

# **St Bernard's** **Primary School and Nursery Unit**



## **Safeguarding / Child Protection** **Policy**

January 2023  
Version 1.1

Designated Teacher for Child Protection:  
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection:  
Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance:

Mr Kavanagh  
Mrs Dempsey, Mrs Craig, Mrs Lawlor, Mrs Patterson  
Mrs Ward

## **ETHOS**

The Ethos of the Catholic school represents the very essence of why the school exists. This ethos is firmly rooted in the Gospel and being Christ centred endeavours to develop the full potential of every child, staff member and parent within the school faith community. There is a clear spiritual hallmark that is pivotal for the ethos and instils and encourages the Christian values vital for life.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Bernard's Primary School is a welcoming school with strong links with parents, church and community. Our Catholic values are at the heart of all relationships. Our ethos of trust, tolerance and inclusion enables each individual to be happy, secure and respected. We strive to ensure that everyone can achieve their full potential and gain the necessary skills and knowledge to have a positive role in their home, school and society.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Safeguarding Ethos**

The governors and staff of St. Bernard's Primary School and Nursery Unit fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE Safeguarding and Child Protection 2017 and the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005), UNCRC, The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, the sexual offences (Northern Ireland) order 2008, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Order 2011

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016, The Addressing Bullying Act (NI) 2016.

We also refer to the following government policies and strategies: Cooperating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland (March 2016), Domestic and sexual violence and abuse strategy 2013-2020 and subsequent action plans and Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Prevention in Partnership-July 2015

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration*. The 'paramountcy' of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

Child sexual exploitation has been prioritised within the three-year strategic plan of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI, 2013).

Our child protection policy gives St Bernard's the opportunity to play a preventative role in child sexual exploitation by raising staff awareness of vulnerability factors and current indicators taking into account all relative, up to date legislation and DENI/CCEA publications. Effective Child protection policy, procedure and practice can help our staff to recognise potentially exploitative and dangerous situations, and help us to safeguard our children and teach them in conjunction with our RSE and Anti Bullying Policies how to take preventative action.

We are integrating and building further relationships within our school, our school community and the wider community in the review and implementation of this revised Child Protection policy in conjunction with our RSE Policy.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult 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 issue 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.

This policy can be accessed on the school website [www.stbernardspsglengormley.com](http://www.stbernardspsglengormley.com) or in a hard copy from the School Office. All new starts in Nursery, Year 1 or families joining throughout the school year will receive a copy of this policy

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
3. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

#### **THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT ST BERNARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT**

Chair of Governors:

Mrs A. Mc Dermott

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance:

Mrs N. Ward

Principal:

Mrs C. Cruiks

Designated Teacher for Child Protection:

Mr S. Kavanagh

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection:

Mrs C. Dempsey, Mrs B. Craig

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection Nursery:

Mrs C. Lawlor, Mrs S. Patterson

Principal:

Mrs C. Cruiks

## WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

- **Physical**
- **Emotional**
- **Sexual**
- **Neglect**
- **Exploitation**

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order 1995)

Child Abuse occurs when 'a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger.' (ACPC, 2005)

### Types of Abuse

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

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child an opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in

sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing / begging

**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

**Domestic Abuse** is the 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.

### **Bullying (See Anti-Bullying Policy)**

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St. Bernard's Primary School.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

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 the bully and the victim will be personally contacted when bullying has been identified.

Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Principal with the assistance of the designated teacher. This will usually include ensuring that another child or a group of small 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 Principal or DT within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of privileges 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.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE**

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.

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with him/her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.

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

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, 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 of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection at the NEELB, or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

If a decision to refer is made, the Designated Teacher will make the referral to Gateway - Single Point of Entry Team (SPOE) verbally and in writing using the UNOCINI referral.

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

- Social Services
- EA/CCMS's Designated Officer for Child Protection

All records made regarding Child Protection will be held on a child's file, in a locked cabinet that only the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher have access to. These records are confidential and are maintained on the child's file forever.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the DT if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher or the Principal). Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

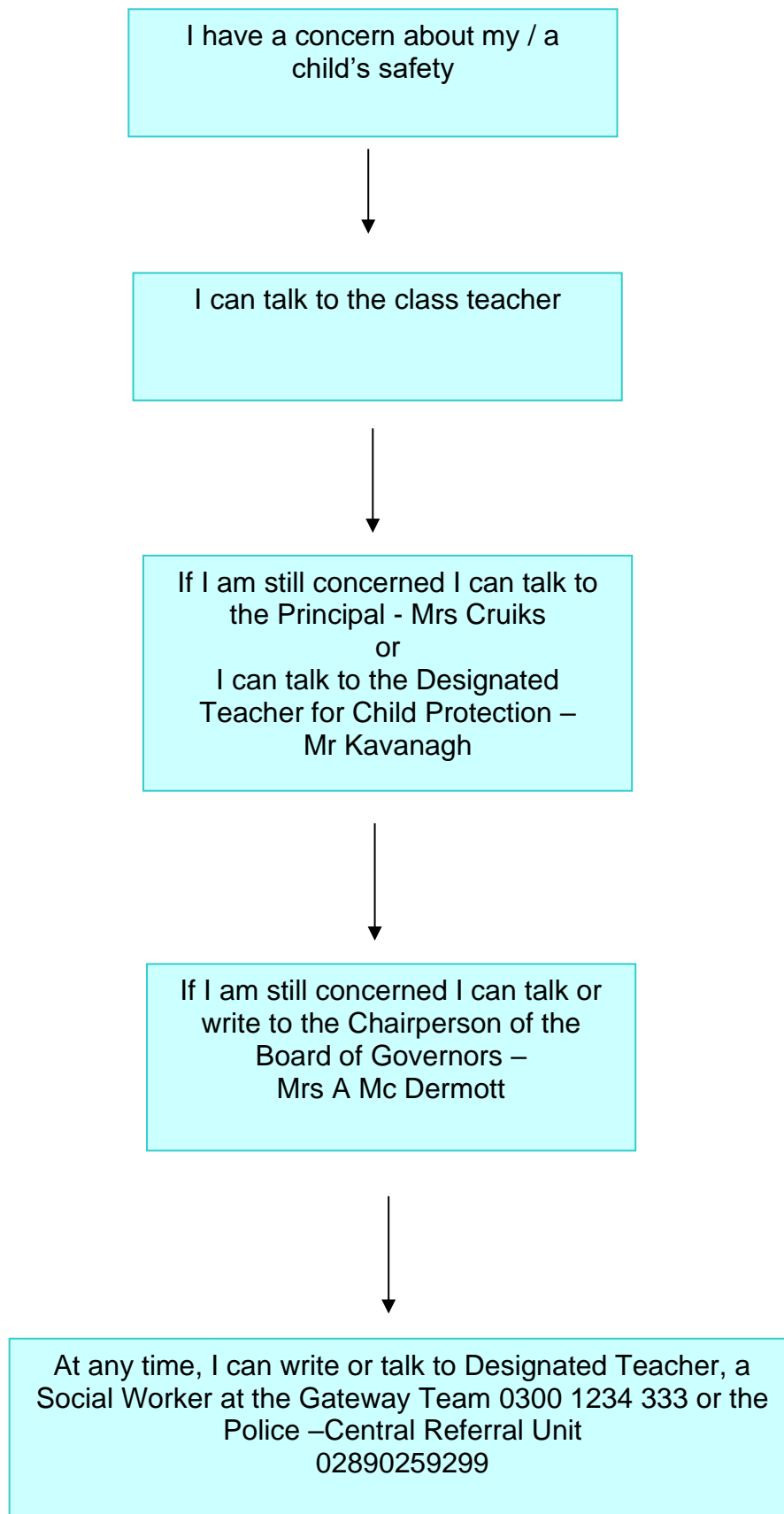
If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. He/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

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 signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

## **HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A RAISE A CHILD PROTECION CONCERN**

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:





## **VETTING PROCEDURES**

The school's vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in DE circulars 2013/01, 2012/19, 2013/01. Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF**

The code of conduct is known to all staff – permanent and non-permanent and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is set out in Appendix 1

## **THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm of our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protections.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for Personal and Social Development through PDMU and RSE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with other members of staff supporting children who we believe may be at risk. We will monitor these children and be there to offer them guidance and support through lunch time nurture group, break time chats, referral to counselling if necessary, access to the chill out/nurture room and liaison with parents and carers.

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in a separate policy on Safe Handling, in accordance with guidelines from NEELB. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

Permission is sought on a yearly basis for taking photographs and using images of children for displays, school publications, school website and online sites etc. All photographs of children should be held in a central electronic folder.

## **EDUCATIONAL TRIPS / VISITS**

A risk assessment is carried out prior to educational visits to ensure maximum safety for our children. On residential a member of staff assumes responsibility for Child Protection.

## **SWIMMING PROGRAMME**

Swimming is statutory at Key Stage 2 and optional at Key Stage 1.

The duty of care for pupils involved in a school swimming programme remains at all times with the school staff.

**Staff Ratios (School)**

As detailed in section 14.2.2 of the Education and Library Boards Education Visits Best Practice Guidance 2009 under normal circumstances the staff/pupil ratios detailed below should not be exceeded.

**Age Group Ratios:**

Primary Foundation Stage (P1/P2) One adult for up to a maximum of 10 young people.

Primary Key Stages 1 and 2 (P3-P7) One adult up to a maximum of 15 young people

*\*We have reviewed our guidance on attending swimming in The Valley Leisure Centre and will have 2 adults attending swimming lessons with Key Stage 2 children. Please be aware the Changing Village is always open to the public. Please advise children they are not to come out of changing cubicle until totally dressed / changed.*

**SUPERVISION ON POOL BANK**

The duty of care for pupils involved in a school swimming programme always remains with the school staff.

**EXTENDED SCHOOLS PROGRAMME**

All coaches have been vetted as set out in the DENI website and have received a copy of the code of conduct.

## **Online Safety**

These principles of keeping pupils and the wider school community safe online and prioritising online safety within the curriculum complies with the DENI Circular 2016/27.

In St Bernard's Primary School, we believe that the Internet and other digital technologies are very powerful resources which can enhance and potentially transform learning and teaching when used effectively and appropriately. The Internet is an essential element of 21st century life for education, business and social interaction. This school provides pupils with opportunities to use the excellent resources on the Internet, along with developing the skills necessary to access, analyse and evaluate them in a safe, responsible manner.

The above circular states that:

"Schools play a crucial role in raising awareness of the risks, highlighting the impact of behaviour when engaging with online technologies and educating children and young people about how to act appropriately and stay safe"

Extra advice and support regarding online activity and accessing school work via google Classroom, and other aspects of blended learning, have been made available to parents throughout lockdown.

## **ICT Vision**

St Bernard's Primary School fully acknowledges the role of ICT, digital and multimedia technologies in enhancing learning and teaching and empowering learners.

In St Bernard's Primary School, we believe that:

- ICT is not taught as a distinct subject, but it is a tool to be used throughout the curriculum.
- ICT is embedded through the curriculum and as such supports the raising of standards in literacy and numeracy.
- ICT practice should build upon pupils' prior knowledge and provide opportunities for pupils to develop as independent and collaborative learners commensurate with their age and abilities.
- There is a need for balance between the development of ICT skills and the application of these skills to the curriculum
- ICT supports the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework within the Northern Ireland Curriculum and enables pupils to plan, do and review their work.
- The use of ICT away from school- at home ICT will continue to be encouraged through projects and homework, which can be saved to the school's Seesaw account.

## **Code of Safe Practice**

When using the internet, e-mail systems and digital technologies, all users must comply with all relevant legislation on copyright, property theft, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity. The Code of Safe Practice for St Bernard's Primary School makes explicit to all users (staff and pupils) what is safe and acceptable and what is not.

The scope of the Code covers fixed and mobile Internet; school PC's, laptops, digital video equipment and iPads. It should also be noted that the use of devices owned personally by staff and pupils but brought onto school premises – Bring Your Own Device, BYOD (such as mobile phones, camera phones, iPads, tablets) is subject to the same requirements as technology provided by the school.

The ICT Co-ordinator will monitor the effectiveness of the Code of Practice, particularly in the light of new developments in technology.

## **Code of Practice for Pupils**

Pupil access to the Internet is through a filtered service provided by C2K/My School (**Appendix 6**) and BT Broadband (installed by iTeach), which should ensure educational use made of resources is safe and secure, while protecting users and systems from abuse. Parental permission is sought from parents on an annual basis before pupils access the Internet. Both parties sign this ICT Code of Practice Agreement and copies of these are held on file by the ICT Co-ordinator.

In addition, the following key measures have been adopted by St Bernard's Primary School to ensure our pupils do not access any inappropriate material:

- The school's Code of Practice for use of the Internet and other digital technologies (enclosed) is made explicit to all pupils and is displayed prominently;
- Our Code of Practice is reviewed each school year and signed by pupils/parents;
- Pupils using the Internet will normally be working in highly-visible areas of the school;
- All online activity is for appropriate educational purposes and is supervised, where possible;
- Pupils will, where possible, use sites pre-selected by the teacher and appropriate to their age group;
- Pupils are educated in the safe and effective use of the Internet, through a number of selected programmes.

It should be accepted, however, that however rigorous these measures may be, they can never be 100% effective. Neither the school nor C2K/My School can accept liability under such circumstances.

The use of mobile phones by pupils is not normally permitted on the school premises during school hours, unless in exceptional circumstances, where permission may be granted by a member of staff.

During school hours pupils are forbidden to play computer games or access social networking sites, unless specifically assigned by the teacher.

## **Reporting**

Incidents of technology misuse which arise will be dealt with in accordance with the school's discipline policy. Minor incidents will be dealt with by the Principal, Vice Principal or the ICT Co-ordinator and may result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet / iPad use.

Incidents involving child protection issues will be dealt with in accordance with school child protection procedures and be reported to the designated teacher. The co-ordinator will keep an up-to-date record of potential breaches of online safety in an Online Safety Risk Register.

## **Code of Practice for Staff**

Staff have agreed to the following Code of Safe Practice:

- Pupils accessing the Internet should be supervised by an adult at all times.
- All pupils are aware of the rules for the safe and effective use of the Internet.
- All pupils using the Internet have written permission from their parents.
- Deliberate/accidental access to inappropriate materials or any other breaches of the school code of practice should be reported immediately to the Principal, Vice Principal or the ICT Co-ordinator
- In the interests of system security staff passwords should only be shared with the network manager.
- Teachers are aware that the C2K/My School system tracks all Internet use and records the sites visited. The system also logs emails and messages sent and received by individual users.

- Teachers should be aware of copyright and intellectual property rights and should be careful not to download or use any materials which are in breach of these.
- School systems may not be used for unauthorised commercial transactions.

## **Internet Safety Awareness**

In St Bernard's Primary School, we believe that it is essential to educate all users in the safe and effective use of the Internet and other forms of digital communication. We see education in appropriate, effective and safe use as an essential element of the school curriculum. This education is as important for staff and parents as it is for pupils.

### **What are the Dangers?**

The Internet is an open communications channel, available to all. Anyone can send messages, discuss ideas and publish materials with little restriction. This brings young people into contact with people from all sectors of society and with a wide variety of materials some of which could be unsuitable.

During lockdown and throughout the restart programme we recognise that children have been and are more vulnerable in regard to exploitation online. We have taken preventative steps to monitor and empower children to be able recognise unsafe activity online and speak to a trusted adult if they have concerns.

### **Key Concerns are:**

#### **Potential Contact**

Children may come into contact with someone on-line who may wish to harm them. Some adults use chat rooms or e-mail to communicate with children for inappropriate reasons

Children need to be taught:

- That people are not always who they say they are.
- That "Stranger Danger" applies to the people they encounter through the Internet.
- That they should never give out personal details or
- That they should never meet alone anyone contacted via the Internet

#### **Inappropriate Content**

- Through the Internet there are unsuitable materials in many varieties. Anyone can post material on the Internet.
- Some material is published for an adult audience and is unsuitable for children e.g., materials with a sexual content.
- Materials may express extreme views. e.g., some use the web to publish information on weapons, crime and racism which would be restricted elsewhere.
- Materials may contain misleading and inaccurate information. e.g., some use the web to promote activities which are harmful such as anorexia or bulimia.

Children need to be taught:

- That information on the Internet is not always accurate or true.
- To question the source of information.
- How to respond to unsuitable materials or requests and that they should tell a teacher/adult immediately.

