

DOMINICAN COLLEGE



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures Reviewed December 2024

Policy review:

	Date	Signed
Mrs S Crea Chairperson of Board of Governors	4/12/2024	
Mrs Lynda Catney Principal	4/12/2024	

Introduction

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy of Dominican College has been developed in line with the Department of Education guidelines on “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” (April 2017 – Updated September 2024).

It takes cognisance of the Ethos and Aims of our school and is intended as a ‘living document’ which will be reviewed annually and adapted to meet the ever-changing needs of the pupils in our care. It should be read in conjunction with all the pastoral policies including:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Policy
- Pupil Attendance Policy
- CRED Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Educational Visits Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Safe Handling Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Administration of Medicines in School Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Drug Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health Policy
- Complaints Policy

These policies are available to view on the school website or by request from the secretary on 90 370298.

(References to parents throughout this document include those that have parental responsibility and carers.)

Ethos

As a Catholic school, the Christian ethos of Dominican College permeates the life of the school. The Safeguarding and Protection of pupils in our care is of paramount importance. We aim to create a safe, stable harmonious atmosphere within which the values of truth, freedom, trust and responsibility are honoured. Within the context of a purposeful learning community, and recognising the uniqueness of each individual, we aim to offer a curriculum which enables every student to reach her full potential: spiritually, academically, morally, socially and aesthetically. This policy supports our work in creating an environment where we appreciate the fundamental dignity of each person and aim to promote respect for self, for others and the wider community.

We endeavour to equip all our pupils with the self-confidence and skills, which will enable them to make informed and responsible choices in life. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the skills they need to keep themselves safe. We encourage parental support in promoting the ethos and aims of the school. Parents will receive a copy of the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and be kept up to date with any changes.

Policy Aims

The aims of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy of Dominican College are to ensure the care, welfare and safety of the pupils and to protect them from harm. The specific aims are:

- To ensure all governors, staff, pupils and parents are aware of all the possible types of abuse.
- To ensure that staff are aware of the symptoms and signs of possible abuse.
- To make all stakeholders aware of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers who hold responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection
- To clarify roles and responsibilities of all staff and governors
- To set out clear procedures to be followed in the case of suspected abuse.
- To ensure that pupils are protected and that suspected abuse is dealt with in an appropriate manner, keeping the interest of the child paramount.

Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection below are an extract from the Department of Education's guidance "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" (2017). These principles should underpin all strategies, policies, procedures, practice and services relating to safeguarding children and young people.

The child or young person's welfare is paramount

The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration for the courts and in childcare practice. An appropriate balance should be struck between the child's rights and parent's rights. All efforts should be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

The voice of the child or young person should be heard

Children and young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously, taking account of their age and understanding. They should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives and be provided with appropriate support to do so where that is required.

Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility

Parents have responsibility for their children rather than rights over them. In some circumstances, parents will share parental responsibility with others such as other carers or the statutory authorities.

Partnership

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met is through working in partnership. Sound decision-making depends on the fullest possible understanding of the child or young person's circumstances and their needs. This involves effective information sharing, strong organisational governance and leadership, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals and professionals.

Prevention

The importance of preventing problems occurring or worsening through the introduction of timely supportive measures.

Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances

Where a child's needs can be met through the provision of support services, these should be provided. Both organisations and individual practitioners must respond proportionately to the needs of a child in accordance with their duties and the powers available to them.

Protection

Children should be safe from harm and in circumstances where a parent or carer is not meeting their needs; they should be protected by the State.

Evidence-based and informed decision making

Decisions and actions taken must be considered, well informed and based on outcomes that are sensitive to, and take account of, the child or young person's specific circumstances, risks to which they are exposed, and their assessed needs.

Types of Abuse

Child abuse may take a number of forms, including:

Neglect

This is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it is inadequate 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

This 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

This 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

This 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 opportunities 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.

Exploitation

This 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.

Specific Types of Abuse

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves the perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person or, in some cases, the trust of the family, friends or community, and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. 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. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media, the latter making it more difficult to detect and identify.

