

# Amazing Grace School

“We meet the standards”

## Child Protection Policy

The first responsibility of all staff and volunteers at Amazing Grace Pre and Primary School is to prevent, as far as it is within our power to do so, 'significant harm' (in the form of neglect or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse) occurring to children in our care and to support vulnerable children in our care. It is important to recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND pupils) are often particularly vulnerable and that additional barriers (e.g. communication barriers) may exist when seeking to determine whether there has been abuse and neglect.

All school staff 'have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.' Every other good we aspire to achieve for children will be undermined if we fail to meet our responsibilities in this area.

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Poor practice includes: failing to act on or refer the early signs of abuse and neglect; poor record keeping; failing to listen to the views of the child; failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve; sharing information too slowly; and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

This policy explains:

1. prevention strategies,
2. procedures for dealing with child protection issues,
3. guidance on recognising abuse (Appendix 1).

### 1. Prevention

Amazing Grace staff members seek proactively to prevent significant harm coming to children in our care through an effective induction and training, adherence to our Code of Conduct, effective pastoral care and effective teaching about personal, social, health and emotional issues across the curriculum.

#### 1.1 Staff Induction and Training

Prior to their employment commencing new staff will meet with a suitable member of staff (e.g. a school Director) to review this policy and then sign a form to say they have done so.

Every regular volunteer or staff member will be expected to read this policy and sign a form declaring they have done so at the time of their appointment and once per year thereafter.

All staff or regular volunteers who regularly supervise children aged 5 and under must also sign a form to confirm that they are not disqualified (including by association) from working with these children.

Refresher training for all staff will take place at least every two years, with updates as necessary in the intervening period.

#### 1.2 Safer Working Practices

All volunteers and staff agree to adhere to the following code of conduct in order to reduce the risk of abuse or a false allegation of abuse:

##### 1.2.1 Physical contact

Whilst it would be undesirable to prevent all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. It should be noted that young children generally initiate contact; staff should generally be reactive to physical contact not proactive. Where incidents occur which might otherwise be misconstrued, this will be appropriately recorded and reported to the Headmaster.

### *1.2.2 Being alone with pupils*

For their own safety and protection, staff should exercise caution in situations where they are alone with pupils. Other than formal teaching situations all other one-to-one work such as coaching, counselling or tutor meetings should take place in an area either where there is visual access and/or an open door.

### *1.2.3 Volunteers*

From a child protection point of view, there are two groups of volunteers: (1) those who exercise sole responsibility for children, and (2) those who are always under the direct supervision of employed staff. Regular volunteers will be required to read this policy at the time of their appointment and once per year thereafter. Both will be required to adhere to this code of conduct. Any volunteer who ever has sole responsibility for children will be required to sign a form to declare that they are not disqualified (including by association) from working with children.

### *1.2.4 Discipline*

Children will be treated with respect and dignity and no punishment, detention, or sanctions are allowed outside of those detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy.

### *1.2.5 Speech with pupils*

Treating pupils with respect and dignity means that staff should never use sarcastic or belittling comments. Language of this nature can cause significant emotional harm.

### *1.2.5 First Aid*

Except in cases of dire emergency, first aid will only be administered by suitably trained staff. If it is necessary for the child to remove clothing for first aid treatment, there will, wherever possible, be another adult present.

### *1.2.6 Using the toilet*

If a child needs help with toileting or washing after soiling themselves, another adult should be present or within earshot. If a male member of staff is providing any form of intimate care, a female colleague will be present.

### *1.2.7 Security*

- No internal doors to rooms will be locked whilst pupils are present in these areas.
- Entry to school premises will be controlled by doors that are secured physically and be supervised by an employed guard.
- Authorised visitors to the school will sign in and out at the school office and will be supervised. Unidentified visitors will be challenged immediately by staff and reported to the Headmaster or school office.
- The presence of intruders and suspicious strangers seen loitering near the school or approaching pupils will be reported to the police.

### *1.2.8 Home time*

Accurate records of those with parental responsibility and emergency contacts for each child will be regularly updated. Pupils will only be released into the care of those with parental responsibility or someone acting with their prior consent.

### *1.2.9 Online, or otherwise, relationships with pupils outside of school*

Members of staff should, under no circumstances, meet alone with a pupil outside of school hours or off the school premises. Staff should never enter into an online relationship with pupils (e.g. by becoming a 'friend' on Facebook). Should a teacher ever need to communicate directly with a pupil via email, this should always be done via supervising staff and parents should be copied into the email.

### *1.2.10 Photography*

Staff will take photographs of pupils on school trips or undertaking routine school work for the purpose of preparing a display or in support of the marketing activities of the school. Staff may not take

photographs of pupils for personal use. Any photographs taken must be either printed for a display or forwarded to the staff member responsible for marketing and then deleted.

Any photographic images used by the school for advertising purposes are only done with the prior consent of the parents / carers concerned. Staff are expected to be aware of the pupils for whom the school does not have parental consent to use photographs.

Staff should be aware that parents, carers or relatives may occasionally wish to take still or video photographic images of their child at a school event. Parents are informed that all such photography is for private use only and that images of other children must never be put online (e.g. on Facebook).

Pupils are only allowed to use cameras on educational visits on specified occasions. No smart phones are ever allowed by pupils in school or on school trips. There is, therefore, no risk during school hours of photographs of other pupils being misused.

#### **1.2.11 Whistleblowing**

The safety of children is paramount. Staff members are encouraged to share any concerns they may have about the behaviour of other staff immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headmaster or a Director of the school.

#### **1.2.12 Recruitment**

All staff recruited to Amazing Grace School will be subject to appropriate character, identity, qualification and health checks. Periods of unemployment will be queried. References will be verified. Interviews with prospective staff will outline our child protection procedures in detail.

### **1.3 Pastoral care**

All Amazing Grace School staff, and class teachers in particular, have a responsibility for the pastoral needs of the children in their care. This includes:

- provision of opportunities for children to share and discuss their concerns with a trusted adult,
- provision of a classroom environment where every child feels secure, where supportive friendships are encouraged and where children feel safe to express their views and concerns,
- special attention to the needs of vulnerable children, offering support and advice.

### **1.4 Personal, social, health and emotional education**

We seek through a range of teaching opportunities to build resilience, help pupils to keep safe and help them to know how to ask for help if their safety is threatened. As part of developing a healthy, safer lifestyle, pupils will be helped, for example:

- to recognise and manage risks in different situations and then decide how to behave responsibly,
- to judge what kinds of physical contact are acceptable and unacceptable,
- to recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well being,
- to know when and to whom to turn to for help, including whom they can talk to at school if they should feel concerned about their safety,
- to find acceptable ways to express their feelings,
- to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches,
- to develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting.

## **2. Procedures**

### **2.1 Who is responsible**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is: Mrs Immaculate Mujabwami, Director.

The DSL is responsible for:

- managing referrals of cases of suspected abuse to the appropriate agencies,
- acting as a source of advice within the school,
- ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy and procedures,
- passing on child protection files to new schools/colleges as soon as possible after the child has left Amazing Grace School.

- organising training on child protection within the school.

The DSL will undergo refresher training every two years and will refresh staff understanding at least every two years. New staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their contract of employment and undergo online training. Trustees hold the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that child protection concerns are dealt with in accordance with this policy.

## **2.2 What to do if you suspect abuse**

All staff are responsible for the welfare of all children in our care. All staff should be alert to possible abuse and be prepared to 'believe the unbelievable'. We recognise the danger of assuming abuse could never happen in our community. If a member of staff, including voluntary staff, suspect a child is being abused or is at risk of significant harm either in school or out of school, he/she should immediately:

- write down any information before it is forgotten (a formal log of concern can be created from these notes, on a disclosure form);
- refer to Appendix 1 of this policy where there are doubts about whether or not a child is at risk or has been abused;
- speak to the DSL as soon as possible (whilst the DSL will usually decide whether to make a referral, any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care directly);

Then, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by the DSL.

## **2.3 Guidance on dealing with a disclosure of abuse**

Staff need to be prepared for a child to disclose information about abuse. Information may be offered in response to an appropriately broad question or it could be entirely unsolicited.

### **2.3.1 Effective listening**

Staff should:

- Listen to the pupil, keeping calm and offering reassurance - e.g. that they are doing the right thing, that you recognise how hard it is for them, that other children have been in similar situations and have come through.
- Let the child lead the conversation. Do not press for details. Ask very open or broad questions.
- Don't lay the blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator.
- Don't promise confidentiality; explain that you will need to tell others and why.
- Observe bruises, but you should not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them.
- Don't promise that you can 'fix things' easily or immediately.

### **2.3.2 What you are listening for**

The goal is to discover enough information to determine whether a referral to the police is necessary. If it quickly becomes clear, for example, that there is suspected sexual abuse, there is no need to 'investigate' or press for details because an investigation will be undertaken by the police.

### **2.3.3 Immediate recording on a Disclosure Form**

It is essential that staff record the allegations immediately in writing. In particular take note of who might have been witnesses. These notes should be dated and signed and submitted to the DSL. On the notes it is essential that the following is included:

- the name of the child
- the date and time of disclosure,
- the place and context of the disclosure or concern,
- the facts you need to report,
- whether or not there are any witnesses, and if so, who they are.

### **2.3.4 Peer-to-peer abuse**

Where it becomes clear that a child is concerned by peer-to-peer abuse these should be referred to the DSL. However, where the DSL believes there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is

suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL will refer the case to local agencies. It should be noted that both the victim and perpetrator should be considered at risk.

### ***2.3.5 Abuse in school***

If you suspect the DSL is abusing children, you should immediately contact the Head Teacher who will report the matter to the Directors of the school.

## **2.4 Involving the local authorities**

### ***2.4.1 Responsibility of DSL***

Upon receipt or completion of a Disclosure Form, the DSL will make any additional notes as required, and will consider whether an early help assessment is needed or a swift referral to the police is needed.

### ***2.4.1 Prior discussion with parents/carers?***

Ordinarily the DSL will contact the parents/carers before a referral to the police is made. However, if the concern involves alleged or suspected sexual abuse or the DSL has reason to believe that informing the parent at this stage might compromise the safety of the child or a staff member, nothing will be said ahead of referral. The situation must be very serious to avoid speaking to the parents/carers as failing to do so is likely to create tension in the relationship with those parents/carers.

## **2.5 Whistleblowing**

### ***2.5.1 A culture of openness***

As noted in 1.2.11 above, staff members are encouraged to share any concerns they may have about the behaviour of other staff immediately with the DSL/Head Teacher.

All allegations against staff should be dealt with common sense and good judgement. If the allegation concerns minor physical mishandling or verbal abuse, this will normally be dealt with under the school's Complaints Procedure.

### ***2.5.2 Reporting criteria***

Allegations which meet the reporting criteria are those which allege significant harm to a child, or a criminal offence, or where there is a serious risk of either.

### ***2.5.3 Confidentiality***

Staff who become aware of an allegation must make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against untimely publicity.

## **2.6 Working with parents**

### ***2.6.1 Parental Responsibility***

Where important decisions respecting the welfare of a child are at stake, it is essential to know who has Parental Responsibility. Who has Parental Responsibility?

- all birth mothers,
  - most birth fathers if they are married to the child's mother or listed on the birth certificate.
- How can Parental Responsibility be acquired:
- if the father marries the mother,
  - if the father is granted a Parental Responsibility Order by a court,
  - if the father enters into a "Parental Responsibility Agreement",
  - if the father is granted a Residence Order by a court,
  - if a step-parent enters into a "Parental Responsibility Agreement" with the consent of everyone who already has Parental Responsibility,
  - anyone: through being granted an Adoption Order, Residence Order or a Special Guardianship Order by a court,

- by being appointed a "testamentary guardian" in the signed will of someone with Parental Responsibility. Parental Responsibility cannot be lost or amended except by the making of an Adoption Order or through a limitation, not removal, imposed by a Care Order.

### ***2.6.2 The priority of child welfare***

Attitudes to, and contact with, parents will be non-judgemental in order to obtain the most effective working relationship. The priority is the needs of the child and we recognise that effective liaison is crucial for this.

### ***2.6.3 Different cultures***

We also recognise that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches to child rearing. These differences will be respected, provided they do not place the child at risk.

## **2.7 Record keeping**

The following procedures and responsibilities will be observed:

### ***2.7.1 Confidentiality***

Members of staff should never promise confidentiality. Time should be taken to reassure a child and confirm that information given will be treated sensitively. Information should only be given to the appropriate person (DSL). Members of staff, other than the DSL and those involved closely, should only have enough details in order to help them act sensitively and appropriately to a pupil. Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children.

### ***2.7.2 Disclosure Form or a Log of Concern Form***

Once a teacher has a cause for concern about a child, he/she should immediately create a record of concern using the Disclosure Form for a Log of Concern Form found in the staff room. The completed form should be given to the DSL.

### ***2.7.3 Whistleblowing and Record Keeping***

An initial disclosure against a member of staff should be carefully recorded in the same way. Thorough notes of all subsequent actions in relation to that allegation should be stored in the usual way, unless it involves the DSL/Headteacher. If an allegation is found to be malicious, all records pertaining to the case should be destroyed. If an allegation is substantiated, a comprehensive summary of the case and all actions taken should be stored also in the staff member's confidential and secure personnel file and stored securely for at least 10 years after the incident.

### ***2.7.4 Welfare Files and Child Protection Files***

Two different types of files are maintained securely: Welfare Files and Child Protection Files. Welfare Files store information from Disclosures or Log of Concern Forms, but where the case has not been escalated. Where a case has been escalated and taken on by Social Care, the Welfare File becomes a Child Protection File and the pupil's main school file is marked differently to show this change of status.

### ***2.7.5 Secure Filing***

Welfare Files and Child Protection Files are to be kept securely by the DSL and separately from educational records. They may only be accessed by the DSL and the Deputy DSLs. When a Welfare File or a Child Protection File is created for a pupil, the pupil's main file in the office is clearly marked to indicate which type of file is in existence.

## **2.8 Supervision**

Staff working with children for whom we maintain a Welfare File or a Child Protection File will have the opportunity to discuss any causes for concern they may have. It is the responsibility of the DSL and Deputy DSLs to ensure there are regular opportunities to for teachers concerned to discuss their concerns.

### **3. Review Date**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier as required. Directors accept their responsibility to ensure adherence to this policy and their responsibility to liaise with the appropriate agencies (noted above) in the event of an allegation against the Headmaster or other senior managers.

## **Appendix - Guidance on Recognising Suspected Child Abuse**

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone, often in a position of power. It is important to recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEN/D pupils) are often particularly vulnerable and that additional barriers (e.g. communication barriers) may exist when seeking to determine whether there has been abuse and neglect.

Abuse could be carried out by an adult, adults or another child or children. It is not our responsibility to decide whether child abuse is occurring, but we are required to act on any concerns immediately and report it to the appropriate party. This should apply even if there is a reasonable degree of doubt. The health, safety and protection of every child is paramount. All staff members need to be alert to the signs of abuse as detailed in this policy.

### **Physical Abuse**

This can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, scalding, suffocating or causing any form of 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. Possible signs include:

- unexplained injuries or burns
- refusal to discuss injuries
- improbable explanations of injuries
- untreated injuries or lingering injuries
- admission of punishment which appears excessive
- shrinking from physical contact
- fear of returning home or parents being contacted
- fear of undressing
- fear of medical help
- aggression / bullying
- running away
- significant changes in behaviour
- deterioration in work
- unexplained pattern of absences.

### **Emotional Abuse**

This is persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It can include:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved
- placing inappropriate age-related expectations on children
- making children feel frightened or in danger on a frequent basis
- exposing a child to domestic violence, even if that violence is not directed at the child

Possible signs include:

- continual self-deprecation
- fear of new situations
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- self-harm or mutilation
- compulsive stealing / scrounging
- drug / solvent abuse
- 'neurotic' behaviour - obsessive rocking, thumb sucking
- air of detachment 'don't care' attitude
- social isolation
- attention seeking behaviour
- eating problems
- depression, withdrawal.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It can include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Possible signs include:



- bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks
- scratches abrasions or persistent infection in the anal or genital regions
- pregnancy
- sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age
- frequent public masturbation
- attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
- aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- withdrawal from friends.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs and can affect the child's health and development. It might include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure appropriate access to medical care and treatment. Possible signs include:

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene
- inappropriate clothing
- frequent lateness or non-attendance
- untreated medical problems
- low self esteem
- poor social relationships
- compulsive stealing or scrounging
- constant tiredness.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time and directed against an individual who cannot defend him/herself in the situation. Bullying may be verbal, physical or psychological. In fact any action, which makes a child feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened may be defined as bullying. All incidents of bullying will be dealt with by the class teacher in the first instance, followed by a senior staff member or head teacher as appropriate.

### **Self Harm**

If it comes to the attention of any member of staff that a child is self-harming, they should alert the DSL as soon as possible.

### **Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence (HBV)**

If it comes to the attention of any member of staff that a child is potentially the victim of forced marriage or honour based violence, they should alert the DSL as soon as possible.

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

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. Where a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) who is aged under 18, this should be referred to the police. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead.

### **Preventing Radicalisation**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation are part of the school's wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.