

FRIENDS' SCHOOL LISBURN



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1 ETHOS

The Friends' School Child Protection Policy is drawn up in the context of our Mission Statement: Friends' School seeks to provide an environment in which pupils, staff and parents are committed to the idea of excellence within a caring, supportive community.

2 CONTEXT

This Policy is set within the context of:

- The Friends' School Pastoral Care Policy
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

This Policy takes account of the guidance within the following documents:

- | | |
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| • Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools | DENI |
| • Promotion of Positive Behaviour (2001) | DENI |
| • Circulars 2006/6,7,8,9,25 | DENI |
| • Co-Operating to Safeguard Children (2003) | DHSS |
| • Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order (2003) | |
| • Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) | DHSS |
| • Friends' School Anti-Bullying, Acceptable Use of Mobile Telephones and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policies | |

3 AIMS

Friends' School has a responsibility for the welfare and safety of all pupils and endeavours to maintain a strong pastoral ethos based on a commitment to care, open communication, relationships of trust, co-operation and good sense.

The aims of the Child Protection Policy are:

- To provide a secure framework in relation to Child Protection
- To outline the signs and symptoms of possible Child Abuse
- To set down clear procedures to be followed when a disclosure or suspected Child Abuse incident occurs
- To define the roles and responsibilities of persons involved
- To provide a Code of Conduct for staff

4 ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) **Governors**

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the appropriate Child Protection Policy and procedures are in place rests with the **Board of Governors**. **Kenneth W Brown** is the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection

(b) **Principal**

In the event of an allegation, suspicion or instance of Child Abuse, the **Principal** will:

- consider the report received from the Designated Teacher (or Deputy Designated Teacher)
- ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented, including the immediate safeguarding of a pupil considered at risk
- decide on the need for a referral, either informal or formal, to Social Services, to the Designated Officer of SEELB and to other agencies, as appropriate
- maintain records of disclosures of abuse, suspicions of abuse and complaints against staff
- inform parents, as and when appropriate
- initiate vetting procedures for all new staff and volunteers
- respond to concerns under the School's Complaints Procedure

(c) **Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher**

In Friends' School, the **Designated Teacher** for Child Protection is **Linda Heggarty, Vice Principal Pastoral**

The **Deputy Designated Teacher** is **Terry Jones, Senior Teacher Pastoral**.

The **Designated Teacher** and **Deputy Designated Teacher** will:

- lead the planning, implementation and development of procedures for Child Protection in Friends' School
- train teaching and non teaching staff and pupil mentors
- give guidance to staff in a Code of Conduct re the exercise of their responsibilities (Appendix 2)
- receive concerns and reports from staff on possible or actual instances of Child Abuse
- support pupil(s) concerned
- collate details of such reports or concerns
- inform the Principal
- report incidents or suspicions of Child Abuse happening in or outside School to SEELB Duty Officer/Social Services/PSNI using the common format UNOCINI
- liaise with outside agencies
- liaise with parents concerned as appropriate
- liaise with all parents re Child Protection Policy every two years
- review the Child Protection Policy annually
- report to Governors annually
- plan opportunities within the Learning for Life and Work curriculum to address issues with pupils

(d) **Staff** will:

- take steps to ensure that pupils in their care are protected from harm
- be alert for signs and symptoms of possible Child Abuse (See Appendix 1)
- know who is the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher

- be familiar with the School's Child Protection Policy
- be familiar with the School's Anti Bullying Policy
- know and follow the Child Protection procedures
- report disclosures or concerns re possible abuse to Designated Teacher or Deputy in the first instance
- Keep a brief written record of details
- ensure that their own professional conduct is prudent

5 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Child Abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Staff in School are well placed to observe symptoms in pupils' appearance, behaviour, learning progress, attendance or language which may indicate incidents of actual or possible Child Abuse.

Appendix 1 contains details on categories of Abuse and related symptoms. Such symptoms may be due to other medical, emotional or psychological reasons but it is in the best interests of pupils that concerns about the possibility of abuse should not go unreported.

ALL CONCERNS AND REPORTS MUST BE REPORTED

6 BULLYING

Bullying is an acknowledged form of abuse and is not tolerated in Friends' School. All staff are encouraged to be vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take steps to prevent it happening, to protect and reassure the pupil bullied and to take appropriate steps to change the behaviour of the bully. (Reference should be made to School's Anti Bullying Policy/Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy/Acceptable Use of Mobile Telephones Policy)

7 PROCEDURES

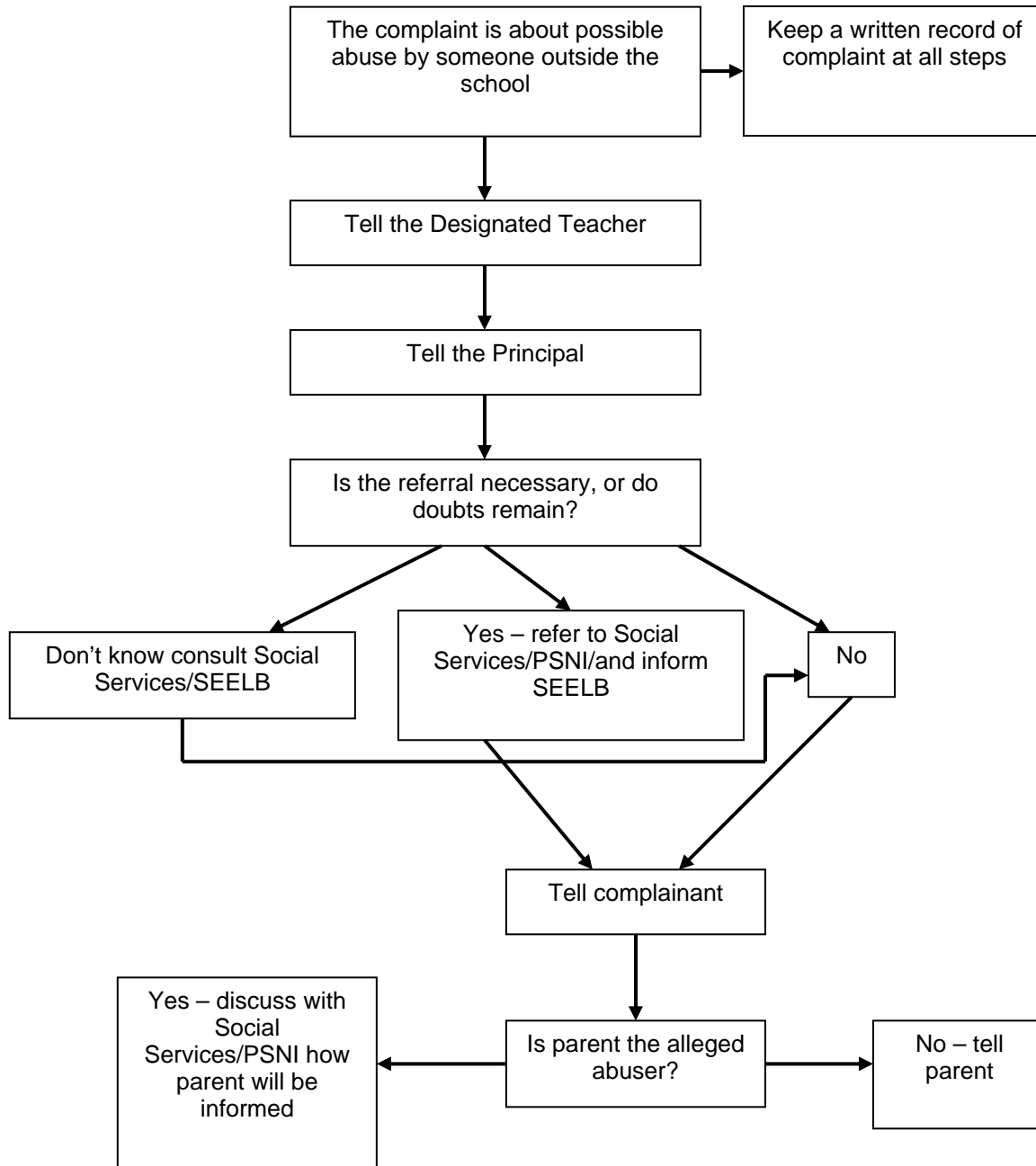
• STAFF RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