Adults may misuse online settings e.g., chat rooms, social and gaming environments and other forms of digital communications, to try and establish contact with children and young people or to share information with other perpetrators, which creates a particular problem because this can occur in real time and there is no permanent record of the interaction or discussion held or information shared. Staff should be alert to signs that may indicate grooming and report any knowledge or concerns to enable preventative action to be taken, if possible, before harm occurs.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child 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 involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Any child 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. Young males can also be victims of CSE.

CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males. While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, the majority of CSE victims are living at home.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

This is 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.'

Sexual Violence and Abuse

This is 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.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. FGM is a form of child abuse and, as such, teachers have a statutory duty to report cases, including suspicion, to the appropriate agencies, through agreed and established school procedures.

Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where staff have knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person; they should report it immediately to the PSNI, through agreed and established school procedures.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour is any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place when there is no informed consent by the victim; and/or the perpetrator uses threat (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce, threaten or intimidate the victim. Harmful sexual behaviour can include: Using age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases; inappropriate touching; using sexual violence or threats. Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled. Harmful sexual behaviour will always require intervention.

E-Safety/Internet Abuse

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern.

Risks around online safety come under four categories:

Content risks: the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.

Contact risks: the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.

Conduct risks: the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.

Commercial risks: the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities.

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes is a term used to describe the sending or posting of naked or partially naked images, videos or livestreams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via text, email, social media and gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. Sharing nudes is sometimes called 'sexting', however this term is often used by young people to talk about sharing sexual messages and not imagery.

- **Sharing of nudes and semi-nude between individuals in a relationship**

As adults we can question the wisdom of this but the reality is that children and young people consider this to be normal. Nonetheless, we must be aware that an image can be shared non-consensually, or a child can be groomed, tricked or coerced into sending nude and semi-nude images. Clearly pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases staff must report any information to the DT or DDT. Advice should be sought from CPSS by DT/DDT.

- **Sharing an inappropriate image with intent to cause distress**

If a pupil has been affected by inappropriate images or links on the internet it is important that you **do not forward it to anyone else**. Please remember that staff are not required to investigate incidents. They must report them to the DT or DDT.

Dealing with Children with Increased Vulnerabilities

Children with a Disability

Children and young people with disabilities (i.e., any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition¹⁵) may be more vulnerable to abuse and staff should be aware of any vulnerability factors associated with risk of harm, and any emerging child protection issues. Staff must be aware that communication difficulties can be hidden or overlooked making disclosure particularly difficult.

Gender Identity Issues/Sexual Orientation

Schools should strive to provide a happy environment where all young people feel safe and secure. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment, to be treated with respect and dignity, and not to be treated any less favourably due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Possible Indicators of Abuse

- **Physical** - Visible marks, for example bruises, burns and cuts or scratches. Improbable excuses for injuries. Aggression towards others, Self-destructive tendencies.
- **Neglect** - Poor hygiene, inadequate clothing, nutrition or medical care. Poor attendance.
- **Sexual** – Behavioural change, precociousness, withdrawal, inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour, frequent absence from school. Being fearful about certain people or places. Angry outbursts.
- **Emotional** – Excessive dependence, withdrawal or attention seeking behaviour. Inappropriate emotional responses to situations. Over-reaction to mistakes. Self-marking.
- **Exploitation** – Acquisition of money or possessions without plausible explanation, truanting, attempting to leave school with significantly older adult, change in mood, new peer group, increasing secretiveness, self-harm, evidence of substance abuse, inappropriate sexual behaviour.

