

# ST KILLIAN'S COLLEGE



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

*Board of Governors  
03 March 2011*

## **Rationale**

We, in St Killian's have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the students in our charge. We will carry out through our Child Protection Policy, as part of the college's Pastoral Care Policy which aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for all our students.

The Child Protection Policy seeks to support the child and aid her/his development in different ways which foster security and confidence, to ensure that her/his welfare is safe guarded and their safety preserved, thereby recognising that the child's welfare must always be paramount. This principle underpins the practice and procedures to be followed. **As well as pursuing our values of the rights of children to freedom from abuse college staff have a responsibility BY LAW to safeguard/protect children. All staff will be vigilant to signs of distress or signs of possible abuse and the CHILD PROTECTION procedures will be put in motion. No sign of possible abuse will be ignored. If the concern is considered serious, there is duty on the college to report the concern to Social Services.**

This policy reflects the pastoral responsibilities of the college and the legal duties in respect of child protection.

## **Aims**

- To ensure that staff are regularly updated and well informed about Child Protection issues
- To inform staff, students and parents of the role of the designated teacher
- To ensure that staff, students and parents are well informed about college procedures for reporting concerns as outlined in the booklet 'Pastoral Care in Schools- Child protection' DENI.
- To ensure that staff are aware of their duty of care and responsibility, to report concerns they may have about a child's welfare.
- To promote co-operation with statutory agencies in the multi-disciplinary response to child protection
- To ensure that key concepts of Child Protection are integrated within the curriculum.
- To provide students with a preventative curriculum based on abuse awareness and personal safety.
- To enhance students' self esteem, self confidence, assertiveness and personal safety by developing appropriate skills to make reasoned and informed choices, judgements and decisions through a personal programme.

## **Objectives**

- By providing an environment within the college and classroom in which every child feels safe, respected and valued;
- By integrating the key concepts of Child Protection, by developing students' awareness and the skills necessary for personal safety.
- "Worried ... need to talk?" as part of the Personal Development programme.
- By identifying a range of people to whom children can turn to share concerns and discuss problems, both in and out of college;
- By providing a range of educational talks to enable students to make informed choices.
- By monitoring students' welfare and their physical, emotional, social and behavioural development.

- By promoting staff awareness of the types and indicators of child abuse and neglect, the appropriate responses, knowledge of procedures for reporting concerns and their statutory responsibility.
- By establishing the consequences of the inappropriate use of still camera and video and/or the exchange of material via bluetooth technology.
- By informing parents of the college's Child Protection Policy;
- By establishing regular contact with other appropriate agencies in order to promote co-operation to protect children.

### **Implementation**

Mrs. E. McKay is the designated teacher who will have responsibility to ensure that all staff, teaching and non-teaching are aware of the procedures, including internal college arrangements. In the case of the designated teacher's absence, Mr J Mulvenna & Mrs. B Haughey will be the deputy designated teachers and will carry out the procedures as laid down here.

### **The duties of the designated teachers are:**

- To co-ordinate action in cases of suspected child abuse and report to the appropriate agencies, and NEELB and CCMS
- To ensure that the teaching staff and the EWO are aware of children in care or on the Child Protection Register
- To inform all staff, teaching and non teaching, of signs and symptoms of abuse
- To know the roles and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them
- To keep confidential records of all incidents reported
- To store separately and securely the decisions taken at Case Conferences. If a child transfers to another school/college, the Social Services Co-ordinator should be informed, and the receiving school/college should be advised that the child's name is on the Child Protection register. All Child Protection records (supplied by Social Services) held by the college should then be destroyed, including case conference records; the receiving school/college should approach the Social Services directly for information
- To make appropriate contributions to a Child Protection conference
- To provide training for staff in the implementation of these procedures
- To display notices about bullying around the college
- To ensure that this Child Protection extends to all out of college educational programmes
- To ensure that all volunteers are vetted before working with our students
- Inform parents where necessary
- To ensure parents access to information is in accordance with our policy
- To report, at least annually, to the Board of Governors

### **Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs. E. McKay, Vice Principal. In her absence, Mr J Mulvenna & Mrs. B. Haughey (Senior Leaders) 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 concern 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 Social Services) **only clarify** – 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 Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher, will decide whether it is in the best interests of the child for the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that a child may be at risk, the college is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents should be informed immediately.

The Principal/Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the NEELB's/CCMS Designated Officer 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 Principal will inform:

The Social Services  
NEELB's/CCMS Designated Officer Child Protection

**(This will be done in an envelope marked 'Confidential – Child Protection')**

#### CHANGES IN THE LEGISLATION WITH REGARDS TO THE AGE OF CONSENT

- The age at which a young person is legally considered competent to give consent to sexual activity changes from 17 years to 16 years.
- A child below the age of 13 years, does not, under ANY circumstances have the legal capacity to consent to ANY form of sexual activity.
- The new offence of 'sexual activity with a child' means such activity with those below 16 years is illegal.
- The term 'sexual activity' includes all sexual contact.
- Sexual activity involving a child between the age of 13 years and 16 years is illegal, even where apparently consenting.
- It is an offence for an adult to have any sexual activity with a young person below 18 years if the adult is in a position of trust with that young person, for example in a school, youth club or residential care.
- It is an offence for anyone to take indecent pictures of children under 18 years.