The following guidelines provide staff with a framework for action in the event of a disclosure of Child Abuse from a pupil. School recognizes that it takes courage and determination for a pupil to tell an adult that s/he is being abused and issues around disclosures are usually complex and very sensitive. Staff can often feel vulnerable in this situation and the following points are designed to reassure staff and provide support for them in the situation.

GUIDELINES

- Ensure that the pupil is safe from risk
- React calmly without displaying shock or disbelief
- Reassure the pupil and tell him/her that s/he is not to blame
- Try to control feelings about the perpetrator
- Listen and accept what is said
- Do not comment on it
- Avoid investigation or interrogation of pupil
- Ask questions for clarification only
- Do not promise confidentiality to pupil - tell pupil that only those persons who need to know will be told
- Keep written notes of the incident including time/date/location/non verbal behaviour/ physical signs/ to whom referral was made - as close to incident occurring as possible
- Use the words the pupil uses
- Check out understanding of what has happened with the pupil
- Get support - inform the Designated Teacher (or Deputy) as soon as possible

- Keep the information confidential and do not discuss with colleagues
 - Be available to support pupil as appropriate after the disclosure
 - Get support for self
- The following procedure should be followed when School has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of School's staff.



- 1 Person receiving the complaint or report should follow recommended guidelines when listening and talking to a pupil disclosing information;
- 2 Report details to Designated Teacher (or Deputy) as soon as possible;
- 3 Consider need for immediate safeguarding of pupil at risk;
- 4 Ensure record of details is kept;

- 5 Designated Teacher informs Principal;
- 6 Principal and Designated Teacher decide if additional information is required.
- 7 If so, discreetly consult with class teacher, informally advise Social Services, contact SEELB Designated Officer (Liam Boal/Alison Casey). Parents should be consulted as soon as possible (unless parent is implicated in the abuse);
- 8 Principal makes a decision:

EITHER

(a) a referral is necessary

- Inform Social Services or PSNI (UNOCINI proforma)
- Inform SEELB Designated Officer (UNOCINI proforma)
- Inform parents/guardian (unless implicated)