The above is not exhaustive but is a list of signs which may give rise to concern. Staff should be alert to all such signs particularly if they occur in combination or occur frequently.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has a statutory duty to:

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

More specifically, the Board of Governors must ensure that:

- A Designated Governor for Child Protection is appointed.
- A Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection are appointed.
- They have a full understanding of the roles of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers.
- Safeguarding and child protection training is given to all staff and governors including refresher training.
- The school has a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed annually and parents and pupils receive a copy of the child protection policy and complaints procedure every two years.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed at intervals of no more than four years and maintains a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying
- The school ensures that other safeguarding policies are reviewed at least every three years, or as specified in relevant guidance.
- There is a code of conduct for all adults working in the school
- All school staff and volunteers are recruited and vetted, in line with DE Circular 2024/10
- They receive a full annual report on all child protection matters (to include details of the preventative curriculum and any initiatives or awareness raising undertaken within the school, including training for staff.
- The school maintains the following child protection records in line with DE Circulars 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff and 2016/20 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools:
 - Safeguarding and child protection concerns.
 - Disclosures of abuse.
 - Complaints against staff.
 - Staff induction and training.

Chair of Board of Governors

In the event of a safeguarding and 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 guidance issued by the Department, employing authorities, and the school's own policies and procedures. The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring child protection records are kept and for signing and dating the Record of Child Abuse Complaints annually, even if there have been no entries.

Designated Governor for Child Protection

The Board of Governors will delegate a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to be able to advise the governors on:

- The role of the designated teachers;
- The content of child protection policies;
- The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school;
- The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report;
- Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

The Safeguarding Team

Chair of Governors	Mrs Sheila Crea
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mrs Mairead O'Neill
Principal	Mrs Lynda Catney
Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Helen Robinson
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Christine Quinn
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Ms Claire Agnew
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Cathy Boyle
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Aislinn O'Reilly

The responsibilities of the team include:

- The monitoring and periodic review of Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in the school.
- Support for the Designated Teacher in the exercise of their child protection responsibilities, including recognition of the administrative and emotional demands of the post.
- Ensuring attendance of Governors and staff at relevant training - including refresher training - in keeping with legislative and best practice requirements.

School Principal

The Principal, as the Secretary to the Board of Governors, will assist the Board of Governors to fulfil its safeguarding and child protection duties, keeping them informed of any changes to guidance, procedure or legislation relating to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring any circulars and guidance from the Department of Education is shared promptly, and termly inclusion of child protection activities on the BoG meeting agenda. In addition, the Principal takes the lead in managing child protection concerns relating to staff.

The Principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school. This includes the appointment and management of suitable staff to the key roles of Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher posts and ensuring that new staff and volunteers have safeguarding and child protection awareness sessions as part of an induction programme.

The Principal must ensure that parents and pupils receive a copy, or summary, of the Child Protection Policy at intake and, at a minimum, every two years.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The role involves:

- The induction and training of all school staff including support staff.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding or child protection concerns of any member of staff.
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns.
- Maintaining a current awareness of early intervention supports and other local services e.g., Family Support Hubs.
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI where appropriate.
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping the school Principal informed.
- Lead responsibility for the development of the school's child protection policy.
- Promotion of a safeguarding and child protection ethos in the school.
- Compiling written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection.

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with 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.

Safe Recruitment Measures

Everyone who works in Dominican College has been subject to appropriate background checks and receives training in safeguarding.

The following groups must have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) from Access (NI) before taking up post:

- All new paid and unpaid teaching and non-teaching staff
- Examination Invigilators
- Private Contracted Transport Providers
- Sports Coaches and Music Tutors
- Unsupervised volunteers (Supervised volunteers need not have an EDC)

Visitors to School

All parents and visitors to school are managed so that their access to areas and movement within the school is restricted. All visitors must initially report to Reception. With the exception of parents coming to school on pre-arranged business or to collect children, all visitors will:

- Be met and directed by school staff.
- Be signed in and out of the school by school staff.
- Be clearly identified with visitor passes.
- Where appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school.
- Where possible, be escorted by a member of staff.
- Have restricted access to pupils.

If delivering goods or carrying out building maintenance or repair tasks, the work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.

Volunteers

All volunteers are supervised and vetted as appropriate. In the event of a volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse from a pupil, he/she must immediately inform the member of staff they are working with.

