

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING



Policy Statement

- The College is required by legislation to have a Child Protection Policy
- This policy is a complete rewrite of our original interim policy.
- This policy has been created using all discoverable guidance issued by the Department and the various boards.

Summary:

This policy tries to set clear guidance as to the College's procedures and structures in relation to Child Protection. The policy tries to be rational in its approach, although there will always be exceptions to the general principles.

It is of the utmost importance that all staff read and understand the guidance offered herein.

To this extent, there will be annual staff training on this policy. It is respectfully suggested that all staff should print and read the policy before training takes place.

E G Martin
Principal

Additional Notes

Policy Number:
2004/6

History:

- Interim was created in August 2003.
- This new policy was created between March 2004 and June 2004 in consultation with Year Coordinators.
- Drafted between June 2004 and September 2004.
- Final version for presentation to Governors written October 2004.
- Presented to and adopted by Governors November 2004.
- Revised June 2005.
- Minor revisions December 2006.
- Modified September 2008
- Modified January 2011
- Modified February 2012
- Reviewed June 2013
- Reviewed June 2014
- Reviewed June 2015 (by Miss Connolly)

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ULIDIA INTEGRATED COLLEGE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. RATIONALE

We in Ulidia Integrated College have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safeguarding of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care procedures, which aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique qualities and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of our school have also developed a Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

2. What is child abuse?

We use the following definition:

- **Neglect** – the persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development.
- **Physical** – physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- **Sexual** – the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.
- **Emotional** – persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

3. Behaviour

A healthy, disciplined atmosphere is a key ingredient in providing an effective and secure learning environment for our pupils. All members of staff must maintain these agreed standards for them to be effective.

Pupils must also be fully aware of any behaviour procedures that involve them. They need to be aware of and appreciate that acceptable standards are expected within the College. They need to know the requirements set by each department or each teacher within the classroom. If they have this awareness and knowledge then they know when they have overstepped these pre-defined limits. Pupils will be made aware of these standards at the beginning of the school year.

It is important that all members of the College staff uphold the principles and structures of the College's Behaviour Policy.

It is the duty of teaching staff to maintain standards within a classroom and of all staff to maintain the expected standards of behaviour outside the classroom.

Pupils should be respectful to one another. Inappropriate behaviour, in certain circumstances, may result in an immediate suspension and a risk assessment being carried out. The College may seek the advice of external agencies.

4. Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the designated teacher for child protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures described (see over).

5. Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse.

The designated Co-ordinator for child protection is **Miss D Connolly, Pastoral Leader**. In her absence, **Mrs B Howe, deputy designated child protection coordinator** will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly and report only to Miss D Connolly or Mrs Howe**. Under no circumstances will child protection issues be discussed with other members of staff.

He/she should not investigate - this is a matter for Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to the designated co-ordinator, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.

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

The Principal, in consultation with the designated co-ordinator, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral**. Unless there are concerns that the parent may be the abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Board's designated officer or the Single Point of Entry Team before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority**.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

- The Single Point of Entry Team

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated co-ordinator, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated co-ordinator). Where the matter is referred to the Single Point of Entry Team, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with the pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated co-ordinator or deputy, must be informed immediately. They will then inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated co-ordinator.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, the designated co-ordinator and deputy designated child protection co-ordinator will share this information with the relevant professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

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6. Appendix 1: Information for Pupils

- If you have something important to talk to staff about
- If you are worried about something that is happening to you, or to someone you know
- If you need help, or if you need to know how to get help

the staff are here to listen and to help you – they will try to do what they can.

- If you are worried about telling things in confidence

tell a member of staff – they will understand - if they are concerned about your safety, they may need to share this with others but they will always tell you first.

