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Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Glasgow Mena Trust

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OVERVIEW

Glasgow Mena Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment. The Trust's policy and procedures in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection follows the guidelines given in the Scottish Council of Independent Schools Guidance on Wellbeing and Child Protection document (2018) as well as the Scottish Government's "Getting it right for every child" (GIRFEC) approach in supporting children and young people.

Commitment to wellbeing and child protection

The Trust sets out its principles and procedures for putting into practice its commitment to the wellbeing of its pupils in the matter of child protection. **This policy and guidance is addressed to all members of staff, governors and volunteers and an electronic copy of this document is given to each individual.**

All children and young people whatever their age, culture, racial origin, disability, gender, language, religion or belief have a right to protection. The Trust will take all reasonable measures to ensure that everyone involved, including staff and volunteers:

- Aim assist and provide the necessary help for children when they need it;
- Ensure children are listened to and respected;
- Share information about children when it is necessary to protect them;
- Work together to assess needs and risks, and develop plans;
- Work in partnership with the external agencies to protect children;
- Demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness.

Child's wellbeing and protection is everyone's responsibility

Review of this policy

This policy and guidance will be regularly reviewed as appropriate and in accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children.

WELLBEING AT THE TRUST/CENTRE

Getting it right for every child

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is the overarching framework for children services in Scotland, underpinned by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The core message of GIRFEC recognises that everyone has a responsibility towards the wellbeing of a child, including the early and proactive intervention in order to identify and provide the best level of support possible.

GIRFEC Values and Principles

The GIRFEC framework focuses on a number of common values and principles, adopted by the Trust, which apply across all aspects of working with children and young people. These include:

- **promoting the wellbeing of individual children and young people**: this is based on understanding how children and young people develop in their families and communities and addressing their needs at the earliest possible time;
- **keeping children and young people safe**: emotional and physical safety is fundamental and is wider than child protection;
- **putting the child at the centre**: children and young people should have their views listened to and they should be involved in decisions which affect them;
- **taking a whole child approach**: recognising that what is going on in one part of a child or young person's life can affect many other areas of his or her life;
- **building on strengths and promoting resilience**: using a child or young person's existing networks and support where possible;
- **promoting opportunities and valuing diversity**: children and young people should feel valued in all circumstances and practitioners should create opportunities to celebrate diversity;
- **working in partnership with families**: supporting wherever possible those who know the child or young person well, know what they need, what works well for them and what may not be helpful;
- **supporting informed choice**: supporting children, young people and families in understanding what help is possible and what their choices are;
- **respecting confidentiality and sharing information**: seeking agreement to share information that is relevant and proportionate while safeguarding children and young people's right to confidentiality;

- **promoting the same values across all working relationships**: recognising that respect, patience, honesty, reliability, resilience and integrity are qualities valued by children, young people, their families and colleagues;
- **making the most of bringing together each worker's expertise**: respecting the contribution of others and co-operating with them, recognising that sharing responsibility does not mean acting beyond a worker's competence or responsibilities;

What is Wellbeing?

To help ensure everyone, including children, young people, parents, staff, volunteers and other services have a shared and common understanding of the meaning of wellbeing, the GIRFEC national practice model describes this in a set of indicators. Every child and young person attending the centre programmes needs to be **Safe**, **Healthy**, **Achieving**, **Nurtured**, **Active**, **Respected**, **Responsible** and **Included**. These eight indicators are identified as areas in which children and young people need to progress in order to do well now and in the future and are adopted by the Trust.



