



# NENDRUM COLLEGE COMBER PASTORAL POLICY

Signed Chair Board of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Ratified by Board of Governors: January 2022

Review Date: August 2023



## **PASTORAL POLICY**

This policy is founded on the principles of the UNCRC and particularly with regard to Article 4: 'The Government through the College must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights'

All learners benefit from an inclusive school ethos where every learner matters and matters equally and where difference is respected.

### **AIMS**

Nendrum College Comber aims:

- To provide a disciplined yet caring and supportive environment in which each pupil is encouraged to attain his/her true potential both academically and socially.
- To promote a safe, personal and flexible educational experience in which the individual is well known, safe, valued, respected and happy
- To build an atmosphere of trust
- To respond in a sympathetic way to the concerns, fears and worries of our pupils
- To make children aware of the potential dangers through the teaching of Health Education
- To maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning
- To guide pupils in terms of pastoral care and to encourage pupils to develop worthwhile leisure pursuits both inside and outside school

### **In order to achieve this prime aim we (the staff) seek**

"To regard each pupil as an individual with different needs and expectations who, through guidance, may develop a sense of personal worth and respect for others." In supporting every individual pupil, staff should take reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure that each individual child is treated fairly and individual needs are met. Each set of circumstances is assessed on an individual basis.

### **To this end the school will, through its curriculum and guidance activities help pupils to:**

- Develop a knowledge and understanding of themselves and others, as individuals - strengths and weaknesses, abilities, skills, personal qualities, attitudes and values, needs.
- Learn how to acquire information in order to make decisions which may concern their personal life, their school work or their future careers.
- Take charge of the conduct and outcome of their own lives.
- Come to terms with their responsibilities to their peers, their parents and the wider community in which they live.
- Prepare themselves for the transition to adulthood and a working life.

## **STRUCTURE**



In order to fulfil this goal the pastoral structure has been designed so that both teachers and pupils can clearly identify the appropriate support when the occasion demands. Pastoral and disciplinary aspects of school life are interlinked. One should always act in support of the other and not in conflict. The process of pastoral care is brought about by the daily interaction between staff and pupils, staff and parents and outside agencies. Subsequent good communication between staff at all levels is considered essential for the wellbeing of the pupils in our care. The normal classroom/subject contact is enhanced by the organisation of the Learning for Life and Work Programme which is interlinked with the Form Teacher structure.

The school aims through its pastoral ethos to prevent rather than correct infringements of the good order considered essential to effective learning and development. All staff are involved in duties that play a part in maintenance of a positive school ethos and this ethos is reflected in the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of our pupils. This is achieved by all the staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of respect within the formal and informal life of the school community.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

A good relationship between staff and pupils is paramount to generating a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels valued and cared for at all times. Good relationships will be nurtured between:

- Staff and Pupils
- Pupils and their peers
- Members of teaching staff
- Senior Management Team and all staff
- Teaching, Supervisory, Cleaning and Caretaking staff.

## **SELF ESTEEM**

We believe that self-esteem and respect are central to the development of the whole child and promote learning. Each member of staff will work to build up pupils' self-esteem and encourage them to be assertive and to resist negative peer pressure. They will help them to celebrate success and develop the ability to make moral decisions and to know the difference between right and wrong.

## **PERSONAL SAFETY**

Children are encouraged to be responsible for their own personal safety. The children will be aware that any visitors in school have to be signed in through the school office and will wear a badge of authorisation. They will also be aware of the staff responsible for First Aid. Children will always be able to speak to their Form teacher or year Head if they need help or are concerned about anything.

## **VALUE ADDED**



Each teacher plays a major role in helping pupils to set agreeable targets. Teachers are asked to review both the attainments and achievements of pupils within their class as part of this process.

