



Child Protection Policy 2022



1. INTRODUCTION

The initial disclosure from a child, or concerning a child, may not come directly to trained staff. We all have a role to play in ensuring children's safety. The section on procedures gives more detail of what to do but remember, however uncomfortable it may be to listen, reassure the child that it is right to tell (now it is an adult's responsibility to take things further) that they are not to blame (this shouldn't happen to children) that you take the child seriously (appreciate that this is really important) Avoid agreeing to 'not tell anyone' you must keep a promise.

2. DEFINITION

Child abuse can be described as the result of acts which may be

- deliberate
- knowingly not avoided or
- Unwilling which result in failure to meet a child's needs.
- categories of abuse, namely
- physical injury
- sexual abuse
- failure to thrive
- emotional abuse
- physical neglect

3. POLICY STATEMENT

All children have a right to protection from abuse and exploitation, and to adequate physical, emotional and social care; Parents have the responsibility and the right to provide such care. Children are best cared for in their own families, other than in exceptional circumstances. The welfare of children must be the paramount consideration in all decisions concerning them; All decisions must be based on children's best interests. Work will be carried out on the basis of partnership with families wherever possible, parents being consulted and involved in all decisions affecting their children, subject to the paragraph above. The highest priority will be given to the protection of children from abuse and will ensure that activities carried out in the name of child protection are child centred and give paramount to the welfare and interests of children.

All concerns that children may have been or being abused will be investigated in accordance with agreed interagency procedures.

All staff members are committed to working in an open and collaborative way, together and with parents, whilst recognising the potential for conflict in child protection situations.

Children have the right to be listened to and to be taken seriously; Interview procedures will focus on the child and will reflect his/her rights, wishes and needs.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As we work in Lantern Academy we have a number of important roles to play within the sphere of child protection. Staff members have extensive contact with children in a variety of different contexts. Each of us has a duty under legislation to initiate certain protective procedures. Staff may become

aware of unexplained, or unexpected, changed in a child's behaviour, of injuries which the child is unable to account for or attempts to conceal, or of worrying patterns of absence.

Often abused children feel able to confide in adults with whom they feel comfortable and who they hope will be able to provide help. The nature of this mosque may encourage pupils to confide in us in this way.

Lantern Academy collectively also has an important role to play in supporting children who have been abused and providing a stable and protective environment in which some recovery may be made.

The statutory responsibility for the investigation of cases of suspected abuse of a child lies with three agencies:

- LADO
- Police
- Social Work
- Reporter to the Children's Panel

The Police have a duty to investigate when they suspect a criminal offence has been committed. The Social Work Department have a duty to make enquiries into allegations of child abuse of every kind; These enquiries suggest that a child may be in need of compulsory measures of supervision, to refer the case to the Reporter.

The Reporter to the Children's Panel has a duty to investigate referrals to him/her and to refer to a Child's Hearing if s/he is satisfied that it is in the child's interest to provide protection, care, treatment or control on a compulsory basis. The extent and type of investigation is for the Reporter to decide.

5. AWARENESS

- Be aware of the responsibility of emotional, physical or sexual abuse and be vigilant.
- Abuse of children is much more frequent than we may realise and occurs in all social economic classes.
- Both male and female children are abused although statistics show that girls are more likely to be abused than boys.
- The great majority of abusers are well known to the victim.

LEGAL OBLIGATION

- Lantern Academy teachers are obliged by our duty of care, to look for associated signs and observe children closely (Children, Scotland, Act 1995).

6. RECOGNITION

There are a number of signs which **may** indicate that a child has been abused. However, it is important to understand that child abuse could be one of a number of possible causes, and, while it is right to be concerned, the existence of one or more symptoms does **not necessarily** indicate child abuse.

Possible indicators may include: doubtful or inconsistent explanations of fractures, cuts, bruises, scalds, burns, lacerations, swelling or small bite marks, damage around the mouth and ears, bruising in areas which a child would not normally injure in everyday play, e.g. Centre of the back, abdomen

bruising which would indicate that the child has been gripped too tightly and possibly shaken, 'finger tip' bruising, e.g. on upper arm and face failure to thrive emotionally or physically, loss of weight, lethargy, tiredness, symptoms of the consumption of potentially damaging substances, e.g. Excess medicines, cleaning fluids unusual or suspicious behaviour of parents, including delay in seeking advice, or over frequent attendance at clinics or surgeries; The parent may be seen to handle the child in an unfeeling or mechanical way, conflicting explanations of injury, and unexplained absences from school, child exhibiting undue fear of adults, or displaying apprehensive or withdrawn behaviour, running away from home, anorexia nervosa, bulimia, insomnia, depression, self injury, child with recurrent urinary tract, genital and/or vaginal infections, exhibiting sexual knowledge inappropriate to the child's age, through behaviour, writing, talking or drawing, childhood pregnancy.

It is reasonable to expect parents and professionals to be seriously concerned by the appearance of these, singly or in combination. However, assumptions cannot be made on the basis of checklists, and it is essential to make objective assessments at all times.

7. PROCEDURES

1. Disclosure of an incident could be made to any staff at any time. We therefore all have a responsibility to ensure appropriate responses and to understand procedures.
2. Within our Madrassa there is one trained designated member of staff (DMS) whom you can talk to:

- Tahir Mahmood (President) (DMS)
- Mohammed Shahid (Head)

(all staff members are aware of the DMS)

All allegations of child abuse will be treated seriously. This does not mean that all allegations will necessarily be accepted as true, but staff must be aware of the seriousness of such allegations and the consequent need to examine and test these. Wherever there is an indication that a child has suffered a physical injury or is being neglected **or** a child makes an allegation that s/he has been subjected to any form of abuse, **whether recent or not**, the staff member must immediately contact the Head Teacher of the mosque or designated member of staff.

The Head Teacher or DMS must immediately refer the case to the Social Work Department, **without** further discussion with the child. Contact telephone numbers are set out at the last page of this document.

Staff may seek an explanation for an obvious injury to the child, either from the child or from his/her parents.

A child may target a member of the Academy or other establishment staff to speak of abuse which has happened to him/her. It is important to acknowledge the trust that the child is placing in the staff member without becoming drawn into an interview. The child will need to understand that: the importance of what the child has said is recognised; he/she is being taken seriously; The staff member is willing to help; And in order to help, the information must be shared with others. Staff cannot give the child a guarantee of confidentiality but should assist the child as far as possible to understand what will happen next.

If the child has sustained an injury which requires medical attention, confirmation should be obtained from the duty social worker as to the medical arrangements, and cooperation given as required to arrangements to take the child to hospital or to his/her GP. It is the responsibility of the Social Work

Department to make these arrangements in consultation with parents. (Social Work staff will liaise with the police regarding the necessity for involvement of a police surgeon). In circumstances where staff members have general concerns about a child, but no clear sign of injury and no allegation from the child, this could be discussed with the Head Teacher or DMS. The Head Teacher or DMS will decide, where necessary in consultation with the Principal Educational Psychologist or Depute, whether a referral should be made to the Social Work Department.

If the Head Teacher or DMS is not available or if the staff member is not satisfied with the action taken he/she may contact the duty social worker directly but must then comply with the directions in the above paragraph.

8. PRACTICAL STEPS TO HELP DEAL WITH DISCLOSURE

1. Stress the importance of what child has said.
2. Indicate your willingness to protect and help.
3. In order to do this you must share information with others.
4. Keep the child informed of every step you plan to make.
5. Pass the basic information to your Head Teacher or Designated Member of Staff.

THINGS TO HAVE IN MIND AT THE POINT OF DISCLOSURE LISTEN Open ended question REASSURE take your time RECORD Keep a record either immediately after or at the time if it seems appropriate.

SUPPORT THREE GOLDEN RULES

1. That it is right to tell (now it's an adult's responsibility to take things further).
2. That the child is not to blame (this shouldn't happen to children).
3. That you take the child seriously (appreciate that this really is important).

9. REMEMBER

A checklist approach should not be decided proof of abuse; even where a number of factors may point towards a child being abuse, each may have an explanation. When a disclosure is made, listen and pay attention to what the pupil says. Believe what a pupil says very rarely do pupils make disclosures about abuse, especially sexual abuse, which are untrue.

Do not question a pupil as this may subsequently affect the action which can be taken. Teachers have a supportive role to play but are not trained in investigative, or for that matter therapeutic, work; These aspects are for other agencies. Because of this duty of care, this applies to all children under the age of sixteen; a disclosure of abuse cannot be afforded confidentiality but must be acted upon.

10. RELEVANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACTS

Child Line	(0900) 1111
Rochdale Police	(0161) 8725050
LADO	0300 3030350
Children's Services	(01706) 719900
Children's Services	(0161) 7780123
Rochdale Social Services	(0845) 2265570
Rochdale Education Authority	(01706) 647474

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