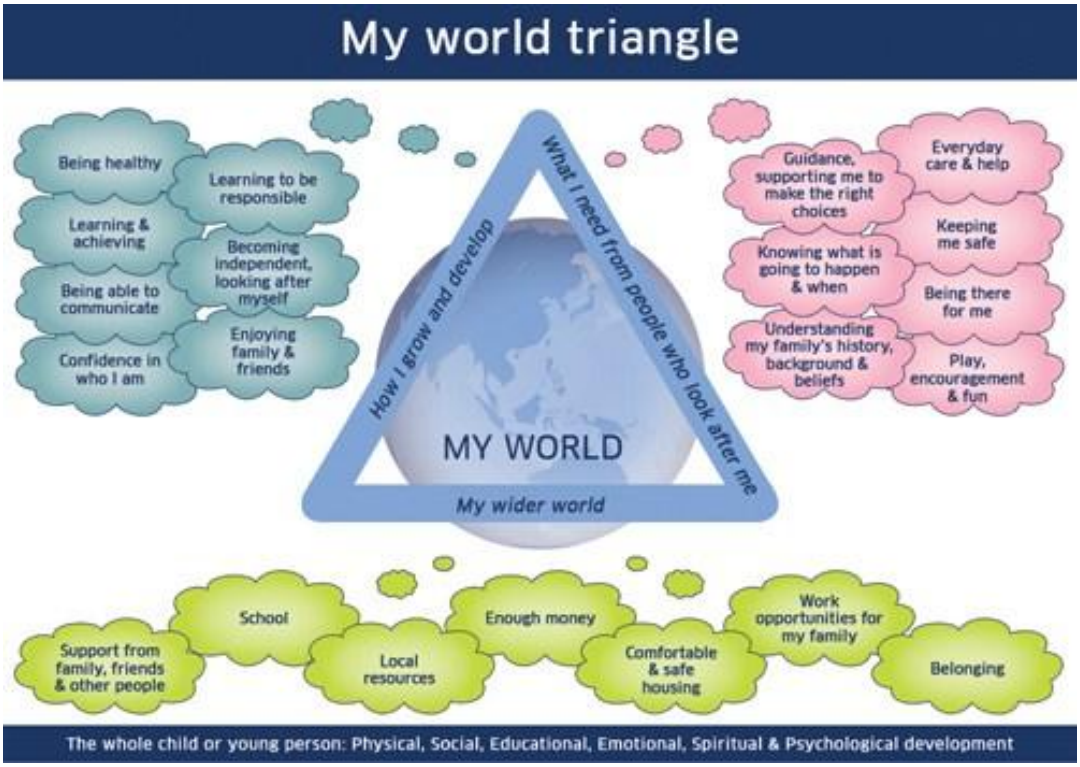
The Five Questions

At each stage of an intervention, staff should ask themselves the following questions:

1. What is getting in the way of this child or young person's well-being?
2. Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
3. What can I do now to help this child or young person?
4. What can the Trust do to help this child or young person?
5. What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

The My World Triangle

Many factors shape children's development throughout childhood. Some factors are inherent such as ability or temperament whilst others are external such as family influences, or social, economic and environmental factors. The My World Triangle provides a mental map to assist staff, children and families explore what is happening in a child's whole world and the likely impact on their wellbeing and development.



The Named Person

The Named Person is a professional within the universal services of health or education. Within the context of this policy, t**he Named Person at the Trust is the Education Principal**. They are the first point of contact for children, families and other agencies when there are concerns about a child. The Named Person is usually the person to initiate action if a child needs extra help, and is critical in supporting early intervention.

The Child's Plan

Where evidence suggests that a co-ordinated plan involving two or more agencies will be necessary, a 'Child's Plan' is drawn up with a particular focus on the risks to the child and the interventions needed to reduce these risks. The Child's Plan comprises a single plan of action and is managed and reviewed through a single meeting structure, even if the child is involved in several processes. The Principal and/or Vice-Principal reviews these plans with the Tutor/Class Teacher, parents, pupil and other agencies where appropriate. These plans are stored securely in the Trust Principal's office.

