



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### St. Anne's Primary School

#### Article 6

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Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

#### Introduction

The Child Protection policy is an intrinsic part of the overall pastoral programme of the School and aims to ensure that the welfare of all children in St. Anne's is safeguarded and their safety preserved. The ethos of a "listening" school with its emphasis on openness and honesty of communication between School Management Team and staff, teacher and teacher, teacher and parent, teacher and pupil, parent and pupil and pupil and pupil is the cornerstone of ensuring such safety. Children who feel threatened in any way are encouraged to speak out to another person and the school's ethos, pastoral programme and administrative structures are designed to ensure that opportunities for and encouragement towards such openness is paramount. The emphasis on the caring role of the teacher and the centrality of good relationships inherent in our school vision places considerable responsibility on all teaching staff to be alert to the risk of emotional abuse of children, such as persistent sarcasm, verbal bullying or severe and persistent negative comments and actions. Equally, it is incumbent upon the school to ensure that the protection of children is at a maximum by reducing the likelihood of physical or sexual abuse within school. All members of staff are thus encouraged to reflect on every aspect of their contact with children so they will promote an atmosphere in which trust and openness can do much to detect the potential abuse of children while sensitive and sensible professional behaviour towards pupils will significantly reduce the risk of allegations against staff being made. At the heart of the school policy is the belief that, as a Christian community, all those in the school - pupils and staff - should be accorded the dignity that comes from their baptism in Christ and that all relationships should, therefore, reflect the teaching of Christ.

#### 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, The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance "Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection"(DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures(2005).

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- 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.
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- 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.

Child Protection complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Positive Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Paths
- PDMU
- Relationships & Sexuality
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- E-Safety Policy

### **Aims**

The specific aims of the policy are:

- To enhance the pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence, assertiveness and personal safety by developing appropriate skills to make reasoned, informed choices, judgements and decisions through a pastoral programme, offering opportunities for class and group discussion of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of tolerance and trust.
- To ensure that staff and parents are well-informed about Child Protection issues and that staff are familiar with procedures for reporting concerns, their duty of care and responsibility to report and the various indicators of child abuse and neglect
- To provide a model for appropriate and effective communication between children, teachers, parents and other adults working with children
- To integrate the key concepts of Child Protection in the school curriculum through units of work in the pastoral programme
- Intimate care is provided for students when needed (**See Intimate Care Policy**)
- To monitor children's welfare and physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.

## Roles And Responsibilities

### The School Safeguarding Team

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team

- Chair of the Board of Governors Mrs E.Friel
- ☐ Designated Governor for Child Protection Mr C.Friel
- ☐ Principal Mrs J Bradley
- ☐ Designated Teacher Mrs S.Gillen
- ☐ Deputy Designated Teacher Mrs E.McGuinness

### The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors as a body must ensure that the school fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in keeping with current legislation and DE guidance including:

- approving the schools Child Protection policy every 2 years and all other safeguarding policies on a regular basis.
- receiving annual (and termly) Child Protection reports .
- ensuring there is a staff Code of Conduct for all adults working in the school
- attendance at relevant Child Protection/Safeguarding training for Governors

### Definition of 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).

### Categories of abuse:

Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer, an acquaintance or a stranger. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act, or of failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms, including:

- **neglect** - the actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health
- **physical injury** - actual or likely deliberate physical injury or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child
- **sexual abuse** - actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos of family roles. 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** - actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child
- **Domestic Abuse** - "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

#### **Identifying Abuse:**

Teachers and non-teaching staff are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. *Such symptoms may be due to a variety of causes and these may be identified with some sensitive questioning by the designated teacher*, but the following symptoms should be noted:

- bruises, particularly of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks and burns - may be apparent when children change their clothes for P.E. or games
- inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition - may be signs of physical neglect
- excessive dependence or attention-seeking - may be an indication of emotional abuse physical signs, withdrawal, inappropriate sexual behaviour and precocity - may be indicators of sexual abuse

Victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties but the signs described above can do no more than give cause for concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. More detailed indications of abuse are to be found in the document "Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection" with which all teachers should be familiar. Copies are available from Mrs Gillen. Members of staff concerned that such abuse has occurred must report this immediately to **Mrs Gillen, Mrs Mc Guinness or Mrs Bradley**. Mrs Gillen is the Designated Teacher and Mrs Mc Guinness is the deputy Designated Teacher who have specific responsibility for child protection. Where a child approaches a member of staff to confide in him/her any information likely to lead to suspicion of child abuse, the member of staff must recognise that, in order to protect the child, confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action by involving others in the child's best interests. ***No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.***

### Procedures: Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

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

- **Receive** - listen to what the child says, without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said, making brief cursory notes. These notes should be retained.
- **Reassure**- ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and his/her interests will come first. No promise of confidentiality can or should be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse.
- **Respond**- respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter. Use open questions e.g. anything else to tell me? Do not interrogate or ask leading questions- this may invalidate your evidence and the child's in any later court proceedings. Do not criticise the perpetrator- the child may love this person and reconciliation may be possible. Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.
- **Record**- make notes at the time and write these up as soon as possible afterwards. Note the time, date, place, people present as well as what is seen and said. Record key phrases/words used, noticeable non-verbal behaviour and any physical injuries. Under no circumstances should a child be photographed or a child's clothing removed. Do not destroy original notes.
- **Report**- refer the matter to the Designated Teacher

Respect confidentiality i.e. the matter should only be discussed on a need to know basis.

Any allegation by a child that he or she is suffering or has suffered abuse will be treated seriously and will immediately trigger the reporting procedures. Where teachers see signs that cause them concern, they should

Seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding (Non-teaching staff should immediately bring their concern to the designated teachers).N.B. St.Anne's staff are not the investigator ! Be aware that the way they ask questions or talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings

- they should not ask the child leading questions
- they should listen carefully and assure the child that he/she is believed
- they should not ask the child questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events or impose the adult's own assumptions
- they should LISTEN and not interrupt if the child is recalling events freely
- they should make a note - verbatim, where possible - to pass on to the designated teachers recording time, date, place, people present, what was said and any signs of physical injury.
- they should *under no circumstances* remove a child's clothing
- they should not give the child any promise of confidentiality
- they should be aware that the notes taken may need to be used in subsequent court proceedings

### 3. Refer the matter to Designated Teacher for Child Protection .

The teacher designated as responsible for child protection will then:

1. Make sensitive enquiries of the child concerned
2. Refer the case to or consult with social services (or the police, where appropriate)
3. Notify the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors
4. Mrs Gillen, Vice-Principal will also liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer
5. Make clear to both Principal and Chairperson the way the designated teacher will keep them informed
6. Make sure that they are informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between the statutory agencies, contribute to this discussion by telephone and clarify with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the child will be told that a referral has been made.
7. Co-operate with the preparation of any case conference held by the Social Services Department and the Key Worker appointed by them.
  - *Where the designated teacher is suspected to or alleged to have abused a child, the member of staff who is made aware of the possible offence should inform the principal immediately, who will instigate normal reporting procedures.*
  - *Where the Principal is suspected to or alleged to have abused a child, the matter should be reported to the designated teacher who will report the matter immediately to social services (or the Police, where appropriate) and to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.*

#### **Considerations for Parents and Other Adults:**

Parents should play their part in Child Protection by:

- telephoning the school on the morning of their child's absence so that the Office is reassured as to the child's situation
- discussing with their child the units of work in the pastoral programme on self-esteem, assertiveness, bullying, sex education and child protection
- informing the school whenever anyone other than themselves intend to pick up the child after school
- ensuring that they know which after-school clubs their child attends
- familiarising themselves with the school's Pastoral Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Protection Policy.
- Other adults helping school staff or leading out of school activities which result in having substantial access to children will be subject to vetting by a Police check. Parents and helpers will be required to provide their written consent to such vetting.
- Parents receive a summary of the pastoral care provision in the school from the designated teacher each year.
- All visitors to the school must report to the office and receive an identification badge. Staff must meet visitors and escort them in the school; any visitor without a badge is challenged by staff.
- An electronic access system requires all visitors to call at and register in the Reception.

### **Record Keeping**

All Child Protection records, information and confidential notes are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. The School's own Child Protection records will be stored for 30 years

### **Vetting Procedures**

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in the School are vetted / supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

### **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.

All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct.

### **Staff Training**

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies. All staff will receive basic Child Protection awareness training and annual/regular refresher training. The Principal, Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend Child Protection training courses specific to their roles which is provided by the EA Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

### **Staff and Governors**

All governors are familiar with the DE "School Governors Handbook on Child Protection". The school complies with the statutory requirements on vetting of all staff and governors, employment of substitute teachers and recruitment of staff in accordance with 2006 Circulars. The Board receives an annual report on Child Protection and maintains records of any suspicions or allegations of abuse by staff. Staff receive annually a copy of the Child Protection Policy and appropriate training from the Designated Teacher. Members of staff are specifically made aware of the Sexual Offences Act 2003: a new criminal offence of abuse of trust and a new offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming.

### **On-Line Safety**

Online safety messages are integrated across the curriculum for pupils in all Key Stages.

- Online safety messages are distributed amongst pupils, staff, parents/carers and the wider community.
- The school's leadership and management have clearly prioritised online safety and safeguarding across all areas of the school.
- Knowledge is shared amongst staff and there are good capacity-building opportunities.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff. It will be implemented through the schools staff induction and training programme and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and periodically by the Schools Safeguarding Team.

The School Management Team and designated teachers will conduct an annual review of the child protection procedures and policy statements each May to ensure that they are fit for purpose. A statement in the prospectus each year will indicate that such a review has taken place in order to reassure parents that their child is as safe as possible in the school. Parents are free at any time in the course of the year to suggest improvements/amendments to the procedures for consideration at the next review meeting. Parents are also consulted biennially via questionnaire on the school's Child protection procedures. The Principal and Vice-Principal will keep parents informed, through the school prospectus or Governors Report, of the School's Child Protection Policy. Parents may obtain a printed copy free of charge on request from the school.

Approved by Board of Governors:  
Next Policy Review Date: December 2017

Appendix 1.

## **The School Safeguarding Team Roles & Responsibilities**

**1. The Chair of the Board of Governors** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a Child Protection policy is in place and that a safeguarding ethos is maintained in the school
- Ensuring that a Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed
- Ensuring that Governors receive relevant training in Child Protection and Recruitment and Selection
- Assuming lead responsibility in the management of a complaint/allegation against the School Principal.
- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive regular updates in relation to child protection activity including a full written annual report

**2. Designated Governor for Child Protection.**

The Designated Governor is responsible for advising the Governors on matters related to child protection including the child protection policy, reports to Governors, the recruitment, selection and vetting of staff and the role of the Designated teacher.

**3. Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all relevant DENI guidance in relation to child protection and safeguarding in particular "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" (1999) is implemented within the school
- Enabling the Board of Governors fulfil their Child Protection duties by keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to child protection and ensuring the inclusion of child protection activities on their agenda
- Maintaining and securely storing the School Record of Child Abuse Complaints and to make it available at least annually to the Board of Governors.
- The appointment of suitable staff to posts (teaching and non-teaching) within the school and the appointment of suitable teaching staff to the roles of Designated and Deputy Teacher for Child Protection
- Ensuring that parents and pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedures every 2 years.
- Managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

**4. Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection**

Every school is required to appoint a Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. They must also appoint a Deputy Designated Teacher who as a member of the Safeguarding team will support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role including undertaking key duties in their absence. The role of Designated Teacher includes:

- Providing child protection training for all teaching and non-teaching staff (whole school training) to be delivered a minimum of once every two years
- Taking lead responsibility for the development and annual review of the school's child protection policy
- Promoting a child protection ethos in the school
- Acting as a point of contact for staff (and parents) in relation to child abuse concerns
- Liaison with the Principal and EA Designated Officers for Child Protection in cases of suspected Child Abuse
- Making referrals to other agencies, with the Principal's knowledge
- Maintaining and securely storing appropriate child protection records
- Attending child protection case conferences and other relevant case planning meetings where appropriate and practicable
- Providing an annual report to the *Governors* on child protection activity
- The Deputy Designated Teacher will deputise in the designated officer's absence.