Work Experience Placements

Any person coming to our school on work experience will never be left unsupervised with pupils.

After school activities

Either the Principal, Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership team will be present in the school from 8.30am – 6.00pm on any day when pupils are attending after-school activities.

In Case of Emergency

In the absence of any Senior staff and finding themselves alone in the school, a teacher confronted with a child protection issue should contact social services Gateway Team on 02890 507000.

The Preventative Curriculum

At Dominican College, we provide a relevant, proactive and flexible preventative curriculum which aims to raise awareness of Safeguarding and Child Protection issues and managing risk. We aim to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Key safeguarding messages are addressed through curricular Personal Development classes, the Tutor class programme, Assemblies and various events and talks from guest speakers throughout the year. Special attention is given to Anti-Bullying week, World Mental Health day and Safer Internet day. Year 13 and 14 pupils actively participate in the delivering and promotion of these programmes.

As a Dominican College we are strongly committed to developing positive relationships and a caring ethos across the whole school. We aim to raise awareness of social, emotional, and health issues, developing the resilience and coping skills of pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing difficulties. In the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme we teach pupils how to develop healthy relationships, and to make informed choices in their lives so that they can protect themselves.

The personal development curriculum has a high priority in the School Development Plan and gives specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral value system. It also offers opportunities to explore sensitive issues with our pupils in an age-appropriate way, which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviour. The teachers delivering the programme are highly skilled in both pastoral care and personal development. We consult parents, pupils and governors and external providers are carefully selected and evaluated prior to delivering their programmes in the school.

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. 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. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. 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. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 'Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools' 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. For further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

Advice for Staff in receiving a disclosure or having cause for concern

*Any allegation by a child that she is suffering or has suffered from abuse should be treated seriously. The main task for the member of staff is to **listen** to the child, make a written record of the discussion and pass it on to the Designated Teacher. No promise of confidentiality should ever be made.*

Protecting Children *A duty to care*

RECEIVE – listen to what a child says but do not ask leading questions except when to show you have understood.

REASSURE – ensure the child is reassured that she has done the right thing and that her interests will come first.

RESPOND – to ensure that the child is safe and secure and that she understands what you are going to do.

RECORD – make a note of what you have seen or heard and the date and time (try to do this immediately after you have listened to the child)

REPORT – report to the designated teachers: **Mrs Robinson, Mrs C Quinn, Mrs Boyle, Mrs O'Reilly or Ms Agnew**, as soon as you have any concern for a child.

Procedures for Staff Member Reporting and Incident of Child Abuse

Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, or a member of staff has concerns about a child.



Member of staff completes the “Note of Child Protection Concern” pro-forma on what has been observed or shared and must ACT PROMPTLY. Source of concern is notified that the school will follow up appropriately on the issues raised. Member of staff DOES NOT investigate.



Member of staff refers matter to Designated Teacher (DT) and discusses issue with DT
Member of staff provides “Note of Child Protection Concern”.



DT meets with child, seeks clarification and records all relevant information
DT completes “Record of Child Protection concern” pro-forma



If necessary, DT seeks advice from a CPSS officer or Social Services. DT consults with the Principal or other relevant staff before deciding upon action to be taken, always taking care to avoid undue delay.



Designated Teacher clarifies/discusses concern with child/ parent/carers and decides if a child protection referral is or is not required.



Child Protection referral is required

Designated Teacher seeks consent of the parent/carer and/or the child (if they are competent to give this) unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm then telephones the Children’s Services Gateway Team and/or the PSNI if a child is at immediate risk. He/she submits a completed UNOCINI referral form within 24 hours.

Child Protection referral is not required

School may consider other options including monitoring the situation within an agreed timescale; signposting or referring the child/parent/carers to appropriate support services such as the Children’s Services Gateway Team or local Family Support Hub with parental consent, and child/young person’s consent (where appropriate).



