

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

1. All staff must recognise the unique status of children. There is a special need to respect them as individuals and protect them in their vulnerability, and accept that those who exploit or abuse children deserve profound condemnation. Children matter in their own right and are to be taken seriously. The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under eighteen for most purposes.
2. All staff must foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness and operate within a carefully thought-out framework of good policy and practice (refer to Teacher's Handbook) which will ensure that children are safeguarded and nurtured physically and emotionally as well as spiritually.
3. The highest professional standards will therefore be maintained in all educational, pastoral and recreational situations.
4. Jameah Girls Academy accepts the principle focus of the Child Protection Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount.
5. Allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and appropriate steps will be taken.
6. Jameah Girls Academy will collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with child abuse. It will not conduct investigations on its own.
7. All candidates for teaching and other positions at the school will be asked to apply to the Criminal Records Bureau for an Enhanced Disclosure.

**CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER: *MRS MOHSINA PATEL* (Head Teacher)**

**DEPUTY CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER: *MS KANIZE REHMAN* (KS2 Co-ordinator)**

*All JGA staff must undergo Child Protection training (Level 2) every three years.*

**DATE OF LAST CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING: *Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010***

**RENEWAL DATE: *December 2013.***

*From November 2010 all employees of JGA will also be registered with the ISA.*

## **Implementing the Policy**

# **What is child abuse and why do we need to be concerned about it?**

### *Definitions of Abuse*

These definitions of abuse are used by every local authority in England and Wales. The four categories of abuse are:

**NEGLECT:** The persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health and development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

**PHYSICAL INJURY:** Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependant and/or developmentally immature.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Actual or likely severe adverse effect of the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment.

Where abuse occurs, it is usually perpetrated by someone known to and trusted by the child, often a family member. The incidence of abuse by someone unknown to the child is extremely low. It should not be assumed that children from disadvantaged families are necessarily at greater risk than those from prosperous backgrounds. Child abuse is, sadly, spread throughout society and outward respectability is no guarantee that a child is at less risk.

### *The Recognition of Abuse*

Sometimes children who are being abused decide to tell someone (disclose) what is happening and ask for help. Sometimes it becomes apparent to adults either through signs of bodily injury, emotional distress or a change in patterns of behaviour, that all is not well with a child. These circumstances must be taken seriously and professional help must be sought. It is not the responsibility of members of the general public and those who work with children to diagnose abuse, that is the responsibility of qualified professionals (those working within Social Services, the NSPCC and the Police).

## ***Responsibilities***

All staff are legally bound by law to protect children (under the age of 18) from abuse.

If staff suspect or a child informs them that she is suffering from abuse or any kind of bullying the staff must immediately share the concern with the Head Teacher, Mrs.Mohsina Patel.

All concerns MUST be entered in the care and concerns diary kept in the office.

The staff should not release a pupil to any other than the authorised adult.

## **What to do if you are told about or suspect child abuse**

### ***How to react when a child wants to talk about abuse***

- It is important to reassure a child or adult that it is right to talk about it, and that you will take everything they say seriously.
- It is wrong to promise confidentiality.
- The following are suggestions which may be helpful rather than precise guidance.

### **General Points**

- Reassure the child that you are taking what is being said to you very seriously
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Don't prejudge anything
- Tell the child you will need to tell someone else- don't promise confidentiality
- Whatever a child may have done, he/she is not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware the child may have been threatened, intimidated or made to promise secrecy
- Never push for more information than is immediately given
- Hear the allegation clearly, make a written note of it afterwards, refer the case correctly.

### **Helpful things to say:**

- "Thank you for telling me this"
- "I will have to share this with someone else who can help"
- "You needn't tell me any more about it, I've understood what you're telling me"
- "I am glad you have told me, it is not your fault, I will help you"

### **Avoid saying:**

- “Why didn’t you tell anyone before?”
- “I can’t believe it”
- “Are you sure this is true?”
- “Why, how, when, who, where?”
- “Don’t tell anyone else”
- “This is dreadful.”

### **Concluding the conversation:**

- Reassure the child that she has done the right thing to tell you
- You are taking what has been said very seriously
- You will tell someone who can help, straight away
- They are not to worry or feel they’ve done anything wrong.

It is helpful to note if the child has told anyone else. The point of the conversation is to establish the barest account of the allegation. You do not have to believe it or disbelieve it, just note it accurately and then refer the case onwards correctly.

### ***What to do next***

**INVESTIGATION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES, THE NSPCC OR THE POLICE (THE LEAD AGENCY)**

**1. If the allegation is specific and names names, the case must be referred to Social Services, the Police or NSPCC within 24 hours.**

- If you have reason to fear the child will suffer further significant harm, the referral must be made at once. It is for the professionals to decide whether the child is at risk or not. They may well have other information to hand on the child and they are authorised and trained to investigate the case correctly and in complete confidence. If you have to make such a referral, notify the Head teacher, Mrs. Mohsina Patel. The trustees will then be notified promptly.

**2. If the allegation is unclear or confused, just accept this and don’t try to question the child further.**

- Note what has been said and then take advice immediately.
- You should inform the Head teacher, Mrs. Mohsina Patel of the allegation and consult her.
- The right thing may be to go on observing the child carefully for a while until a clearer picture emerges; but it may be right to make a formal referral to Social Services. Professional advice is VITAL.
- You must consult-you must not do nothing.

The Children Act states that where a Local Authority (Social Services Department) suspects that a child in their area is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the Authority shall make enquiries as to the necessary action to promote the child's welfare. *You must not do anything to delay, hinder or prevent a Local Authority from exercising that duty.*

You do not have to ask permission from a child's parents, or even inform them before making a referral to one of the Lead Agencies (Police, Social Services, NSPCC). This is for the Lead Agency to handle.

They will advise you of the correct action to take when the referral is made and they may also be consulted if you are unsure how to proceed. Remember, the key principle is to make the child's well-being the first concern. This can be hard on any adults involved but this must not prevent referrals being made when this is called for. The Lead Agencies are responsible for investigating cases fairly, justly and confidentially.

### **3. Complaints made by Parents and Carers.**

If a clear allegation of abuse is made by parents or carers against any school employee, they should be immediately advised to notify one of the Lead Agencies. This will normally be Social Services. The Lead Agency will then advise on the correct action to be taken. At the same time, the school's Child Protection Representative- the Head Teacher, should be advised of the situation.