

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The teaching, administrative and ancillary staff of Bangor Grammar School are committed to practice which protects the pupils (including those of Connor House) from harm. They recognise and accept their responsibilities under the Children (NI) Order 1995 about safeguarding children.

Aims

- To provide a secure environment in which the basic rights of each individual are respected, protected and safe-guarded.
- To create an atmosphere in which pupils feel at liberty to share concerns about child abuse.
- To create awareness amongst staff of the symptoms of possible child abuse and the correct procedure for dealing with such.

Implementation

In order to fulfil their responsibilities, all staff must

- Have an awareness of the issues which cause children harm, including recognition of the signs and symptoms of possible child abuse.
- Comply with the school's guidelines on Self-Protection for Staff.
- Be familiar with procedures for interviewing pupils about whom there are concerns, and for recording and reporting this information.
- Follow the correct course of action as set out in the school's Child Protection procedures when abuse is suspected.

A designated teacher is responsible for the overall implementation of the school's Child Protection policy and the co-ordination of school procedures.

Training is given to all staff to enable them to carry out their responsibilities in relation to Child Protection.

Procedures for the recruitment of staff are in line with best practice.

Complaints Procedure

Concerns or complaints from pupils, parents or staff should, in the first instance, be brought to the attention of the pupil's Head of Year or the designated teacher as appropriate. All complaints will be recorded and investigated rigorously in accordance with the school's Child Protection procedures.

Evaluation

The policy and procedures are reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

These procedures are integral to the broader pastoral care programme of Bangor Grammar School, linking with the school's stated aim of providing 'a system of pastoral care and guidance in which the academic and wider welfare of each boy is carefully supervised and a valued liaison with parents is maintained.'

The school seeks to protect its pupils 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 the school's staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. They have adopted a Code of Conduct in relation to behaviour towards pupils.

The purpose of the following procedures is to protect the pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in the school has clear guidance on the action which is required when 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 of paramount importance to the school.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse falls into four main categories:

- **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 or development, including non-organic failure to thrive;
- **Physical injury:** actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, 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 the social taboos of family roles;
- **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. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.

School staff are aware of the characteristic symptoms of abuse in a child. These are given in Appendix I. It is recognised that some forms of abuse, such as emotional and sexual abuse, may not show physical signs at all. Further a child may be reluctant or

even prevented from disclosing abuse. It is vital that all observations and suspicions are brought to the attention of the designated teacher.

REPORTING

1. A senior member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher with responsibility for child protection. A deputy is also nominated. All members of staff (teaching, administrative and ancillary) should be aware of their identities.
2. The designated teacher has responsibility for:
 - ensuring that all teaching, administrative and ancillary staff are aware of the school's child protection procedures;
 - co-ordinating action by staff in cases of suspected child abuse, checking concerns with and reporting to the appropriate social services officer and to the South Eastern Education & Library Board designated officer;
 - informing the Headmaster and through him, the Chairman of the Board of Governors;
 - clarifying with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the child will be told that a referral has been made;
 - contributing the school perspective to a child protection conference.
3. Where members of staff are aware of signs which cause them concern, they may attempt to gain clarification from the child. This must be done with sensitivity and care, avoiding leading questions or accusations. **No promise of confidentiality can ever be given where abuse is alleged.** A record should be made of all physical signs and any discussion with the child. The child's clothing must never be removed. **It is not the teacher's responsibility to investigate** but the child must be reassured that the matter will be taken seriously. (see Appendix 3)
4. Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he or she must report this **immediately** to the designated teacher using CPI R1 Form.
5. The designated teacher immediately informs the Headmaster. In all cases where abuse is suspected or where an allegation has been made by a pupil or a third party that abuse has taken place, or where serious concerns exist about the welfare of the child, the Headmaster or designated teacher initially contacts the South Eastern Education & Library Board Designated Officer for Child Protection and/or North Down and Ards Community Health and Social Services Trust (Asst. Principal Social Worker level through the Duty Social Worker) for advice. It is not necessary to give any names *at this stage*. All advice given must be recorded and the situation monitored and reviewed. Contact with or referral to social services will not automatically trigger a child protection investigation in every case.
6. Having checked and verified the cause for concern, the case is referred formally to the Social Services and/or RUC care unit by the Headmaster or designated teacher. The Chairman of the Board of Governors is informed through the Headmaster. The SEELB designated officer is notified. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately. The safety of the child is the school's first priority.

7. If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Headmaster (or the designated teacher, if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply. The interests of the pupil are represented by the Designated Teacher of Child Protection and those of a staff member by the Headmaster. Where the designated teacher is suspected to have abused a child, or such

an allegation is made, the reporting member of staff should inform the Headmaster immediately, who will instigate the normal reporting procedures. Where the Headmaster is suspected or an allegation is made against him, the matter should be reported to the designated teacher who will instigate proceedings and inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services.⁴

RECORD KEEPING

At every stage where a report has been made or action taken regarding suspected child abuse, a written record must be kept. On completion, a report is signed by the Headmaster and the Designated Teacher of Child Protection. These records are confidential and are kept by the Designated Teacher on the Child Protection file. The Headmaster may not provide access to persons who are otherwise entitled to see the pupil's school records.

Where a complaint or allegation of child abuse is made against a member of staff, a written record of the complaint and subsequent action taken is held in the staff personnel file. If the complaint is not upheld, the record is cancelled.⁵

All complaints are also held in a central complaints register consecutively numbered and dated by the Headmaster.

STAFF

1. Appointment:

The Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring that its recruitment procedures include a check of the possible criminal background of all staff likely to have substantial unsupervised access to the pupils. A separate policy exists for the recruitment and use of volunteers within the school.⁶

2. Training:

All staff are aware of:

- how to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse;
- the school's child protection procedures;
- how to talk to children about whom there are concerns and how to record and report this information;
- the name of the designated teacher (and his or her deputy).

The designated teacher (and deputy) are familiar with the detail of the school's policy and procedures for child protection, together with the role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, whom to contact and how to liaise

with them. Regular personal contact is maintained with representatives of the key agencies (listed in DENI circular 1999/3 p 61 Appendix 4) concerned with child protection.

3. **Guidelines for self protection:**

These guidelines are contained in the Code of Conduct for staff. (Appendix II) and in the Code of Conduct for Educational Visits.

4. **Allegations against staff:**

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that any complaint made that a member of staff has abused a pupil is thoroughly investigated by instigation of the normal child protection procedures. Where the complaint is against the Headmaster, the responsibility lies with the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

INFORMING PARENTS

Bangor Grammar School makes its parents aware of its child protection arrangements by providing relevant information from the policy to all parents every two years. The full child protection procedures document is made available on request.

EVALUATION

The policy and procedures are kept under review and updated to be in line with best practice as disseminated by DENI, DHSS and South Eastern Education & Library Board.

References

1. Children Order Regulations and Guidance DHSS "Co-operating to protect Children" Vol 6
2. DENI Circular "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" p 10-16, para 14-27
3. DENI Circular "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" p 16
4. DENI Circular "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" p 21-30, para 36-58
5. DENI Circular "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" p 18, para 32-33; p 31-33, para 59-64
6. DENI Circular "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" p 90-104, App 11
7. DENI Circular "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" p 71-74, App 9

Appendix 1:

RECOGNISING ABUSE

Listed below are some of the signs and types of behaviour which may indicate that a child is being abused. In themselves and in isolation they are not evidence of abuse, but may suggest abuse, particularly if a child exhibits several of them, or if a pattern emerges of when or how a child exhibits such signs or behaviour. If child abuse is suspected, it is necessary to identify what it is specifically, that is causing concern.

IN YOUNGER CHILDREN:

- Reluctance to go somewhere or to stay with someone
- Loss of appetite
- Clingy, highly dependent behaviour
- Regressive behaviour
- Passivity or very compliant behaviour in relation to adults
- Nightmares, fear of sleeping without a light, reluctance to go to bed
- Fear of going to school, school problems
- Unwillingness to undress/change
- Display of affection in inappropriate ways

IN OLDER CHILDREN:

- Depression
- Withdrawal/Secretiveness
- Poor self-image (may neglect grooming and hygiene)
- Lack of involvement in school activities (grades may fall)
- Skipping school or avoiding going home
- Excessively seductive behaviour
- Running away

Appendix 1:

More Specific Signs and Types of Behaviour are:

NEGLECT

- * Appearance and development not consistent with age of child
- * Physical development not following normal patterns
- * Child thrives away from home
- * Voracious appetite/constant diarrhoea
- * Listlessness/unresponsiveness
- * Lack of adequate supervision, in or out of the home
- * Lack of adequate physical care
- * Health needs not met
- * Educational needs not met

SEXUAL ABUSE

- * Venereal Disease
- * Soreness or injury to genitals
- * Recurrent urinary tract infections
- * Changes in behaviour e.g. wetting soiling
- * Sleep disturbance
- * Inappropriate sexual play/language
- * Excessive masturbation
- * Self mutilation/suicide attempts/drug and alcohol abuse
- * Psychosomatic illness
- * Disturbed eating patterns e.g. bulimia/anorexia
- * Escape attempts - running away, staying out persistently, refusing to go home

Physical Injury

- * Unexplained facial bruising
- * Black eyes
- * Torn frenulum (inside upper lip)
- * Fingertip bruising on chest and back
- * Bite marks
- * Scalds
- * Burns - cigarette, object shaped and linear
- * Fractures - particularly in a child too young to walk
- * Head injuries
- * Poisoning
- * Injuries of varying ages/time span
- * Repeated injuries of a minor nature

Emotional Abuse

- * Failure to thrive
- * Withdrawn/aggressive or bizarre
- * Attention-seeking behaviour
- * Inappropriate seeking of affection
- * Wetting/soiling in older children
- * Difficulty in forming relationships
- * Rejection shown by parents

It is the combination of the above symptoms which could give rise to concern. Any of the above symptoms could be indicative of other conditions unrelated to abuse.

