

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful



## Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

## Categories of Abuse

The Department of Education Skills Document Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) defines the main categories of child abuse, which is also used for the purposes of drawing up child protection plans for children at risk of harm. The categories are as follows:

### Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as 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 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. Children who do not fit the categories above may also be at risk of significant harm as they could, for example, be in a situation where another child in the household has been harmed or a person who may pose a risk to children may reside in that household.

### Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## Recognising Possible Signs Of Abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

### PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse
- Fear of going home to parents or carers

### INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia
- Unaccounted for sources of money
- Telling you about being asked to 'keep a secret' or dropping hints or clues about abuse.

### EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

## **Nominated Child Protection Officer**

The Madrasah should have a nominated child protection officer that has some expertise and knowledge in child protection, who will act on their behalf when there is a suspicion or allegation of abuse. However, if the nominated child protection officer does not have previous experience or knowledge in this area, specialist training should be made available.

The name of the nominated child protection officer should be displayed prominently in the Madrasah so that everyone, (including parents and carers) is aware of who they should talk to if they are concerned about a child. The nominated child protection officer should be selected by the Mosque management. An enhanced level DBS check and two references should be sought prior this appointment.

The role of the nominated child protection officer is to;

1. Report any concerns to the relevant body and/or the Police
2. Promote the needs of children in the Mosque and keep everyone informed of good practice, and work in partnership with local statutory agencies as needed
3. Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a child or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies
4. Ensure this policy is reviewed regularly.
5. Ensure that all workers within the Mosque have a basic knowledge of child protection and receive some training or induction in this protocol.

In the absence of the nominated child protection officer, or where they are implicated or allegations have been made against them in these circumstances contact the Head Imam/ Trustees of the Mosque who will act as the deputy child protection officer.

## **What To Do If You Suspect That Abuse Has Occurred**

Very few adults hurt children deliberately and usually it is a sign that families need help and support. If a Madrasah worker feels that a child attending the Madrasah is suffering abuse, they must pass this information on in order to ensure that the child is protected. The information should be passed on to the nominated child protection officer and the management committee.

If a Madrasah worker suspects that a child attending the Madrasah has been hurt in any way, either by their family or by another person within the Madrasah, they have a clear responsibility to ensure that action is taken to protect that child.

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on the local authority to investigate any allegation of abuse against a child. If a crime appears to have been committed then the police also have a duty to investigate.

## **What To Do If a Child Tells You About Abuse**

- Listen attentively and let them know that they were right to tell someone about their worries
- Stay calm and make sure that the child feels safe and knows that they are not to blame
- Explain that you will have to tell someone else about the abuse if it is to stop
- Only ask questions that establish what was done and who did it
- Make a note of what the child said and the date and time of the conversation
- Don't act without talking to the nominated child protection officer to deal with child abuse
- Seek advice before telling parents or carers about the conversation. You could be putting the child in greater danger by doing this.
- Do not investigate, but speak to the nominated child protection officer or a member of the Mosque committee.

## **Allegations of Physical Abuse, Neglect or Emotional Abuse**

If a child attends Madrasah and has a serious physical injury or symptoms of neglect or emotional abuse the nominated child protection officer should be informed. The parents or guardians of the child should normally be contacted and informed of the concerns raised unless by doing so the child would be placed in further danger. If this is the case, the relevant child protection authority or Police Child Protection Team should be contacted for advice and assistance.

### **The Nominated Child Protection Officer Should:**

Speak with the parent/guardian and suggest medical help/attention be sought for the child. If appropriate the parent/guardian should be encouraged to seek help from the relevant child protection authority. With older children it is important to take their wishes and feelings into account with regard to speaking to their parents.

If the parent/guardian is unwilling to seek help, then it may be appropriate for a worker from the Mosque to go with them. If they still fail to act and there is concern about the welfare of the child, the nominated child protection officer should contact the relevant child protection authority.

Where a child needs emergency medical attention, all efforts must be made to contact the child's parents prior to treatment, but the health and safety of the child must come first. The nominated child protection officer should inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

If the nominated child protection officer is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the relevant body, then s/he can always contact them for advice or to discuss the case.

CCPAS a children's charity which advises faith groups in safeguarding and child protection can also be contacted for advice on 0845 120 4550 (24 hour telephone helpline). As well as Muslim Youth Helpline 0808 808 2008

## Allegations of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the nominated child protection officer should:

Contact the relevant authority directly. The nominated child protection officer will not speak to the parent or anyone else directly, as there is always a possibility that they could be involved. If named people are innocent, talking to them before contacting the authorities may make it harder for them to be cleared.

If sexual abuse has occurred very recently, the nominated child protection officer should contact the police urgently so that any physical evidence is preserved. Do not interfere with any evidence such as stained clothing. If the allegations concern events more than a week old, then there is less urgency but either the child protection body or Police must be informed promptly.

Under no circumstances must the nominated child protection officer or any Madrasah worker attempt to carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The important thing is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the relevant body. They will then investigate the matter under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the nominated child protection officer, their absence should not delay referral to the relevant external body.

There may be disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the nominated child protection officer or Deputy as to the appropriateness of the referral to outside authorities. If so, the person who heard allegation has a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the relevant authorities, and should do so without hesitation.

If the allegations or suspicions involve the nominated child protection officer, then a report should be made to the chair of the management committee who will contact the relevant bodies for advice.

## **Allegations Against People of Authority Within The Mosque**

- If an allegation in any way implicates the nominated child protection officer, then a report should be made to the chair of the management committee.
- If an allegation implicates both the nominated child protection officer and the chair, then a report should be made to the relevant bodies
- If the allegation is one of assault by the Imam or any member of staff or management committee of the Mosque then the matter must be referred to the relevant body.
- If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above the co-ordinator in accordance with regulatory procedures will need to liaise with the relevant bodies in regards to the suspension of the worker and making a referral to an Allegations Management Adviser (AMA).



## **Madrasah Staff and Child Protection Procedures**

The following procedures are designed to promote the effectiveness of the Mosque and to protect both children and workers. The procedures involve all potential staff and volunteers being treated as potential job applicants.

### **Appointment of workers**

All prospective workers should be asked to complete:

- An application form requesting basic details and experience of working with children
- Two personal referees from people not directly involved in the work of the Mosque
- The references supplied will be taken up personal contact
- Details of any criminal charges convictions or disclosure of a criminal record may not in itself prevent appointments as the nature of any offence is considered
- It is good practice for a Criminal Record Bureau (DBS) disclosure check to be carried out on all those appointed to work with children in the Mosque or Madrasah.
- At times the Mosque may take up telephone references. When this is the case the contents of that telephone reference will be recorded and kept on file. The name, address and telephone number of the person providing the reference will also be kept on file.

### **Appointment of workers from abroad**

There may be occasions where the Mosque committee wishes to appoint another from abroad. This will mean that a DBS disclosure may not be able to be undertaken. Nevertheless, a 'fit person' check may be available from the country the person is moving from. Mosque committees will ensure that additional references are undertaken on any worker from abroad.

### **Criteria For Not Appointing Workers**

The Mosque's responsibilities towards those it works with means that on occasions it will exclude people from work with children and young people. An applicant should never be appointed where it is known that they have a criminal record for offences relating to children or sexual or violent behaviour. Even when real changes has taken place in the life of the individual it would be unwise to place an individual in a position of temptation, and refusal would be for the benefit if the individual concerned as well as for the children.

Applicants will not be appointed where an unsatisfactory reference is received. Where a criminal record is disclosed relating to other types of offences, this should be brought before the Management Committee in confidence, together with other relevant background information, for a decision to be made as to whether to appoint or not. The Mosque will follow the DBS Code of Practice in relation to the handling of disclosure information.

### **Working with known offenders**

Where someone attending the Mosque is known to have abused children, the Mosque Committee will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but our commitment to the protection of children will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep.

### **Good Practice For Working With Children**

All workers are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries with children.

Workers should ensure that they are not dependent on their relationships with children and young people to meet their own emotional needs.

- Touch, Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touching should be related to a child's needs not the workers.
- Touching should be age appropriate and generally be initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity, which is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child for example, fondling, touching private parts of the body.
- Workers should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to constructively challenge a colleague if necessary.

## Discipline

Achieving good behaviour is not just expecting children to be quiet and obedient. It is important to teach children to live alongside others and encouraging them to understand individual rights and responsibilities.

In order for children to learn good behaviour, adults have to set an example because children learn not only through teaching, but also by seeing how adults behave towards them and other people. Mosque committees and teachers in the Madrasah need to agree on what sort of behaviour is acceptable, and have agreed plans so that everyone follows the same system.

- **Be clear and positive** – explain fully to pupils what you want them to do. Tell them what they have to do, not what they don't have to do. Use positive statements rather than negative ones. For example, saying 'come and sit in your place' is better than saying 'stop running around'.
- **Use ignoring as a technique to reduce low-level poor behaviour** – your pupils want your attention and some think that bad behaviour will get it. Sometimes they may be right! Give your attention as a reward. For example, if a pupil is chatting when you are ready to start your class, choose a child who is nearby and say: 'Well done Aysha, you are quiet and ready to learn'. This often results in other children paying attention. Be sure to give the first pupil some positive attention at the earliest opportunity.
- **Be consistent** – be the same from day-to-day in what you allow or don't allow.
- **Be polite** – we cannot teach children to be polite if we do not show them politeness.
- **Be fair** – children will usually accept rules if they can see that they are fairly applied.
- **Recognise, praise and reward good behaviour** – the best way to achieve good behaviour is to praise children who are behaving well. Rewards can be a smile, a good word, a comment written on work, stickers or stamps, a note to parents, certificates, etc.
- **Criticise the behaviour, not the child** – don't label children by calling them naughty or stupid. If you have to reprimand a pupil, say, for example: 'Calling names is not allowed here and is unkind' rather than 'you are a very unkind girl' 'That was a dangerous thing to do – a sensible boy like you should have realised that' rather than 'you stupid boy – did you want to cause an accident?'
- **Avoid putting negative labels on children** – children generally believe what ustaads say. If we tell them they are lazy or forgetful, they begin to believe it and act accordingly. If we tell them they are hard-working and helpful, they will try to live up to our expectations. This is known as self-fulfilling prophecy.
- **Be calm** – if pupils are upset or angry, staying calm is the best way to deal with the situation. Pupils will then learn from you that ustaads can keep their temper.
- **Give pupils the chance to make amends** – offer them the opportunity to suggest a way to make things better, for example an apology or a suggestion about how they will do better next time.
- **Remind pupils regularly of the rules** – all pupils need reminders. It can be useful to let children help to decide on rules – they are often much more strict than adults! A poster on the wall allows you to bring the children's attention to the rules as and when necessary.
- **Be a good role model** – children learnt to speak and behave by how they are spoken to. It is therefore essential to set a good example.
- **Be patient** – recognise that children learn at different rates. Some children have special educational needs which may mean that they need additional support or more time to

learn.

- **Be a good role model** - Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect children to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
- **Be consistent in what you say** and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
- **NEVER smack or hit a child** and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary.

## Physical Punishment or Restraint

Mosque staff should never hit children – either with their hands or with sticks or other implements. This is against the law. On some occasions, it may be necessary for a worker to restrain a child or young person physically to prevent him or her from inflicting injury to others or damage to property. On these occasions, only the minimum force necessary should be used. If restraint is used, the worker should make notes of what happened and report the incident to the nominated child protection officer. The child's parents should be informed of the incident.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, *“The strong is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.”*

## Children and Fasting

Children are required to fast from the age of puberty, and this is not harmful. Fasting prior to this age is tolerated differently depending on the children's general health, nutrition and attitude. Fasting prior to the age of seven or eight years old is not advisable, although it is a good idea to make the children aware of the practice of fasting in the community around them, and to give them a 'taste' of fasting, e.g. a few hours at a time.

It is narrated that the companions would distract young children if they were hungry near the time of iftar, so they would become accustomed to joining the rest of the community in eating at sunset rather than eating just before sunset, during Ramadan (Sahih al-Bukhari). Communities in Action supported by the NHS have produced a helpful booklet: Ramadan Health Guide – A Guide to Healthy Fasting.

## Children with Special Needs

Special care and attention should be given to all children with disabilities and special need for two reasons:

1. Children with disabilities are at greater risk of abuse.
2. In Eleanor Stobarts research “Child Abuse Linked to Accusations of ‘Possession’ and ‘Witchcraft’ (2006)”, she found that where children had a difference, such as a disability, illness or challenging behaviour these were rationalised as being signs of ‘Witchcraft’ or ‘Possession’

Ashton Central Mosque should help and support children with special needs by making its buildings and activities accessible and welcoming to all children.

## Venues and Transport

If a worker arranges an activity with a child or young person outside the usual group time this must be with knowledge and consent of the Management Committee as well as that of the parent. A child or young person arriving uninvited to a worker's home should not be allowed to stay without the consent of the parent. Parental consent will be obtained for all organised activities and outings, which are outside the usual group times. Arrangements for transporting children and young people must also be with the knowledge of the nominated child protection officer and with parental approval.

## **Marriage( Nikah)**

The minimum legal age for getting married in the UK is 16 years old. In England and Wales the written consent of a parents or guardian is required for persons who have not reached 18 years old. There is a difference between arranged marriages and forced marriages. An Arranged Marriage is a traditional arrangement for a marriage whereby the parents choose the young persons future spouse with little or no input from the young person, If the child refuses the choice, the parents usually respect the young person's wishes and choose another possible spouse. A Forced Marriage is a marriage that is performed under duress and without the full and informed consent or free will of both parties. Being under duress includes feeling both physical and emotional pressure.

Marriage is an important part of Islam; it is an integral part of the Muslims social system, so much so that, Allah almighty says "He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may live in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between you".

It is also believed that upon marrying one completes half of his religion. It is therefore important that both young men and young women have a choice in whom they marry. Two Hadith's have been narrated by Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) that verify how he advocated choice in a partnerships between man and woman and the right to revoke a marriage conducted with force. As the main authority and the officiator of the marriage ceremony, the Imams ought to request consent from both young people wishing to participate the in the marriage union as part of this protocol.

## **Spirit Possession In Islam (Jinns & Shaitan)**

Islam gives much guidance and support to individuals experiencing unease due to a spiritual imbalance as a result from spirit possession or mental distress. However, some individuals may not have the expertise or experience of making a precise diagnosis. Consequently, issues such as mental health issues may become misinterpreted or blurred with spirit possession and therefore vulnerable children may not get the support they need. Children may exhibit a variety of behaviours that they may need support with for example; they may become withdrawn or anxious and this may be a sign of distress or abuse. However, if families feel this child may need spiritual intervention, it is important for Imams approached for exorcisms not to use physical methods of expelling Jinns or Shaitan. More suitable yet effective methods are utilised by many Imams. Methods such as reciting the therapeutic verses from the Holy Quran as well as making Dua (supplication) is an approach that ought to be advocated by the Imams and filtered down to members of the community. It is good practice for Imams to access training on mental health issues: this will increase their awareness and knowledge on the mental health issues and will enable them to make the appropriate referrals to support the individual.

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM has been illegal in the UK since the introduction of The Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. Although this Act made it illegal to practice Female Circumcision in the UK no prosecutions have been recorded due to many girls being taken abroad for this procedure. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 was therefore introduced to extend its jurisdictions abroad as well as increase the sentence from 5 to a maximum of 14 years imprisonment for those found to conduct the procedure and aiding and abetting it. This subsequent Act also adopted the new and

widely used term to describe this practice as Female Genital Mutilation. There has been a wide misconception that FGM is an Islamic Mandate. However, Islamic scholars have not authenticated any Hadiths that have been used to justify its existence. If any member of staff become aware of any child that may be at risk of this procedure, they must contact the relevant authorities as soon as possible. It is good practice for issues such as FGM, forced marriages, domestic violence and its adverse impact on the entire family to be discussed during Friday sermons.

## **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, wealth and geography. Domestic violence is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members.

The legal definition of harming children has been extended by the introduction of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, to include the harm children suffer by seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another - particularly in the home. Workers need to be aware of any children that exhibit any distress as this may be as a result of observing domestic violence in the home environment and make the necessary referral to ensure the safety of the child.