

GPA's CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
FOR GREEK SCHOOLS, YOUTH CLUBS AND GPA CENTRE

The Greek Parents Association (GPA) is a voluntary organization registered with the Friendly Societies No 63 SA. The GPA has established and is responsible for the promotion and running of Greek Community schools.

The GPA recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004.

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives – including domestic violence, substance misuse, bullying, child prostitution and ritualistic abuse. We aim to create a safe environment within which children and young people can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.

For the purposes of these policies and procedure children are any persons under the age of 18 years, or those whom are considered vulnerable.

This child protection policy was adopted by the GPA executive on 16 March 2006 and is reviewed annually. The next review is to be carried out on 08 March 2016.

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers, visitors and school committee members of the GPA schools. We will make them available to the parents and carers of the children and young people who attend our schools. Through them, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected.
- Staff is aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns.
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures.
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training.

Role of designated teacher

The child protection designated teacher should be the Head or another member of staff appointed by the Head and all members of staff should be aware of who this person is and what their role is.

Each school should have arrangements in place for when the designated teacher is absent.

The designated officer should act as a source of advice and coordinate action within the school over child protection issues. In order to be effective, the designated member of staff should be offered appropriate child protection training.

The designated teacher should be the first person staff and volunteers report cases to and it is the responsibility of the designated teacher to discuss the situation with the GPA Child Protection Officer or his/her deputy who would inform the relevant agencies, such as Children and Families (Children's Service) or Police.

The designated teacher should also deal with allegations made against staff and volunteers.

The designated teacher should ensure that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate child protection training.

These guidelines are divided into the following sections:

1. Recognising signs of abuse
2. What to do with your concerns
3. Allegations made against staff
4. Safe recruitment
5. Good practice
6. Safeguarding children
7. Health & Safety
8. Insurance
9. Wistleblowing
10. Code of behaviour – for all Staff and Volunteers.
11. Contacts

1. **RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE**

It can often be difficult to recognize abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger.

If you are worried about a child it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention; this is called fabricated illness, or Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising in or around the mouth, on the back, buttocks or rectal area
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child •
- Bites
- Burn and scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars of different sizes or ages

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually co-exists with other forms of abuse.

Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of someone else. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention-seeking behaviour
- Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Excessively withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness; a 'frozen watchfulness'
- Despondency
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse. Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill-health
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food

- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Inappropriate clothing for conditions

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative, or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, any sexual activity – contact or non-contact – with a child under the age of 13 is a crime. Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Allegations or disclosure
- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted diseases; urinary infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; inappropriately sexualised play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Repeated sleep disturbances through nightmares and/or wetting

Older children and young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self-mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/peer/relationship problems

2. WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CONCERNS?

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;
- Do not attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. **Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret;**
- Inform your designated child protection officer as soon as possible;
- Make a written record of the incident or events.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated child protection officer, who will help you to decide what to do.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with social workers where the child normally lives and the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT). It is the responsibility of the designated child protection officer to make a referral to these agencies, but if you judge the situation to be an emergency and/or you require urgent advice in the absence of the designated officer, you must report your concerns directly.

The Children's Service also employs Child Protection Advisors (CPAs), who you can contact in office hours for further specialist guidance.

The Duty social worker or CPA will advise you when or whether to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns. If they decide to pursue a child protection investigation, you should:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the child safe;
- Attend a child protection conference if you are invited. You will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child, which is why it is important to keep records of your concerns;

- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.

3. ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

We are aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse may be made against members of our staff. They can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has actually taken place;
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the child is unable to recognize that the situation and the people are different;
- Children can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else;
- Some children know how powerful an allegation can be; if they are angry with you about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out;
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

The Designated teacher should bring all allegations to the notice of the GPA child protection officer immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against the Designated Teacher, the complainant should inform directly the GPA Child Protection Officer.

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser;
- Contact the Children's Service Referral & Assessment Team relevant to where the child lives.
- Contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/officer in charge of allegations;
- Irrespective of any investigation by social workers or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure; the member of staff will either be asked to carry out other duties away from the school setting or be suspended pending the completion of the investigation.

- Consider whether the person has access to children anywhere else and whether those organizations or groups need to be informed;
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy meeting.