**How a parent can make a complaint about possible Child Abuse**



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



I can talk to the class/Pastoral Tutor teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to  
(the designated teacher for child protection  
(Mrs E. McKay)



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

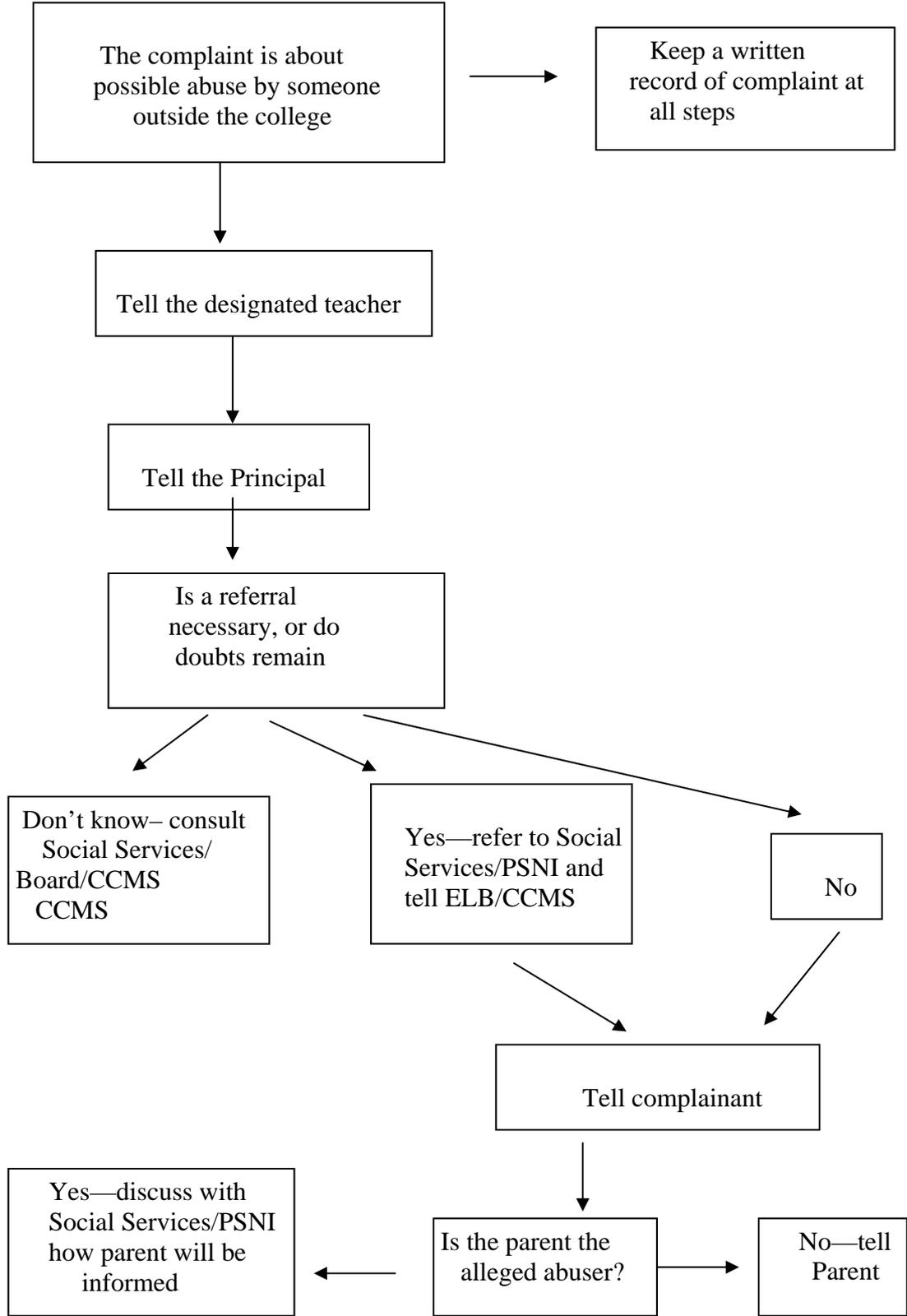


If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to  
the Chairman of the Board of Governors

