



## SAFEGUARDING WALLACE: CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Safeguarding Context

At Wallace High School we believe that every child should be kept safe and that everyone here has a responsibility to safeguard our pupils. Children and young people cannot learn or develop effectively unless they feel secure. At Wallace High School we have a strong pastoral tradition. It is our aim to create an ethos which contributes to the care, safety and well-being of all of our pupils.

At Wallace High School we consider *Safeguarding* to be the process of protecting children from abuse, neglect, harm or the risk of these as well as providing care and support for children.

At Wallace High School we consider *Child Protection* to be part of Safeguarding. It refers to the actions taken by the staff and the agencies engaged in protecting children from harm when a disclosure is made.

The Wallace High School has a dedicated *Safeguarding Team* of experienced and specially trained staff.

Mr Reid is the school's designated teacher for Child Protection. There are also four deputy designated teachers who work with and as directed by Mr Reid. They are Mr Atkinson, Miss Frey and Mrs Jordan in the Grammar school and Mr Harper and Mrs Dowds in the Preparatory Department. Together they make up the Safeguarding Team.

### Safeguarding procedures for Parents

At Wallace High School we encourage parents to advise us of any concerns they have with regards to the safety, care and well-being of our pupils.

If you have a specific concern about a child at Wallace, please contact the school and ask to speak to the designated teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

When a disclosure of abuse or the risk of abuse is made, the designated teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team will consider all the information and carefully plan a course of action. The Principal and the Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed.

A Safeguarding Wallace **leaflet** is available on our website. This provides guidance for parents and useful contact details to support agencies. Alternatively, parents can contact Social Services or the PSNI directly.

### **Rationale**

The school recognises that all its staff have a responsibility to help protect its pupils from abuse or the risk of abuse. In light of this the Principal will:

1. Ensure that all staff (teaching and non-teaching) have guidelines indicating
  - a. code of conduct for all staff.
  - b. the different possible categories of abuse.
  - c. the possible symptoms of abuse.
  - d. how to investigate and report on abuse.
  - e. procedures to be followed when necessary.
  - f. the role of the designated teacher (and deputy).
  - g. reporting procedures.
2. Designate a senior member of staff (the designated teacher) or deputy available in the absence of the designated teacher, who will have the primary immediate responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
3. Ensure that appropriate records of reports, interviews, reviews etc. are kept, including the information on the Child Protection Register.
4. Ensure that both the designated teacher and members of the Safeguarding Team are properly trained to carry out their responsibilities.
5. Ensure that child protection issues are part of the induction programme for all newly appointed members of staff, including volunteers and sports coaches.
6. Ensure that appropriate in-service training for staff, volunteers and sports coaches is organised.
7. Ensure that the progress of a child placed on the Child Protection Register is monitored.
8. Ensure that an appropriate self-protection programme for pupils is included in the curriculum.
9. Ensure that pupils, through appropriate notices placed around the school, are aware of how to obtain help and from whom.
10. Inform all who need to know of the complaints procedure.
11. Arrange for an AccessNI check to be carried out on new employees, volunteers and sports coaches.
12. Ensure where a referral has been deemed necessary that Social Services and/or the Police and the designated officer for child protection in the appropriate Education & Library Board are notified immediately.
13. Ensure that parents are made aware through the school prospectus, parents' meetings or other appropriate methods, of the school's child protection arrangements and the fact that these may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies.

### **Categories of Abuse**

One recognised working definition of the term 'Child abuse' is:

'Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a 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** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers.

**Domestic Violence and Abuse** is defined as 'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'

### **Identifying Abuse**

It is always preferable to prevent abuse, or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff, especially teachers but also non-teaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary or auxiliary 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 other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances, or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse. For example:

- bruises, particularly bruises 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, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities, or when very young children or children with special education needs are helped with toileting;

- possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition and of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention-seeking, may be noticeable;
- sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. Also, it must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described above.

**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. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature (Child Sexual Exploitation - CSE).

### **Grooming**

“Grooming” is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.

This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child’s/young person’s loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming.

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional.

Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Grooming is often associated with CSE but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse.

It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or
- (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Child sexual exploitation does not always include physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Any child (i.e. a person under the age of 18) can be a victim of CSE.

Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited.

Both young females and males can be victims of CSE. While CSE is not a specific criminal offence, it does encompass a range of sexual offences and other forms of serious criminal misconduct.