All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished. There should also be a review of organisational practice and if necessary additional measures put in place to prevent a similar thing happening again

4. SAFE RECRUITMENT

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:

- All prospective staff (paid and unpaid) should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two referees;
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should have a new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure before they start employment with you – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed; for those members of staff who have recently arrived to UK from Cyprus or Greece, they will be obliged to produce the equivalent checks.
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour;
- Nobody should start work before references have been received. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment;
- All appointments to work with children should be subject to an agreed probationary period;
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description;

- These guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

5. GOOD PRACTICE

1. Every organization working with children should have a designated child protection teacher who must undergo child protection training. It is the responsibility of this person to make themselves available for consultation by staff, volunteers, visitors, children and their families and to report all incidents to the GPA Child protection Officer.
2. All staff are responsible for children while on these premises and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to;
3. All staff working with children should receive supervision from a more experienced staff member and should attend basic child protection training.(refresher courses every 3 years)
4. No member of staff should be left alone with a child where they cannot be observed by others;
5. Under no circumstances should visitors be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present;
6. Staff should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless notification has been received;
7. If a child is not collected after a session it is reasonable to wait approximately half an hour for a parent or carer to arrive. If the parent or carer or other identified persons cannot be contacted, staff should contact the GPA Child Protection Officer for advice.

6. Outings & Trips

1. All vehicles hired for outings must be insured, roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts;
2. All drivers should travel with at least one escort. Drivers and escorts should have up to date DBS checks and been subject to appropriate

recruitment procedures. All drivers and escorts should agree to abide by these guidelines;

3. Roll call will be taken at the start of a journey and again before commencing the return journey; if travelling in more than one vehicle, children will be encouraged to travel in the same vehicle there and back;
4. Staff accompanying trips will carry the contact numbers for the home organization and emergency services in the event of an alert being necessary;
5. If a child goes missing while on a trip, staff should instigate an immediate search. If the child cannot be found within half an hour, the appropriate security staff and the police should be notified;
6. If, having notified security staff and the police, the child cannot be found; the parents/carers of the child will be notified immediately;
7. The care of the remaining children is paramount. It is imperative that they return to the home site as quickly as possible, while a senior staff member remains at the visit site to co-ordinate contact between security staff and the child's parents/carers.

Use of premises by other organisations

- In the event that a room or rooms on the premises are used by other organizations, we will ensure that children and young people are supervised at all times.

7. Health & Safety

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits. We confirm that project premises, play equipment and play areas are safe and suitable.

8. Insurance

We confirm that we have relevant insurance in place.

GREEK PARENTS ASSOCIATION (GPA)

9. WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR ITS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

We aim to develop a culture of openness.

Consequently, it is fundamental that any concerns, which you may have about suspected malpractice within the GPA, are aired. It is clearly in all our interests to ensure that any malpractice does not occur.

To this end, we have devised a policy and procedure to cover the airing of genuine concerns which you may have about suspected malpractice within the organisation.

The policy and procedure is intended to conform to the guidance in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

PIDA encourages you to raise concerns internally in the first instance.

The policy and procedure is not incorporated by reference into your Contract of Employment.

Policy

This applies to all permanent and short term employees of the GPA. It also applies to all volunteers, secondees, external consultants, contractors and agency personnel whilst at the GPA.

Malpractice includes (but is not confined to): conduct likely to prejudice the standing of the GPA, breaches of internal rules and regulations, criminal offences or breaches of civil law, endangerment of the health and safety of any person, discrimination, harassment, environmental damage and the deliberate concealment of any malpractice.

A qualifying disclosure under PIDA is one which, in the reasonable belief of the worker making the disclosure, suggests that one or more of the above has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.

PIDA protects you in making a disclosure to the GPA where the disclosure meets the requirements set out above and is made in good faith.

In raising a malpractice concern, you may assume that only those GPA staff investigating the malpractice concern will know your identity. There may be circumstances, however, in which we may be required to reveal your identity. If this is the case, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that you suffer no detriment.

If you raise a malpractice concern, you will be taken seriously and will be treated fairly and justly by the GPA. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no person under our control engages in victimisation in any form.

Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone deliberately raising false and malicious allegations.