## **REGISTRATION AND ABSENCE**

Pupils report to their Form teacher at 8.50am where their attendance will be recorded. Pupils arriving after 9.00am should report to the office where they will be marked present. Registration activities take place until 9.00am on days when pupils go for assembly. Junior school attend assembly on a Wednesday and seniors attend on a Thursday.

Form teachers and Year Heads will monitor attendance. Parents know that letters are essential to explain absence. Persistent late coming will be reported to the Year Heads and a letter will be sent to parents informing them that the pupil will be detained in the afternoon unless the situation improves. If absence is requested for an appointment etc, the Form Teacher should receive written notification from parents. This will be recorded in the school office. Heads of Junior and Senior School will monitor attendance and contact parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 85% if there is not a satisfactory explanation. There will be a monthly meeting with the EWO and if necessary pupils who have an unsatisfactory attendance record with no extenuating circumstances will be referred.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to contact their child's teacher, Year Head or Head of Junior/Senior school as appropriate, if they have any concerns or worries. To do this they should contact the school office and make an appointment. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention. We will encourage parents to share concerns about home circumstances or medical matters which may affect their child's work or behaviour in school. Any information will be treated as confidential and used on a "need to know" basis. Staff will discuss Pastoral care issues at the monthly Year meetings.

The structure on the previous page shows;

- the independence of each role.
- the support structure whereby each role complements the other.
- the in-line responsibility of each role. (where required).
- the importance of inter-communication at each stage.
- the need for liaison with external agencies.
- the importance of the parental role.

Within this school the Form Teacher is central to the success of the pastoral process. He/she is supported by a Year Head, Head of Junior/Senior School, Vice Principal and the Counsellor. The Form Teacher will teach the class and this gives



added opportunity to get to know the pupils well and encourages continuity of care. The services of the Counsellor are available throughout the pupil's time in Nendrum College and this represents another constant for pupils who require ongoing support.

## **FORM/YEAR RESPONSIBILITIES**

<b>PRINCIPAL</b>	-	Mrs Taggart
<b>VICE PRINCIPAL</b>	-	Miss Thompson
	-	Mr Maginnis
<b>HEAD OF JUNIOR SCHOOL</b>	-	Mr McClure
<b>YEAR HEADS</b>	-	Year 8 – Miss Blake
		Year 9 – Mr Bowman (Acting)
		Year 10 – Mr Maginnis
<b>HEAD OF SENIOR SCHOOL</b>	-	Miss S Walsh
<b>YEAR HEADS</b>	-	Year 11 – Mr Williams
		Year 12 – Miss Burton

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

The Designated teacher for Child Protection is Miss V Thompson and the Deputy Designated Teacher is Mr C Maginnis. Pupils are informed of this in assembly at the start of the Year and there are posters around the college to make them aware of this. All Staff; teaching and non-teaching are also informed of this during staff training where child protection issues and responsibilities are discussed.

## **COUNSELLOR – Independent Counselling Service**

Each Year Group has a programmed monthly meeting attended by all relevant Year 'team' members. The agenda is prepared by the Year Head and he/she chairs the meeting which is also attended by the relevant Head of Junior/Senior School. The Principal and Vice-Principal receive minutes of each meeting and attend as and when the agenda requires their presence.

## **THE FORM TEACHER**

The Form Teacher has first level responsibility for the pupils in his/her form class. In Years 8, 9 and 10 the Form Teachers all teach their class in at least one subject area. In Years 11 and 12 this is not always possible but contact is maintained during Form Period time and some staff will teach modules of the LLW programme.

## **TASKS/RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Knowing each pupil in their tutor group well and promoting a caring climate within the school for that group.
- Providing guidance, through the vehicle of the Learning for Life and Work Programme, to enable their pupils to develop personally.



- Passing on necessary information to other members of staff to promote a better understanding of the pupils in their group throughout the school.
- Monitoring the academic and personal progress of the pupils within the group which will necessitate the form tutor dealing with things such as attendance problems and disciplinary problems. Effective communication links are essential to enable the form teacher to carry out this very demanding aspect of the role.
- Forging good relationships with parents and involving their understanding when necessary. This can be done through formal parents' meetings and/or personal contact.
- The form tutor will be directly responsible to the year head for their group who will provide support, when necessary, for all aspects of their work.