Appendix 2:

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF *Self - Protection for Staff*

A. Introduction

In seeking to uphold the best interests of our pupils, Staff must be mindful of their position of trust. 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.

B. Code of Conduct

1. 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 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. 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) In such interviews there should be a desk width between teacher and pupil.
- (d) Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.
- (e) A single pupil should not be placed in detention on his own unless another member of staff is constantly in the vicinity.
- (f) A teacher should not travel alone with a pupil. Where this is unavoidable, another teacher should be told, the parents notified if possible and the pupil should be seated in the back of the car.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

- (a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- (b) For example in the coaching and playing of sports and in the demonstration of associated skills, physical contact should be avoided. Staff should be aware that such physical contact is open to misinterpretation by the pupil, parent or other casual observer.
- (c) 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.
- (d) It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. It may be fitting to give a distressed child the sort

of reassurance involving physical comforting that a caring parent would provide, but this is generally only suitable for younger children. Whilst Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this comfort it must be age-appropriate and Staff must be aware that perfectly innocent actions can be misconstrued.

- (e) 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.

- (f) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- (g) In extreme cases, a teacher might have to physically restrain a pupil to prevent him causing injury to himself, to others or to property. In such instances the teacher must always follow the procedures set out in the school's policy "The Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling" (based on the Regional Policy framework on the use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling). In particular only the minimum necessary force must be used and a report of the incident, together with names of witnesses, be given to the Headmaster. (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).
- (h) With regard to particular circumstances, such as use of areas like the photographic darkroom, the staff in charge should draw up and publish accepted guidelines for use.
- (i) Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of another adult or other children. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- (j) 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.
Note: guidelines specific to the school's residential activities are listed in separate policy and procedure documents for Residential Activities.

3. Teaching and the Choice and Use of Appropriate Materials

- (a) A teacher should not repeatedly hector a pupil using an excessively loud voice nor repeatedly criticise a pupil to the point of apparent victimisation.
- (b) A teacher should never make sexually suggestive or inappropriate comments about a pupil, even in jest.
- (c) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- (d) 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. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials such as

the AIDS education for schools and in connection with sex education programmes.

- (e) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Headmaster before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, 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.

C. 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. Any suspicions of

abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague should always be reported to the Designated Teacher or the Headmaster.

This advice to staff is drawn from “A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector” produced by D.E.N.I. 1999. The school policy on the use of reasonable force is drawn from the “Regional Policy Framework on the use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling” May 2004.

Appendix 3

Guidance for Staff

RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

When a child discloses abuse, the way in which you respond is crucial.

It is important to take the disclosure seriously and make a response that includes all of these five statements in some form.

- I believe you.
- I'm sorry it happened to you.
- I'm glad you told me
- It's not your fault, and never was.
- We can get help, together

Never promise confidentiality

If you suspect abuse or if a child discloses it to you, you are required to report it as soon as possible to the designated teacher, the Headmaster, the police or Social Services.

You should otherwise keep the disclosure confidential. This means respecting the young person's right to privacy except where their safety or well-being is in question. Sometimes you will need to consult with someone about what steps to take, so you will need support for unsettled feelings after receiving a disclosure.

In these situations it is appropriate to talk to another adult about it, keeping in mind the child's right to privacy.