## **Excessive Commercialism**

The Internet is a powerful vehicle for advertising. In visiting websites children have easy access to advertising which is very persuasive.

- Children should be taught:
- Not to fill out forms with a lot of personal details.
- Not to use an adult's credit card number to order online products.

If children are to use the Internet in places other than at school e.g. – libraries, clubs and at home, they need to be educated about how to behave on-line and to discuss problems.

There are no totally effective solutions to problems of Internet safety. Teachers, pupils and parents must be vigilant.

## **Internet Safety Awareness for pupils**

Rules for the Acceptable use of the Internet are discussed with all pupils and are prominently displayed in classrooms. In addition, pupils follow a structured programme of Internet Safety Awareness using a range of age appropriate online resources including the safety messages of how to stay safe, how to protect yourself and how to take responsibility for your own and others' safety.

## **Internet Safety Awareness for staff**

The ICT Co-ordinator keeps informed and updated on issues relating to Internet Safety and attends regular courses. This training is then disseminated to all teaching staff, classroom assistants and supervisory assistants on a regular basis.

## **Points for Teachers to Consider**

Internet use should be planned, task orientated and educational within a regulated and managed environment.

Supervision is the key strategy. Children should have a teacher or classroom assistant present when using the Internet. Computers should be positioned so that it is possible for adults to see materials on screen.

Children should know why they are using the Internet. Teach children to use the Internet in response to a need. E.g. to answer a question which has arisen from work in class.

Search engines require careful use and planning/supervision. Children can be bombarded with information and yet fail to find the material they need.

Children do not need thousands of website addresses. A small appropriate choice is much more effective.

Individual e-mail addresses may not be considered appropriate for younger children. Class or project e-mail addresses may be used. All incoming and outgoing mail should be checked.

Discuss with pupils the rules for responsible Internet use. It is not enough to protect children from materials, we must teach them to become Internet Wise. Children need to learn to recognise and avoid the risks. Children need to know what to do if they come across inappropriate material or if they are approached by a stranger. Be informed – read about E-Safety.

## **Internet Safety Awareness for Parents**

The Internet Safety Policy is available for parents by request and is also posted on the school website. The Code of practice for pupils is sent home at the start of each school year for parental signature. Internet safety messages for parents and carers are also sent home annually and shared via Facebook and the school website.

### **Points for Parents to Consider**

It is important to promote Internet Safety in the home and to monitor Internet use. Keep the computer in a communal area of the home.

- Ask children how the computer works.
- Monitor on-line time and be aware of excessive hours spent on the Internet.
- Take an interest in what children are doing. Discuss with the children what they are seeing and using on the Internet.
- Advise children to take care and to use the Internet in a sensible and responsible manner. Know the SMART tips.
- Discuss the fact that there are websites which are unsuitable.
- Discuss how children should respond to unsuitable materials or requests.
- Remind children never to give out personal information on the Internet.
- Remind children that people online may not be who they say they are.
- Be vigilant. Ensure that children do not arrange to meet someone they meet online.
- Be aware that children may be using the Internet in places other than in their own home or at school.

### **Community Use of School ICT Resources**

The school's ICT facilities and equipment can be used as a community resource under the Extended Schools programme. Users will be issued with separate usernames and passwords by C2K. They must also agree to the school's Acceptable Use of the Internet policy before participating and only access pre-selected and appropriate websites under the guidance of a tutor.

### **Health and Safety**

St Bernard's Primary School have attempted, in so far as possible, to ensure a safe working environment for pupils and teachers using ICT resources, both in classrooms and in the ICT suite, which has been designed in accordance with health and safety guidelines. Pupils are supervised at all times when Interactive Whiteboards, Laptops and iPads are being used.

### **Digital and Video Images of Pupils**

Parental permission is sought at the start of each school year to cover the use of photographs of pupils on the school Website / Facebook and Seesaw, in the local press and for displays etc within school and written permission must be obtained from the parent/carers.