- If you are still unsure about talking to a member of staff, you can telephone

Childline  0800 1111

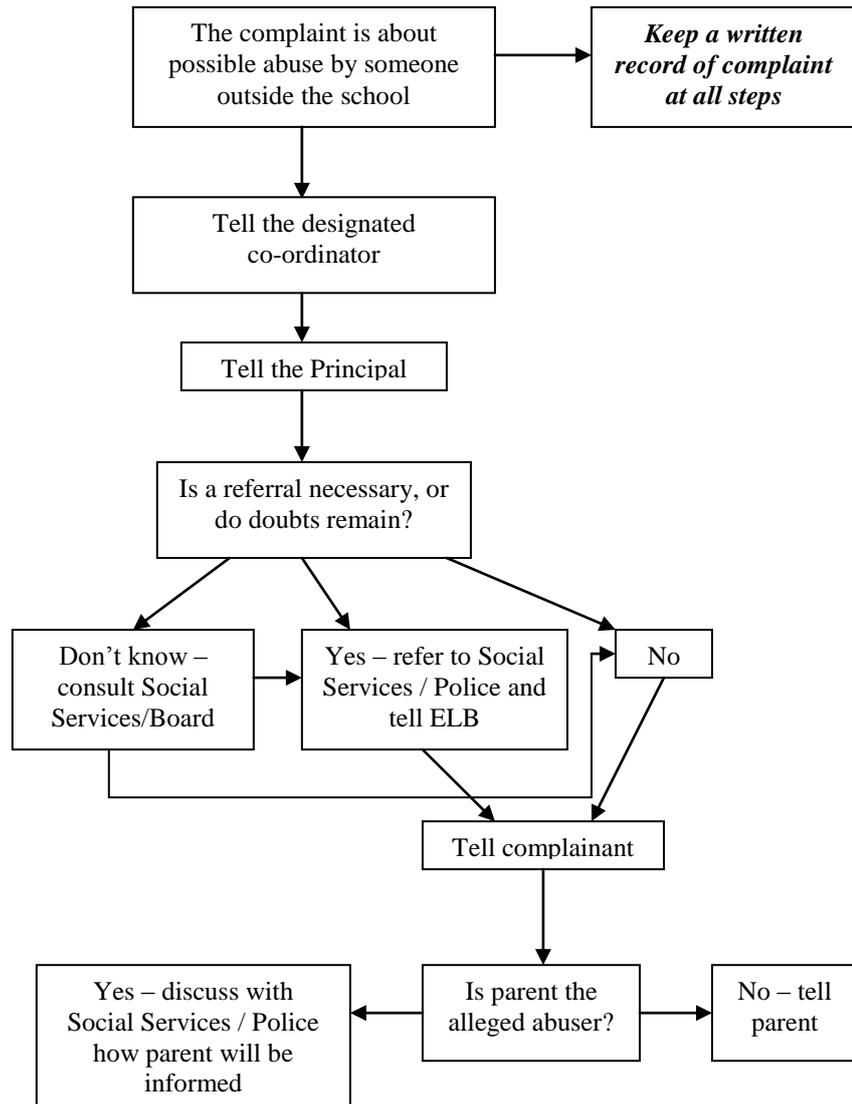
NSPCC  0808 800 5000

Calls to Childline are free, and will not show up on your phone bill.

They will help you work out what to do next.

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7. Appendix 2: Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff

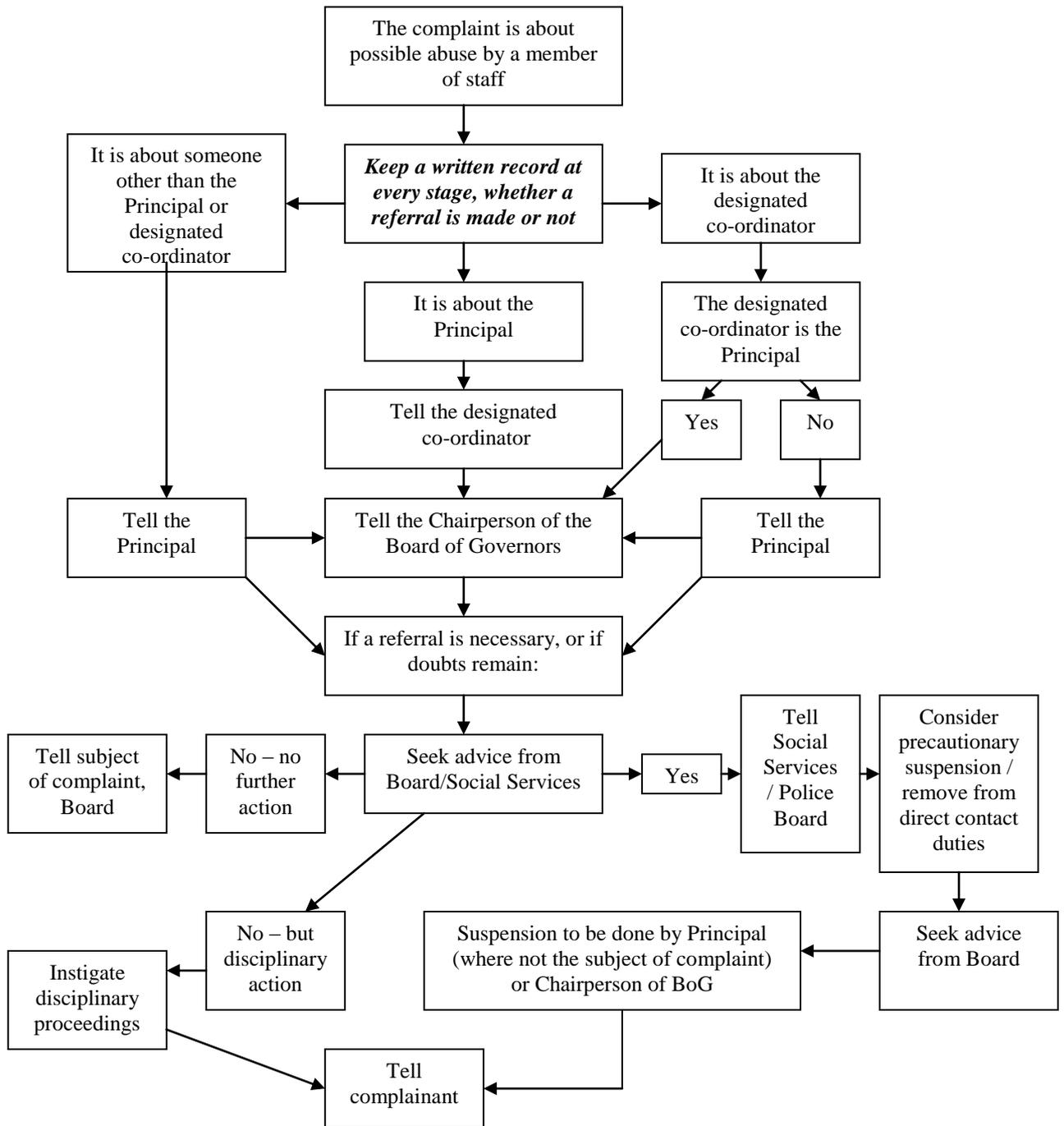


Designated Co-ordinator is Miss Connolly

Deputy Designated Co-ordinator is Mrs B Howe

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8. Appendix 3: Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff

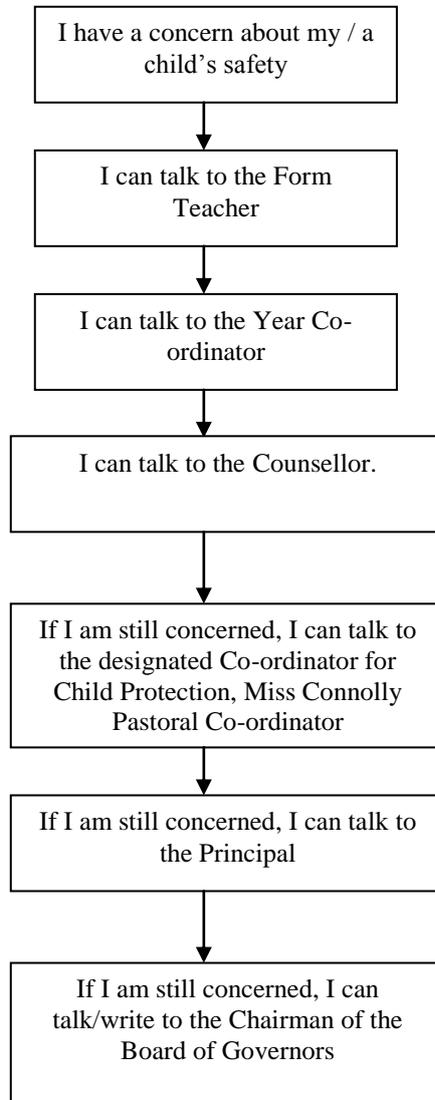


Designated Co-ordinator is Miss Connolly

Deputy Designated Co-ordinator is Mrs B Howe

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9. Appendix 4: How a Parent can make a complaint



At any time, I can talk to the Social Worker

Carrickfergus ☎ 028 9331 5114

Larne ☎ 028 2826 6124

Or the PSNI Care Unit

☎ 028 9025 9305

Or the Single Point of Entry Team

☎ 0300 100 0300

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10. Appendix 5: A code of conduct for Employees within Ulidia Integrated College

10.1: Introduction

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 children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It 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.

10.2: Code of Conduct

Private Meetings with Pupils

- a) 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 the "Interview 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. 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.
- c) Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

10.3: 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. (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*)).

- 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 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.*
- 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 designated Co-ordinator for Child Protection.
- 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.

10.4: Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- 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/Deputy Principal before using it.

10.5: Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies and our Behaviour and Relationship Policy, 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, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

10.6: 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.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees, this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts

about points in this Code of Conduct, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult their line manager or a representative of their professional association.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

11. Appendix 6: Storage and use of visual images

11.1: The use of images of pupils

The Data Protection Act (DPA) and Human Rights Legislation require that the college take care in the use of photographs, videos and web cams in the college environment.

- All photographs held on file (both electronic and paper) of the pupils exist in accordance with the DPA.
- Photographs and videos of the pupils taken during the year to promote the college for publicity use in the prospectus or in other printed material will be subject to consent by the parents. Images being used will portray the pupils appropriately attired.
- Digital video recordings may be made at various functions or of class activities. These can help encourage creativity, motivate and enthuse pupils and improve communication, team-working skills and may be used for assessment purposes.
- Photographs of college staff will only be used with the consent of that staff member.
- Photographs taken for the purpose of journalism are exempt from the DPA and on all occasions, the pupils will be aware that their photograph may be used.
- Photographs or film footage by parents or guardians of their children at college events is permitted under an exemption in the DPA.
- The use of camera phones to send offensive pictures to other pupils is not permitted and will be dealt with under the Discipline Code.
- Any incident of improper use of photographs should be reported to the Designated Teacher (Miss Connolly) immediately.