



مدرسة جيمس رويال دبي الخاصة
GEMS Royal Dubai School

GRDS SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

GRDS 2020-21

Review Date: January 2021
Charlotte Grieves Vice Principal

Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

The Teacher Standards 2012 state that teachers, including Head Teachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018*)

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is an overarching policy which supports the vision and aims of the school. Policies which are included under the Safeguarding umbrella are;

- Attendance and Punctuality
- Behaviour Management
- Anti-bullying, including Cyber bullying
- Counselling
- IT Acceptable usage
- Device Responsible Use
- Internet Safety
- Remote and blended Learning policy
- BYOD policy
- DL policy
- Social Media policy
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- Safer Recruitment
- Code of conduct
- Whistle blowing
- SEND
- Toileting and Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

GEMs Royal Dubai School (GRDS) is fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. GRDS is committed to developing the children's understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens, in line with The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to which the UAE is a signatory.

The term 'children' includes everyone under the age of 18.

Definition

GRDS adheres to the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015) definition, which states safeguarding and promoting welfare is;

- **Preventing** impairment of children's health or development;
- **Protecting** children from maltreatment;
- **Supporting** - Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Rationale

GRDS believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them. We recognise that

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989

- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs and other issues
- working in partnership with children , young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

Aims

At Royal Dubai School, we believe we have a duty of care

- to protect and support children and young people who are part of the GRDS community
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

Legal Framework

First and foremost we follow the guidance outlined in the UAE Children's Rights Law (June 2016). GRDS also endeavours to follow UK legislation and guidance as these are known to be some of the most robust in the world. Therefore we have based our safeguarding procedures on the following UK legislation:

- The Children Act (1989)
- 1998 – The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Education Act (2002)
- The Children Act (2004)

We have consulted the following UK guidance documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2016

We have also consulted the following worldwide legislation and guidance:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Investing in the children of the Islamic World (Unisef 2005)

These procedures also cover the following areas:

- Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Leads;
- Training;
- What staff should do if they have concerns over a child;
- What staff should do if they suspect a child to be in immediate harm;
- What staff should do if they have concerns over a fellow staff member;
- Allegations of abuse made against other children;
- Elements of investigation.

All staff have a responsibility to

- provide a safe and caring environment in which children can learn develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.
- Be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse (see Appendix C)
- identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm
- know how to respond and what action to take by being familiar with the current child protection procedures in place at GRDS
- take appropriate action, working with other services as needed
- always act in the best interests of the child and ensure we take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to them

- All school staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of the pupils in their school.
- Report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of safeguarding concerns on the HSE Platform
- The school also has a duty under UAE Law 3, 2016 to report any abuse or suspected abuse to the police (this would be done by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Principal following consultation with the GEMS CPO).

We will seek to keep children safe by

- placing the child at the centre of all practice
- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately
 - To provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour and procedures to follow when 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.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined for the purposes of this policy as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes (Department of Education, 2016).
- **Child** – each and every child below the age of 18. (Federal law 3, 2016)
- **Child Protection Officer (CPO)** – the designated senior employee within GEMS support centre who has specific responsibility for evoking and leading the GEMS crisis management team for high level child safeguarding incidents.
- **Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL)** – the named staff responsible for overseeing safeguarding at GRDS (see below for responsibilities).
- **Crisis Management Teams (CMT):** An appointed group of employees from GEMS schools support centre who can provide support during serious incidents.
- **Child abuse:** Each and every act or omission that would harm the child in a manner that prevents his upbringing and growth in a proper safe and healthy manner (Federal law 3, 2016).
- **Child neglect** – Failure of parents or custodians to take the measures necessary for preserving the child's life and physical, psychological, mental and moral wellness from danger and protecting his various rights (Federal law 3, 2016).
- **Physical Abuse** - Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering (Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006).
- **Sexual abuse** – 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 (Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006).
- **Emotional abuse**– 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 (Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006).

- **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 ((Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006).
- **Bullying** - any persistent and uninvited behaviour which insults, hurts or intimidates someone (includes cyber bullying). (Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The GEMS designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) – has overall responsibility for child safeguarding across all GEMS schools. The appointed person is the Sara Hedger Head of child safeguarding and child protection.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads - The Designated Persons for Safeguarding at GRDS as appointed by the Principal/CEO **Mrs Vicky Martin**, are **Mrs Charlotte Grieves Vice Principal and Mrs Suzannah Hoskin, Vice Principal**. Their role is to:

- To ensure all staff are familiar with the child safeguarding systems that are in place including school guidelines for identifying and reporting abuse, including allegations of abuse against staff;
- To ensure that the school operates an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding policy;
- To ensure that all staff receive foundation training in safeguarding upon joining and at the beginning of the academic year and then two yearly intervals and ensure a register of training provided is maintained;
- To be responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with other agencies and support services over safeguarding issues;
- To report any safeguarding incidents or concerns to the GEMS CPO and other relevant Head Office stakeholders. This can be done via the HSE incident reporting system by the Principal, School Doctor or MSO under the guidance of Designated Person(s).
- In consultation with the CPO at GEMS Corporate office assist in enquiring into allegations of child abuse (*see Appendix B for elements to consider during an investigation*).
- To follow, as appropriate, recommendations made by the CPO at GEMS Corporate office
- To be aware of the materials referenced at the end of this policy.
- To support and advise staff on safeguarding issues generally.
- To ensure they have completed a recognised child safeguarding training qualification (level 2 or above)
- 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.
- To be responsible for tracking trends across the school and using the data to work with the Pastoral Team and Counsellor to facilitate support for children at GRDS

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 Leads.

The School Nurse and School Doctor - 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 Persons.

Types of injuries, attendance and frequency are recorded.

Responsibility of Human Resources Manager and Recruiters/Interviewers (Safe Recruitment)

The school will, when appointing staff, take account of the guidance issued by GEMS Corporate office 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.

Reference should also be made to the GEMS HR Policy – Criminal Clearance Checks Policy.

STAFF CONTACT WITH PUPILS

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 Safeguarding Leads immediately who will report to the Principal and the GEMS CPO where necessary.
- If a child is deemed to be in immediate danger, the GEMS CPO must be notified immediately by the Principal. The incident should then be reported via the HSE reporting system immediately.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult with the staff member and Principal, a decision will then be made on appropriate action to take and ensure the incident is recorded onto HSE.
- In all circumstances, the welfare of the child must take ultimate priority.
- The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The

recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

- 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 GEMS CPO and consider the transfer of appropriate records to the receiving school.

Examples that could require GEMS CPO involvement:

- Physical injuries to a child which are suspected to be caused by physical abuse.
- Evidence of neglect, this could include, frequent hospital visits, frequent and long periods of absenteeism from school.
- Significant incidents involving peer or peer abuse which have resulted in physical or psychological harm.
- Any suspected or claimed child safeguarding incidents involving GEMS teachers or GEMS support staff.
- Any incidents in which a parent or guardian makes an official complaint to the 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.

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 Principal.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

- Staff 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.

STAFF TRAINING

All staff should receive regular and timely Safeguarding training as part of their induction and CPD programme. Staff are informed of any changes subsequently made.

SAFEGUARDING AND 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 and citizenship curriculum):

- Developing pupil self-esteem;
- Developing communication skills;
- Informing about all aspects of risk;
- Developing strategies for self-protection;
- Developing a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults;
- Developing non-abusive behaviour between pupils
- Internet safety

REFERENCES

- UAE Federal law 3, 2016.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Department for Education UK 2016.
- Working together to safeguard children, HM Government UK 2015.
- GEMS Safeguarding code of conduct
- GEMS Child Safeguarding Policy version 1.1 updated 5 Sept 2016, to be reviewed 5 Sept 2018.
- Principles for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings. (Feb 2005)

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

At GEMs Royal Dubai School (GRDS) we are fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. GRDS is committed to developing the children's understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens, in line with The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to which the UAE is a signatory.

This policy should be used in conjunction with GEMs Child Safeguarding Policy and defines the responsibilities, processes and procedures relating to the protection of students at GRDS. The overall intention and purpose behind this Child Protection Policy is underpinned by the fundamental principle of the Children Act 1989 and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy should also be read in association with the Safeguarding Policy.

Role and Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection Issues

At GRDS the DSLs for Child Protection issues are:

Mrs. Charlotte Grieves – Vice Principal

Mrs. Suzannah Hoskin – Vice Principal

Mrs. Jenny Evans – Deputy Principal (Online DSL)

Mrs. Debbie Simpson – Deputy Principal

Mrs. Michaela Bullock - SENDCo

They are responsible for coordinating action within the institution and liaising with outside agencies/professionals as appropriate.

They will

- follow the agreed procedures
- know how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse
- can provide advice and support to staff in matters of Child Protection
- report allegations and suspicions to Mrs Vicky Martin CEO/Principal when necessary and as soon as practical
- maintain relevant records of incident reports and follow-up
- ensure all records are kept confidentially, separate from the main student file, and in locked locations
- know when and how to make a referral to outside agencies/professionals
- can contribute to and monitor a child protection plan
- will hold monthly case conferences (Student Watch Meetings) with School Counsellor, to update themselves on status of current/new concerns.
- Be responsible for the administration and monitoring of HSE
- keep ALL staff up to date with training.

PREVENTION

School Environment

All staff will be expected to contribute towards an environment that offers children maximum protection e.g. contributing to creation of a positive atmosphere in which students are respected and know that they can find assistance if necessary. Children should know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they have a worry or a problem.

Lanyards will be worn by all staff, parents, contractors and visitors at all times to facilitate easy identification. Visitors should be accompanied by their host at all times.

In order to keep students safe within school, there are designated bathrooms for visitors. Visitors are made aware of this on entry and on the visitors safeguarding leaflet, and students are informed of which bathrooms they are allowed and not allowed to use. Currently the bathrooms on the ground floor near the reception for visitors only.

GRDS has one school counsellor:

Primary Counsellor – Cindy Santos – c.santos_rds@gemsedu.com

Child protection in the curriculum

The planned curriculum will include material and activities, mainly within Personal, Social and Health Education which are designed to help children to be less vulnerable to abuse, where this is possible, without in any way implying that the responsibility for child protection is the child's. This will include emotional health and well-being, anti-bullying, safety, and all work that develops self-esteem and inter-personal skills.

Monitoring of attendance

Staff should notify the DSL responsible for Child Protection if there is an unexplained absence of more than one day of a student who is on the GRDS Child Protection register.

Employment

Safe recruitment procedures will be upheld in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policy.

Information

Information about individual needs will be shared with relevant others in order to ensure the highest level of care and support. A register of medical needs, Achievement Centre IEPs (Individual Education Plans) and profiles will be available and staff will be reminded to refer to these. Staff will be notified of any updates.

Medical

Emergency procedures will be made known to all staff to ensure that children who require medical assistance will receive it promptly. In order to protect children, there will be staff training provided in the use of Epipens and information regarding the treatment of children with epilepsy will be available on the shared drive.

Parents

Parents should be aware that the school will take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of its students. In cases where the school has reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff will have no alternative but to follow child protection procedures.

Parents will not always be fully informed of concerns unless staff are certain that the safety of the child will not be prejudiced by their doing so.

PROTECTION

Please see GEMs Child Safeguarding Policy for types, definitions, signs and symptoms.

All staff have a responsibility to protect and safeguard children.

Child abuse may come to staff attention in a number of ways:

- A child or young person may make a direct disclosure to staff
- Staff may observe bruises/burns or injuries for which there is no plausible explanation
- Another child, young person or parent/carer may tell staff something which causes concern
- Staff may observe changes in behaviour that are a cause of concern
- Staff may instinctively feel something is wrong
- There may be neglect issues

Class Behaviour Log

Class teachers ultimately hold responsibility for the children in their classes. Therefore, they need to be responsible for monitoring and recording any concerns of abuse. Phoenix HSE must be used to keep a running record of any concerns. GRDS teachers must follow the Behaviour Policy requirements for reporting

behaviour concerns. These may be transferred to Phoenix HSE should the concerns become a safeguarding/Child Protection concern.

If there are marks or bruises, a body map (Appendix A) with date of observation also needs to be completed.

Both Systems ensure that any concerns that are logged will follow the student as they move up through the school.

Child Protection /Welfare concern – recording sheet

If there are a number of concerning records in the log that indicate that the student is at risk of child abuse, the class teacher needs to complete the details onto Phoenix HSE and alert the DSL (if unsure, please discuss with DSL). If a student makes a disclosure, this needs to be recorded onto Phoenix HSE and the DSL tagged.

Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Any disclosures or concerns regarding possible abuse need to be recorded onto Phoenix HSE with the alert sent to the DSL. The DSL will then investigate the case further and decide on the next course of action. Whilst some incidents can be contained within the school without the need for outside assistance, some will require additional assistance from School Support Centre.

SUPPORT

Guidance for Staff

All Staff will receive training on the procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.

All Staff will receive the hand out “Talking and Listening to Children” which gives guidance on what to say and do when faced with a disclosure. (Appendix A)

All staff will receive training on using the Phoenix HSE system for reporting.

Counselling support will be available to staff involved in reporting cases of child abuse.

The Counsellors and DSL will advise on the appropriate external support services available to children and their families.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST OTHER CHILDREN

The GRDS Anti-Bullying Policy may also be relevant when dealing with such allegations. If abuse is deemed serious then it must be reported to the Designated Persons and the Principal. The Designated Persons will commence initial investigations which may include liaising with teachers. Depending on the severity of the issue the Principal may report to the GEMS CPO who will decide on further action to be taken.

Physical Intervention

At GRDS we do not use restraint or physical intervention with any child.

We firstly de-escalate students through an understanding and restorative approach. Should a child be unsafe or a danger to self or others we remove the other students from the area. After the child has calmed restorative justice discussions are held to talk through the situation and this is followed up with intervention if required. We offer intervention, strategies and support to prevent incidents occurring.

If a child is in immediate danger to themselves or others and de – escalating conversation is not being effective, a member of staff may safely intervene.

Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against staff

Any concerns or allegations regarding the conduct of staff members should be reported to the HR Manager immediately. The procedures apply to all staff as well as volunteers. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that further action is not subject to delay.

The HR Manager will make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting others as necessary. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter will be reported immediately to the Principal/CEO.

It is important that the HR Manager does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and gives rise to a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation and if so by whom.

National laws in the U.A.E. govern any legal action taken in cases of child abuse. However, staff should know that upon allegation they may also be prosecuted in their country of origin or residency (as in the case of the UK under the Sexual Offences Act 2003).

DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE – See Appendix A

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 will be necessary to refer the case to the Designated Persons who may need to refer to the GEMS CPO
- 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.

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;
- 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.

Recording of Information

Record keeping: It is essential that any concern about a child protection issue and any discussions with students or others are accurately documented as soon as possible, and are clearly signed and dated. Any such records may be required as part of a subsequent investigation, and they could be used as evidence in court if there is a criminal prosecution. Consequently, it is vital that all written records are accurate and factual.

Any allegations or statements made by a child or by any other person should be documented verbatim - documenting the exact words used -wherever possible. The person, who made the allegation or statement, and any witness who was present, should countersign the written record. This information should then be uploaded into the Phoenix HSE system by attaching a PDF of the original disclosure documentation. The original information should always be filed and stored securely with the DSL.

As soon as a child protection issue or concern has been raised, a timely and accurate record must be made by the DSL of all events, reports and notifications made, and reports circulated. This should be inputted into Phoenix HSE online reporting system. On some occasions, it may be deemed necessary to obtain photographic evidence of suspected injuries to a child or young person.

This evidence will be obtained by the police or medical professionals or child protection services. School staff may document details in writing of any visible injuries, or illustrate the position and extent of the injuries on

a 'body map' type of diagram, but must not take any photographs of a child or young person in these types of circumstances.

The need for these types of documents to be confidential is taken very seriously.

All records of such discussions and any documents concerning safeguarding and child protection issues are kept in confidential files in each student's folder and/or on the GEMS Phoenix HSE online reporting system. Only GEMS senior managers, the Principal/CEO's and DSL's in individual schools should and will have access to these files. These same end users will also make decisions about with whom they are to be shared. The GEMS Phoenix HSE Online Safeguarding Platform should be used as the primary way to report, document, escalate, review and evaluate outcomes of cases.

Appendix A

Talking and Listening to Children

If a child wants to confide in you, you SHOULD

- Be accessible and receptive
- Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace
- Take what is said seriously
- Reassure children that they are right to tell
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on
- Make sure that the child is ok
- Make a careful record of what was said (see *Recording*).

You should NEVER

- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse
- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc.
- Speculate or accuse anybody
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved
- Forget to record what you have been told
- Fail to pass this information onto the correct person (the Designated Safeguarding Office).

Children with communication difficulties, or who use alternative/augmentative communication systems

- While extra care may be needed to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are interpreted correctly, any suspicions should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.
- Opinion and interpretation will be crucial (be prepared to be asked about the basis for it and to possibly have its validity questioned if the matter goes to court).
- Where appropriate an interpreter may be used. This should be a bilingual member of staff who has been trained in how to receive a disclosure correctly.

Recordings should

- State who was present, time, date and place
- Be written in ink and be signed by the recorder
- Be passed to the DSO immediately (certainly within 24 hours)
- Use the child's words wherever possible
- Be factual/state exactly what was said
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation

What information do you need to obtain?

- Schools have **no investigative role** in child protection (The DSL will refer cases to the police as appropriate)
- Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and pass on.
- Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of **who, what, where and when**.
- The question which you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is 'Might this be a child protection matter?'
- If the answer is yes, or if you're not sure, record and pass on immediately to the DSO.

If you do need to ask questions, what is and isn't OK?

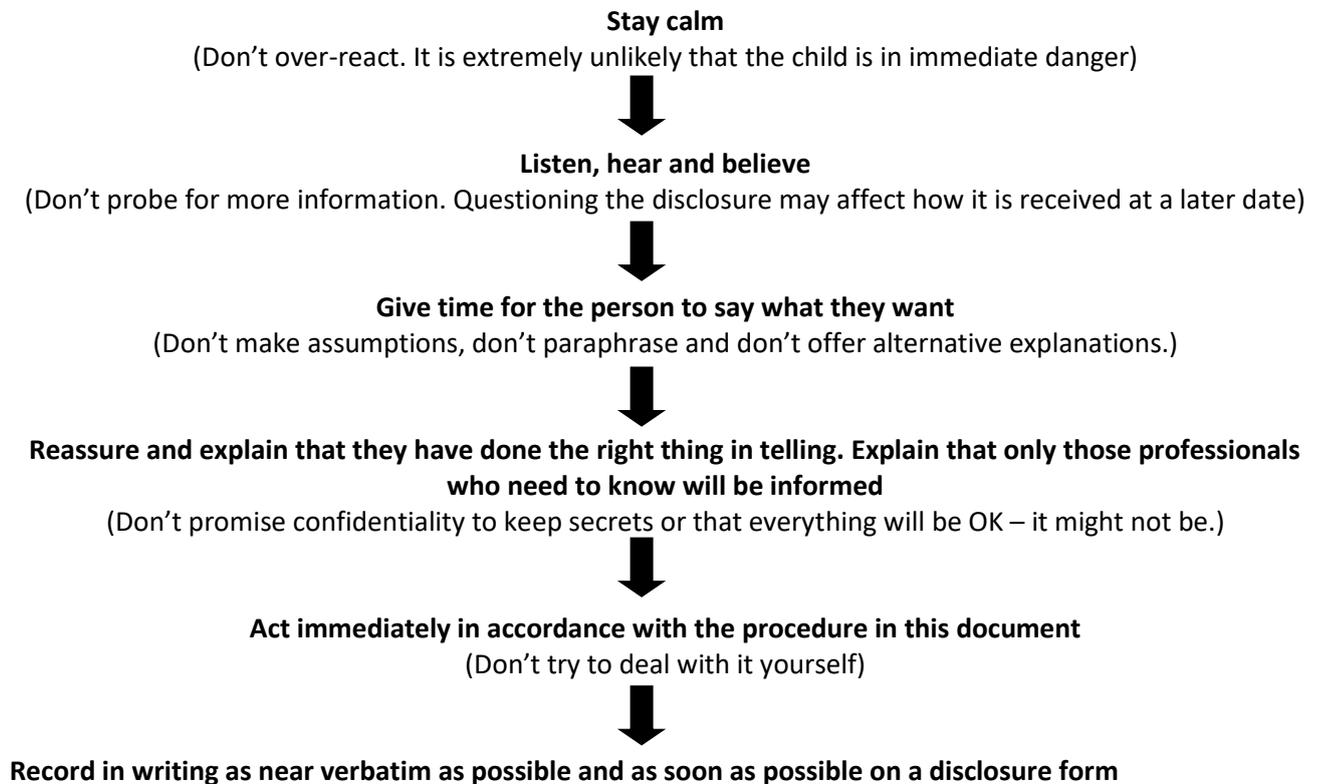
- **Never** asked closed questions; ones which children can answer yes or no, e.g. did he touch you?
- **Never** make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc. e.g. top or bottom, front or back?
- If we must, use only '**minimal prompts**' such as 'go on ... tell me more about that ... tell me everything that you remember about that'
- Timescales are very important: '**When was the last time this happened?**' is an important question.

What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?

- Is there a place in school which is particularly suitable for listening to children e.g. not too isolated, easily supervised, quiet etc?
- We need to think carefully about our own body language – how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal.
- Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question.
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we 'know that [child.....] tells lies'.
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity.
- Think about what support **you** could access if faced with this kind of situation in school.

What to do on suspicion or disclosure

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are personal to the individual. Whatever the reaction, it must be responded to in the correct manner, outlined below.



DO

- Listen and accept
- Try not to interrupt
- Tell the student that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Inform the student of what you are going to do
- Make accurate notes using all the student's words as soon as possible
- Inform a member of the WIS Child Protection Team

DON'T

- Promise confidentiality
- Investigate
- Ask leading questions
- Paraphrase when recording the allegation
- Ask a student to remove clothing
- Take photographs
- Ask the student to repeat the disclosure over and over again

APPENDIX C

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.

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

APPENDIX D

ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER DURING AN INVESTIGATION (Designated Safeguarding Leads and Principal)

- The initial investigations conducted may determine that no further actions are required. In this instance, the incident and supporting information is still required to be submitted onto the HSE system.
- During any investigations the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. If the allegation is against a staff member, then the child should be removed from contact with the staff member as investigations are conducted. The school will endeavour to ensure that the investigations are conducted effectively and quickly.
- If during or after the investigations the alleged allegations are confirmed to be true, then the staff member will be immediately suspended and dealt with under the GEMS disciplinary process.
- If the allegations are peer on peer, then the safeguard lead will determine if the parents are to be informed. If the parents are informed then the name of the child/other children should not be disclosed. The safeguard lead will work with the parents to investigate the incident.
- Any persons who are conducting the investigations must ensure that they remain open minded, this means listening to all parties in an equal and unbiased manner. The welfare of the child is of paramount importance. Any parties should be separated from contact during the investigations.
- If any allegations are found to be untrue then the information gathered must be included into the HSE reporting system and held on file.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy has been reviewed by GRDS Leadership team and shared with all staff.

Next Review date: January 2022