### **School Website / Social Media (Facebook)/ Seesaw**

Our school Website, Social Media and Seesaw accounts promote and provide up to date information about the school, as well as giving pupils an opportunity to showcase their work and other aspects of school life. All communications between the school and parents or wider community should be clear and professional. In order to minimise risks of any images of pupils on the school website and social media being used inappropriately the following steps are taken:

- Group photos are used where possible, with general labels/captions;
- Names and images are kept separate – if a pupil is named their photograph is not used and vice-versa;
- The website does not include home addresses, telephone numbers, personal e-mails or any other personal information about pupils or staff.
- Website links selected by teachers may be put on the website for pupils to access outside of school – sites will be previewed and checked regularly.
- Parents'/Carers' permission will be sought to publish pupils work and/or photographs. These will only be published subject to the strict safeguards above.

### **Storage of images**

- Digital and video images of pupils are, where possible, taken with school equipment. Photographs of pupils are removed when they leave the school.

### **Social Software**

Chatrooms, blogs and other social networking sites are blocked by the C2K filters so pupils do not have access to them in the school environment. However, we regard the education of pupils on the safe and responsible use of social software as vitally important and this is addressed through our Internet Safety Education for pupils.

Instances of cyber bullying of pupils or staff will be regarded as very serious offences and dealt with according to the school's discipline policy and child protection procedures.

Pupils are aware that any misuse of mobile phones/websites/email/iPads should be reported to a member of staff immediately.

All reasonable and appropriate steps have been taken to protect pupils. The school recognises that despite employing safety procedures, in some circumstances, the Internet may give children access to undesirable information or images.

Children are regularly reminded that should they encounter inappropriate material online they must immediately:

- Leave that website
- Inform an adult

Should a child or teacher encounter unsuitable material through the managed service, this will be reported to C2k via the C2k helpdesk number.



## **THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

The staff at St. Bernard's Primary School recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn.

St. Bernard's will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such pupils in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

Support for all pupils in the school in building resilience, developing skills in self-protection and developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

- The content of the curriculum, particularly Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school Positive Behaviour Policy and Whole School House System which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, Counselling Services, PSNI and the school nurse.

## **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.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

## **Appendix 1**

### **A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF**

#### **Objective, Scope and Principles**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff and volunteers are expected to observe. School staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school.

This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

#### **1. Setting an Example**

1.1 All staff and volunteers who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

1.2 All staff and volunteers must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.

1.3 All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

1.4 This Code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority.

1.5 All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

1.6 Personal mobile telephones should not be used during working hours.

#### **2. Safeguarding Pupils/Students**

2.1 All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.

2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal).

2.3 The school's DT is Mrs G. Walsh, the DDT is Mrs C. Cruiks and the DDT for Nursery is Mrs A.M. Privilege.

2.4 All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents and other relevant school policies eg e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

2.5 All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues. Staff should not raise their voices to anyone

2.6 All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.

2.7 All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

### **3. Relationships with Students**

3.1 All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in Appendix 2 of this document.

3.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

### **4. Pupil/Student Development**

4.1 All staff and volunteers must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.

4.2 All staff and volunteers must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/ students.

### **5. Honesty and Integrity**

5.1 All staff and volunteers must maintain high 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 must be declared to the Principal with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

### **6. Conduct Outside of Work**

6.1 All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.

6.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual’s work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

### **7. E-Safety and Internet Use**

7.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools’ E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

7.2 Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by ‘liking’ certain pages or

posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

7.4 Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students and parents (outside of existing relationships / friendships).

If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.

7.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

## **8. Confidentiality**

8.1 Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

8.2 Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

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

8.4 If a member of staff 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.

8.5 Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.

8.6 Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

## **9. Dress and Appearance**

9.1 All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.

9.2 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

9.3 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

## **10. Disciplinary Action**

Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

## **11. Compliance**

All staff and volunteers must complete the form in Appendix 3 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

## Appendix 2

### Relationships with Students Outside of Work Declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student outside of school I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring.
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school.
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (eg via the child) or formally.
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.**

## **Appendix 3**

### **Confirmation of Compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Post Held \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.**

## Appendix 4

### **GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other support staff in St. Bernard's Primary School and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the school.

It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken, through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

#### **Who is a Volunteer?**

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, either

1. Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or
2. Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips; residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Formal arrangements as to selection and vetting should not be required for volunteers who are involved outside school hours and who do not have unsupervised contact with pupils. These would include fund raisers, people using school premises for meetings etc.