Reporting a Concern about a child's wellbeing

If a member of staff has a concern about a child's wellbeing (according to the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators) they should:

- Raise with the relevant child's class teacher.
- Complete a Cause of Concern form and share this with the Named Person (i.e. Trust Principal).
- Assess the risks and needs of the child based on the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and My World Triangle (discussed earlier).
- Seek Child's and/or parent's opinion where applicable.
- Class teacher or Named Person to create a child's plan.
- Weekly meetings of Class Teacher and Named Person to assess progress.

See later sections for guidance on record keeping procedures.

CHILD PROTECTION AT THE TRUST/CENTRE

What is Child Protection?

The term child protection means protecting the child from any abuse or neglect. This does not necessarily mean that abuse or neglect has actually taken place, as it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect. Equally, where a child may have been abused or neglected in the past but the risk of future abuse has not been identified, the child and their family may require support and recovery services but not necessarily a Child Protection Plan.

Significant Harm in a Child Protection Context

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time. It is essential that when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm that the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority and not simply the alleged abusive behaviour. Whether the harm suffered, or likely to be suffered, by a child or young person is significant is determined by comparing the child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child.

Forms of Child Abuse and Child Neglect

Both abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Anyone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting or by failing to act to prevent significant harm to the child.

- **Physical abuse** is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person, which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating.
- **Emotional abuse** is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.
- **Sexual abuse** is any act that involve the child in any activity of sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child consented.
- **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 and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing or failing to protect child from physical harm or danger.

The Child Protection Named Person

All teaching, support staff and volunteers have responsibilities towards the children they teach and care for, and should receive relevant training on both wellbeing and child

protection. However, the senior designated contact for all wellbeing and child protection matters shall be the Named Person, which in context of this policy is the **Education Principal**. Their role and responsibility can be summarised as follows:

- Reporting child protection concerns to appropriate agencies outside the centre.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the Trust's safeguarding and child protection procedures and policies.
- Supply new members of staff with an electronic or written copy of the procedures.
- Organising frequent staff briefings and training on child protection.
- Overseeing the planning of any curricular provision designed to give children the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe from all forms of abuse.

Responding to Child Protection Concerns

Teaching staff play a crucial role in the support and protection of children as well as development of their wellbeing. When a member of staff has reason to believe that a child's safety is compromised or likely to suffer significant harm, they must share these concerns with the Names Person (i.e. Education Principal) as soon as possible and must complete a Cause for Concern form. In summary a concern about child abuse may arise in the following circumstances:

- A member of staff has concerns arising from observation of the child's behaviour or appearance or comments the child has made
- A child tells a member of staff they are have been abused or feels unsafe
- A third party expresses concerns to a member of staff; this could be another pupil, a parent or guardian or member of public.

Role of Trust staff to observe, record and report

- **Observe** carefully the child's behaviour.
- **Record** in detail what they have seen and heard. Any signs of physical injury should be described in detail. Any comment by the child concerned or by an adult who might be the abuser, about how the injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used as soon as possible.
- **Report** the suspicions as quickly as possible and on the same working day to the Principal.

Action by the Principal (Named Person)

All cases of alleged or suspected abuse **must be treated seriously**. Some may require an urgent response. If the Principal is certain, or has very good reason to suspect or believe

that a child has been abused or requires protection or is at risk of significant harm, they should contact the appropriate social services stating the concerns clearly and the basis for them. It should always be borne in mind that it is not the Trust's role to investigate the allegations or suspicions, but to gather together what information it has about a child and pass it to the social work department or police. The Principal should collate all relevant information held by the Trust on the child and complete the relevant form, sign and date it and include the reasons for the decision to make or not make a formal child protection referral to the statutory agencies.

Child Protection Plan

When a Child's Plan (under GIRFEC) is converted into a Child Protection Plan, children and their families need to understand clearly what is being done to support them and why. In addition, a Child Protection Plan needs to identify clearly:

- the key people involved and their responsibilities, including the Lead Professional and named practitioners;
- the perceived risks and needs;
- what is required to reduce these risks and meet those needs;
- who is expected to take any tasks forward including parents/carers and the child;
- timescales;
- the agreed outcomes for the child or young person;
- the longer term needs of the child and young person;
- the process of monitoring and review; and
- any contingency plans.

