



# **Anjuman – E – Gujarati Muslim Society (AGMS) Safeguarding Policy Statement**



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AGMS has the long term aim of establishing itself as a hub for the community. Thus far this vision is being realised every day with the growth and size of its congregation and service provision. The huge range and diversity of the congregation and service users requires that AGMS has written guidelines and procedures pertaining to Safeguarding that are held centrally and can be accessed and monitored at any given time.

We at AGMS believe that everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstance may be. As such, we believe that each of us has a responsibility to uphold these individual rights. Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. This is inclusive of all service provisions on site at AGMS and those off site.

Safeguarding has always been built into the processes and procedures of the individual service offerings at AGMS but as the organisation is growing, we believe that a centralised approach will help in the delivery of safeguarding and ensure a uniform, standardised approach which can be closely monitored and become part of the cognitive behaviour of all personnel and voluntary staff.

AGMS takes the safety and well-being of all people very seriously, thus making safeguarding of paramount importance. The young and vulnerable under Islamic principles and guidelines have a special right to be treated with care.

The Islamic ethos of the masjid makes safeguarding an integral part of behaviours and communication. AGMS Staff at all levels, including paid, unpaid and volunteers will be expected to uphold and maintain safeguarding at all times. The Executive Committee will endeavour to monitor, enforce and review the practice of safeguarding across the entire organisation, setting the precedence at the most senior level.

AGMS will use official Government guidance and those introduced under UK legislation, with particular focus on established procedures, to make certain that safeguarding is given the importance that it deserves. This will be practiced through regular staff training (internal and external), monitoring, reviews and regular reporting, audits (scheduled and unscheduled), incorporated into recruitment processes, operational procedures and feedback mechanisms.

As a masjid, we recognise that abuse takes place anywhere. This makes it difficult to identify or categorically state that one is being abused. We will encourage staff and service users to come forth to raise any concerns in a fully private and confidential set up. A relationship of trust will be established and nurtured so anybody within or external to the organisation will be encouraged and empowered to raise any issue without fear.

The aim of this Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document is to encourage best safeguarding practice pertaining to all children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where necessary, the document differentiates between the specific needs of children and vulnerable adults. Otherwise the document is aimed to incorporate all three groups of vulnerable people.

The Safeguarding Policy Statement and Procedures will be subject to annual review or as and when there is a change in circumstance such as legislation prompting amendments.

**This policy is applicable for members of the public who attend the Masjid Zeenatul Islam for the five daily prayers.**

A separate policy is created to protect children who attend evening and weekend classes at Madrasah Zeenatul Islam: **Madrasah Zeenatul Islam - Child Protection Statement and Child Protection Policy**

## **Safeguarding**

Anjuman – E – Gujarati Muslim Society has a diverse group of people attending the mosque and centre to undertake various activities. This Safeguarding document will set out guidance on how to uphold best practice.

We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society and communities. AGMS has a duty of care and we aim to fulfil our obligations and uphold the rights of our community, particularly those who attend or support AGMS. This is further extended by protecting those who use on-line services that AGMS operates.

What is Safeguarding?

- It is protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.
- It is to ensure that people are enabled to get access to the service that they require being fully supported and safe from harm.
- It is treating people the same no matter what their circumstances.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare includes preventing impairment of health or development. Providing optimum life chances to all children, young people and vulnerable adults.

As a masjid and community centre, AGMS can carry out many actions and activities that will uphold safeguarding principles.

- Employ people who are trustworthy as paid / unpaid / voluntary staff.
- Carry out DBS checks of all personnel that will have direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Provide relevant and adequate training to all personnel.
- Establish and maintain close relationships with authorities and other organisations such as the Police, Schools, Social Services, Children's Services, and local authorities etc. to share relevant information.
- Build-in regular checks into each process from conception to execution in order to establish and uphold safeguarding.

We must always remember that 'anyone can abuse'. Therefore, nobody is exempted from adherence to the Safeguarding processes including criminal checks and prosecution.

## Religious Services

Congregational prayers take place five times a day at AGMS, along with other religious services. The number of people attending varies depending on the time of prayer, the day and season. The number of accessible prayer halls is also dependent on size of congregation. For the five daily prayers fewer halls are available whereas for Friday prayers more space is required. People from all walks of life pray at AGMS. Parents often bring their children to certain prayers which is actively encouraged and catered for.

It is during the congregational prayers, and especially Friday prayers, that the myriad of people is more apparent. Adults with special needs or circumstances which are noticeable are given allocated prayer areas to keep them safe, attendees with less obvious needs are encouraged to notify a steward so they can be cared for appropriately, Stewarding teams are setup to assist and direct people.

Each space is assessed for safety and areas are allocated accordingly. These areas are always reviewed to ensure suitability to changing needs such as the growing size of the congregation. Regular checks, risk assessments, health and safety, maintenance and facilities are all assessed regularly, especially when dealing with large numbers of the public.

