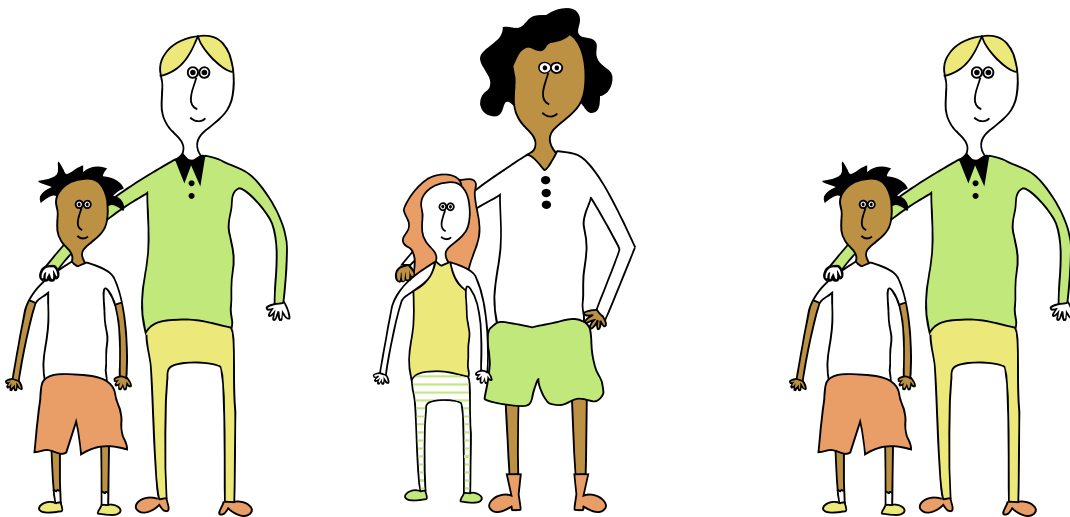


Pastoral Care

Intimate Care & Child Protection



Policies

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

It is the aim of Dromara Primary School to provide a disciplined, caring and happy environment where effective learning can take place.

In the school it is also our aim that through this environment each person, both child and adult, associated with the school can feel safe and secure.

What this means for Pupils:

For **pupils** this means encouraging them:

- to set and achieve personal, social, moral, physical and academic goals through a planned and developmental programme.
- to help them gain maximum benefit from their time in the school.
- to develop independence of mind and to take responsibility for their own actions.
- to develop self-discipline and self-respect.
- to develop an understanding of themselves as individuals recognising their strengths and limitations, their personal qualities, their attitudes and values.
- to develop a respect for the opinions and rights of others and show tolerance towards them.
- to develop an understanding of the world in which we live.
- to foster relationships where they feel happy and secure.

What this means for Teachers:

For **teachers** this means:

- establishing a clear vision of the school with its pupils, its community and its point of development.
- developing whole school policies which establish principles for action throughout the school.
- promoting a caring environment where pupils' learning is developed within the context of their individual needs and abilities.
- providing them with opportunities for their own professional development.
- establishing appropriate structures of time and support for those in need.
- being aware of the children's individual "backgrounds and experiences" and individual "needs and aspirations".
- fostering relationships where children feel happy and secure and can come to the class teacher for any reason.

What this means for other Adults in the School

For **other adults** associated with the school this means:

- understanding, and having an empathy with, the general ethos of the school.
- being partners with the teachers in providing a caring approach.
- helping the pupils achieve their personal goals.

- developing a team approach where each member has a particular role to play.
- being aware of the children's individual "backgrounds and experiences" and individual "needs and aspirations".

The pastoral dimension has a general and specialised focus.

A - GENERAL FOCUS

Since the pastoral dimension permeates all activities, the general focus requires a caring commitment by all teachers and adults to every aspect of school life. The implication of this is that the pastoral dimension should therefore be evident in:

- the school ethos
- the hidden curriculum
- extra-curricular activities
- individual subjects
- discipline procedures
- reward procedures

1. The School as a Community

The school as a community should be seen as an extended family where everyone works for the common good.

- Parents will be made welcome in the school and encouraged to feel that their role is important and appreciated: Open Days, Sports Day.
- Parents will be encouraged to; show their support in a variety of ways: e.g. Football/Netball matches, Fund Raising, Concert.
- Teachers will share duties as part of a mutually supportive team.

The school is also part of a wider community

- The assistance of outside agencies will be sought to extend pupils' experiences: e.g. the visit of a policeman, the visit of a local person to speak on the school/home life during certain periods of the 20th century.
- Links will be established with neighbouring schools.
- There will be links with statutory agencies involved in the health and welfare of children.

2. The School in the Community

a) The school will have close associations with local bodies e.g. the churches, council and other community organisations.

b) The school will involve the community through aspects of the hidden curriculum e.g. anti-vandalism, litter and environmental projects.

Activities

Some specific activities which show how the pastoral dimension permeates all aspects of school life are listed below:

- a) Individual classes and year groups collaborate in projects e.g. those which will provide an awareness of local environmental issues.
- b) School is used for community activities where possible to ensure everyone has a vested interest.
- c) Schools in an area can collaborate e.g. through competitions, Youth Sport initiatives and work in Education for Mutual understanding where appropriate.
- d) Children can help support a variety of charities having recognised the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.

Ethos of the School

The pastoral dimension is central to the ethos of the school; the atmosphere which the school is creating is ordered yet sympathetic.

- a) Children's work is displayed in classrooms and corridors.
- b) Supervisory and classroom assistants are included in discussions promoting a positive behavioural programme.

Attitudes to Learning

The pastoral dimension influences the attitudes to learning.

- a) Teachers will provide a range of learning styles in an encouraging framework to promote opportunity for active research and self expression. The development of a flexible approach is of paramount importance to effective learning.
- b) The school will encourage a positive disciplined, caring and happy atmosphere for learning.
- c) Every child will be treated as an individual.
- d) Children with special needs will be integrated with other children.
- e) Each child will be stretched to achieve his/her maximum potential.

Caring Attitude

The pastoral dimension necessitates a caring approach to all activities.

- a) A positive and fair approach to discipline, where praise and reward are fundamental, will be adopted.
- b) Appropriate strategies will be adopted where there are particular home circumstances.
- c) Parents will be encouraged to support the school in the common aim of ensuring the whole development of the pupils.

B- SPECIALISED FOCUS

The class teacher should endeavour to have a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each pupil in the class. With this knowledge, allied to the teacher's skills, the work of the school, parents and other adults is integrated to support the learning and development of each pupil. The following are specific examples.

(I) Development of Inter-Personal Relationships

The development of good inter-personal relationships is vital to ensure mutual respect, positive attitudes and happiness and security for both pupils and staff.

- a) Pupils will be encouraged in the classroom situation to assist one another, care for one another and develop the skill of listening, thereby promoting in them tolerance and respect for others.
- b) Staff will encourage good relationships through the careful management of human relationships.

(II) Areas of Experience

The pastoral dimension means that children are offered a wide variety of experiences.

- a) The school will continue to have an educational visits programme, which is progressive and developmental.
- b) A community service programme will be explored.

(III) Discipline Procedures

A positive behavioural programme to enhance self-esteem will be adopted where self-discipline is encouraged.

- a) Central to the school's discipline policy is a programme for positive behaviour.

(IV) Extra Curricular Activities

The school will encourage positive attitudes throughout its extra curricular programme.

- a) Positive attitudes will be actively promoted in games activities and those of the arts.
- b) On day visits pupils will be encouraged to respect people and property.
- c) Pupils on a residential visit will learn to share in responsibilities undertaken.

(V) Personal and Social Development

The school will encourage the development in pupils of a wide range of personal interests and in the ability to take responsibility.

- a) The school will continue with its extensive range of after school activities.
- b) The school will continue with its road safety programme.
- c) The school will promote individuals' talents in all areas of the curriculum.

(VI) Health Education

Implicit in the pastoral dimension is a programme throughout the school for Health Education.

Communication

A policy on Pastoral Care depends on it being communicated positively to staff, pupils, parents and all others involved in the life of the school. To support this pastoral dimension the Principal has overall responsibility for pastoral care although Mrs Heather Milligan is the teacher assisting with the development of Pastoral Care within the school.

Training

Opportunities will be provided for the above members of staff to undergo training appropriate to this school. In addition all staff will be trained on a regular basis in the areas of Pastoral Care and Child Protection.

Evaluation

The school will carry out at regular intervals an evaluation of the pastoral dimension to determine ways of improving the quality of provision for the benefit of all pupils and teachers. This will assess what is being achieved.

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Introduction

Every child in Dromara Primary School has the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. The guidelines in this policy are designed to safeguard children and staff.

They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Disabled children can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Definition

'Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs to each individual child. Parent/guardians have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their child, and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents'. (Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children: Area Child Protection Committee, 2005)

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are based:

- Every child has the right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has their right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels to intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

Procedures

We will try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his/her intimate care. Where the child is fully dependent on an adult's help we will talk with them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible.

We will ask the child/parent/guardian about any likes/dislikes while carrying out intimate care and obtain consent. Effective communication between parents/guardians/staff ensure practice is consistent.

Where possible, two classroom assistants will help a child to change their clothes. If there is only one classroom assistant available, another member of staff will be sent for. If a child has to be changed then this will be recorded on the 'Clothes Changing Record' and the parent/guardian will be told verbally where applicable, otherwise in writing. In extreme circumstances parents or guardian will be contacted.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

"All Children have the right as individuals to knowledge that will help them to be safe, independent and to be able to express their own feelings and concerns."

Kidscape

"All adults have the responsibility to keep children safe, to listen to their feelings and take them seriously."

Kidscape

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence"

U N Convention 1991

"When adults or organisations make decisions which affect children, they must always think first about what would be the best for the child."

U N Convention 1991

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Members of Staff - all teachers, full and part time, secretarial, ancillary auxiliary staff and classroom assistant(s)
- D.T. - designated teacher
- B.O.G. - Board of Governors

The School's Responsibility

The teaching staff in Dromara seeks to reinforce the ethos and general aims of the school. It recognises the importance of values and caring attitudes. It aims to contribute to an atmosphere in which all pupils are confident that they are cared for, valued and respected. It endeavours to ensure they receive the guidance and support necessary to reach their full potential.

All members of staff have a responsibility for the day-to-day care of their pupils. If a pupil asks to speak to a member of staff in confidence, he/she should respond positively, but point out that it may be necessary to seek advice before an answer can be given.

If a member of staff becomes concerned about the welfare of a particular pupil, he/she should consult the designated teacher (D.T.), and secondly, the Principal.

Members of staff should also appreciate that, while every effort will be made to keep them informed about pupils for whom they have direct responsibility, there may be occasions when it will not be possible to provide confidential information.

Role of the Principal

It would be neither desirable nor practical for the Principal to deal with each concern personally, but he should be satisfied that each is being dealt with appropriately. This will mean working closely with the D.T. The Principal should ensure that parents and the appropriate agencies are being informed and consulted. He will inform the B.O.G. of any action taken on behalf of the school.

Role of the Designated Teacher

The D.T., Mrs Heather Milligan, has the responsibility of dealing with suspected child abuse. She will ensure that the staff is aware of the procedures to be followed in such cases. She will consult with the teachers individually with regard to including child protection, personal and social development and pastoral care elements within the curriculum.

Reports of suspicions of child abuse will be kept by the D.T. These will remain confidential, and will only be available to appropriate persons. Information recorded will include dates, events and action taken, and copies will be sent to the Education Welfare Officer, Social Services as deemed necessary.

Teachers may themselves be in need of support, having discovered signs of abuse, and the D.T. should be aware of this.

Role of the Class Teacher

The teacher is probably the first professional person a child in need may choose to speak to. S/he must act with tact and sympathy, without appearing to pry, and certainly without examining the child in any way. S/he must not make any promises as to confidentiality to the child, or appear to "take sides".

The teacher must make notes, even roughly, immediately after the chat, and these should be made available to the D.T. (*See "Procedures to follow when there is suspicion of child abuse."*)

It may be necessary to inform outside agencies of the abuse allegations, and the teacher must be prepared for a formal interview.

In class, it is important to be sensitive to the child and to reassure him/her, without singling him/her out for special attention.

Identifying Signs of Abuse

Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (*i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home*), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms

Neglect

- persistent or significant neglect of a child which results in severe impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include:

- hunger and tiredness
- poor personal hygiene
- unkempt state
- emaciation
- few friends
- withdrawal or aggression
- health problems
- difficulties in school work

Physical

- actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Signs may include:

- unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- unwillingness to change for PE
- self harm tendencies
- aggression towards others
- fear of physical contact

Sexual

- actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not fully understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos or family trends.

Signs may include:

- sudden changes in mood
- regressive behaviour (*bed wetting*)
- lack of trust in adults, perhaps one person in particular overly affectionate in behaviour
- displaying sexual behaviour inappropriate to age
- drawing explicit pictures
- playing sexually explicit games
- inability to concentrate
- social withdrawal
- medical; problems in the genital area

Emotional

- actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

Signs may be:

- physical, mental and emotional immaturity
- sudden speech disorders
- very low self esteem
- neurotic behaviour (*rocking, pulling hair*)
- overreaction to correction by adult aggression
- inability to play cooperatively
- extreme fear of new situations

It should be noted that a child may display a combination of behavioural signs, and that these are only indicators, not evidence of abuse. Conversely, a child may display none of these signs, and still be a victim.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN THERE IS A SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

Teachers are probably the first professionals to notice a change in a child's physical or mental demeanour. These changes may be part of a child's normal development or they may be signs of child abuse. The child may actually disclose facts of physical or sexual abuse, which may have happened in the home or elsewhere. The abuse may have taken place at school involving a colleague.

However the suspicion is raised, it will produce a feeling of fear and disbelief in the mind of the teacher receiving the information, especially if the alleged abusers are known to the teacher. These reactions are understandable. Where a child is at risk of suffering "significant harm" from abuse, teachers have an obligation to report the fears or suspicions to the D.T. or the principal. They will then liaise with Social Services and seek advice as to

how to proceed. If necessary, the police will be informed. These procedures are standard in all cases of alleged abuse and are instigated to protect the child from further abuse. In order to give all teachers confidence in handling the difficult situations, here are some guidelines to follow.

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse:

- do not agree to keep it a secret
- tell the child that you want to help and may need to tell someone who can help
- do not ask leading questions
- do not suggest a reason for what might have happened
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing to talk about it

Immediately after disclosure or suspicion of abuse:

1. write down your suspicions or make a note of the words spoken, and also note the behaviour of the child including when and where disclosure took place.
2. report immediately to the D.T. and /or principal, making a note of when and where this took place.
3. provide a copy of the report of the words spoken by the child, keeping a copy for yourself.

After the Report is Submitted:

- ask to be kept informed of the result of any decisions or case conferences.
- seek advice from the D.T. or union headquarters as to how to proceed with reports etc.
- do not take sides in proceedings, and try to put the child's feelings and wishes first.

ADDITIONAL CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Police Checks

All adults working with pupils in school or in the after-school club will be police checked using the appropriate SEELB vetting form. These will be updated on an annual basis as appropriate.

Photographs

All parents will be asked to give permission at the beginning of the school year for photographs to be taken and displayed of their children. These will include press articles, photographs for the school display boards and the school website. Teachers will receive a list of pupils in their class who are not allowed to have their photographs used and the relevant context. A copy of the complete list will be displayed in the school staff room.

School Visits

On all school visits, whether it be to the swimming pool or on an educational residential trip, the correct adult / pupil ratio will be observed. A risk assessment will be carried out for all visits and these will be filed for future reference.

Transportation

If pupils are being transported by coach, the company must be recommended by the SEELB or a reputable travel agent if outside Northern Ireland. All coaches must have fitted seatbelts installed and these will be worn at all times by the children while travelling.

If children are traveling in a teacher's car or the vehicle of another parent e.g. to a football match or inter-school quiz, then an individual booster seat must be provided by parents if their child is below the necessary height restriction.

BULLYING

Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself. Three main types are physical, verbal or indirect, e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups. Symptoms - behaviour change such as withdrawal, lack of concentration, marked deterioration in school work or absenteeism.

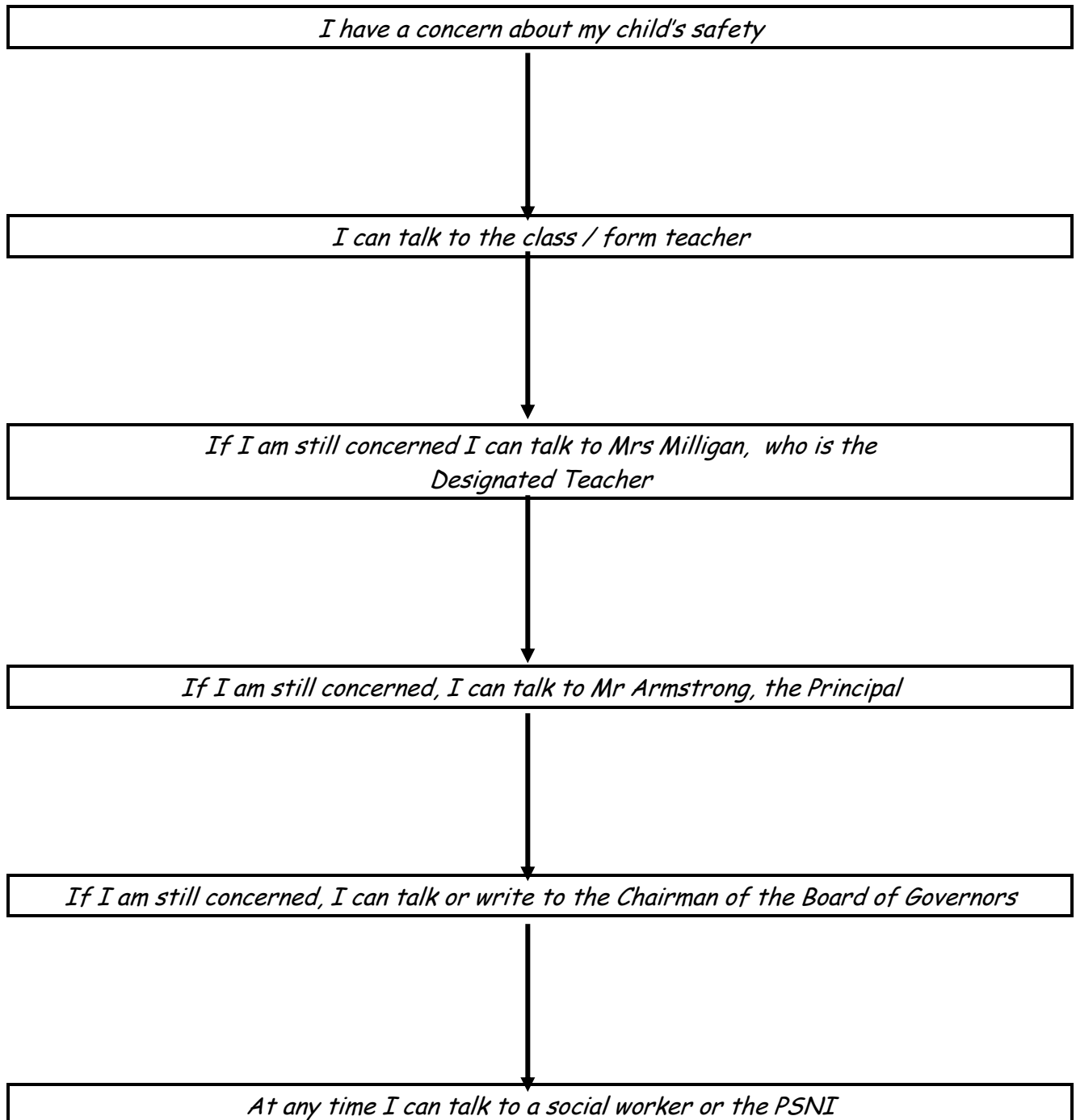
It is vital that schools should act - and more over, be seen to act - promptly and firmly to combat bullying. All schools should have, within their pastoral care and statutory discipline policies, a clear whole school anti-bullying policy statement, familiar to staff, parents and pupils. It should set out the measures which the school will take to prevent bullying or describe how bullying will be tackled including the sanctions which will be taken against the perpetrator. A senior member of staff should always report back to parents on the steps which have been taken by the school in response to an expressed concern about bullying.

In extreme cases, a teacher might have to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him or her causing injury to him or herself, to others or to property. In such instances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used.

