

## Domestic Abuse, Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage NMS 20.1 – 20.6

This policy should be read alongside other GGCA policies including:

- Safeguarding Children Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality
- GDPR Privacy Notice

**The UK's cross-government definition of domestic abuse is:** Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This abuse can encompass but is not limited to

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

The Serious Crime Act 2015 section 76 created a new offence of "controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship". The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 extended provisions to help stop domestic abuse and created the new offence of "causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult". This Act was amended in 2012 by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012 to include 'causing or allowing serious physical harm (equivalent to grievous bodily harm) to a child or vulnerable adult'.

Where domestic abuse is taking place in a child's home the child is at risk of harm, whether they witness the violence or not. This may take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. At GGCA Kids R Us we ensure that if there are any signs or symptoms that domestic abuse may be occurring we act without haste and follow our main child protection policy.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age, social background, religion, sexuality or ethnicity and domestic abuse can happen at any stage in a relationship.

Staff are required to look out for the signs and symptoms of domestic violence. These signs may include:

- Visible signs of injury or repeated injury with unlikely explanations.
- Change in the manner of dress: for example, clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries
- Changes in behaviour of the adult(s) and child – e.g. the abused adult may become withdrawn and/or quiet, show low levels of self-esteem, show signs of being anxious, fearful, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed etc
- One adult being visibly worried about what their partner may say in a certain situation (e.g. if the child has become dirty or injured at nursery)
- One adult becoming scared of their partner
- Adults becoming isolated from their friends or family
- Signs of abuse in the child (as per the main safeguarding policy).
- Partner or ex-partner stalking employee/parent in or around the community association, this may also include excessive calls or messages
- Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule
- Frequent lateness or absence from work

We will raise awareness of domestic abuse within the GGCA by:

- Sharing information external organisations that can offer support with incidents of domestic violence. The information will be displayed in visible spaces within the setting
- Providing all staff with the telephone number for the free 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline ( 0808 2000 247)
- Sharing our domestic abuse policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding policies with all stakeholders

If we are concerned that domestic violence is happening within a home and a child is at risk we will follow our safeguarding policies reporting procedures (see Safeguarding and Child Protection policy).

Where incidents of domestic are shared by an employee or parent/carer we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

### **Honour based Violence**

'Honour' based violence (HBV) is a type of domestic abuse which occurs in the name of so called 'honour'. Some families believe that certain actions bring shame on the family and may react with punishment. This may be rejecting a forced marriage, having a relationship not approved by the family, wearing the wrong clothing or wearing makeup. This can happen in families from a variety of cultures and countries and also happens within the UK.

Signs of HBV may include changes in behaviour of the person undergoing the violence, changes in how they dress or act and also in comments they make. If signs of HBV are present in a parent or staff member within the GGCA then we will act and follow our safeguarding and child protection policy to keep children safe in the environment as well as seeking support for the adult involved.

Where incidents of HBV are shared by an employee or parent/carer we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

### **Forced Marriage**

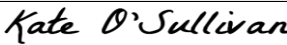

We are aware arranged marriages are part of some cultural practices. We also recognise there is a clear distinction between a marriage in which the both parties are willing and able to give an informed consent to, and a marriage which is forced. Forced marriage is a criminal offence.

A forced marriage is defined as 'a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced'.

If we suspect or receive information about a forced marriage being planned then we will follow our safeguarding reporting procedures. If the person concerned is under the age of 18 years then we will report the incident to the children's social care team.

If we believe a person is in imminent danger of being forced into a marriage we may contact the Police and the Governments Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) on 020 7008 0151.

This policy was adopted on 13.10.2025 and will be reviewed on or before 13.10.2026

Name and Position	Signed	Date
Kate O'Sullivan Community Association Manager		13.10.2025
Olive Frances Vice Chair of Trustees		13.10.2025