### Identifying CSE

CSE can be very difficult to identify and a young person may not see themselves as a victim. However, it is our statutory responsibility to protect all children and young people from abuse, irrespective of whether or not they view themselves as a victim of abuse. Professionals need to be able to identify vulnerability in the midst of challenging behaviour and frequent resistance to, or even apparent disregard for, professional support.

Research repeatedly shows that young people rarely report abuse through CSE. Most concerns are identified by professionals, friends or family or by proactive investigation by authorities. In recognition of this, good practice guidelines state that all areas should assume that CSE is occurring within their area unless they have evidence to indicate otherwise. As such, schools should be alert to the likelihood of CSE and plan to protect children and young people accordingly.

### Potential indicators of CSE:

- ✓ Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation.
- ✓ Truancy/leaving school without permission.
- ✓ Persistently going missing or returning late.
- ✓ Receiving lots of texts/ phone calls prior to leaving.
- ✓ Change in mood - agitated/stressed.
- ✓ Appearing distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances. Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.
- ✓ Physical symptoms eg bruising; bite marks.
- ✓ Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis.
- ✓ New peer groups.
- ✓ Significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ✓ 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 abuse.

While these indicators can be useful in identifying potential risk, their presence does not necessarily mean CSE is occurring.

### **What to Do?**

CSE is a form of child abuse and, as such, any member of staff suspecting that CSE is occurring should follow the school child protection policy and procedures, including reporting to the appropriate agencies.

The HSCT and PSNI should be involved as early as possible to ensure any evidence that may assist prosecution is not lost and to enable a disruption plan to reduce the victim's contact with the perpetrator(s) and reduce the perpetrator(s) control over the victim to be put in place without delay.

### **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse**

**Domestic Violence and Abuse** is defined as 'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'

Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

### **Operation Encompass**

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse.

Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm.

As a school, we recognise that children's exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them. Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure.

Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team.

This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information and a note will be made in the child's child protection file.

The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis.

All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls.

Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Further information see The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

### **So what does Operation Encompass actually look like in practice?**

- If the Police attend a domestic abuse incident, and one of your pupils is present, they will notify the school – usually by a telephone call, before the start of the next school day.
- This enables your school safeguarding team to provide appropriate and timely support for a child who may have experienced trauma.
- Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling you to provide immediate support for that child.
- This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

**Sexual Violence and Abuse** is defined as 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

\*All of these definitions are from Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016) [www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-youngpeople-northern-ireland](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-youngpeople-northern-ireland) These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.

Each of these definitions uses the term 'actual or likely'. For practical purposes, 'actual' can be taken to mean 'confirmed', i.e. that the teacher is satisfied that the abuse has actually happened, and 'likely' can be taken to equate to 'potential' or 'suspected', i.e. that the teacher believes that the abuse probably happened, or will probably happen.

We are advised that "sexual activity involving a child who has achieved sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up his or her own mind on the matter, while illegal, may not necessarily constitute sexual abuse. One example which could fall into this category is a sexual relationship between a 16-year old girl and an 18-year old boy. The decision to initiate child protection action in such cases is a matter for professional judgement and each case will be considered individually. The criminal aspects of the case will, of course, be dealt with by the Police."

## **Procedure for Dealing with Suspected Abuse**

The school recognises that its entire staff have a responsibility to help protect its pupils from abuse or the risk of abuse. (The term abuse includes physical injury, neglect, continued ill-treatment, emotional and sexual abuse). In the event of any member of staff receiving or uncovering information, no matter how trivial or uncorroborated about actual or suspected child abuse, the procedure will be as follows:

- The member of staff shall immediately inform the designated teacher, Mr J Reid, or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- The designated teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team will then inform the Principal.
- The designated teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team will telephone the Gateway Team at Stewartstown Road Health Centre within the space of one working day.
- The designated teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team will complete a UNOCINI form and send copies to the appropriate agency, SEELB and retain a copy in the school files.

Any teacher or other member of staff who complies with the school's procedure in making a report of suspected child abuse is acting within the course of his/her employment and in such circumstances where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the full support of the Board of Governors and will not be legally or financially liable.

