



***School Governors
Handbook
Safeguarding and
Child Protection***

This handbook has been developed by the Child Protection Support Service for Schools and the Department of Education

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1. Introduction

“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration”

Article 3 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

This handbook is intended to assist school governors in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities regarding their safeguarding and child protection role, in order to promote clarity and consistency of approach in all schools.

Recent public enquiries into child death and child abuse have highlighted the need for everyone to take responsibility for protecting children. In addition to this there is a necessity for those in key positions to have a clear understanding of their role in adhering to policy and procedures.

The awareness of the public and schools in matters relating to child abuse continues to grow, as the safeguarding and child protection context rapidly expands due to changes in society, particularly in relation to new technology. Legislation, guidance and policy for education have developed in response to this growing awareness and the utmost priority has now been given to the safeguarding and child protection role of schools.

In recognition of the key role that school plays in the life of a child, as school governors and managers of schools you must ensure that all children and young people feel both safe and protected in this environment.

This handbook outlines the key safeguarding and child protection legislative, policy and guidance context in education. It also explains what this means for you as a governor, and identifies the key safeguarding and child protection professionals in a school setting.

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with 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, which refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission.

2. The Law in Northern Ireland

There is a broad range of international and domestic legislation relating to child welfare and protection.

The Children (NI) Order 1995 is the overarching legislation setting out the requirements for professional practice in relation to children and young people. It is the most comprehensive and far reaching child care legislation ever introduced to Northern Ireland. It clearly identifies the welfare of the child as being of paramount importance and sets Prevention and Protection as two of the five key principles.

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 places a statutory duty on Boards of Governors to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Have a written child protection policy
- Specifically address the prevention of bullying in school discipline policies

This is the legislation relating specifically to a Board of Governors and its child protection responsibilities towards pupils in schools. It will be helpful for all governors to have access to a copy of Articles 17, 18 and 19. See DE website www.education-ni.gov.uk

The Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 places interagency co-operation on a statutory footing, makes arrangements to promote the welfare of children and directs agencies to supply information to the SBNI under certain conditions. It established the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) which was launched in September 2012. The objective of the SBNI is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in NI by coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the board. www.safeguardingni.org

In order to fulfil your responsibilities you are obligated to acknowledge and work within the relevant guidance and procedural documents that have been produced by the Department of Education (DE) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)

3. Guidance, Policy and Procedures that help you understand the Law relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection

- **Area Child Protection Committees' - Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and Amendments (2008)**

This was written to reflect the changes in thinking and practice contained in 'Co- Operating to Safeguard' and this document sets out the procedures to be followed by all agencies working in the child protection environment. This policy and procedures will be replaced by SBNI guidance.

- **Pastoral Care in Schools. Child Protection (1999)**

This is the key guidance document for schools on the management of safeguarding and child protection issues in a school setting.

The above documents are currently under review.

- **Co-operating to Safeguard Children & Young People in NI (2016)**

This provides the guidance on safeguarding and child protection arrangements in Northern Ireland. It sets out how agencies should co-operate to promote children's welfare and protect them from abuse and/or neglect.

- **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013 – 2020** and subsequent action plans

Safeguarding and Child Protection: DE Circulars

- **Circular 99/10**

Guidance for schools on child protection policy and procedures

- **Circular 03/13**

Guidance for schools on the Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003

- **Circular 06/06**

Guidance on safer recruitment practices for education authorities

- **Circular 06/08**

Guidance for schools on the requirement for child protection training in relation to interviewing and selection panels

