



## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Parents and Carers**

St. Teresa's Nursery School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. All staff are committed to providing an environment where every child can enjoy the right to live their life free from harm or abuse or potential harm or abuse; a caring, supportive and safe environment, which values individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all children can learn and develop to their full potential.

There is a broad range of international and domestic legislation relating to child welfare and protection. This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is predicated on:

### **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Kingdom agreed to be bound by the Convention in 1991. It sets out the rights which all children and young people up to the age of 18 should have.

### **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is the principle statute governing the care, upbringing and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It applies to all those who work with and care for children, whether parents, paid carers or volunteers. It is the most comprehensive and far reaching child care legislation ever introduced to Northern Ireland. It clearly identifies five key principles, which are:

1. Paramourcy
2. Prevention
3. Protection
4. Partnership
5. Parental Responsibility

This order sets out that the welfare of the child is considered as being of paramount importance. Under the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003/05, the Board of Governors has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They have delegated responsibility for promoting, developing and monitoring child protection within St. Teresa's Nursery School to the Designated Teacher or in her absence the Deputy Designated Teacher.

### **The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003**

Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 place a statutory duty on Boards of Governors (BoG) to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils and to determine the measures to be taken at the school with a view to protecting pupils from abuse (whether at school or elsewhere).

### **Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008**

This legislation reduced the age of consent in NI (in line with other areas of the UK), and strengthened the legal safeguards for young people between the ages of 16 and 17.

Significantly, it introduced the concepts of grooming (including online behaviours), and „Abuse of a Position of Trust“.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a Disclosure and Barring Service and requirements relating to individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults.

### **The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011**

This Act established the SBNI and places interagency co-operation on a statutory footing. The objective of the SBNI is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland by co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the board. The SBNI is also responsible for development of regional policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

### **The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016**

The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016 gives a power to investigate education authorities in respect of complaints made by a member of the public (this came into effect on 1 April 2016). The power to investigate extended to Boards of Governors of grant-maintained schools from 1 April 2017.

### **Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)**

This policy replaces the „Co-operating to Safeguard Children guidance issued in 2003 and provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

### **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020**

This Strategy highlights an overarching strategic vision for addressing domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The Department of Health (DoH), and the Department of Justice (DoJ) are the strategic lead departments in taking forward both the domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence and abuse agendas through improved effective, collaborative, and cohesive engagement within and across Northern Ireland.

Circular 2016/20 updates and replaces records management guidance included in DE Circular 1999/10 “Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection” and should be read in conjunction with DE Circular 2015/13 “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff”. Circular 2017/04 “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” (SACPIS) replaced the 1999/10 guidance and supersedes this document. These circulars and the guidance they provide, have been used to inform this school policy.

This policy applies to all staff, Governors, students and volunteers working in the school. The main elements of the policy are:

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

St. Teresa's Nursery School recognises that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the Personal, Social and Emotional Curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

St. Teresa's Nursery School will:

- Ensure that there is a Safeguarding Team in place; this consists of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Chairman of the Board of Governors and the nominated Governor responsible for Child Protection and Safeguarding. The Safeguarding Team meet regularly to review the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding practices and to address any issues arising.
- Ensure that there is a Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, who has received appropriate training/support for these roles.
- Ensure that there is a nominated Governor responsible for Child Protection, who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and students and volunteers) and the Governing body knows the name of the Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher responsible for Child Protection and their designated role.



- Ensure all staff, students and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and the responsibility of referring any concerns to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Ensure that parents/ carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus and all Induction information.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location.
- Develop and follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policies on:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Mobile Phones Policy
- Staff Professional Code of Conduct Policy



St. Teresa's Nursery School recognises 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 and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour management policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, health services, education welfare services and the educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the Child Protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the Designated Teacher in the new school and that the child's social worker is informed.

As a condition of employment all staff have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff have also adopted a Code of Practice for appropriate behaviour towards pupils, with particular reference to challenging children.

The purpose of the following procedures is to protect, safeguard and support pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in the school (teachers and non-teaching staff and students/ volunteers) has clear guidance on the action which is required where the abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school.

## What is child abuse?

"Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them."

There are five categories of abuse:

1. **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.

2. **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.
3. **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 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.