DT/Principal makes referral to Gateway, providing copies of pro-forma to the Chair of BoG and EA. Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed as to the action taken. The Designated Teacher will maintain a written record of all decisions and actions taken and ensure that this record is appropriately and securely stored.

Note: Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS) - Out of Hours Social Workers can be contacted through one central telephone number: (028) 0800 197 9995

Procedures for parents reporting a potential child protection concern

I have a concern about my/a child's safety



I can talk to the Head of Year or Senior Teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors



If I am still concerned, I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman
Tel: 0800 343 424



At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team or the PSNI Central Referral Unit at cru@psni.police.uk

Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff

The Principal and Board of Governors have a duty of care for the welfare of pupils and any allegation needs to be effectively evaluated and managed. However, as employers, we also have a duty of care to our staff and will ensure that appropriate support is provided for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

All allegations about staff should be reported immediately, normally to the Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. A Lead Individual will be identified to manage the handling of the allegation from the outset. This would normally be the Principal or a designated senior member of staff. If the Principal is the subject of concern the allegation will be reported immediately to the Chair of the Board of Governors, Deputy Chairperson, Designated Governor for Child Protection and the person about to become the Lead Individual.

In the interests of all involved the issue will be dealt with as a priority and unnecessary delays avoided. Every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity must be made. Allegations should not be shared with other staff or children.

All allegations of a child abuse nature against a member of staff **must** be recorded in the hard backed and bound Record of Child Abuse Complaints book, which must be retained securely. A record of this should be placed on the relevant pupil's Child Protection File.

Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff

Key Points

Lead individual (normally the principal) learns of an allegation against a member of staff and informs the Chair/Vice Chair of BoG as appropriate.



Guidance on the Next Steps

Lead individual then establishes the facts, seeks advice from the key agencies as appropriate, usually through informal discussion.



Possible Outcomes

Following on from establishing the facts, seeking advice from Key Agencies and discussion with the Chair and/or BoG to agree a way forward from the options below.



Precautionary suspension is not appropriate, and the matter is concluded.	Allegation addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures.	Precautionary suspension under Child Protection procedures imposed.	Alternatives to precautionary suspension imposed.
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Appendix 1 - Child Protection Proforma – Note of Concern

DOMINICAN COLLEGE FORTWILLIAM



To be completed by the staff member reporting concern.

(The information contained in these notes should be factual and objective)

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD - REPORT TO DESIGNATED TEACHER

Name of Pupil:
Year Group:
Date, time of incident/disclosure:
Circumstances of incident/disclosure:
Name and description of concern:
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:

Action taken at the time:
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when:
Any further action taken:
<p>Written report passed to Designated Teacher. If "NO" state reason</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> YES <input style="border: 1px solid green; width: 60px; height: 25px; margin: 0 10px;" type="checkbox"/> NO <input style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 25px; margin: 0 10px;" type="checkbox"/> </p>
Date and time of report to the Designated Teacher:
<p>Written note from staff member placed on pupil's Child Protection file If "NO" state reason</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input style="border: 1px solid green; width: 80px; height: 25px;" type="checkbox"/></p>

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of Staff member making the report _____ Date: _____

Signature of Designated Teacher _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2 - Child Protection Proforma – Record of Concern

DOMINICAN COLLEGE FORTWILLIAM



To be completed by the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Name of Pupil:
Advice sought from CPSS, Social Services, PSNI (date, time, place, advice given)
Decision NOT to refer and why? Other action/support and feedback to all involved (how/when)
Decision to refer and why? Other action/support and feedback to all involved (how/when)
Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3 Staff Training Declaration



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION DECLARATION

I confirm that I, _____, have been given a copy of Dominican College Safeguarding and Child Protection pack.

The pack contains:

- The School Child Protection Policy
- The Names and Photographs of The Safeguarding Team
- Safeguarding Training Power point Presentation (For New Staff Members Only)
- The Code of Conduct For Staff And Volunteers
- The Note of Concern Template
- The Safeguarding Information Leaflet
- The Safeguarding And Child Protection Flow Charts
- Safeguarding Checklist

SIGNED:	
DATE:	

I confirm that I have read the School Child Protection Policy for Dominican College and I confirm that I understand the reporting procedures in the school.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

For new staff members only:

I confirm that I have viewed the Safeguarding training Power point for Dominican College.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

Appendix 4

SAFEGUARDING CHECKLIST - 2024/2025

NAME OF SCHOOL:

NAME & DOB OF PUPIL:

PROCEDURE: SAFEGUARDING: Recording, Retaining and Sharing Safeguarding Concerns in School with Other Agencies

TASKS:	BY WHOM	COMPLETED
(1) Safeguarding concern recorded on note of concern by member of staff, ensuring it is signed and dated.	Staff Member	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Information passed to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher.	Staff Member	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher timetable/duty/meetings covered, if required, to allow focus on concern.	Principal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(4) Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher speaks with child, if appropriate.	DT/DDT	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(5) Professional reflection discussion with Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal and actions agreed, without delay.	DT/DDT/Principal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(6) Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal makes call to parent/carers, if appropriate.	DT/DDT/Principal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(7) Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher and or Principal contacts CPSS as necessary (this call can be made at any stage in the process)	DT/DDT/Principal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(8) Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher updates record of action taken.	DT/DDT	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(9) Information and outcomes shared with Principal and any other relevant staff, if appropriate.	DT/DDT	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(10) Information secured in line with DE guidance on record keeping in child protection	DT/DDT	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

PRINCIPLES IN SAFEGUARDING

- The principles below are based on and adapted from the DE Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools; A guide for Schools, (2017/04), updated September 2024.
- *The child or young person's welfare is **PARAMOUNT**. Our children and young people will always be our first priority.*
- *The **VOICE OF THE CHILD** or young person should be heard. We communicate with and listen to all our children and young people.*
- *We support our parents to exercise **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**.*
- *We work in **PARTNERSHIP** with our children and young people, our parents and guardians as well as with other agencies such as social services and PSNI.*
- *We do all we can to **PREVENT** child abuse by using the preventative curriculum to inform children how to keep safe. We model healthy relationships in school.*
- *Our responses are **PROPORTIONATE** to the circumstances and we will work hard to make sure children are safe in our care.*
- *We will adhere to our child protection and safeguarding policy to make sure everyone in our school community is **PROTECTED** from harm.*
- *We will make **EVIDENCE BASED** and informed decisions and we will use the support and guidance of the EA CPSS to help us in this.*



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN DOMINICAN COLLEGE

(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools, 2017, updated September 2024)

NAME:	ROLE:
	Principal
	Chair of Board of Governors

Date Ratified:	
Date of Review:	

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

This Code of Conduct, which applies to all staff and volunteers, is designed to give guidance on the standards of behaviour which should be observed. School staff and volunteers are role models, in a unique position of influence and trust and their behaviour should set a good example to all the pupils within the school.

It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It is merely for guidance and specific breaches of the Code must not be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

The Code includes sections on:

- Setting an Example
- Relationships and Attitudes
- Private Meetings with Pupils
- Physical Contact with Pupils
- Honesty and Integrity
- Conduct Outside of Work
- E-Safety and Internet Use
- Confidentiality

1. Setting an Example

- 1.1 All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.
- 1.2 Staff and volunteers must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

2. Relationships and Attitudes

- 2.1 All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times and sexual relationships with current pupils are not permitted and may lead to criminal conviction.
- 2.2 Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school; perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.
- 2.3 Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner which, within the context of this Code of Conduct, includes such aspects as:
- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
 - cooperating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
 - respect for school property;
 - taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
 - being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers;
 - respect for the rights and opinions of others.

3. Private Meetings with Pupils

- 3.1 It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place. As far as possible, staff and volunteers should conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with an open door and ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

4. Physical Contact with Pupils

- 4.1 To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.
- 4.2 Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force (Circular 2021/13 Interim Guidance on the use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings) and be familiar with the school's policy on Safe Handling and Use of Reasonable Force.

5. Honesty and Integrity

5.1 All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

5.2 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (e.g., a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents e.g., at Christmas or the end of the school year. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

6. Conduct Outside of Work

6.1 Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school. Advice should be sought from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

7. E-Safety and Internet Use

7.1 A staff member or volunteer's off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

7.2 Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations /friendships with current pupils via social media and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. It is preferable that any contact with pupils is made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary.

7.3 Staff are encouraged not to make links to parents in online platforms. However, if they chose to do so, they must ensure that they follow this policy.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

8.2 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

8.3 If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

8.4 Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

8.5 The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.

Appendix 6

ROLE AND REQUIREMENTS OF ALL TEACHING STAFF

All teachers should be committed to fostering and promoting the school ethos and ensuring that a safe and secure environment is created and maintained for pupils, staff, parents and all visitors. Teachers **MUST** be proactive in ensuring the requirements below are met.

Attendance and Punctuality

- 1 Staff must be present on school premises between 8:55 am and 3:20 pm each day except Wednesday when the day finishes at 4.30 pm. Directed time (to include staff, departmental, HOD, HOY and Tutor meetings) will be scheduled every Wednesday between 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm.
- 2 Staff must seek permission from the Principal or Vice- Principal if they wish to leave the school premises for any reason during the school day, except during designated lunchtimes.
- 3 Staff must submit an **Application for Planned Absence/Request for Cover** form if absence from school is necessary for any reason during the school day (this includes directed time, parents/option meetings and Staff Development Days). Forms must be submitted at least two days prior to the date of the planned absence, where possible.
- 4 Staff must sign '**in**' and/or '**out**' at reception if they leave the school premises between 8:55 am and 3:20pm (4:30 pm on Wednesday) including lunchtime. The school is legally obliged to keep a record of persons present on the school premises at all times.
- 5 Staff must inform the HOD if a planned absence requires non-attendance at timetabled class.
- 6 Staff must set appropriate work for pupils if a planned absence requires non-attendance at timetabled class. Details of the work set must be forwarded to the HOD.
- 7 Staff must inform, in advance, the relevant member of staff (i.e., Principal, Vice-Principal, Senior Teacher, HOD or HOY) if a planned absence requires non-attendance at a scheduled meeting.
- 8 Punctuality to registration, assembly and timetabled class is essential. Should circumstances arise that cause a member of staff to be 'late' arriving at school, he/she must phone the Principal's mobile on **07543 220635** immediately.
- 9 For any unplanned absence from school, including illness or any other unforeseen circumstances, staff **must** phone the Principal's mobile on **07543 220635** at the earliest opportunity and no later than 8.30am on the first day of absence.

Propriety, Behaviour, Reputation and Appearance

1. All teachers have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils.
2. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general.
3. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute.
4. Staff should recognise that they are role models for pupils and must ensure they are dressed professionally, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

5. Personal property or other items of unsuitable nature (including books, magazines, DVDs or data stored digitally) must not be brought into school.
6. Staff must adhere strictly to the school's Social Network and E-Safety Policy.
7. There are occasions when it may be necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils (e.g., administering first aid), but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and sensitive to the pupil's age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Where possible have the pupil's agreement and if necessary, have another member of staff present. For further information, the school's Safe-Guarding Policy.
8. Physical contact should never be secretive or casual or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported immediately to the designated Child Protection Officer(s) or in their absence the Principal.
9. Staff should limit occasions when they are in a one-to-one meeting with a pupil. On such occasions staff should operate an 'open door' policy and maintain visual or auditory contact with others if possible.
10. If a pupil reveals information that causes a member of staff to be concerned, he/she must pass this information on immediately to the designated Child Protection Officer(s) or in their absence the Principal. (Ref: Safeguarding Policy).