Responsibility is shared for the Child Protection Plan. Each person involved should be clearly identified, and their role and responsibilities set out. To preserve continuity for the child and their parent(s)/carer(s), arrangements should be made to cover the absence through sickness or holidays of key people. All Child Protection Plans, where there are current risks, should have specific cover arrangements built in to make sure that work continues to protect the child.

Information Sharing and Recording

Sharing appropriate information is an essential component of child protection and care activity. To secure the best outcomes for children, staff need to understand when it is appropriate to seek or share information, how much information to share and what to do

with that information. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child are of central importance when making decisions to lawfully share information with or about them.

- Children have a right to express their views and have them taken into account when decisions are made about what should happen to them.
- The reasons why information needs to be shared and particular actions taken should be communicated openly and honestly with children and, where appropriate, their families.
- In general, information will normally only be shared with the consent of the child (depending on age and maturity). However, where there are concerns that seeking consent would increase the risk to a child or others, or prejudice any subsequent investigation, information may need to be shared without consent.
- At all times, information shared should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know with a record of who it was shared with and for what purpose noted.

Child Protection Concerns should only be shared with the Named Person (Principal).

Record Keeping

Any Cause for Concern should be kept in an individual folder for each child, separate from the child's education record and clearly marked Confidential and held in accordance with the data protection arrangements. These must be stored securely in the Principal's office. They should be shared with other staff on a need to know basis only. Records should include note of:

- child's name and any other name the child has or is known by;
- child's date of birth;
- any unique identifying number; all pupils in schools in Scotland have an identity number, known as the Scottish Candidate Number (SCN);
- details of the cause for concern(s);
- dates of staff contacts with children and families;
- the child's views and emotional well-being;
- actions and decisions and the rationale behind them;
- outcomes of interventions;
- the Child's Plan (or Child Protection Plan, where the child is assessed as being at risk of significant harm); and
- a chronology of significant events involving the child and their family/carers.

RECRUITMENT OF STAFF, TRAINING AND GENERAL GUIDANCE

Recruitment of Staff

The Trust recruitment process requires that all potential candidates complete an application form along with suitable references, qualifications as well as agree to being registered on the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme. The PVG Scheme is designed to create a fair and consistent system that will help to ensure that those who have regular contact with children and protected adults through paid and unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour. It requires those who wish to work with children, or vulnerable adults, to be registered.

Appointment of Governors

The Trust must ensure that any new appointment is made under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme and that they are registered Scheme members.

Staff and Volunteer Training

Training in child protection is essential for everyone involved in managing or has contact with children. They require to:

- have information, advice and training to make them aware of risks to children and understand their particular responsibilities in keeping children safe;
- have ready access to appropriate, relevant and up-to-date guidance that tells them what action to take if they are concerned about a child's safety or welfare;
- understand what, how and when to record and share information to keep children safe, and be able to do so;
- be given information, advice and training to help them understand key child protection processes and their roles and responsibilities;
- know who they can seek advice from if they need it.

Guidance on Staff Interaction with Children

Allegations about improper behaviour by staff towards pupils must always be taken seriously and at least a preliminary investigation made. Staff should always be wary of allowing situations to develop which could lead to allegations of impropriety.

- Physical contact should only be for the purpose of care, instruction, health and safety or restraint;

- Avoid any physical horseplay with a child, or any other actions another adult or child might misinterpret, no matter how innocent or well-intentioned the actions might be;
- Staff should always be able to justify resort to physical contact in any situation;
- Demeaning remarks should never be made to or in the presence of children and young people. Remarks about a child's physical characteristics or development, or suggestive or derogatory comments could fall into this category. Staff should avoid making unfavourable comparisons to a child and 'picking on' particular children.
- As far as possible, staff should avoid unnecessary one-to-one meetings with pupils, although it is recognised that such meetings are an inherent part of School life. Where it is necessary to discuss something of a confidential nature or, for example, to provide individual tuition etc., then if possible, such interviews/sessions should take place in a room with visual access or the door open and with another adult in an adjacent area or within earshot. Never have the door locked and, where possible, maintain a gap/barrier between you and the child and allow free access to the door.

