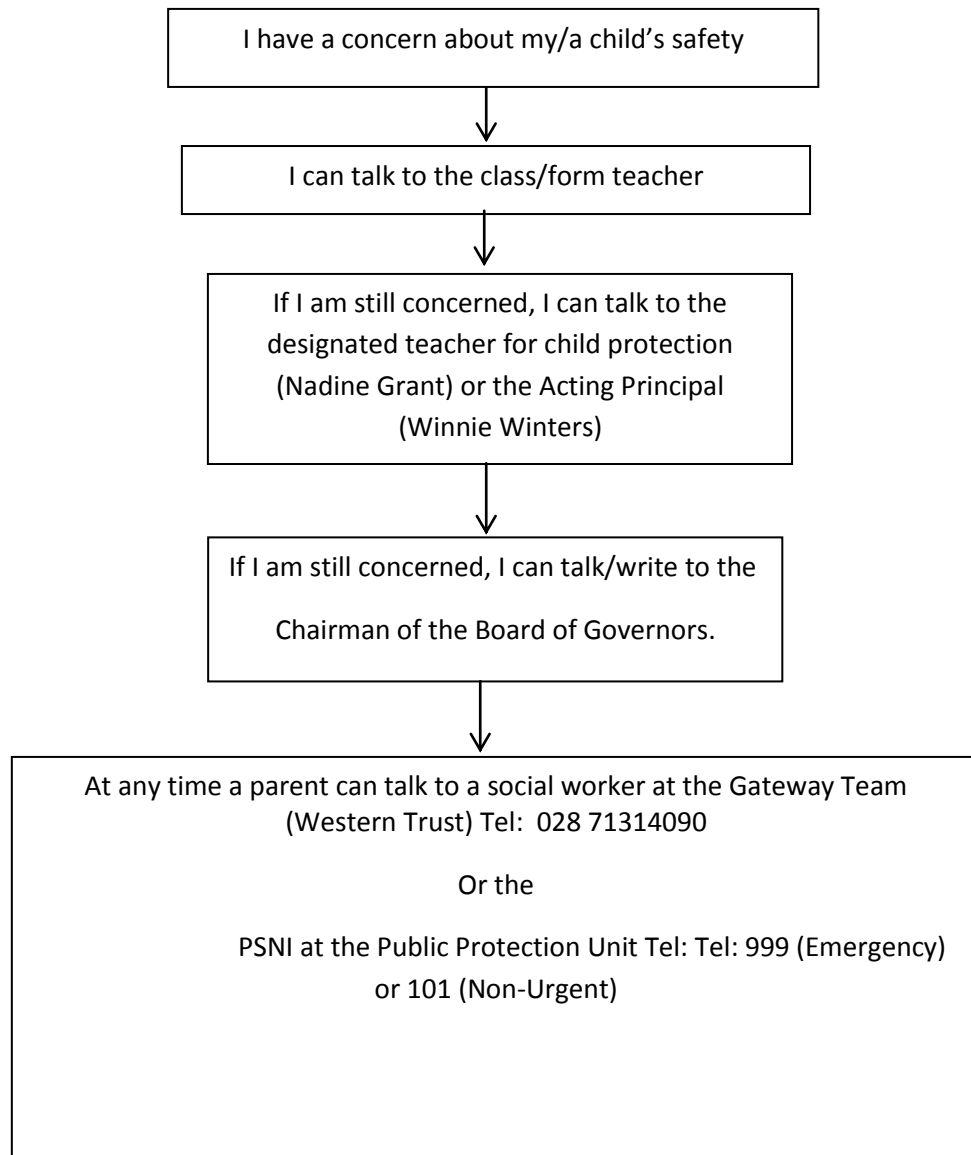
On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy

Date Policy Reviewed: November 2014

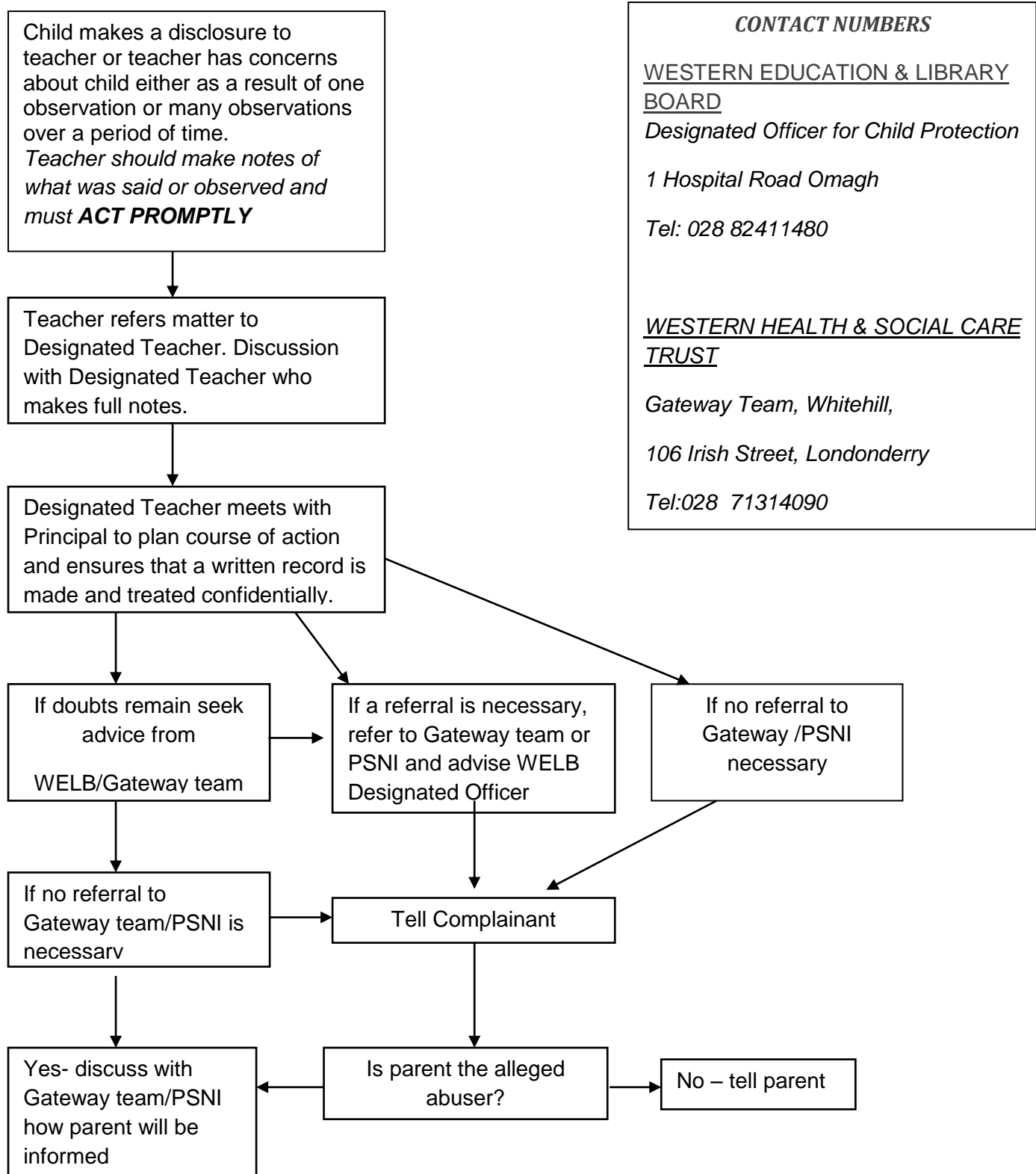
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Board of Governors)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

## How a Parent can make a Complaint



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



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