- **Circular 07/01**

Acceptable use of the internet and digital technologies in schools

- **Circular 08/10**

From 1st August 2008 substitute teachers must be booked on line via NISTR

- **Circular 2010/18**

“Every School a Good School” – the Governors’ Role

- **Circular 2011/22**
Internet Safety (addendum to 2007/01). Advice and guidance on arrangements for preventing the accessing of inappropriate material on the internet, the use of materials from blocked sites, and the provision of information to parents.
- **Circular 2012/18**
Replaces Circular 2010/07. Pupil Attendance: Absence Recording by Schools
- **Circular 2012/19**
Disclosure and barring arrangements: changes to pre-employment vetting checks for volunteers working in schools from 10 September 2012
- **Circular 2013/01**
Disclosure and barring arrangements. Guidance for Schools and employing authorities on pre-employment vetting checking and safer recruitment practices
- **Circular 2013/16**
Relationship and sexuality education policy in schools.
- **Circular 2013/25**
E Safety – further guidance
- **Circular 2014/14**
Guidance on how to encourage pupil participation in decision making in schools
- **DE Circular 2014/27**
Managing Information on Persons Who Pose a Risk to Pupils
- **DE Circular 2015/02**
Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording by Schools
- **DE Circular 2015/13**
Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff
- **DE Circular 2015/22**
Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- **DE Circular 2015/23**
Drugs Guidance
- **DE Circular 2016/05**
Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour
- **DE Circular 2016/20**
Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools

Letters from DE

February 2009

Child Protection: Legislation Changes to Age of Consent

June 2009

Provision of free school meals on humanitarian grounds

December 2009

Child Protection: AccessNI Pre-Employment Checking – End of Temporary Arrangements put in place in August 2008

May 2012

Revised criterion for the provision of free school meals on humanitarian grounds

November 2013

Concussion and Sudden Impact Syndrome

July 2014

Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines on Female Genital Mutilation

September 2014

Disposal of Child Protection Records. Letter to Principals.

October 2014

Child Sexual Exploitation – key messages.

June 2015

Inappropriate use of the internet and mobile technologies. Advice for pupils, parents and staff.

June 2015

Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation.

September 2015

SBNI leaflet “Sexting and the Law”

December 2015

Child Sexual Exploitation – False Freedom

March 2016

Protecting Life in Schools – Helping Protect Against Suicide Guidance document

April 2016

Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland

Sept 2016

DE Guidance on Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools (letter issued with Circular 2016/20)

New and updated guidance in relation to safeguarding and child protection including DE circulars and letters can be found using the following DE web page link.

<http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/child-protection-safeguarding.htm>

4. What does this mean for you as a School Governor?

A Board of Governors must ensure that;

- A Designated Governor for child protection is appointed.
- A Designated and a Deputy Designated Teacher are appointed in their schools.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff.
- The school has a child protection policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils should receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every 2 years.
- The school ensures that all safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every 2-3 years.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school.
- All school staff and volunteers are vetted where appropriate.
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (It is best practice that they receive a termly report of child protection activities)The Record of Child Abuse Complaints (Allegations against Staff) is made available to them at least annually.
- The school maintains records of:
 - Child protection concerns
 - Disclosures of abuse
 - Complaints against staff
 - Staff induction and training

NB: Governors of Schools which are involved in initiatives such as Extended Schools and Full Service Schools must ensure that the implications for safeguarding their pupils in the extended school environment are fully addressed and included in the schools child protection policy.

5. Who is who in the Safeguarding Team?

It is important to acknowledge that everyone has a responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in our schools.

Within the school setting there are key Governors and staff who are delegated specific responsibility for Child Protection.

5.1 The School Safeguarding Team

In the best interests of the children and as support for the Designated Teachers, the school should establish a Safeguarding Team. This team should include the Chair of the Board of Governors, the Designated Governor, the Principal (as Chair), the Designated Teacher and the Deputy Designated Teacher. The team may co-opt other members as required to help address specific issues.

The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) provides child protection training in relation to the specific responsibilities of each member of the team.

The role of the team should include;

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and child protection arrangements in the school
- Support for the Designated/Deputy Designated teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities.

5.1.1 Chair of Board of Governors

The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, Part IV 'Welfare and Protection of Pupils' places a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils on the Board of Governors.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the safeguarding ethos within the school environment.

In the event of a child protection complaint being made against the Principal, it is the Chairperson who must assume lead responsibility for managing the complaint/allegation in keeping with DE Guidance and the school's policies and procedures.

5.1.2 Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Board of Governors will have delegated a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in child protection/safeguarding issues in order to be able to advise the governors 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 termly updates and full annual Designated Teachers report
- Recruitment, selection and vetting of staff

5.1.3 School Principal

The school Principal has the delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that no adult begins to work with pupils unless they have been inducted in the school Safeguarding and child protection policies including the Code of Conduct.

The Principal must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedures every 2 years. This could include a simplified, abbreviated version of the full policy.

The Principal as the Secretary to the Board of Governors will have the responsibility of making sure that the Board of Governors fulfil their Safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to Safeguarding and child protection and ensure termly inclusion of child protection activities on the agenda. In addition the Principal takes the lead in managing Child Protection concerns relating to staff.

5.1.4 Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Every school is required to have a Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. This is a highly skilled role developed and supported through specialised training requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues. It involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff and volunteers.
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for secure record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Making referral to Social Services or PSNI.
- Liaising with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school principal informed of any child protection concerns.
- Taking the lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promoting a child protection ethos in the school.

- Compiling reports to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection and relevant Safeguarding issues.

The Annual Report to Governors will provide a report on the schools child protection/safeguarding arrangements and may include the following headings;

- **Child Protection/Safeguarding Activity e.g.**
 - (i) concerns of abuse
 - (ii) complaints of a child protection nature against staff
 - (iii) number of referrals to Social Services/PSNI
 - (iv) number of children known to Social Services
 - (v) number of children on the child protection register
 - (vi) number of child protection case conferences and other Trust meetings attended by school staff

No identifying details of any case should be shared.

- **Child Protection Training e.g.**
Designated / Deputy Designated Teacher
Principal
Governor
Whole School Training
- **Policy Reviews / Updates**
- **Safeguarding Initiatives**

5.1.5 Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection is to actively support the Designated Teacher in fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

It is important that the Deputy Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Designated Teacher so that he/she develops sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher when required. Deputy Designated Teachers are also provided with the same specialist training by CPSSS to help them in their role.

Schools may have more than one Deputy Designated Teacher depending on their size, location e.g. split site schools and the presence of an additional provision such as a nursery or speech and language unit.

6. Safeguarding and child protection Support Services

6.1 Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)

The CPSSS was developed as a regional support service for schools in April 2006. It is based within the Education Welfare Service under the managerial responsibility of the Chief Education Welfare officer in each Education Authority region.

The CPSSS is comprised of Designated Officers for Child Protection whose primary role is to provide advice, support and training to Designated Teachers for Child Protection (DTs), their Deputies (DDTs), Principals and Governors in relation to their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. This includes the provision of:

- A daily telephone helpline to advise, guide and support DTs, DDTs, and Principals in relation to concerns about individual children and on wider policy and training matters.
- Initial, refresher and cluster group training.
- Support visits to schools where required.
- Advice and guidance on the assessment and management of children whose behaviour poses a significant risk of harm to themselves, other pupils and staff.
- Dissemination of new information on training, DE circulars and guidance.
- Support in developing or reviewing the school's child protection policy.
- Follow up to ETI inspections where child protection/safeguarding is identified as an area for improvement.

The CPSSS will also:

- Offer training to the Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection in relation to their statutory child protection/safeguarding responsibilities.
- Offer support, advice and training to other services within the Education Authority.
- Assist EA Human Resource managers in dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other EA officers/employees
- Liaise with Social Services and PSNI where appropriate.
- Represent the education sector at multi-agency meetings including MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings which are a coordinated inter-agency response to domestic abuse.

The CPSSS also has responsibility for the:

- Approval and granting of work permits for children in employment.
- Approval and granting of performance licences (where required) for children of statutory school age who are involved in entertainment and guiding production companies in accordance with the provisions of the Children (Public Performances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.
- Approval, licensing and training of chaperones for children involved in entertainment.

6.2 Other Education Authority Services

There are also services available within the Education Authority such as the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) which provide training and support for Governors in relation to their general role. This provision includes induction training and recruitment and selection training both of which reference the safeguarding and child protection responsibilities of Governors.

All Education Authority services and staff share a global responsibility to follow the agreed child protection and safeguarding policies.

6.3 Human Resources

Employing authorities e.g. EA, CCMS, NICE, GBA, will provide advice to their member schools on specific employment issues such as recruitment and selection, use of disciplinary procedures etc.

7. What Should your Child Protection Policy include?

A school's child protection policy must be a 'living document' providing a secure framework within which all staff can work. It reflects the values to which the school community is committed and how the school is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities in safeguarding children. Each school should develop their policy in order to address the needs of their specific school community. The school policy should include:

- The school's child protection/safeguarding ethos
- Definitions and potential signs and symptoms of abuse including child sexual exploitation and domestic violence
- The roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers and who they are
- The reporting process for Child Protection concerns:
 - i. who to report to
 - ii. what to record
- The reporting process for concerns about school staff or volunteers
- How a parent can raise a concern about child protection/safeguarding.
- The school's safe recruitment measures
- A code of conduct for all staff and volunteers
- The school's approach to "The Preventative Curriculum"
- Reference other safeguarding policies e.g. safe handling, intimate care, educational visits, e-safety, anti-bullying, whistleblowing policy
- Specific issues e.g. extended school activity

The child protection policy must be reviewed annually with a copy shared with parents every 2 years. It should be acknowledged that the child protection policy is one of a suite of policies that reflect that safeguarding takes place across all aspects of school life.

8. What is the Role of the Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI)?

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) provides inspection services for the Department of Education, the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure and the Department for Employment & Learning. Within the Inspectorate, particular inspectors carry out specific roles.

A District Inspector has responsibility for a group of organisations within sectors, the pre-school sector, primary schools, post-primary schools, colleges of further education, training organisations and youth organisations.

The Chair of the Board of Governors is notified when an inspection is announced. An Inspector will be delegated to survey pastoral care/safeguarding arrangements within the school, an integral part of which will relate specifically to child protection.

The ETI Safeguarding Pro-forma is a questionnaire sent out by the ETI prior to the inspection visit. It is intended to establish the extent to which your school complies with child protection/safeguarding requirements and how your arrangements reflect best practice in all aspects of safeguarding children and young people. The completed questionnaire forms the basis of discussion about pastoral care and safeguarding provision and a copy should be made available to the Inspector at the start of the visit. There are three sections:

- Whole Organisation
- Communication and Record Keeping
- Children/Young People and Parents

The Inspectors will meet separately with the governors on the first day of the inspection. The Inspector will ask governors questions relating to the child protection systems and processes set up within their school. An in depth evaluation and report will be provided indicating the ETI findings. A follow-up inspection, if required, will be carried out normally within 18-24 months. If, however, significant pastoral care or child protection issues are identified during the inspection, a follow-up inspection on these issues will take place within a period of 6-8 weeks

9. Child Protection Training for School Governors

Child Protection Training for school governors has three specific strands

- Initial awareness of child protection that will be included as part of the induction programme for all governors.
- Child protection training from the CPSSS for the Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection in order that they can assist the full Board of Governors with their child protection governance.
- Training on recruitment, selection and vetting which incorporates child protection and DE guidance for all governors who will be sitting on interview or teaching appointments panels.

Each training strand is co-ordinated by the relevant Education Authority Service.

10. Where do I get help?

Education Authority Child Protection Support Service for Schools

Belfast Office: 028 9056 4289

Antrim Office: 028 9448 2223

Dundonald Office: 028 9056 6413

Armagh Office: 028 3834 1975

Omagh Office: 028 8241 1480

Resources

- The Education Authority had developed a new website designed to provide Governors with information and support materials on a range of school related matters including safeguarding and child protection. Apps for this site are available to download for android and apple devices.
<http://www.schoolgovni.org.uk/>
- To support the guidance in Circular 99/10 the DE developed the Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection resources (booklet and DVD). This provides comprehensive advice on all aspects of child protection necessary for Principals and school governors to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. These resources are available on the DE website
<http://education-ni.gov.uk>

Further helpful websites with governor information are:

<http://www.esaqs.tv>

<http://governornet.co.uk>