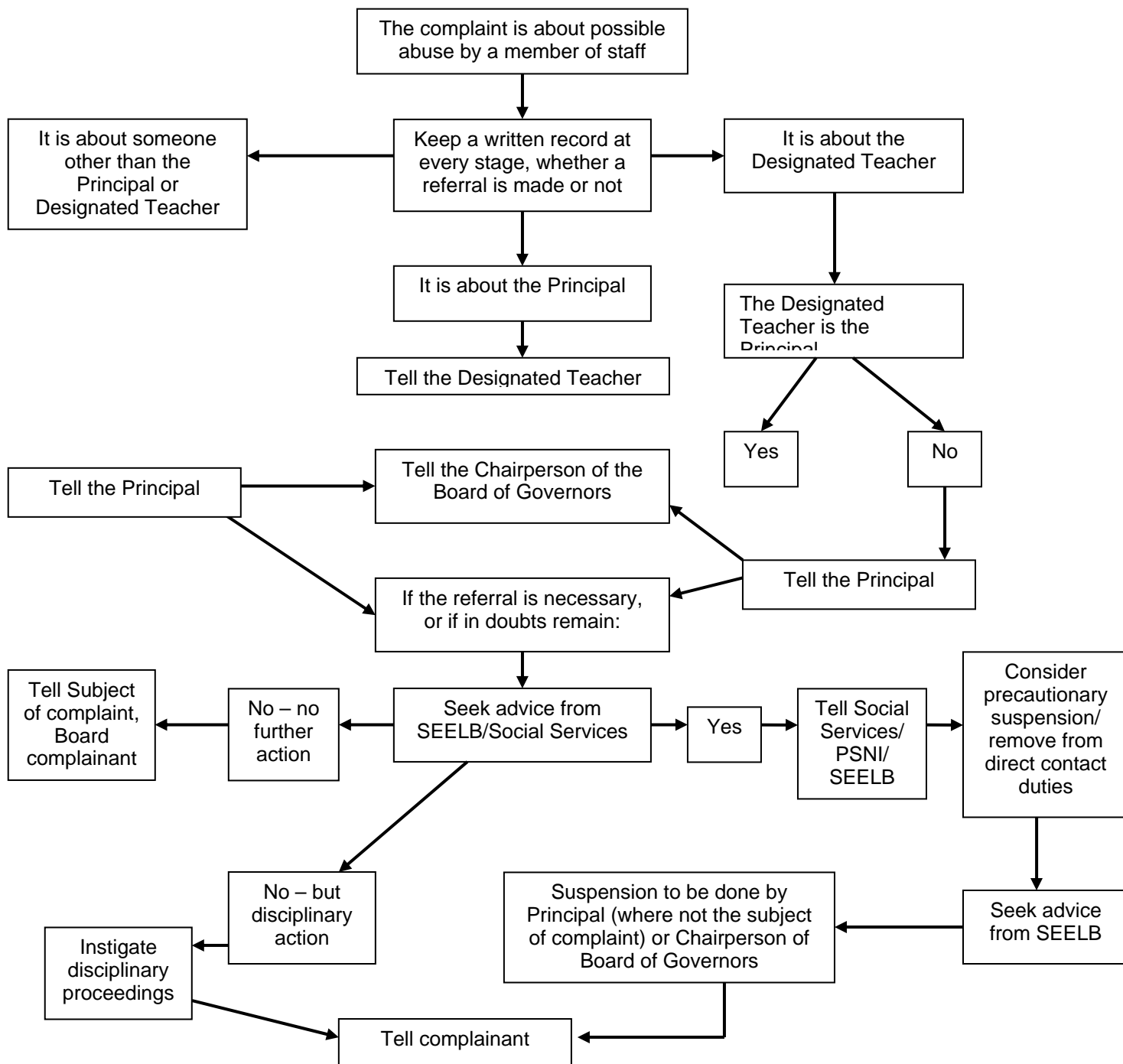
OR

(b) no referral is necessary

- Inform person making complaint or providing information
- Inform parents or guardian (unless implicated)
- Record details, including reasons for no referral, in pupil file

- 9 Designated Teacher ensures that a detailed record is retained.

- The following procedure should be followed when a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of School's staff.



- Person making or receiving details of complaint should refer it directly to Principal.
- Principal will seek clarification, if required;
- Principal will:
 - ask Designated Teacher or Deputy to initiate the record of the complaint;
 - consult with SEELB Designated Officer;
 - consult with Chairperson of the Board

- 4 Principal will consider evidence and advice received;
- 5 In consultation with Chairperson of the Board, Principal will decide that the evidence is such that:
 - (a) The accusation is unsubstantiated and there is no case to answer;
OR
 - (b) An immediate referral to Social Services or PSNI is required;
OR
 - (c) Action should be taken under Disciplinary Procedures.
- 6 In the case of 5 (a) ie no further action, Principal should:
 - advise member of staff concerned of the nature of the complaint (if not already done) and also of the outcome;
 - advise SEELB Designated Officer of the outcome
 - advise the complainant in writing of the action taken and the outcome
 - consider if support eg counselling is required
 - record a brief record of the complaint on the file of the pupil including reasons for outcome along with copies of correspondence

8 PARENTS

Friends' School values and seeks to promote open communication and good relationships with pupils and parents, responding readily and consistently to any concerns raised. The School's structures for pastoral care offer a co-ordinated support system in which pupils can approach Subject Teachers, Collect Teachers, Year Teachers, Heads of School, Vice Principals, Principal, Matron or Counsellors.