The responsibility of the designated teacher/deputy designated teacher is as follows:

- to ensure that the member of staff completes an appropriate report for school records using the Safeguarding Pro forma.
- to notify the local Social Services Department (via the Gateway Team) and, where an arrestable offence is suspected, the police and the designated officer for child protection in the South Eastern Education and Library Board
- to complete the UNOCINI form for Social Services
- to liaise with the appropriate Head of Year if this is thought to be beneficial
- to keep suitable records of reports, interviews, reviews, etc.
- to liaise with Social Services as necessary.
- to ensure that the appropriate Heads of Year are made aware of "Looked After" children or those on the Child Protection Register.

<b>Designated Teacher</b> (Grammar School)	-	Mr J Reid (Senior Teacher)
<b>Deputy Teachers</b> (Grammar School)	-	Mr D Atkinson (Pastoral Vice- Principal)
	-	Miss Frey & Mrs Jordan
<b>Designated Teacher</b>	-	Mr J Harper (Head of Department)
<b>Deputy Teacher</b> (Preparatory Department)		Mrs S Dowds

The schools' Safeguarding Team is supported by the EA's CPSS.



## **Procedures for Reporting Suspected Abuse**

All staff are trained annually on identifying the signs and symptoms of abuse and dealing with a disclosure.

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding.

Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's ancillary or auxiliary staff sees such signs, he or she should immediately bring them to the attention of the designated teacher or member of the safeguarding team and it may be appropriate for the necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher.

Such clarification may reassure staff that abuse has not occurred but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his or her family is in need of Social Services intervention.

Care must be taken in asking and interpreting children's responses to questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some cases, talking to the child will crystallise initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred and point to the need for immediate referral.

Staff should, therefore, be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings:

- they should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- they should, therefore, not ask questions which encourage the child to change his or her version of events in any way or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?".
- the chief task at this stage is to listen to the child and not to interrupt if he or she is recalling significant events and to make notes of the discussion to pass on to the designated teacher. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail or sketched but under no circumstances should the child's clothing be removed nor should a photograph be taken.
- any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, preferably quoting the actual words used.
- staff should not give the child or young person undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should, of course reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.
- they should also be aware that their notes of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.

While discreet preliminary clarification from the child or his parent or carer will often help to confirm or allay concerns it is not the responsibility of teachers and other education staff to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child's family or other carers. They should not take action beyond that recommended in the policy to be followed in handling cases of abuse, including where a teacher or other member of staff is accused of abuse

### **Code of Conduct for Employees of The Wallace High School**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interest of the young person as a primary consideration.

Staff must always be aware of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the pupils in the school must be above reproach.

The code of conduct is intended to assist staff by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

#### **1. Private Meeting with Pupils**

Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that 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.

Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.

Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

#### **2. Physical Contact with Pupils**

As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.

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.

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. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).

Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.

Staff who have 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.

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

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 his/her line manager - in the case of teaching staff to a V.P. and in the case of non-teaching staff to their support staff line managers.

**The support staff line managers are as follows:**

- Administration - Colleen McDowell (Head of Administration)
- Premises – Nigel Hylands (Head of Premises)
- Accounts - John Tracey (Head of Finance)
- Classroom Assistants and Technicians - Neal McKnight (Senior Teacher)
- ICT Technicians - Jane McMath (Senior Teacher)
- Preparatory Department Support Staff - Jonny Harper (Head of the Preparatory Department)

Should a V.P. or the Head of Finance be in such a situation he/she should submit his/her report to the Principal.

**Substitute Teachers/Sports Coaches/PGCE students**

All coaching and substitute or temporary teaching staff have been vetted by Access NI.

All coaching and substitute or temporary teaching staff complete an in-house Safeguarding induction.

**Residential visits**

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 Materials**

Teachers should avoid any teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted. 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. 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. When using

teaching materials of a sensitive nature the teacher should be aware that they or the materials may be criticised after the materials have been used.

### **Child Protection Register**

If the Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, the school will monitor the progress of the child.

The school will alert either the child's case co-ordinator from Social Services or the Education Welfare Officer when a child on the Child Protection Register is absent for more than a few days, or on a regular basis, or shows any signs which suggest a deterioration in the child's home circumstances.

### **Child Protection Case Conferences (MARAC)**

When a referral has been made to Social Services of a case of suspected or alleged abuse, either the designated teacher, a member of the Safeguarding Team or the Head of Year, may be asked to contribute the school's knowledge of the child to the Child Protection Case Conference convened by Social Services to assess the child's circumstances and decide on further action.

Reports will be made using the **UNOCINI** form.

**Created by:** J Reid

**Date:** June 2023