## The Designated Person

AGMS has appointed **Hafez Jabir Khalifa as the Designated Safeguarding officer.**

His role is to:

- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and ensure that he keeps up to date with training on safeguarding.
- Ensure that all staff are briefed on what to do if they have concerns.
- Know how to report concerns to the Agencies and take responsibility to do so when concerns about a child arise.
- Provide advice and guidance to staff and be prepared to seek advice and guidance from agencies and others if they themselves are unsure of what to do.
- Attend any meetings in respect of safeguarding matters relating to AGMS.
- Ensure that all newly-appointed staff and volunteers, teaching and non-teaching, are immediately informed about the safeguarding policy and their duties within it.
- Provide a briefing for all staff at least annually to update them on the importance of child protection and any new issues, and remind them of internal procedures.
- Support the development of good safeguarding practices.
- Be aware of how allegations of abuse are investigated by the Social Care Department of the Local Authority and the Police.
- Review this policy on an annual basis.

## Identifying / Recognising Abuse

Abuse takes shape in many forms. Children, young people and adults can fall victim to any type of abuse. Identifying abuse is not always easy. Some signs may be more obvious whereas others less so. More than one symptom is common and prevails when a person is being abused.

### Signs of abuse to a vulnerable adult

#### Physical abuse:

- Multiple bruising
- Fractures
- Burns
- Bed sores
- Fear
- Depression
- Unexplained weight loss
- Assault (can be intentional or reckless)

#### Emotional abuse:

- Fear
- Depression
- Confusion
- Loss of sleep
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behaviour
- Deprivation of liberty could be false imprisonment.
- Aggressive shouting causing fear of violence in a public place may be an offence against

#### Neglect:

- Malnutrition
- Untreated medical problems
- Bed sores
- Confusion
- Over-sedation
- Deprivation of meals may constitute "willful neglect"

#### Sexual abuse:

- Loss of sleep
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behaviour
- Bruising
- Soreness around the genitals
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear

- A preoccupation with anything sexual
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Rape — e.g. a male member of staff having sex with a Mental Health client

#### **Financial Abuse:**

- Unexplained withdrawals from the bank
- Unusual activity in the bank accounts
- Unpaid bills
- Unexplained shortage of money
- Reluctance on the part of the person with responsibility for the funds to provide basic food and clothes etc.
- Theft
- Institutional Abuse
- Inflexible and non-negotiable systems and routines e.g. daily routines, for example: set bedtimes and/or deliberate waking.
- Lack of consideration of dietary requirements
- Name calling; inappropriate ways of addressing people Lack of adequate physical care — an unkempt appearance Dirty clothing and bed linen.
- Lack of personal clothing and possessions.
- One commode used by many people and people left on commode/ toilet for long periods.
- Unwelcoming, stark surroundings, lack of stimulation.
- Inappropriate use of nursing and medical procedures.
- Lack of individualised care plans and failure to comply with care plans.
- Ritualised or rigid care practices.
- Inappropriate use of power, control, restriction or confinement.
- Failure to access health care, dentistry services etc.
- Inappropriate use of medication.
- Misuse of residents' finances or communal finances.
- Dangerous moving and handling practices. Failure to record incidents or concerns.

Isolated signs do not necessarily indicate abuse. These symptoms may occur without abuse. However, if many signs are apparent and a noticeable trend has been observed then the Safeguarding Officer must be notified. Abuse is a highly sensitive matter thus the individual's right to privacy should be upheld and respected at all times. The matter should not be discussed with any other parties. The Safeguarding Officer will take the appropriate action following an investigation.

## REPORTING ABUSE PROCEDURES

A Service User or member of staff may report abuse. How abuse is reported depends on the different situations, profile of the victim - including age of victim, mental capacity of victim, where the alleged abuse occurred, who instigated reporting of abuse, nature of abuse etc.

### How to react to abuse committed against a child or young person

There are many ways you can be alerted to abuse. Teachers within the Madrasah or personnel within AGMS may be informed of or notice abuse towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

You may suspect or become aware for a number of reasons:

- A child or a vulnerable adult tells somebody what is happening
- You see signs of abuse or neglect
- Witness an abusive act
- Recognise several of the risk indicators above and become concerned. You find evidence of abuse
- You see worrying changes in a child's behaviour or moods, or in a parent's behaviour to a child
- Someone else tells you about something that they have seen or heard
- An adult or child tells you that they have hurt a child
- A parent /guardian tells you that they are having problems meeting a child's or adult's needs

With all forms of abuse pertaining to children, young people and vulnerable adults the abuse may surface in different ways.