Parents wishing to register concern about their child's welfare in School should take one of the following courses of action:

(the course chosen will depend upon the nature of the concern)

- speak/write to a pupil's Year Teacher
- speak/write to a pupil's Head of School
- speak/write to Vice-Principal Pastoral/Designated Teacher
- speak/write to Principal
- write to Chairman of Board of Governors

All concerns will be followed up as appropriate.

8 CONCLUSION

The protection of children is a natural part of pastoral care. The experiences that children gain from School depend upon relationships of trust between teachers and pupils and from a feeling of security within School's environment. However, the area of Child Abuse can be difficult and sensitive. It is hoped that this Policy offers clear procedures for action; draws attention to areas of potential risk and provides guidance to staff in respecting the rights of children in their care whilst also keeping themselves safe.

Any member of staff who complies with School's procedures and guidance and who acts in good faith will receive the full support of the Board of Governors and will not be legally or financially liable.

L Heggarty Designated Teacher November 2007

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

SEXUAL - involves forcing a child to take part in sexual activities.

Young people may:

- Be chronically depressed
- Be suicidal
- Use drugs or drink to excess
- Have a tendency to self harm
- Become anorexic or bulimic
- Run away frequently
- Be inappropriately seductive towards adults and/or peers
- Be fearful about certain people like relatives or friends
- Not be allowed to go out socially or have friends around
- Find excuses not to go home or to a particular place
- Be unable to concentrate or seem to be in a world of their own
- Have a "friend who has a problem" and tell about friend's abuse
- Have chronic ailments such as stomach pains and headaches
- Exhibit sudden changes in schoolwork habits or truant
- Be withdrawn, isolated or excessively worried
- Have outbursts of anger or irritability
- Be reluctant to participate in PE or Games
- Repeat obscene words or phrases
- Talk or write about sexual matters

PHYSICAL - involves the deliberate physical injury to a child or the neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.

Young people may:

- Have unexplained or recurrent injuries, burns or bald patches
- Give improbable excuses to explain injuries
- Refuse to discuss injuries
- Have untreated injuries
- Keep arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Be reluctant to receive medical help
- Be frightened of physical contact
- Be reluctant to participate in PE or Games
- Admit to punishment which appears excessive

- Be frightened of parents being contacted
- Be frightened to go home
- Have a tendency to self harm
- Be aggressive towards others
- Run away from home
- Play truant from School

EMOTIONAL - involves the persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child such as causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Young people may:

- Over-react to mistakes
- Develop sudden speech disorders
- Become aggressive
- Become passive
- Be attention seeking
- Be extremely frightened of parents being contacted
- Steal compulsively
- Be extremely frightened of new situations
- Be excessively dependent
- Be involved in drug or solvent abuse

NEGLECT - involves the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm.

Young people may:

- Be noticeably hungry
- Be noticeably tired
- Wear dirty clothes
- Have poor personal hygiene
- Have no social relationships
- Have untreated medical problems
- Be frequently absent
- Be frequently late

RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM - involves a child whose own behaviour, such as consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs places the child at risk of significant harm.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEACHING AND NON TEACHING STAFF

Respect for the individual and a concern for personal dignity are fundamental principles within the ethos and values of Friends' School Lisburn. The School endeavours to create and maintain an environment in which relationships are based on tolerance and respect. However, it is desirable at times to specify certain guidelines on behaviour. This Code of Conduct relates to contact with children. The code is intended to provide guidance and to act as a safeguard for all members of staff - teaching and non-teaching - whose work brings them into contact with children.

Guidelines for Staff**1. Interviews with Pupils**

- a) Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b) Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

- a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b) It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c) Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- d) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e) Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- f) Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- a) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal, or one of the Vice Principals, for confirmation of its suitability.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

- a) Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.
- b) Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal, Vice Principal (Pastoral) or Bursar.
- c) A complaint relating to inappropriate conduct on the part of a member of staff will be dealt with under the School procedures. A concern for fairness and for the welfare, dignity and protection of staff and pupils will be paramount.
- d) In accordance with the Child Protection policy, all members of staff whose work gives them substantial access to children are subject to criminal record checks.