## **Appendix 2.**

# **Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers**

### **Introduction**

This Code of Conduct 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 built on the premise that staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. However, it is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff.

#### **Code of Conduct**

##### **1. Private meetings with pupils.**

- a. Staff should be aware of the possible misconceptions or potential risks which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that in the normal course of school life there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. While it may be appropriate to use a sign indicating that the room is in use it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- c. If a member of staff has concerns that a private interview with a pupil may be misinterpreted or may give rise to concern he or she should ensure that another adult (or if this is not possible another pupil) is present or near by.
- d. Staff should be mindful of the potential risks involved in the use of social networking sites accessed by pupils.

##### **2. Physical contact with pupils.**

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e. Staff who need to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of

staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.

f. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

g. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Vice-Principal (Pastoral).

h. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

### **3 Choice and Use of Teaching Material**

a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

b. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.

c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

### **4 Relationships and Attitudes**

Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

### **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. It is therefore important that staff exercise judgement and seek advice if unsure about a situation.

From time to time, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions.

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.

### **Child Abuse in Other Specific Circumstances**

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is not defined as a category of abuse within the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The policy does however state that the damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and at the extreme cause them significant harm (including self harm).

The procedure for referral and investigation of abuse may therefore be implemented in certain circumstances such as when anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective; bullying is persistent and severe, resulting in the victim suffering/likely to suffer significant harm; there are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the bully suffering/likely to suffer significant harm or where concerns exist in relation to the parents/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child (either victim or bully).

#### **Children Who Sexually Abuse Others or Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour**

When abuse of a child is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the procedures outlined in this policy will be followed. It is important in such situations to distinguish between behaviours which are experimental in nature and those that are exploitative and harmful. Advice and support will be sought in such circumstances from a EA Designated Officer for Child Protection and where appropriate a referral made to the statutory agencies. In all such cases a risk assessment will be undertaken and an individual support and safety plan identified. Appropriate services will also be provided for the children involved.

#### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

"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."

(SBNI 2014, adopted from CSE Knowledge Transfer Partnership NI).

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of child sexual abuse is the concept of exchange - the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of those 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.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE.

The potential indicators of CSE 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;
- Truancy 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;
- 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.

Whilst these indicators can be usefully used to identify potential risk, it is important to note that their presence does not necessarily mean that CSE is occurring. More importantly, nor does their absence, mean that it is not.

### **Indecent Photographs**

The offence of taking indecent pictures of children under 18 years can apply in a situation where a pupil has taken an indecent picture using a mobile phone of others under 18 years of age. It is also an offence to distribute, possess with intent to distribute or show such photographs to others. In such circumstances the PSNI and Social Services will be contacted.

### **Young Person whose Behaviour places him/her at Risk of Significant Harm**

A child whose own behaviours e.g. self-harming behaviour, leaving school without permission etc. places him/her at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse as defined in Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). The decision to initiate child protection procedures is a matter for professional judgement and each case will be considered individually with advice sought from a EA Designated Officer for Child Protection. The criminal aspects of such cases will be dealt with by the PSNI.

### **Domestic Abuse**

The definition of 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

A child may live in a family where there is domestic abuse or a young person may be in a relationship where they become the subject of domestic abuse. In high risk cases involving domestic abuse Social Services and/or the EA Designated Officer for Child Protection PSNI will contact the school in order to help assess the child/young person's needs and to ensure that he/she is receives appropriate support.

