

APPENDIX 2

CHILDREN WITH INCREASED VULNERABILITIES

Children with a Disability

Children with disabilities (i.e. any child who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition) may be more vulnerable to abuse and those working with children with disabilities 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. Staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities will receive training to enable them to identify and refer concerns early in order to allow preventative action to be taken.

Children with Limited Fluency in English

Children whose first language is not English/Newcomer pupils should be given the opportunity to express themselves to a member of staff or other professional with appropriate language/communication skills especially where there are concerns that abuse may have occurred. DTs and other relevant school staff should seek advice and support from the EA's Intercultural Education Service if necessary. All schools should create an atmosphere in which pupils with special educational needs which involve communication difficulties, or pupils for whom English is not their first language, feel confident to discuss these issues or other matters that may be worrying them.

Pre-School Provision

Many of the issues in the preceding paragraphs will be relevant to our young children who may have limited communication skills. In addition to the above, staff will follow our Intimate Care policy and procedure in consultation with the child's parents/carers. Teachers, nursery assistants and other adults will come into contact with children while helping them with toileting, washing and changing their clothing. Staff in pre-school settings should consider whether the Code of Conduct meets the needs of their particular responsibilities and should make clear the boundaries of appropriate physical contact and their Code to staff and parents.

Looked After Children

In consultation with other agencies and professionals, a health and Social Care Trust may determine that a child or young person's welfare cannot be safeguarded if they remain at home. In these circumstances, a child may be accommodated through a voluntary arrangement with the persons with parental responsibility for the child or the HSCT may make an application to the Court for a Care Order to place the child or young person in an alternative placement provided by the Trust. The HSCT will then make arrangements for the child to be looked after, either permanently or temporarily.

A member of the school staff will attend LAC meetings where possible, and will provide a written or oral report. Where necessary, school support will be put in place for the child/ young person. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

Children or Young People who go missing

Children and young people who go missing come from all backgrounds and communities and are known to be at greater risk of harm. This includes risk of being sexually abused or exploited although children and young people may also become homeless or a victim or perpetrator of crime. Those

who go missing from their family home may have no involvement with services as not all children and young people who run away or go missing from their family home have underlying issues within the family or are reported to the police as missing.

The patterns of going missing may include overnight absences or those who have infrequent unauthorised absences of short time duration. When a child returns having been missing for a period, we should be alert to the possibility that they may have been harmed and to any possible behaviours or relationships or other indicators that children may have been abused.

School staff will work in partnership with those who look after the child who goes missing and, if appropriate, will complete a risk assessment. Current school policies will apply e.g. attendance, safeguarding, RSE.

Children and Young People who are homeless

If we become aware that a child is homeless, we will share this information with Social Services whose role it is to carry out a comprehensive needs and risk assessment. We will contribute to the assessment and multi-disciplinary meetings.

Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children

Separated children are those who have been separated from their parents or from their previous legal and customary primary care-giver. Unaccompanied children and young people are those seeking asylum without the presence of a legal guardian. Consideration must be given to the fact that separated or unaccompanied children may be victims of human trafficking.

Child Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or young person, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation.

If we become aware of a child or young person who may be separated, unaccompanied or a victim of human trafficking, we in Ballinderry Primary School and Nursery Unit will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Children of parents with additional support needs

Children can be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Parents, carers or siblings with disabilities may have additional support needs which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children in the family, possibly affecting their education or physical and emotional development. It is important that any action staff take to safeguard children in these circumstances encompasses other professionals and agencies involved in providing services to adult family members.

Where it is known or suspected that parents or carers have impaired ability to care for a child, the safeguarding team will give consideration to the need for a child protection response in addition to the provision of family support and intervention.

Gender Identity Issues and Sexual Orientation

Schools should strive to provide a happy environment where all children 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 fairly due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. At Ballinderry we have our own policy on how we address Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) within the curriculum. It is via this policy that schools are expected to cover issues relating to relationships and sexuality.

At Ballinderry Primary School we support all of our pupils to appropriately access information on healthy relationships and to report any concerns or risks of abuse or exploitation.

Residential Settings

Children in the above setting are particularly vulnerable to abuse. We will ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and trained in accordance with DE guidelines.

Work experience, School Trips and Educational Visits

Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children also includes periods when they are in our care outside of the school setting. We will follow DE and EA guidance on educational visits, school trips and work experience to ensure our current safeguarding policies are adhered to and that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

Children/ Young People's behaviours

Children and young people may be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse must always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Where a child has been harmed by another, all school staff should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to both the children who perpetrate the abuse as well as those who are victims of it and, where necessary, should contribute to an inter-disciplinary and multi-agency response.

Self- Harm

Self – harm encompasses a wide range of behaviours that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. Self- harm may involve abuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs, including both illegal and /or prescribed drugs.

Suicidal Ideation

Staff must act without delay if they have concerns about a child who presents as being suicidal. It is important that children who communicate thoughts of suicide or engage in para-suicidal behaviours are seen urgently by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, including those in the statutory sector, to ensure that they are taken seriously, treated with empathy, kindness and understanding and informed assessments of risks and needs can be completed as a matter of priority.