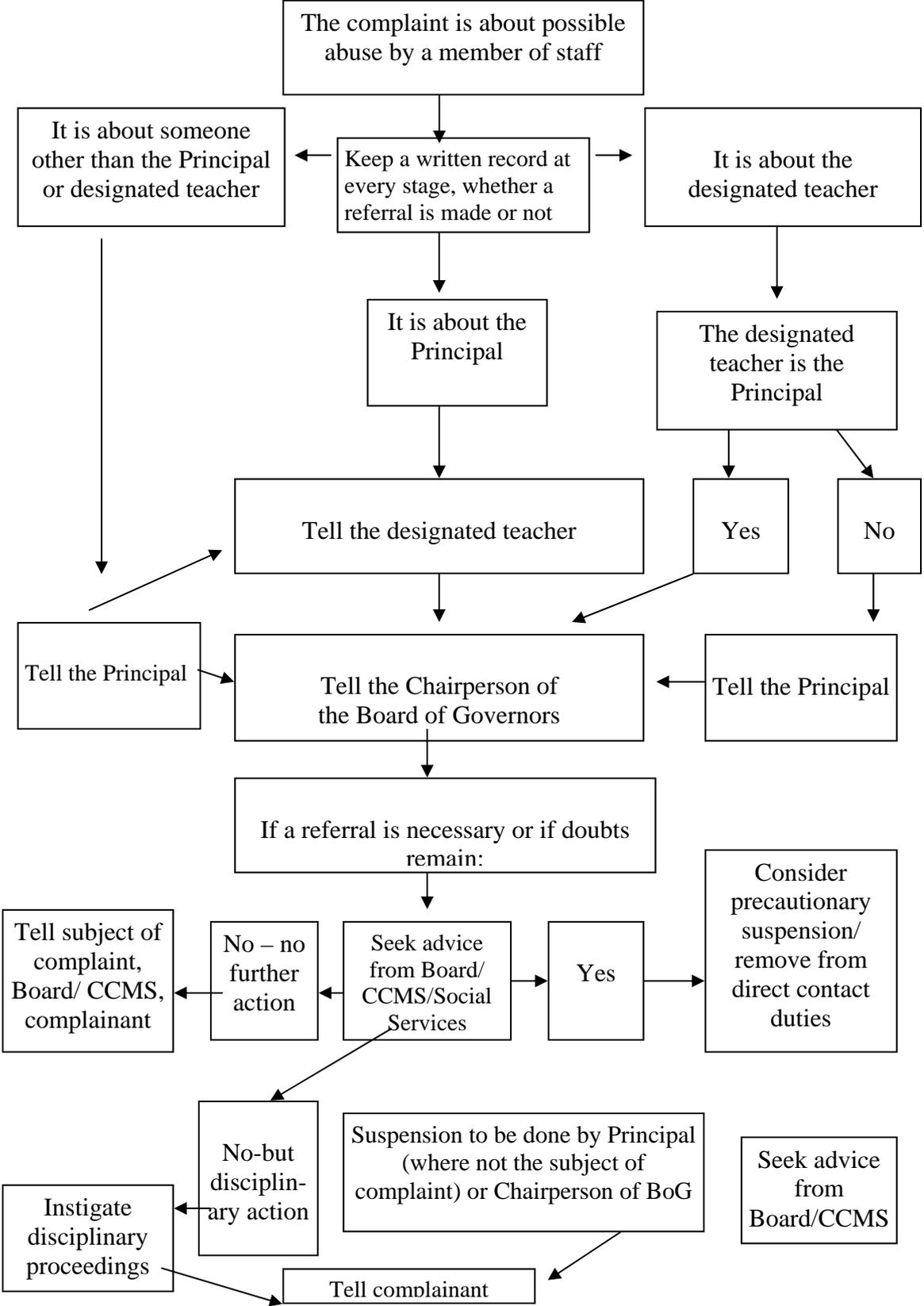


At any time, I can talk to the social worker (tel: 28275427)  
or the PSNI (tel. no 256653355 of local CARE Unit)

**Procedure where the college 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**



## PROTECTING CHILDREN – a duty to care

### Emotional Abuse

#### Physical Indicators

- Sudden speech disorder
- Signs of mutilation/bruising
- Signs of solvent abuse (eg mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)
- Wetting and/or soiling
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relationships

#### Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour (eg rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Reluctance for parent liaison
- Fear of new situations
- Chronic runaway
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

### Sexual abuse

#### Physical Indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Vulnerable diseases
- Unexplained pregnancies

#### Behavioural Indicators

- Be chronically depressed/ suicidal
- Inappropriately seductive or precocious
- Sexually explicit language
- Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence
- Recurring nightmares/fear of the dark
- Outbursts of anger/hysteria
- Overly protective to siblings

N.B. If in doubt speak to someone **NOW**.

## **PROTECTING CHILDREN — a duty to care**

### **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

Child abuse means ill treatment or neglect leading to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm. The following illustrations outline common indicators of abuse and neglect. These signs are not a checklist, indeed many of them could have other explanations.

### **Physical abuse**

#### **Physical Indicators**

- Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries

#### **Behavioural Indicators**

- Self destructive tendencies
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body

### **Neglect**

#### **Physical Indicators**

- Constant hunger
- Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Emaciation/distended stomach
- Constant tiredness

#### **Behavioural Indicators**

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Lack of social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self-esteem

## What happens after a referral is made

### Roles of Other Agencies

The welfare of the child is paramount and the following interagency procedures are intended to ensure a prompt and co-ordinated response to any referral