### Dealing with a child

When you are aware of what is potentially abuse of a child you must be sensible and rational in your interaction with the child. The following steps will guide you:-

- Always react calmly. Abuse of a child is always an emotive issue.
- Be aware of your non — verbal messages. (If you do not believe a person, do not express it in your face or body language).
- Let the person talking about the abuse (parent / child / guardian / friend / member of staff) continue without interruption. Let them tell you what happened.
- Observe and listen; do not ask for more information.
- Sometimes the person reporting abuse may have speech or hearing impediments, does not speak English well or you may have difficulty understanding them — in this case reassure them that you will find somebody who can help them.
- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing. In these situations many people walk away feeling exposed and sometimes guilty for telling somebody.
- Do not make comments or judgements about what has been said.
- Tell the individual truthfully what will happen next. Be honest as they have trusted you.

Many factors will determine what course of action is taken.

Nobody should be penalised for reporting suspected abuse, even if it transpires that abuse did not take place.



## Reporting Suspected Abuse Committed Against a Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

### If someone tells you they are being abused:

- If someone tells you that they are feeling unhappy, frightened or unsafe because of another person's actions and you think that this may be abuse, stay calm and listen. Take what they say seriously.
- Prompt the individual to give more information but do not ask leading questions or turn the chat into an interrogation!
- Make notes of what they say. If they are reporting the abuse to you then you can make notes during the conversation but make sure you are listening.
- However, if they are talking to you in an informal chat, it will help you to remember what they have said if you make a note of the conversation soon after they have spoken to you. Write down exactly what you heard them say as you may need to refer back to this at a later stage.
- Be careful - If the victim senses that you are taking mental notes then he / she may become suspicious and feel especially vulnerable. They might stop talking to you.
- If the vulnerable person has disclosed the identity of the alleged culprit - do not try to question the alleged abuser. Whether you know them or don't know them. This will make the situation much worse.
- Be aware that medical evidence may be needed.
- Reassure the person that the information will be treated seriously.
- Don't make any promises that you may not be able to keep (e.g. 'it won't happen again').
- Do not promise to keep the conversation a 'secret'. If the individual is in immediate danger then you will have to take action.
- Help the person to understand that whatever has happened is not their fault.
- Explain the referral process and that others will need to be made aware.
- The person who has been abused must be the one to make any decisions about who to contact and what action to take.
- Talk to the person about their situation and what could be done to help them. They may not want you to contact any authority on their behalf and provided they have the mental capacity to make this decision it is their right to do so.
- You can support them by listening to them, helping them to consider the options that they have and helping to direct them to any information or support available.
- A person with sound mental capacity may not want you to contact social services but if you think that the person may be physically or mentally harmed by the abuse, or that children or other vulnerable adults are also at risk then you must inform the Safeguarding Officer who will seek counsel from the social services without the person's consent.
- If the person has learning difficulties, is autistic or suffers from memory loss / amnesia, dementia or any other condition that affects a person's decision — making or understanding then you must make the Safeguarding Officer aware of the situation.
- The Safeguarding Officer will then contact the Social Services or Police. The
- Safeguarding Officer will tell them what you have been told and whether or not you are contacting them with the person's consent.
- If you think that a person's immediate safety is at risk then you should notify the Safeguarding Officer immediately. He will then contact the Police.

If the individual has asked you to personally report their situation to the authorities — you must discuss the situation with the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer will advise you on course of action. Remember — the Safeguarding Officer is an appointed person who has been trained to deal with these situations.

Adult Social Services departments have a duty to respond to any concerns about a vulnerable adult. They are specialised in this field so should be trusted with the responsibility.

Always let the Safeguarding Officer know that you have been made aware of abuse. Even if the alleged victim has chosen not to take any action. You do not need to disclose personal information about the victim but you must act responsibly. Making another person aware of the situation will protect you.

### **If you suspect a person is being abused**

- If a person does not tell you but you suspect that they are being abused, because of the prevalent signs or somebody else has mentioned it - you must contact the Safeguarding Officer who will make the decision to seek advice from Social Services or the Police.
- You may want to talk to the person before you contact the Safeguarding Officer. If you do this, bring the subject up sensitively by letting the person know that you are concerned about them and want to support them.
- Listen to the individual without being impatient or critical of them or their actions. Letting them talk and share their concerns is very important as it helps them to break the silence and know that they are not on their own.
- Talking to a person will help to build trust. They may approach you in future if they do have a problem. Or they may feel confident enough to talk to somebody else.
- Getting involved does not mean that you have to solve the situation. It can be very difficult supporting someone who is being abused as they may not make the decisions that you think they should.
- It is important that they make the decisions, not you or anyone else, unless the person does not have the mental capacity to do so, in which case you must act in their best interests.
- Your support will be important to the individual as they may have very little confidence and poor self-esteem as a result of the abuse.

Do not put yourself at risk. Always contact the Safeguarding Officer if you are concerned for the person's immediate safety.

If the person is not in immediate danger, then the Safeguarding Officer may contact Social Services if there is a concern.

Always discuss the matter in confidence with the Safeguarding Officer. He will provide you with support and guidance in how the situation should be dealt with. Alternatively, if the situation is an immediate risk to any person, then he will contact the appropriate authorities.

If an immediate danger is present you must contact the Safeguarding Officer.