



ST PATRICK'S  
ACADEMY  
DUNGANNON



# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

**St Patrick's Academy**  
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**Principal: Mr Fintan Donnelly**  
**Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Mrs Fiona O'Hagan**

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**Voluntary Grammar School**  
**Age range: 11-18+**  
**Approved Admissions Number for 2021: 208\***  
**Approved Enrolment Number for 2021: 1,394\***

## **SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

Principal: **Mr Fintan Donnelly**  
Designated Teacher: **Mr Ronan Campbell Deputy**  
Designated Teacher: **Mrs Kiera Boyle**  
Deputy Designated Teacher: **Mrs Helen Guilfoyle**  
Designated Governor for Safeguarding: **Ms Geraldine Mulholland**  
Chair of the Board of Governors: **Mrs Fiona O'Hagan**

## **AT ANY TIME A PARENT CAN TALK TO A SOCIAL WORKER AT**

The Gateway Team: **Telephone 0800 783 7745**

PSNI Public Protection Arrangements for N.I. Central Referral Unit:  
**Telephone 028 9025 9299** [weekdays 08.00-21.00 and weekends 09.00-17.00]  
or **101 extension 30299**

Duty Social Work Gateway Team: **Telephone 028 3741 5285**

Regional Emergency Social Work Service; available outside normal office hours including weekends and Public Holidays: **Telephone 028 9504 9999**

Family Support Hub. Support for parents and children at the earliest opportunity. Three Hubs in Southern area. Referrals to Duty Social Work Team as above.

Vulnerable Adults [for overs 18s] recognising adult abuse and what to do about it:  
**Telephone 028 3741 2015**

Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline: **Telephone 0800 389 1701** (NSPCC)

## SAFEGUARDING ETHOS (REVIEWED AND RATIFIED JUNE 2020)

We in St Patrick's Academy have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the young people in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential, and, at the same time, be valued for their unique talents and abilities.

All of our staff have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff have adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards our young people. This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a young person is suspected and outlines referral procedures within St Patrick's Academy.

## 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" (DOH, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" (DENI Circular 2017/04) and the Safeguarding Board for NI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

In particular, the principle we support is that every young person had the fundamental right to be safe from harm and to be shown proper care of their physical, emotional and spiritual well being, by those looking after them.

The following principles form the basis for effective Safeguarding activity and underpin the guidance we follow:

- The young person's welfare must always be paramount; this overrides all other considerations. Where a young person is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration;
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting young people and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict, the young person's interests must always come first;
- Young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. Where a young person has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this;
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family;
- Action taken to protect the young person (including investigation) should not in itself be abusive by causing the young person unnecessary distress or further harm;
- Intervention should not deal with the young person in isolation; the young person's needs should be considered in the context of the family. Agencies' actions must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to, and take account of, the young person's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture, race and any special needs;
- Where it is necessary to protect a young person from further abuse, alternatives which do not involve moving the young person and which minimise disruption of the family should be explored.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher, The designated teacher and deputy designated teacher must:

- Avail of training so that they are aware of duties, responsibilities and role;
- Organise training for all staff (whole school training);
- Lead in the development of the school's Safeguarding Policy;
- Act as a point of contact for staff and parents
- Assist in the drafting and issuing of the summary of our Safeguarding arrangements for parents;
- Make referrals to Social Services Gateway team or PSNI Public Protection Unit, where appropriate;

- Liaise with the Southern Education and Library Board's Designated Officers for Safeguarding;
- Maintain records of all Safeguarding concerns;
- Keep the School Principal informed;
- Provide written annual report to the Board of Governors regarding Safeguarding.

## 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 Safeguarding training;
- That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner;
- That the Chairman of the Board of Governors (and, when appropriate, the Board of Governors) is kept informed;
- That Safeguarding activities feature on the agenda of the Board of Governors meetings and termly updates and annual report are provided;

- That the school Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and that parents and young people 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 GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING

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

- The role of the designated teachers;
- The content of Safeguarding 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 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 Safeguarding Policy in place and that staff implement the policy;
  - Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Safeguarding and recruitment and selection training provided by the SELB Safeguarding Support Service for Schools, the SELB Governor Support and Human Resource departments;
  - Ensure that a Designated Governor for Safeguarding 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 Safeguarding activity. Ensure compliance with legislation, Child Protection recording keeping and policies.

## OTHER MEMBERS OF SCHOOL STAFF

Staff in school see young people over long periods and can notice physical, behavioural and emotional indicators and hear allegations of abuse. Remember the 5 Rs: Receive, Reassure, Respond, Record and Refer.

The member of staff must:

- Refer concerns to the Designated/ Deputy Teacher for Safeguarding;
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and support the young person act promptly;
- Make a concise written record of a young person's disclosure using the actual words of the young person (Appendix 7);
- Avail of whole school training and relevant other training regarding safeguarding children;

- Not give young people a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures;
- Not investigate;
- Not ask leading questions.

In addition the Class Teacher should:

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about young person abuse or serious bullying, concerns about home conditions including disclosures of domestic violence.

## PARENTS

Parents should play their part in Safeguarding by:

- Telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence, or sending in a note on the young person's return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the young person's situation;
- Informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the young person after school;
- Letting the school know in advance if their young person is going home to an address other than their own home;
- Familiarising themselves with the School's Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Positive Behaviour, I.C.T. and Safeguarding Policies;

- Reporting to the office when they visit the school;
- Raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

## THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Board of Governors must ensure that:

- That a designated governor for child protection is appointed and a Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers are appointed within the school;
- Ensure that safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training;
- Ensure that the school has a child protection policy which is reviewed every two years;
- Ensure 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 behaviour or alleged bullying behaviour;

- Ensure that there is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school;
- Ensure that all school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2012/19;
- Ensure that they receive a full annual report on all child protection matters;
- Ensure that the school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

## AIMS

- To introduce procedures in the school to deal with Safeguarding concerns as directed by the SELB Safeguarding Procedures, DENI Circular 1999/10 Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 Guidance, DENI 2013/16 Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy in Schools, Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff DENI 2015/13 DENI guidance Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools, 2017 and Circular Area Safeguarding Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures
- To make staff and parents aware of the referral procedure within the school;
- To help our young people learn about the risks of possible abuse, to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and to acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

St Patrick's Academy recognises the five main responsibilities in the areas of Safeguarding.

These are in the areas of:

- 1. Prevention**
- 2. Recognition**
- 3. Response**
- 4. Referral**
- 5. Confidentiality and Record Keeping.**

## 1. PREVENTION OF ABUSE

In St Patrick's Academy we offer a supportive environment to our young people who are being abused, have been abused and may be abused in the future. All young people are vulnerable.

St Patrick's Academy has developed and provides a 'Safeguarding ethos' and a preventive curriculum. We offer our young people an alternative model to violent or abusive behaviour and alternative methods of responding. We aim to involve the whole school in creating a 'listening school'.

St Patrick's Academy offers protection on two levels:

- Immediate protection – creating a listening environment that makes it easier for young people to share their concerns;
- Long term protection, enhancing self-esteem and encouraging social skills, breaking the cycle of abusive behaviour.

The Board of Governors ensures that the curriculum includes a programme for young people on personal protection.

When it is appropriate to deliver sex education, management will ensure that the programme is consistent with guidance from the Department of Education.

We ensure that persons other than our school staff who are invited as leaders/helpers on educational visits, residential visits or other out of school educational activities are subject to vetting procedures.

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

## 2. RECOGNITION OF ABUSE

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

***Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm.***

### Types of Abuse

- **Neglect:** the persistent or severe neglect of a young person, or the failure to protect a young person from exposure to any kind of danger resulting in the significant impairment of the young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.
- **Physical Abuse:** physical injury to a young person, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- **Sexual Abuse:** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others.
- **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.

- **Emotional Abuse:** persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a young person.
- **Domestic Abuse:** threatening behaviour, violence or abuse inflicted on one person by another where they have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation.

When we become aware of young people below the age of consent engaging in sexual activity or where we have concerns about a 16/17 year old in a sexual relationship the Designated Teacher has a duty of care to share this information with Social Services.

Bullying behaviour is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St Patrick's Academy. 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 pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and to support and discipline the pupil displaying bullying behaviour. See Anti Bullying Policy.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse. Abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. A child protection record might be commenced if there is evidence of a safeguarding risk of, for example, self-harm, suicidal ideation, or other behaviours that cause concern. In addition to the types of abuse described above there are also some specific types of abuse that we in St Patrick's Academy are aware of and have therefore included in our policy.

### 3. RESPONSE TO SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. If a parent/guardian has a concern about their child's safety, they can speak to members of St Patrick's Academy Safeguarding team.

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

- Listen to the young person and accept what is said
- Record statements Explain what has to be done next and to whom the member of staff will have to talk
- Reassure the young person he/she has done the right thing to talk about it
- Refer information to the designated teacher.

### 4. REFERRAL ABOUT ABUSE

Mr Ronan Campbell is the designated member of staff for Safeguarding. In her absence Mrs K Boyle or Mrs Helen Guilfoyle will assume responsibility for Safeguarding matters.

If a young person makes a disclosure to a member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a young person, the member of staff must act promptly. The member of staff should report immediately to the designated member of staff to discuss the matter with her and make full notes.

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

The Principal, in consultation with the designated member of staff, will decide whether, in the best interests of the young person, the matter needs to be

referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the young person may be at risk, the Principal is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal/Designated Teacher may seek advice from the Education Authority (EA) Designated Officers for Safeguarding or the 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 safety of the young person is our first priority.

## 5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD KEEPING

### Confidentiality

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. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a ‘need to know’ basis. Where it is necessary to safeguard children, information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school data protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

### Record Keeping

In accordance with DE guidance all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in St Patrick’s Academy are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them.

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