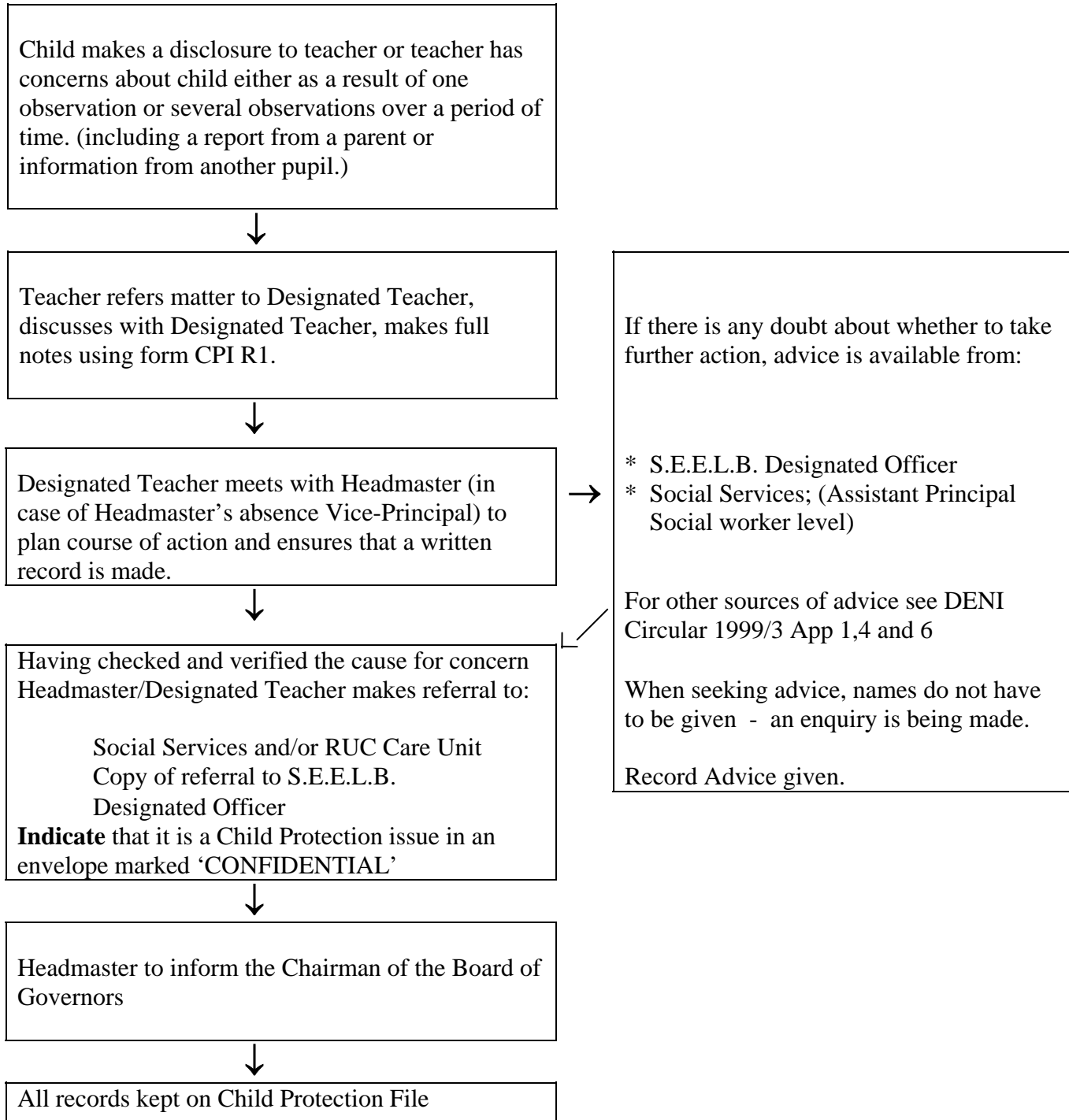
Seven things to do

1. Listen
2. Believe, let them know you believe
3. Do not interrogate - it is not your responsibility to obtain details of abuse
4. Affirm whatever feelings the young person has
5. Refer - follow up accepted proceedings
6. Follow up - support the young person after referral as the process can be lengthy and stressful
7. Record dates and content of interviews.

Appendix 4

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

SUMMARY



Where the Designated Teacher is suspected of child abuse or an allegation is made, the Headmaster is informed directly. Where the Headmaster is suspected or an

allegation is made against him the designated teacher will instigate proceedings and inform the Chairman of the Board.

Appendix 5



BANGOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT RECORD FORM (CPIR 1)

Name: _____ **Class:** _____

Date: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

N.B. It is imperative that only factual and neutral information is recorded

Details of the Incident/Concerns/Disclosure - day, date, time, place, who dealt with it, observations or circumstances, description of physical/behavioural indicators, child/young person's statements.

Details of anyone else involved; conversations held with anyone else; witnesses e.g. parent, other staff member, designated teacher - day, date, time, place, factual content of conversation.

Referral to Designated Teacher in school who, when (date and time), how, place and advice given by the Designated Teacher.

Signed by School Staff Member _____ Date _____

Part 2 - To be completed by the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher

Advice sought/conversation with - Board Officer for CP, CCMS Diocesan Officer Social Services, Police CPSA Unit, date, time, place, advice.

Decision not to refer and why. Other action plus type of feedback to all those involved - how, when.

Decision to refer and why. Other action plus type of feedback to all those involved - how, when.

Signed by Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Headmaster: _____ Date: _____