### **YEAR HEAD'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The function of the Year Head is to lead the team of form teachers and act as a line manager in support of them in all their tasks. In particular, the Year Heads will have a supportive positive behaviour and pastoral management role and a liaison role between staff, parents and outside agencies. In addition to the above each Year Head will undertake the organisation of necessary administrative tasks which relate to his/her year. Year Heads will draw up the agenda, chair and write and distribute the minutes of their year team meetings and provide weekly updates for senior staff and form teachers.

Year Heads will closely monitor the attendance and progress of pupils in their charge.

### **THE COUNSELLING SERVICE**

The Counselling Service in Nendrum College Comber was established in 1978 and since then it has undergone changes both in personnel and organisation.

Pupils are informed at the beginning of each term how to access counselling provision and the limits of confidentiality.

'First level' counselling is the responsibility of the form teachers. Pupils may access Independent Counselling Service on one morning per week. This is a provision supported by DENI. There are request slips to speak to the Counsellor in every Form class. Pupils may post these confidentially or simply ask their form teacher to make an appointment.

The Year Heads and Head of Junior/Senior school are available to offer support to pupils requiring help at other times.

The Counsellor's Role:

Counsellors help the young people in their care to identify problems they may have, consider possible solutions and work towards realistic goals.

The Counsellor will:



- assist pupils to face the challenge of growing up, the anxiety of personal traumas and the emergence into the world of work or unemployment
- support teachers in dealing with disaffected pupils
- identify educational, emotional or behavioural areas for support
- refer pupils for specialist assistance
- liaise with outside support agencies, parents and employers.

### **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Contact with parents is encouraged by an open invitation to all parents to approach school whenever they wish to discuss matters concerning their children. A parents' afternoon for each Year Group is held at least once per year, and they are encouraged to attend all school functions. Year 8 parents are invited to an Introductory Evening early in their child's first term at school. This is to meet their child's Form Teacher, Year Head, Head of School, Counsellor, Vice Principal and Principal. The opportunity is used to introduce parents to key school policies, including the Child Protection Policy, Health Education including RSE and general pastoral arrangements. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the Parent Teacher Association.

The school also, as a matter of policy, makes early contact with parents in matters concerning poor attendance, indiscipline or lack of progress. The Educational Welfare Officer attached to the school plays an important part in this process.

The Parent Teacher Association provides a vital link with parents in a more informal setting which benefits relationships between the school and home. Valuable fund raising is also carried out.

### **Liaison with outside Professional Agencies**

Professional contact with a wide number of support agencies is maintained on an on-going basis.

Eg School Medical Service, EAL Support teacher, PSNI (Juvenile Liaison), Cotton Dyslexia Support Unit, Social Services, Ardmore Outreach Services, Local Health Centre and GP's, ASD Support Service, Psychology Service, EWO, ETA and CAMHS.

Progress to maturity is facilitated where young people are helped to acquire the personal competence and social skills necessary to cope in life; where they are encouraged to develop their own identities; where self-discipline is promoted and encouragement given them to assume independent direction of their own affairs.

### **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

In Nendrum College Comber we believe that all members of the School Community have the right to be free from physical or emotional abuse.





We recognise that in growing up and in maturing young people encounter relationship difficulties with others. A judgement has to be made regarding an acceptable level of interpersonal disharmony and what could be deemed “Bullying”. Where an infringement into the well-being of a member of the school community is such as to cause an unacceptable level of distress then action will be taken through channels which are well known to all members of the college.

NB. These measures can only be taken if those available to provide help are made aware of the situation.

- Pupils are encouraged through Assemblies and the LLW programme to show respect for others and report any infringements of acceptable conduct towards others.
- Pupils are all made aware at the beginning of each school year and reminded throughout the year, of the various people available to them if they require help. These include Form Teachers, Year Heads and the Counsellor.
- Friends/Classmates are encouraged to report to staff if they are aware of any pupil being unduly upset as a result of the inappropriate behaviour of another or others.
- When/if such a situation arises it will be dealt with through the discipline/counselling combination approach, according to the severity of the situation. Pupils can be suspended from school and in any case parents involved if one pupil physically assaults another in a vicious, non-accidental way.
- Ongoing support will be given to pupils who have been bullied and those involved in bullying will be encouraged to consider and change their behaviour.
- Parents of pupils who have been bullied and of the bullies will be informed by the school of the progress of the school’s investigations and the outcome. Support from parents will be sought in all circumstances.
- In the interests of safeguarding pupils, mobile phones are not permitted to be used during school. A pupil or parent can use the college telephone if they need to make contact.
- All personnel who come in contact with pupils during the school day are vetted according to EA requirements. Complaints about staff and volunteers should be taken to the Principal and will be dealt with according to the guidelines set out in Pastoral Care In Schools, Child Protection, issued in 1999 by the Department of Education.
- Pupil attendance is closely monitored by the Heads of Senior and Junior school along with the Education Welfare Officer. If there is no good reason for the continued absence of a pupil and the parent has not responded satisfactorily, the matter will be referred to the EWO in the interests of the child.

(Also see Anti-Bullying policy)

## **DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION**





This is a highly skilled role developed and supported through specialised training requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues. The role involves:

- The training of all college staff including support staff
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns
- To have knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse
- Making referral to Social Services of PSNI Care Units
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection
- Keeping the college Principal informed
- The lead responsibility for the development of the college Child Protection Policy
- Promotion of a Child Protection ethos in the college
- Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection
- Notifying the following of Child Protection referrals:
  - The Child Protection Support Service for Schools
  - The Chair of the Board of Governors

The Designated Teacher is: Miss VThompson (Vice Principal)

The Deputy Designated Teacher is: Mr C Maginnis (Senior Leader)

Governor for CP: I Gilpin

These members of staff have received training from the EA Child Protection Liaison Officers and are familiar with the UNOCINI referral system. There is annual training in Child Protection for both teaching and non-teaching staff and they are informed who the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers for Child Protection are. Pupils are informed in Assembly and by posters on the notice boards around the college.

All share a responsibility for recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse. It is essential that any concerns are shared with the designated teacher as soon as possible. Such concerns should be recorded by the reporting member of staff and kept in a confidential file in the Principal's Office. Staff need to be sensitive to the needs of children when concerns are raised. If allegations are made against a member of staff the matter will be referred to the Principal and Chair of the Board of Governors.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for everyone concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only and stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people. This will be a locked file in the Vice Principal's Office.



Information for suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern on the 'Initial Concern' proforma. It should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also mention any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of any witnesses
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details

Where possible, referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. The name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or designated teacher, if she is not available, must be informed immediately.)

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher or his deputy, if he is not available must be informed immediately. He will inform the Chairman of the Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

The flowchart (Appendix 1) is issued to teaching and non-teaching staff at the beginning of each school year. In addition, Appendix Fb reminds staff of what to look out for in cases where pupils are suffering from possible Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse or Emotional Abuse.



The designated teacher in Nendrum College Comber, for suspected cases of Child Abuse, is Miss V Thompson (Vice Principal). Deputy designated teacher is Mr C Maginnis.

There is close collaboration between the school counsellor 'Independence Counselling Service' and school personnel in the interest of the care and safety of our pupils.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Some examples of common signs and symptoms encountered by teachers which might indicate abuse or neglect.

Please note however, that this is not a checklist and some of the signs and symptoms may have other explanations.

#### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

hand slap or belt marks  
two black eyes or black ear  
gripping bruises  
burn or bite marks  
unwillingness to undress in front of others  
failure to reach potential

#### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

sexually explicit behaviour  
loss of self esteem  
running away from home  
unusual sexual themes in artwork or writing  
self-mutilation

#### **NEGLECT**

low weight for height  
listlessness  
chronically dirty, cold or hungry  
under achievement at school  
lack of supervision at home

#### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

stunted growth  
over passivity or hyperactivity  
loss of self esteem  
chronically dirty, cold or hungry  
fearful or unhappy

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/COERCIVE CONTROL**

#### **REFERRAL PROCESS**

Each school has appointed a designated teacher to manage the implementation of procedures. (C. Allister)

If a classroom teacher suspects child abuse it is important that he/she follows the correct procedures.

Classroom teacher suspects abuse or neglect



Reports to designated teacher





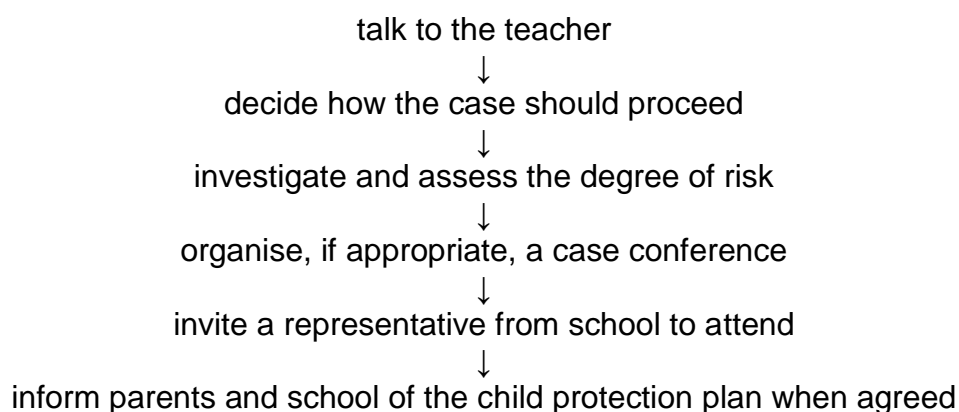
Reports to Social Services



Reports to designated officer EA

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

The statutory responsibility for protecting children lies with Social Services and they will:



## **REMEMBER**

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Confidentiality is subordinate to the need to protect the child.

If in doubt report suspicions to the designated teacher.

You are only asked to report suspicions, not make a diagnosis.

If you comply with ELB/CCMS procedures, you will receive full support and will not be legally or financially liable.

## **Parental Involvement in the Child Protection Process**

Parents and carers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their children. If they are concerned about their children it is important that they talk to a member of staff. Misunderstandings can be avoided by informing staff if their child has received an injury or an upsetting experience. The staff are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers.

## **CHILD PROTECTION IN THE CURRICULUM**

Issues related to the safety and wellbeing of children are included in all areas of the curriculum but specifically delivered through Learning for Life and Work. This incorporates activities which support the development of children's self-esteem and self-respect. Learning to manage feelings and emotions enable them to feel good



about themselves and to make independent decisions relating to their own actions. Issues can be discussed in conversation with staff as they arise in other subjects.

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

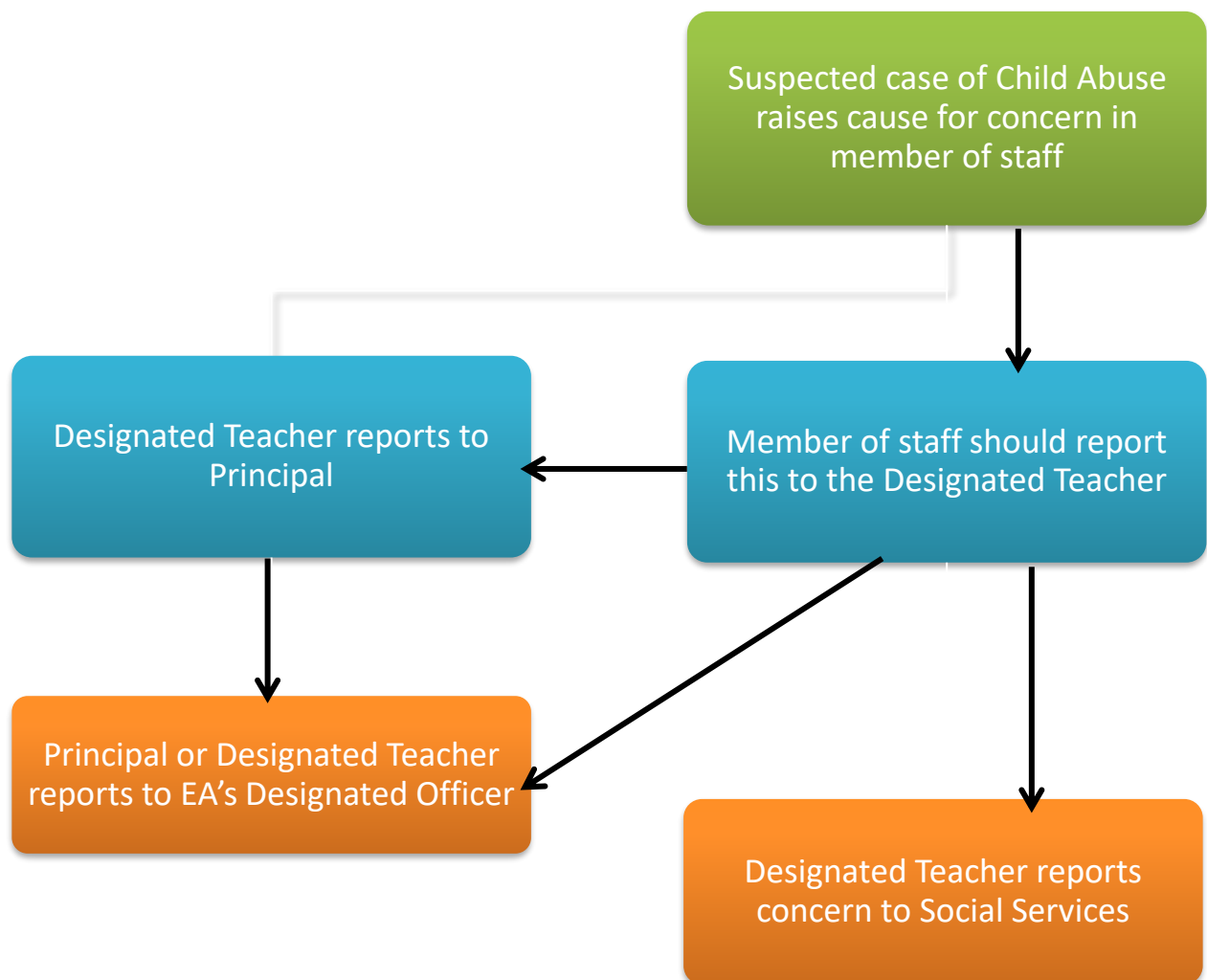
All staff should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

- Always work in an open environment (avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Treat all pupils equally, with respect
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Do not develop relationships with children which could be in any way deemed exploitive or abusive
- Do not use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Do not take a child to spend time or stay overnight in your home
- Do not ring pupils on mobile telephones or send messages as these can be misconstrued
- Do not offer a pupil a lift home if you are on your own



## **NENDRUM COLLEGE COMBER – ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF**

### **SUMMARY OF CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**



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The Designated Teacher in Nendrum College Comber, for suspected cases of Child Abuse, is Miss V Thompson (Vice Principal). Deputy Designated Teacher is Mr C Maginnis.

There is close collaboration between the school counsellor (Family Works), and school personnel in the interest of the care and safety of our pupils.