#### **Use of Volunteers**

There are three main categories into which the use of volunteers might be grouped and to which guidance will apply:

- During school hours involving direct contact with Pupils
- Outside school hours involving direct contact with pupils
- During school hours but not usually involving direct contact with Pupils

#### **Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers**

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance at their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

#### **Initial Appraisal**

As a minimum requirement all potential volunteers are asked to provide the following information:

- personal details
- qualifications and previous work with children
- a declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound-over Order
- a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for child protection
- agree to a criminal record being carried out
- provide the name of two referees who are not family members or members of staff in the school
- attend an interview with the school Principal with proof of identity
- Undergo an annual criminal record check through Access NI (via NEELB)

No individual will be admitted to the school as a volunteer until these basic steps have been completed and the results assessed.



## **Accepting Volunteers**

Where the previous procedures have been followed as appropriate and the school is satisfied that:

- the volunteer is a suitable person to have contact with the children and has the character, skills and experience to support the work of the school in a voluntary capacity;
- well defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the volunteer to undertake and he/she is competent to undertake them;

the school will notify the individual that he/she has been accepted for voluntary duties in the school

## **The use of Volunteers**

These are the fundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

- the purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties
- volunteers only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff and these arrangements should be such as to minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised, access to children
- volunteers are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment
- volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and receive appropriate training to enable them to perform these
- volunteers are only allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers are not to be placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom
- volunteers are not afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception might be made where a child has a medical or other condition of which all those working with the pupil should be made aware, and where agreement of the parent has been sought.

## **Health and Safety Insurance**

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety Legislation. St. Bernard's Primary School therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees under the legislation.

## **Information and Training**

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

- the policy of the school and the management authority in relation to pastoral care and child protection, including its behaviour/discipline policy, including rewards and sanctions, and the extent of the volunteer's authority within it; its child protection procedures
- Health and Safety Policy

### **ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT) AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER (DDT)**

#### **The DT:**

- To provide training to all school staff including support staff
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for recordkeeping of all child protection concerns
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI Public Protection Units
- Liaising with NEELB /CCMS Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Keeping the school principal informed
- The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school's child protection policy
- Ensures parents receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made to Social Services and the role of the school regarding this
- Promotion of a child protection ethos in the school
- Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Maintains all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by the Designated Teacher and the School Principal as appropriate)
- Forward to Antrim Board Centre, any concerns pertaining to a child when they transfer schools.

#### **DDT:**

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required

## **Appendix 6**

Before using MY-SCHOOL and its associated online services you need to understand and agree to the following:

1. Do not share your password with anyone or log on as someone else.
2. You must not upload, save or share any illegal, obscene, defamatory or offensive material either through MY- SCHOOL or by email.
3. All online contact with other pupils and adults must be polite and sensible. It must not be offensive or racist.
4. You must never harass or cause distress to others. Where such use of MY-SCHOOL is reported, C2k will make best efforts to remove such material pending investigation of the matter. Where appropriate, disciplinary action may be taken against the user concerned to reduce or remove MY-SCHOOL access privileges and a report submitted to the proper authority.
5. Commercial content, provided under licence via MY-SCHOOL has its own Terms and Conditions. You must comply with all such regulations. If you intend to use content in ways other than those expressly permitted you must obtain prior permission from its owner(s). Copyright infringement is a criminal offence.
6. Content within MY-SCHOOL may contain hyperlinks to external resources. C2k is not responsible and shall not be liable for the availability, nature or use of any external content or the policies of linked websites.
7. Personal information about any living person must not be published through MY-SCHOOL or the associated services without express prior permission from the person concerned.
8. Names, images and logos identifying C2k/ MY-SCHOOL or third parties and their products and services are subject to copyright, design rights and trademarks and may not be copied or used without permission. All Rights Reserved.
9. All pupils participating in a video or web conferencing session must have the written parental consent in compliance with the image management section of the school's child protection and data protection policies.
10. Adults should be notified prior to the start of a video or web conferencing session that the session may/will be recorded. By joining a session a participant is accepting these conditions unless they advise the meeting organiser in advance.
11. Video or web conferencing sessions should be terminated once the session has ended and a device secured if left unattended during the session.
12. Online course room tutors should ensure that learner and guest accounts are used appropriately. Supervision of course rooms is the responsibility of the course room tutor(s).
13. C2k is committed to safeguarding each user's privacy online. Notwithstanding, you are notified that Course room tutors may track usage of their course material and that C2k may monitor usage to maintain system integrity and to ensure that the system is used legally. Monitoring, however, cannot be guaranteed in all circumstances.
14. C2k supports the rights of copyright owners and does not tolerate reckless or deliberate copyright infringement. Copyright material of third parties must not be used without specific authorisation. Copying material to a hard disk or removable disk, printing, distributing or sharing copyright material by electronic means may give rise to personal liability, despite the belief that the use of such material was permitted.
15. By using MY-SCHOOL and its associated services you are considered as understanding and agreeing to the terms published here (and any revisions/additions as C2k may post to these Terms & Conditions at any time).

## Use of Internet – Pupil/School Agreement

At St Bernard's Primary School we expect all pupils to be responsible for their own behaviour on the Internet, just as they are elsewhere in the school. This includes materials they choose to access and the language they use. The rules outlined below will keep pupils safe when using the Internet. Please read them carefully.

### Using the Computers/iPads

- I will only access the computer system with the username and password I have been given;
- I will not access other people's files
- I will not bring in CD's from outside school and try to use them on the school computers Using the Internet
- I will ask permission from my teacher before using the internet;
- I will report any unpleasant material to my teacher immediately because this will help protect other pupils and myself;
- I understand that the school may check my computer/i-pad files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit;
- Copyright laws must be respected. Pupils should ask permission before downloading or printing information from the internet. Using E-Mail
- I will not complete and send e-mails without permission from my teacher;
- I will not give my full name, my home address or telephone number when completing e-mails;
- I will immediately report any unpleasant messages sent to me;
- I will only e-mail people I know, or who my teacher has approved;
- The messages I send will be polite and responsible;
- I understand that the e-mail messages I send or receive may be read by others.

Pupil:

As a school user of the Internet, I agree to follow the school rules on its use. I will use the Internet in a responsible way and observe all the restrictions explained to me by the school.

Pupil's Name: ..... Class: .....

Parent:

As a parent or legal guardian of the pupil named above, I understand that pupils will be accountable for their own actions. I also understand that some materials on the Internet may be objectionable and I accept responsibility for setting standards for my child to follow when selecting, sharing and exploring information and media.

Parent Signature: ..... Date: .....

## **Appendix 7**

### **Designated Officer**

### **Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)**

028 9985590

Ms Susan Sullivan  
Down & Connor Office  
193/195 Donegall Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2FL

Telephone 02890 327875

SPOE (single point of entry)  
028 94424459

#### **Email**

[SPOE.Referral@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:SPOE.Referral@northerntrust.hscni.net)

**Gateway Team - using UNOCINI form (24 Hours) (Copy to child's CP file and to CPSSS)**  
**Northern Trust – 0300 1234 333**

### **Regional Emergency Social Work Service**

**5pm to 9am Monday to Thursday**

**5pm on Friday to 9am on Monday**

**24-hour cover over public holidays and 365 days per year**

**Contact Number**

**028 95049999**

### **PSNI – Central Referral Unit (CRU)**

**Tel: 02890 259299 (or 101 extension 30299)**

- This is now the single point of contact for all agencies and partners making referrals for suspected child abuse cases.
- It will also provide a specific service in respect of the quality assurance of domestic violence investigations across Northern Ireland
- From 1 April 2015 all child abuse and domestic abuse referrals must be made to the CRU rather than to local PPU's.

### **Designated Teacher**

### **Deputy Designated Teacher**

### **Designated Governor**

Mr S. Kavanagh  
St. Bernard's PS  
Elmfield Road  
Newtownabbey  
BT36 6DW

Mrs B. Craig  
St. Bernard's PS  
Elmfield Road  
Newtownabbey  
BT36 6DW

Mrs N. Ward

Telephone: 02890844634

Telephone: 02890844634

To access letters of advice, circulars and updated information regarding Child Protection and Safeguarding please use link below

[www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-developoment-2/childprotection-safeguarding.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-developoment-2/childprotection-safeguarding.htm)