Procedure

1. Raising a concern: if you have a malpractice concern, you should inform your Head Teacher of the concern. Your Head Teacher will then raise the matter with the GPA Coordinator. If the concern involves your Head, or for any reason you would prefer them not to be told, you may raise the matter directly with the GPA Coordinator.

2. If you feel you need to take advice before doing so, you may contact the independent charity, Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609. They provide free, confidential legal advice on whistleblowing matters. But remember that there is no “gateway” to allow you to disclose any confidential information to them.

3. If you have disclosed your worry and you are concerned either by the response or lack of response, or if you feel unable to talk to the above mentioned persons for whatever reason, you can contact the GPA Council Chairman, Panayiotis Yiacomou, 39 Winkfield Road, London, N22 5RP, telephone 07939 589759, email pybeaconsfield@aol.com or if relevant, a body prescribed for the purpose under PIDA. A list of such bodies, the matters for which they have been prescribed and the relevant test can be found at www.fsa.gov.uk/whistle/.

4. Fact find: as the person raising the malpractice concern, you may be accompanied at any fact finding meeting(s) by a fellow employee of your choice who may be a friend or colleague or a Staff Consultative Committee representative. Alternatively, you may be accompanied by a full time officer employed by a Trade Union. You may confer with your companion during the

course of the meeting and he/she may address the meeting but may not answer questions on your behalf. Individual(s) under investigation may also be accompanied on the same basis. The GPA Coordinator may be accompanied by any member of the Executive Committee.

5. Investigation: the Ethics Officer will conduct a full investigation with the objective of establishing whether malpractice has occurred. The format of the investigation may vary depending upon the circumstances.

6. Findings: the coordinator will communicate the findings of the investigation to: a) you as the person raising the malpractice concern; b) the individual(s) under investigation; and, if appropriate c) those members of GPA management or external authorities who need to consider whether action should be taken on the basis of the findings.

10. Code of behaviour - for all staff and volunteers

1. Staff and volunteers **should not** spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others. Meetings with individual children should be avoided or take place within sight of others. If privacy is needed, the door should remain open and other staff or volunteers should be aware of the meeting.

2. Staff and volunteers are **advised not to** make unnecessary physical contact with children. However, there may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing comfort at times of distress, or physical support in contact sports or similar. In all such cases contact should only take place with the consent of the child.

3. It is not good practice to take children alone in a car, however short the journey. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents, (or guardians) and the person in charge of the GPA event.

4. Staff and volunteers **should not** meet children outside of organised activities, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the parents and the person in charge of the GPA event.

5. Staff and volunteers should not start an investigation or question anyone after an allegation or concern has been raised. This is the job of the authorities. You should just record the facts and report these to a designated person

6. Staff and volunteers should **never** (even in fun)

- Initiate or engage in sexually provocative conversations or activity.
- Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged
- Do things of personal nature for children that they can do themselves
- Allow any allegations made by a child go without being reported and addressed, or either trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues
- Make promise to keep any disclosure confidential from relevant authorities

7. Staff or volunteers should not show favouritism to any one child, nor should they issue or threaten any form of physical punishment

You must

8. Staff and volunteers **must respect** children's rights to privacy and encourage and adults to feel comfortable enough to report attitudes or behaviour they do not like.

9. Staff and volunteers at GPA events **will be expected** to act with discretion with regards to their personal relationships. They should ensure their personal relationships do not affect their leadership role within the organisation

10. Staff and volunteers **must refrain** from consuming alcohol for a period of at least 12 hours prior to assuming responsibility for any child or children; or if they have been identified as a duty officer for a y period of time

11. All staff and volunteers **should be aware** of the procedures for reporting concerns or incidents, and should familiarise themselves with the contact details of the designated persons

12. If a member of staff or volunteer finds himself or herself the subject of inappropriate affection or attention from a child, **they should** make others aware of this

13. If a member of staff or volunteer has any concerns relating to the welfare of a child in their care, be it concerns about actions/behaviours or another

staff member or volunteer or concerns based on any conversation with the child; particularly where the child makes an allegation, they should report this to a designated person

Our child protection policy is reviewed annually. It was last reviewed on **14/01/2016** and is due to be reviewed on **13/01/2017**.

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