Confidentiality, Integrity and Security

1. Teachers are required to have an awareness and high regard for the confidential, sensitive and important nature of their role and responsibilities. They should be mindful of this during formal and informal discussions with parents, pupils, other members of staff and the wider school community, particularly when in public areas of the school such as corridors and the staffroom. All members of staff should adopt a 'need to know' policy to ensure no child or group of children is unfairly stereotyped or unnecessarily spotlighted.
2. Staff must avoid being 'drawn' into discussions of a personal/confidential nature relating to school matters, individual pupils, groups of pupils, pupil's families or other members of staff. If there are any concerns in this matter, please refer them to the Principal or a Senior Teacher.
3. As per GDPR policy and procedures, confidential records in both hard and digital copy must be kept in a safe place at all times and should not be left in open places in school at home or left in cars. Further information is available in the Data Protection and E-Safety Policies. Should a member of staff be in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information he/she must seek guidance from a Senior Teacher.

Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention

1. Staff must treat pupils with respect and dignity at all times and must not use any form of degrading treatment.
2. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation.
3. Shouting aggressively is not acceptable in any situation.
4. Intimidation of pupils by any means (including the subtle use of physical presence) is not acceptable under any circumstances.
5. Staff should avoid physical contact with pupils.
6. With regard to Reasonable Force/Restraint, "the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Article 4, outlines the powers a member of school staff can use in restraining pupils. However, schools are

reminded that reasonable force/restraint should only be used as a measure of last resort. Staff of a grant-aided school may only use reasonable force/restraint:

- to prevent a pupil from committing an offence;
- to prevent a pupil causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);
- to prevent a pupil from engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils.

Reasonable force/restraint should: -

- only be used as a measure of last resort;
- preserve the dignity and respect of all concerned;
- never be used as a form of punishment or to make a child behave; and
- never deliberately cause pain/injury to a pupil.

All instances of the use of reasonable force/restraint should be recorded, parents/carers should be informed and follow up support provided to the pupil and staff involved.” DENI Circular 2021/13

7. The circumstances in which staff can physically intervene with a pupil are covered by the Education (NI) Order 1998. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from:
 - committing a criminal offence;
 - injuring themselves or others;
 - causing damage to property;
 - engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order;
 - to maintain good order and discipline.
8. In all situations Staff should have regard for the health and safety of themselves and other staff and pupils.
9. It is important that staff take a proactive approach in helping to maintain order on the corridors and school grounds.

Communication

1. Teachers are required to be sensitive in both their verbal and written communications (including electronic communication) and to maintain high standards of professional discourse and courtesy at all times.
2. Staff must familiarise themselves with and adhere to the school’s E-Safety Policy which includes internet use and electronic communication.
3. Staff should check their school e-mail account at least once per day.

General

1. Staff must carry out all duties in a manner that complies with Health and Safety legislation.
2. During the school day (i.e., 8:55 am – 3.20 pm) staff may not engage in activities/tasks that are not directly related to their role and responsibilities within the school.
3. Staff may not carry out marking of assignments/assessments or any duties associated with a post of responsibility during time scheduled for teaching and learning.

4. Staff must consult the 'cover' rota (available on SIMS and email) throughout the school day. It is essential that the SIMS home screen is 'refreshed' regularly to ensure that amendments to the rota are available on the SIMS timeline.
5. Staff will be expected to carry out pupil supervisory duties in accordance with published rotas.
6. Staff will be expected to adhere to and implement all school policies and procedures.
7. Staff must attend Staff Development Days and INSET courses as scheduled by SLT.
8. Staff will be expected to undertake any reasonable duties as requested by the Principal, Vice Principals and Senior Leadership Team.
9. Where possible and practical members of staff are encouraged to lead appropriate extra-curricular activities within the school.
10. Staff must not leave items of personal property unattended. The Board of Governors of Dominican College does not accept liability for any personal items lost or stolen on the premises.
11. The information contained in this document should be read in conjunction with 'The Role of Subject Teacher.' In addition, if Staff hold other positions of responsibility (e.g., tutor, HOD or HOY) then the relevant guidance/direction must also be adhered to.