4. **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.
5. **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. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

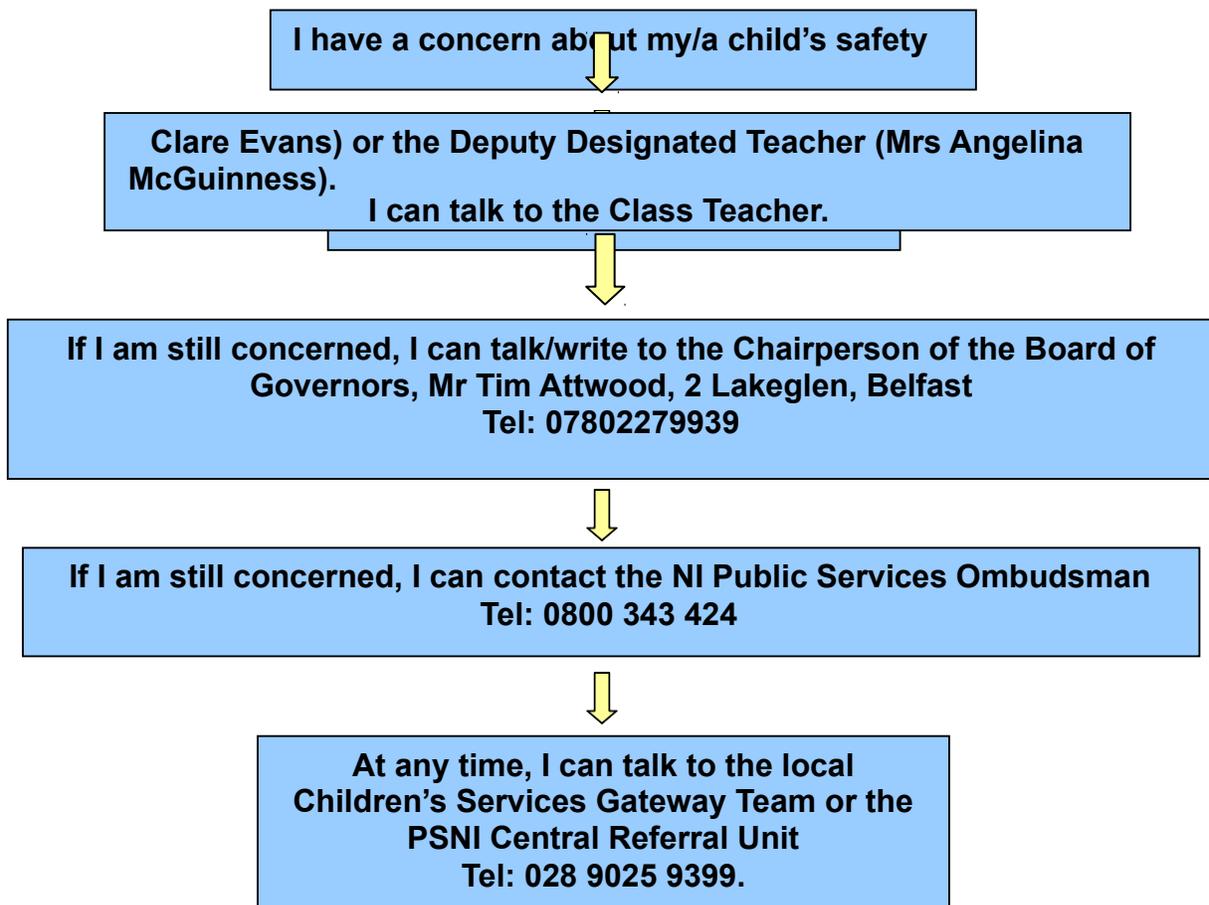
The Designated Teacher ensures that staff training is kept up to date and that all staff remain abreast of current Child Protection and Safeguarding information, including the types of abuse and their symptoms. These include; Grooming, Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, E- Safety and Internet Abuse. Where there is evidence or reasonable suspicion of domestic violence and abuse in a household where children or young people reside, this will be referred to Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Service.

## Safeguarding Team

Chairman of the Board of Governors:	Mr Tim Attwood
Governor responsible for Child Protection & Safeguarding:	Mrs Lesley Ann Christie
Designated Teacher for Child Protection:	Mrs Clare Evans Deputy
Designated Teacher for Child Protection:	Mrs Angelina McGuinness

## Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse

Should a parent/ carer have concerns regarding the safety of their (or another) child they should follow the procedures set out below:



The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is:

**Mrs Clare Evans (Principal)**

In her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection is

**Mrs Angelina McGuinness (Assistant Teacher)**

If a child makes a disclosure which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, or if information is received that gives rise to a concern, the member of staff will act promptly and the guidance below will be followed:

- The staff member will not investigate- this is a matter for the Social Services or the PSNI – but will report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.
- The Designated Teacher will, as a matter of urgency, plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made, signed and filed. The Designated Teacher will then decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services or the PSNI. Advice may be sought from the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) at the Education Authority (EA).
- **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.**
- Unless there are concerns that a parent/carer may be the possible abuser, the parent/carer will be informed immediately.
- The Principal may seek clarification or advice by consulting one of the Designated Officers for Child Protection at CPSSS or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.
- **The safety of the child is always the first priority.**

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

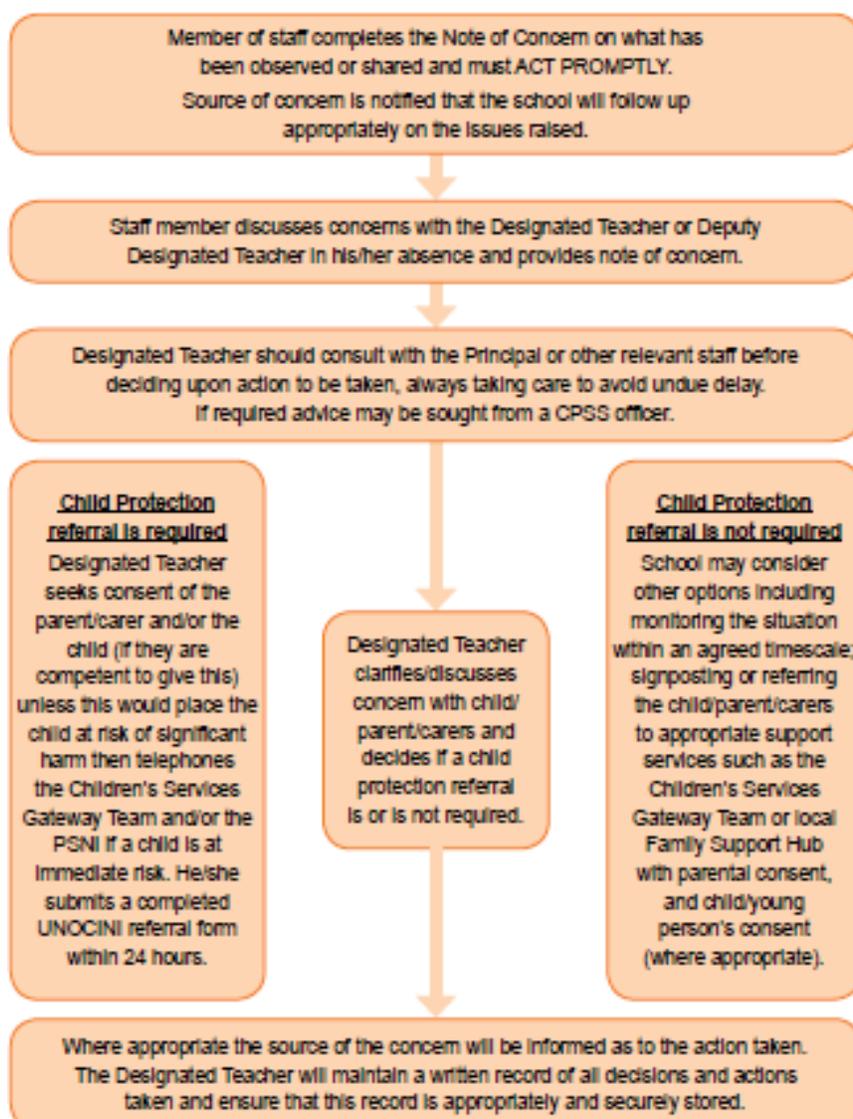
- The Social Services
- And/ or the PSNI
- The Education Authority's Designated Officer for Child Protection at CPSSS

Disclosures made, relevant information received or concerns identified will be recorded on the *Note of Concern* form, which all staff have access to. This form will be completed and signed by the staff member to whom the disclosure was made and also signed by the Designated/ Deputy Designated teacher for Child Protection. Once signed, the form will be placed on the pupil's Child Protection File.

Where appropriate a UNOCINI will be forwarded to the Gateway Team of Social Services within 24 hours of making a verbal Child Protection referral.

The consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) must normally be given prior to a referral. An exception can be made if it is considered that a child is in need of immediate safeguarding and that to try and gain consent may increase the risk to the child. Issues of consent (including when consent is not forthcoming) must always be clearly recorded and kept on file.

### Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff



## **Complaints against staff**

In line with the guidance in Circular 2015/3 “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Staff”, all concerns must be taken seriously and every effort to maintain confidentiality must be made. The allegation details must not be made known to other staff or pupils.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal/Designated Teacher (Mrs Clare Evans) must be informed immediately. The Principal will take on the role of Lead Individual to manage the handling of the allegation. The Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Safeguarding Team will be informed immediately.

If there is a complaint against the Principal/Designated Teacher, it should be made known to the Chairman of the Board of Governors who will ensure that the necessary action is taken and will inform the Safeguarding Team. The Chairperson will take on the role of Lead Individual to manage the handling of the allegation.

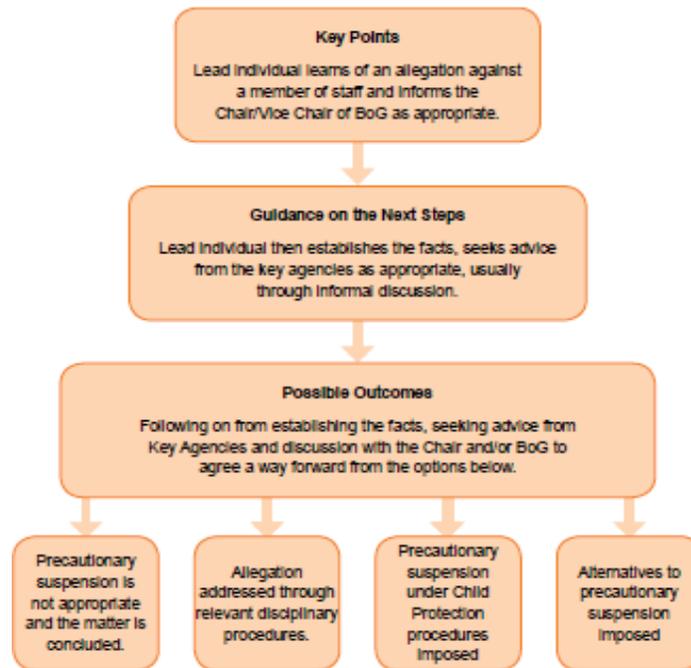
The Lead Individual must determine the facts of the allegation but it is the role of Social Services/ PSNI to conduct any investigations. The Lead Individual should seek advice and views from other key agencies including:

- The Chairman (if not the Lead Individual)
- The Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)
- Employing Authority
- Social Services
- PSNI

Following full review of the facts and discussion between the key agencies, appropriate action must be determined. If deemed necessary, the complaint will be referred to Social Services/ PSNI for investigation and the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils. In accordance with agreed disciplinary procedures, an imposed precautionary suspension may be invoked by the Board of Governors, but this will be in conjunction with the information shared by the Lead Individual and on the advice of the Education Authority. Principals and Boards 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, they also have a duty of care to their staff and should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation of abuse.

Records of the allegation should be signed and dated by the Principal. If the Principal is the subject of the concern, the allegation records will be signed by the Lead Individual. All records are retained in the school, on both the child’s Child Protection File and the on file of the member of staff concerned.

## Dealing with an allegation against a member of staff



### Confidentiality

It should be noted that any 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. The person making a complaint or giving information will be advised as soon as possible by the Principal (or if the complaint is against the Principal then the Chairman) about whether or not the complaint has been referred to an investigating agency. All allegations are recorded in the Record of Child Abuse Complaints Book which is securely retained and is reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

### Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and monitored annually in line with the school’s policy review schedule.

*A copy of the school’s full Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available on the Nursery’s website.*

## **Child Protection Key Agency Contact Numbers**

### **Nursery School Contacts**

Designated Teacher: Mrs Clare Evans  
Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Angelina McGuinness

St. Teresa's Nursery School: Tel: 90 616944

Chairman of the Board of Governors Mr Tim Attwood  
2 Lakeglen, Belfast  
Tel: 07802279939

### **Education Authority**

The CPPSSS Team  
EA-Belfast Region  
40 Academy Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2BR

Christine, Lorraine, Sean & Therese  
Tel: 90 564289

Social Services Gateway Team  
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust,  
Stewartstown Road Health Centre  
212 Stewartstown Road  
Dunmurry  
BT17 0FB  
Tel: 0300 1000 300/ Out of hours: 90602705  
Ask for Senior Social Worker/Duty Social Worker

### **PSNI**

Central Referral Unit  
Tel: 101 OR 028 9025 9299  
Ask for the Detective Sergeant in the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU).