

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr Jeremy Hallum

Lead Safeguarding Officer: Ms Ashley McCarthy

Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Georgina Briggs

LAB member: Ms. Vicky Martin

Date: October 2019

Introduction

GEMS Founders School Al Mizhar is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its pupils and works to create an ethos in which pupils feel secure and listened to.

If our Safeguarding Policy is successful, concerns that arise will be dealt with as quickly, as sensitively and as effectively as possible. Records will be accurate and securely stored and passage of information will always occur when it is in the best interest of the child for this to take place.

Aims:

- To provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with safeguarding issues.
- To make explicit the school's commitment to the continued development of good practice and sound procedures so that safeguarding concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child.
- To integrate safeguarding issues into the curriculum
- To take account of policies in related areas such as behaviour and anti-bullying.

Definitions: (taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006*)

- Neglect - The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in impairment of health or development.
- Physical Abuse - Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.
- Sexual – Actual or likely exploitation of a child by involvement in sexual activities without informed consent or understanding, or that violate social taboos or family roles
- Emotional – actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment, inappropriacy, or rejection.

- Potential abuse – situations where children may not have been abused but where social and medical assessments indicate a high degree of risk that they might be abused in the

future, including situations where another child in the household has been abused, or where there is a known abuser.

- Bullying - any persistent and uninvited behaviour which insults, hurts or intimidates someone (includes cyber bullying).

Signs of possible abuse include: (These are not exhaustive or necessarily indicative of abuse). (Taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* DfES 2006).

- Neglect – constant hunger or tiredness; frequent lateness or absence, poor personal hygiene, untreated medical problems; running away, stealing, low self-esteem
- Physical - unexplained injuries/bruises; improbable or evasive excuses, untreated injuries; fear of treatment or medical help, fear of physical contact, fear of going home, over-aggressive or defensive tendencies, fear of removing clothes, bites, lashes, facial injuries.
- Sexual - Tendency to cling, tendency to cry, genital itching, acting 'like a baby', distrust of familiar adults, wetting and/or soiling, fear of undressing, throat infections, depression, fearful/panic attacks.
- Emotional – Physical, emotional, developmental delay; over-reaction to mistakes; tearful, fear of losing, fear of parents being contacted, stealing, thumb-sucking, rocking, anxiety, Fabricated Illness syndrome (If a parent of child deliberately fabricates or induces illness in that child). Signs may include; perceived illness, doctor shopping, enforced illness, fabricated illness, poisoning e.g. with salt, induced seizures, suffocation, bleeding, rashes, tampering with vomit/urine. Child may exhibit unusual or unnaturally prolonged illness; symptoms/signs have a temporal association with mother's presence, mother unusually at ease in hospital environment, multiple illnesses/similar symptoms in family, unexplained death of siblings.

For further detail see Appendix 1.

Framework

GEMS Founders Al Mizhar follows UK best practice as set out in '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' (DfE, 2017). Furthermore under the UAE Child Rights Law (2014) schools are expected to ensure:

- that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or are at risk of abuse.

These procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused or suspected of abuse. DfES Circular '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' (2006) places the following responsibilities on all schools.

- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- Designated Teachers should have responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school.
- All staff should receive Safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Schools should have procedures, of which all staff are aware, for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Staff Designation:

The Designated Safeguarding officer: Jeremy Hallum

Lead Safeguarding Officer: Ashley McCarthy

Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Georgina Briggs

The Principals role is to:

- To ensure all staff are familiar with school guidelines for identifying and reporting abuse, including allegations of abuse against staff;
- To ensure that the school operates an effective safeguarding policy;
- To ensure that all staff receive foundation training in safeguarding;
- To be responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with other agencies and support services over safeguarding issues;
- In consultation with the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre, assist in enquiring into allegations of child abuse.
- To follow, as appropriate, recommendations made by the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre
- To be aware of any relevant documents (See further reading at end of policy)
- To support and advise staff on safeguarding issues generally.
- To ensure they have had up to date, relevant training.
- To monitor the attendance and development of children who have given cause for concern.
- To disseminate relevant information to the appropriate staff e.g. to class teachers or Teaching Assistants (TA).
- To complete appropriate records and send on to new schools (where relevant)
- To maintain accurate and secure safeguarding records in chronological order.

Class Teachers

Class teachers will, in most cases, be the first person to raise a concern. They will collate detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and liaise with the designated safeguarding staff.

They will keep all concerns and reports confidential and ensure that the information is handed over to one of the safeguarding officers as soon as possible.

The School Nurse

It is the role of the school nurse to ensure that relevant information obtained in the course of their duties is communicated to the Designated Teacher. Types of injuries, attendance and frequency are recorded.

The Responsibilities of the whole School Staff

- All school staff have a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils in their school. In doing so they should seek advice and support as necessary from the Principal/Designated Teacher.

- Staff are expected to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions. Children must be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.

All school staff are expected to:

- Be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse (see Appendix)
- Report concerns to the Designated Teacher as appropriate
- Keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of safeguarding concerns.
- Follow all guidelines, practice and policy relating to safeguarding as laid down by the school, GEMS School Support Centre or UAE Law.
- The school also has a duty under UAE Law to report any abuse or suspected abuse to the Police.

Appointment of Staff

The school will, when appointing staff, take account of the guidance issued by GEMS School Support Centre and observe the following safeguards:

- Ensure that documentation sent out to potential candidates will make it clear that safeguarding is a high priority of the school and that rigorous checks will be made of any candidate before appointments are confirmed;
- Ensure that a reference as to the suitability of a candidate to work with children will always be obtained from the last employer;
- Request at interview an account of any gaps in their interviewee's career/employment history;
- Ensure that staff already living in Dubai when applying for posts will be asked to supply a certificate of good conduct or similar from the Dubai Police. Staff and helpers who have recently moved to the Dubai will be asked to produce a certificate of good conduct (or national equivalent) from the authorities representing the countries from which they have recently moved.

Allegations against Members of Staff

If a child, or parent, makes a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform the Principal or other SLT member in the Principal's absence.

Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a pupil may have been abused by another member of staff, either at school or elsewhere, must immediately inform the Designated safeguarding officer. A record of the concerns must be made, including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident or allegation.

The Principal will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre in accordance with the safeguarding procedures.

If the Principal decides that the allegation warrants further action through safeguarding procedures, a referral must be made direct to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre. If the allegation constitutes a serious criminal offence, it will be necessary to contact the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre before informing the member of staff.

If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre, the Principal will consider whether there needs to be an internal investigation.

If the concerns are about the Principal, the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre must be contacted directly by the Designated Teacher.

Staff contact with students

In order to minimise the risk of accusations being made against staff, as a result of their daily contact with pupils, staff should ensure that they consider the following points of guidance (taken from *Principles for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings*. (Feb 2005))

- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead to any reasonable person questioning their motivation and intentions
- Staff should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way (especially when working with individual pupils). Staff should not allow pupils to visit their place of residence
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise for concern
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed and the Principal should be informed
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them

School Procedures

- Any member of staff concerned about a child must inform the Designated Teacher immediately.
- The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns as soon as possible after the event or disclosure using the school “*Child causing concern*” form. The recording must be a clear, precise, **factual** account of the observations.
- The designated teacher will consult the Principal who will decide whether the concerns should be referred to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre. If it is decided to make a referral to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre, this will be done, if necessary, without prior discussion with the parents.

Designated Teacher will ensure that a written report of the concerns is sent to them within 48 hours.

- Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as at risk.
- If a pupil who has been identified as at risk changes school, the Principal will inform the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre and consider the transfer of appropriate records to the receiving school.

Staff should be concerned if a pupil:

- has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children’s activities;
- regularly has unexplained injuries;

- frequently has injuries, even when apparently reasonable explanations are given;
- offers confused or conflicting explanations about on how injuries were sustained;
- exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude;
- indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age;
- discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.

Dealing with a disclosure:

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- accept what is being said;
- allow the child to talk freely;
- reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- not promise confidentiality, as it might be necessary to refer the case to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre
- reassure the pupil that what has happened is not their fault;
- stress that it was the right thing to tell;
- listen, rather than ask direct questions;
- ask open questions rather than leading questions
- not criticise the perpetrator;
- explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Our school understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- If a referral is made to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre, the
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration
- Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

Children missing from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency.

Recording a disclosure

When a pupil has made a disclosure, the member of staff should:

- make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation;
- as soon as possible write up the disclosure more fully using the “*Child causing concern*” forms, which are kept with every phase leader and Head of Section.
- not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court;
- record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child;
- draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury;
- record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Support for pupils and staff

The Principal will make all reasonable attempts to protect and otherwise support pupils who have disclosed information about possible child abuse incidents. Dealing with a disclosure from a child is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff concerned should consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Teacher.

Confidentiality

Members of staff have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities.

Staff and volunteers are expected:

- to treat information they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner.
- to, if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them, seek advice from the Principal.
- to be cautious when passing information to others about a pupil.
- Never guarantee confidentiality about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or pupils), or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Records & Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good Safeguarding practice. Concerns and disclosures should be recorded in writing by the member of staff who receives them and passed to the Designated Teacher without delay. The Designated Teacher, in consultation with the Principal will then decide on further action and any appropriate monitoring programme for the pupil.

Records are stored in a dedicated filing system maintained by the Designated Teacher in their office. When pupils with records in this filing system pass on to their next school, the Principal is responsible for transferring information judged to be relevant to the child’s next school.

Staff Training

All staff should receive Safeguarding training as part of the CPD programme. Staff are informed of any changes subsequently made.

Safeguarding & The Curriculum

The school curriculum is important in the protection of children. We aim to ensure that curriculum development meets the following objectives (these are often met through the PSHE, Computing and Citizenship curricula):

- Developing pupil self-esteem;
- Developing communication skills;
- Informing about all aspects of risk, including on-line behaviours;
- Developing strategies for self-protection
- Developing a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults;
- Developing non-abusive behaviour between pupils.

Further Reading

- 2003 *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*
- 2005 *Guidance for safe Working practice for the protection of Children and Staff in Educational Settings.*
- 2007 *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education.*
- 2013 *Working Together to Safeguard Children.*
- 2014 *UAE Child Rights Law*
- 2018 *Keeping Children Safe in Education*

Monitoring and Review

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders Al Mizhar School teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

This policy should be read alongside

Health and safety policy

GEMS code of conduct policy

Safer recruiting policy (currently being developed by GEMS SSC)

Principal: CEO/Nigel Cropley

Review Date: June 2020

Signed: _____

APPENDIX 1 - Safeguarding Guidance

What to do if you are told of abuse:

- Stop and listen.
- Take notes and keep (verbatim)
- Do not interrupt
- Do not be judgemental
- Do not promise confidentiality - staff must not work in isolation, but offer discretion.

Avoid leading questions/coaxing, pressurising

- Note any concerns about going home, now he/she has spoken up
- Inform the designated person promptly who will ask for a verbatim written record with time and persons present
- Discretion should be maintained inside and outside of the staff room.
- Never think it cannot happen
- Do not work in isolation

What happens next:

- Member of staff with suspicion/concern/ disclosure informs designated teacher
- The Designated Teacher gathers information.
- All subsequent concerns are reported and recorded by the designated teacher.
- Where action is required they will either monitor, or refer to the Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre and be advised whether to enter the incident on online record keeping.
- When in need of serious health or immediate welfare attention the child should be taken to the nearest A&E department.

When allegations are made against a member of staff, the Designated Teacher should be informed without delay:

- A written record will be requested which will be signed and dated.
- The Safeguarding Officer at GEMS School Support Centre is informed by the Principal.
- The member of staff may be suspended pending further investigations.

APPENDIX 2 – Signs and Symptoms of Abuse or Neglect

PHYSICAL ABUSE - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Signs:

- Unexplained injuries: Bruising; face/head, earlobes, arms, torso, neck, fingertip bruising, Belt marks. Human bite/teeth marks. Burns & scalds. Cuts: scratches, knife slashes, pinches, utensil slashes. Marks: linear, handprints. Fractured or broken bones.
- Different explanations for how the injury happened
 - Refusal to discuss injuries
 - Arms & legs kept covered
 - Fear of returning home/medical examinations
 - Self-destructive tendencies
 - Poor physical condition

SEXUAL ABUSE - Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities; activities involving inappropriate physical contact; activities such as child pornography, watching sexual activities; encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Signs:

- Bruises on arms, buttocks and thighs
- Fingertip bruising around the mouth
- Excessive masturbation
- Genital and/or anal injury e.g. difficulties walking, sitting, soreness • Urinary Infection/ STD/discharge
- Sexualised drawings

EMOTIONAL ABUSE – Defined as the persistent ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It involves conveying to children they are worthless, unloved, inadequate and not wanted. Imposing expectations which are developmentally inappropriate to child.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

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It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, or alternatively overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs:

- Acting out
- Fear of new situations
- Self-harming and self-depreciation
 - Fear of parents being contacted
- Relationship difficulties
 - Regression
- Soiling or vomiting
- Frozen watchfulness

NEGLECT - may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Signs:

- Constant hunger, failing to grow
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance • Untreated medical problems
- Thriving only away from home environment
- Unresponsiveness
- Being left alone or with inappropriate or inadequate minders