Use of Photographs and Video of Children

Staff should take all reasonable steps to safeguard pupils when they are being photographed and/or videoed. They provide opportunities to celebrate the Trust activities, pupils' achievements and for specific educational purposes. Common sense is required when implementing this guidance. All decisions should reflect the best interests of the pupil.

- **Notification** - parents and children should be informed they may, from time to time, be photographed. This could be for one of the following reasons: Educational purposes, media coverage of an event or achievement or promotional purposes e.g. website or publication
- **Permission** - specific consent should be sought and where appropriate, children should be asked their views. Where a child is able to provide an informed view (on the principle of other legal rights, generally a child over 12 may be deemed to have legal capacity to do so) this should be taken into account.

Publishing on the Internet and/or Websites of personal information that could identify a pupil should never be included e.g. home address, e-mail address, telephone number of a child

Allegations of Abuse against Staff

Any information, suggestion, allegation or complaint against a member of staff about possible child abuse must be taken seriously. The Named Person (Principal) should be informed immediately and they in turn should inform the Chair of Governors.

- **Establishing the Facts – Unfounded Allegations**
  Any information which may suggest inappropriate behaviour or an allegation of abuse against a member of staff should be tested for any basis of fact. The basic facts should be established (not investigated). Where the information does not suggest a criminal offence, the context of the interaction between the member of staff and child and the intent of the member of staff should inform the initial assessment; if after due consideration the conclusion is that the allegation is completely unfounded, the decision to take the matter no further should be recorded, together with the reasons for it, and the information placed in a confidential file. This is securely stored in the Principal's office.

- **Establishing the Facts – Where the Information Suggests Possible Child Abuse**
  Where it is clear that the initial information suggests a criminal offence this guidance should be followed and advice taken by the Principal and the Police before anyone is questioned. Inter-agency child protection procedures and the Trust's disciplinary procedures should be invoked and the Police asked to investigate. If the position is unclear, the basic facts should be established using open non-leading questions and a decision made as to what action the Trust needs to take. Should there be reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child is at risk of being abused, has been abused or groomed by a member of staff or volunteer, the same procedures should be followed as for other allegations or suspicions of abuse. If there is any doubt the Principal should seek advice from the statutory agencies.

Should the allegations against the member of staff be proven, parents should be informed of the facts and of the action taken by the Trust. If, after Police and social work investigation, there is felt to be insufficient evidence for prosecution, or where a prosecution does not result in a conviction, disciplinary action against the member of staff may still be taken, if the member of staff is considered to represent a risk to a child or children or their behaviour has caused concern.

In cases where the member of staff against whom the allegation is made is the Named Person (i.e. Principal), a report should be made to the Chair of Governors. It will be the responsibility of the governors to consider the matter and take appropriate decisions as well as following the principles in this guidance.

Referrals to the PVG Scheme

One of the key aims of the PVG Scheme is to help to ensure that those who have regular contact with children and protected adults through paid and unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour. It seeks to remove opportunities for those who may be unsuitable from moving undetected within, or across, the workforce. Harmful behaviour is not restricted to unlawful criminal conduct. It includes other forms of conduct which may not be recognised as a criminal offence but nonetheless might result in harm, or risk of harm, to vulnerable groups such as the inappropriate use of restraint or inappropriate relationships with clients. Where an employer takes disciplinary action to remove an individual from regulated work as a result of harmful behaviour towards a child or vulnerable adult, then they have a duty to refer the individual to the PVG Scheme so that consideration can be given to whether that individual should be barred from any kind of regulated work with vulnerable groups.