

St. Patrick's Grammar School



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY SUMMARY

St. Patrick's Grammar School is committed to the care of its students and to doing what is reasonable in all circumstances in order to safeguard and promote students' safety and welfare, both in school and in school related activities, outside the usual classroom environment. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where students are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that students receive effective support, protection and justice. All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection and we are conscious of children who have special needs that may put them in a particularly vulnerable position. The welfare of the child - the paramount consideration of the Children (NI) Order 1995 - is one of the principles which underpin the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

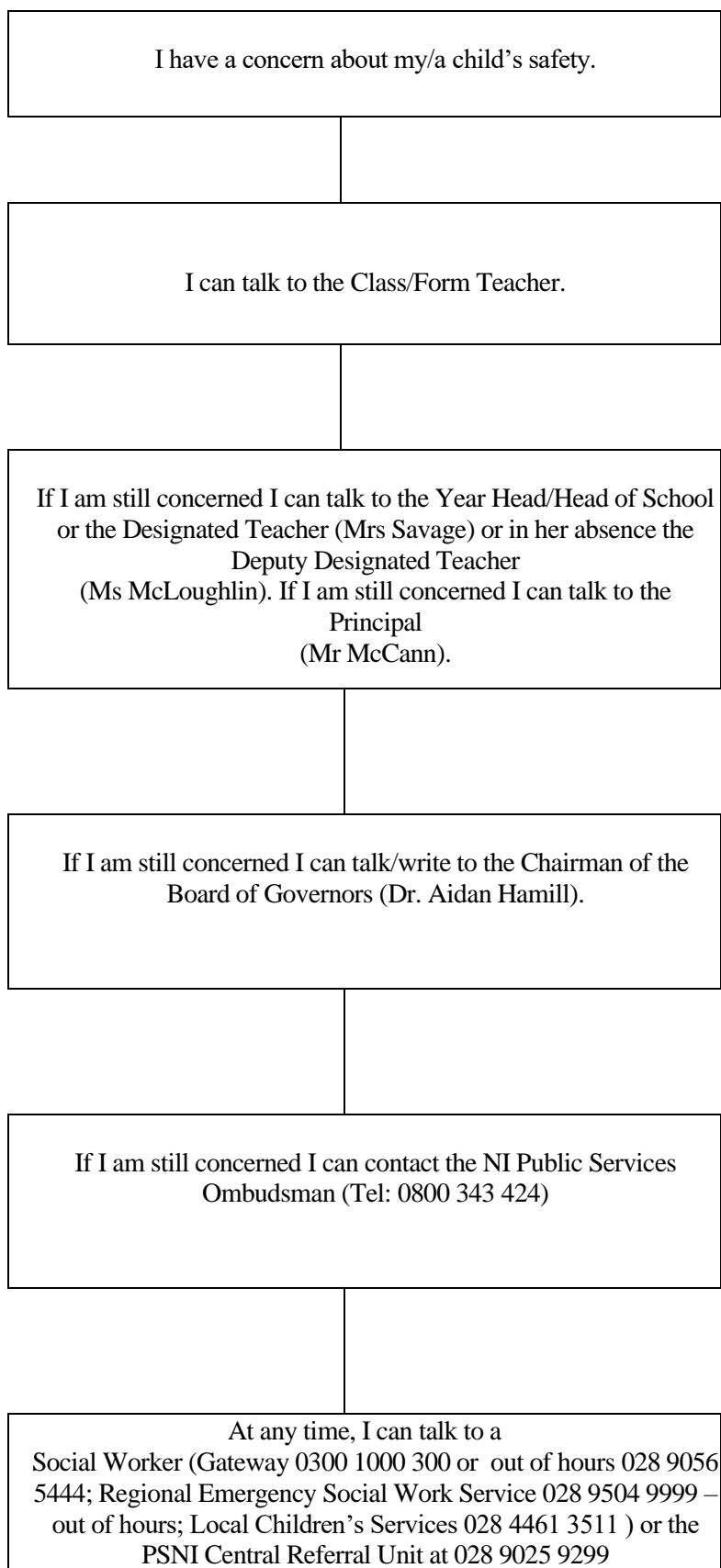
The school recognises that the problem of child abuse is a community and social issue and responsibility; the school's role in safeguarding and child protection is one part of a wider partnership between home, school and community, in preventing child abuse. While the primary responsibility for the protection of children from abuse rests with parents and Social Services, staff who come into contact with children and young people have a duty to help protect them from abuse or the risk of abuse. The policy details the roles and responsibilities of all adults in the school, regarding safeguarding and protecting young people from abuse. Child abuse is a criminal offence, and therefore cases of suspected abuse must be investigated by the statutory authorities. Given the necessity of ensuring the immediate protection of the child, and the fact that a crime may have been committed, confidentiality must be subordinate to the need to protect the child.

The school provides within its curriculum, elements which promote the development of students' physical and emotional well-being, health and safety and resilience. It offers guidance to students regarding the development of a moral thinking and value system, regarding personal growth and relationships, which includes recognition of the parts played by the media, social networking sites and mobile technology, in the lives of young people today.

As part of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents/carers, the school helps parents/carers to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the young people in its care. The school will share relevant policies with parents and encourage parents to read these. **Parents must keep the school informed of: their child's medical conditions or educational needs; court orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child; change in the child's circumstances (address or contact details, name change or change of parental responsibility); their child's absence from school, by contacting the school if their child is absent and sending in a note on the child's return.**

As part of overall pastoral care provision, parents are encouraged and expected to contact the school if they have any worries about any aspect of their child's experiences or education. This is especially important where parents have a concern about their child's safety. Please see the chart overleaf which explains how parents can raise a concern or make a complaint.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE
FOR PARENT RAISING A CONCERN



A copy of the school's policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection is available from Reception.



St. Patrick's Grammar School Downpatrick - Overview of The Complaints Procedure

SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Board of Governors together with the Principal set the direction and tone of the school in all that they do and are committed to working with parents in the best interests of their children's education. The purpose of the Complaints Procedure is to effectively address complaints raised by parents/guardians.

The procedure covers all matters relating to the actions of staff employed in the school and the application of school procedures, where they affect individual pupils. However, school staff, and the Board of Governors recognise the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest possible stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

Where it becomes evident at an early stage that a matter should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms, this Complaints Procedure will be set aside in favour of the agreed procedure such as Safeguarding, Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions, Grievance, Discipline, Bullying and Harassment or the Unsatisfactory Teaching Procedure.

The school will not investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the school to be of a serious nature. Anonymous complaints may be investigated where they relate to alleged Child Protection matters or alleged financial impropriety. This will be at the discretion of the school. The Board of Governors will be informed by the Principal at each board meeting of such complaints.

AIMS

In operating this Complaints Procedure we aim to:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- allow swift handling of a complaint within established time-limits for action;
- keep people informed of progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation;
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved;
- respect confidentiality;
- fully address all aspects of a complaint and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary; and
- in the interest of continuous improvement, provide relevant information to the school's Senior Management Team and Board of Governors.

This Procedure is designed to be:

- easily accessible and publicised;
- simple to understand and use;
- impartial; and
- non-adversarial.

The full details of this procedure are available on the school's website or, from the school on request.