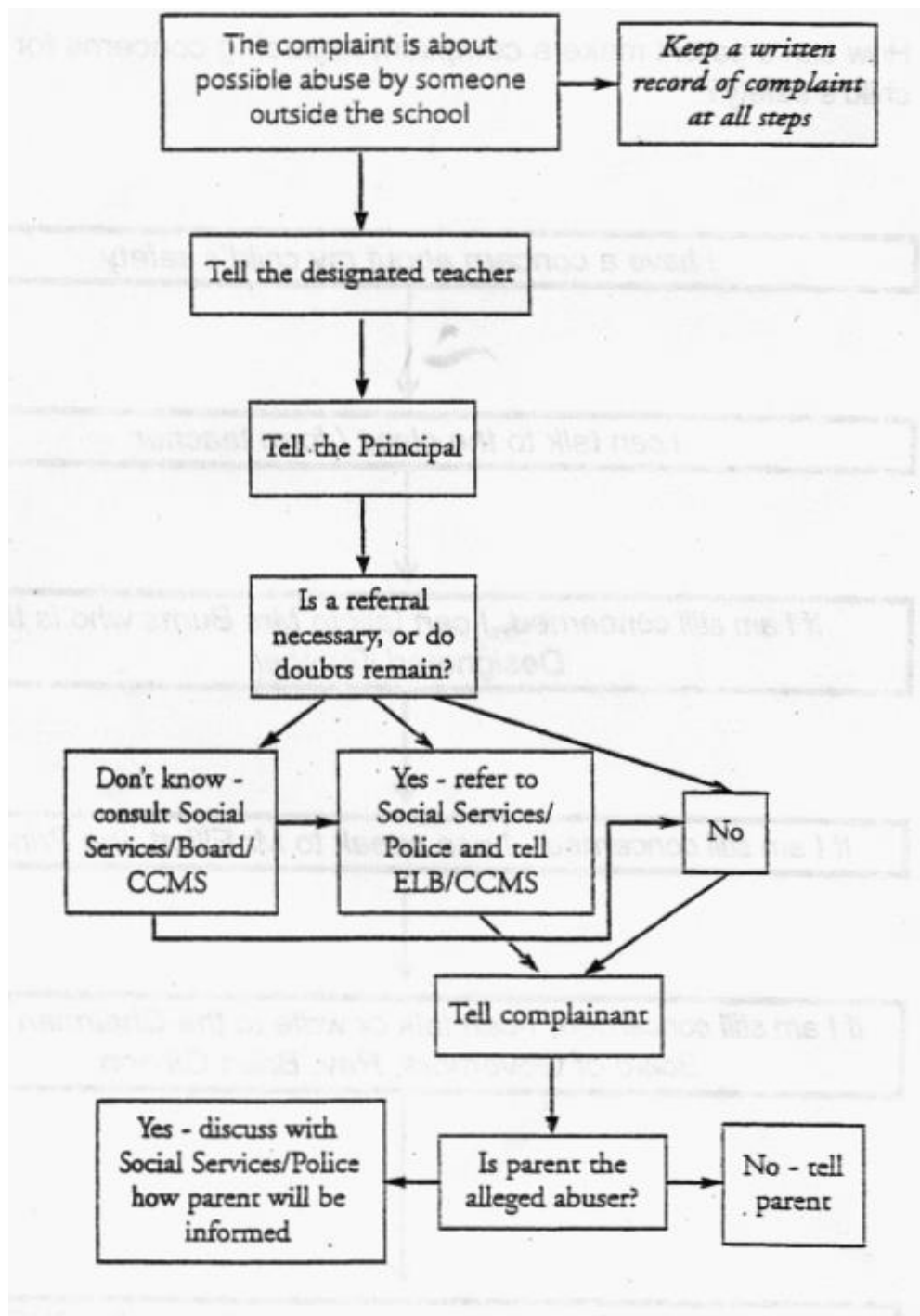
The Department has no direct role in the investigation of allegations of abuse involving teachers, this is a matter for the school in the first instance and ultimately for the employer of the member of staff. Some schools have self-protection programmes in place to help children recognize and deal with potentially dangerous situations. School inspectors will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's procedures for child protection as part of the evidence about the quality of pastoral care.

The following procedures illustrate how concerns relating to Child Protection are dealt with in the school:

How can a parent make a complaint regarding concerns for their child's safety?



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



Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff

