

## Supporting Safeguarding in Yeshivas

### Introduction

This document sets out a plan to support Yeshivas in Hackney. It collates details of initiatives that have been previously developed by the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP), together with a range of activity being operationally led by Hackney Education as part of the DfE funded Out of Schools Setting project. If adopted, the activity specified has the real potential to help strengthen the overall safeguarding arrangements within these settings.

As with all safeguarding related activity, accountability for this work remains with the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP). As set out in Working Together 2018 (Chapter 3, para 3), the purpose of the CHSCP is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

All safeguarding partners of the CHSCP (Local Authority, CCG and Police) are firmly committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children in the borough, including those from the Orthodox Jewish community. They are committed to working collaboratively with Yeshivas to enable them to demonstrate their commitment to keeping children safe.

Much of this comprehensive offer is consistent with that available to all schools and out of school settings across Hackney. This ensures consistency of practice and inclusivity. There

are, however, proposals that are unique to the context in which Yeshivas operate within their respective communities.

## **Strengthening Leadership and Accountability**

Safeguarding partners may include any local or national organisation or agency in their arrangements, regardless of whether they are named in relevant agency regulations. In this respect, Yeshivas have been formally included within the written safeguarding arrangements of the CHSCP. Consistent with *Working Together 2018*, whilst not under a statutory duty at this time, Yeshivas are expected to cooperate and collaborate with safeguarding partners.

Recognising the crucial role that Yeshivas play in safeguarding children, an existing proposal made by the CHSCP remains part of this overarching offer. In line with previous conversations held with representatives of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (UOHC), the CHSCP is keen to accrue the benefits of the experience and wisdom of the UOHC in operating its own **Independent Safeguarding Committee**.

Such a committee would meet to oversee the sufficiency of safeguarding within Yeshivas. Acknowledging the complex governance arrangements of Yeshivas and the fact that there is no singular governing body that speaks for all, such a committee would provide a crucial single point of contact for the sector. Importantly, there would be a level of independent overview on the effectiveness of safeguarding in such settings.

The CHSCP team, together with specialists from Hackney Education can help develop the terms of reference for such a committee and be on hand to provide ongoing technical advice on how it should operate.

## **Mapping of Yeshivas**

In order for the CHSCP to discharge its functions as they pertain to safeguarding children, there is a need to better understand the cohort of Yeshivas; where they are, how many pupils attend, the number of teachers and associated staff / volunteers and any other organisations currently involved in supporting the settings.

This basic demographic information is available in the context of maintained and independent registered schools. This information is required as it supports safeguarding partners make

arrangements to safeguard children and work together to identify and respond to the needs of children, functions conferred to them by Section 16 E of the Children Act 2004.

## **Self-Assessment Framework for Yeshivas**

The CHSCP has introduced a self-assessment process to help determine the sufficiency of safeguarding arrangement within schools and education settings. The self-assessment also helps organisations identify areas where they need to develop their own safeguarding practice.

Replacing the Section 11 audits and Section 157 / 175 audits, the new framework is intended to make the process easier to access and update. Whether an organisation is a safeguarding partner, a relevant agency or is one named within our local arrangements, there is an expectation that a self-assessment is completed.

There are two self-assessment tools available for schools and education settings (one for schools and a separate one for Out of School Settings (OOSS)). Schools and education settings complete the appropriate one and return to the CHSCP team. The self-assessment develops an action plan that schools and education settings can then use to track progress against identified areas for improvement. Support is available in determining when to undertake the self-assessment tool and how to complete it.

The proposed Independent Safeguarding Committee of the UOHC would have a key role in providing a level of scrutiny and support to Yeshivas for completing these and responding to any identified actions to meet a standard or improve existing arrangements.

## **Child Safeguarding Statements**

Yeshivas could also be one of the first settings to engage in a new initiative soon to be launched by the CHSCP. As part of a DfE funded programme, the CHSCP will be introducing Child Safeguarding Statements into its local arrangements.

Prior to preparing a Child Safeguarding Statement, a self-assessment will need to have been undertaken.

A Child Safeguarding Statement is a written statement that specifies the services being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child using the service is safe from harm.

It should set out any potential risk of “harm” to a child that has been identified in the self-assessment, and the arrangements in place to reduce the identified risks. The Child Safeguarding Statement should provide an overview of the measures that a Yeshiva has in place to ensure that children are protected from harm. It may also refer to more detailed policies which can be made available on request.

Upon completion, the Child Safeguarding Statement should be signed by the proprietor / most senior person in charge and shared with all staff members. It should be displayed in a prominent place and made available to parents and guardians, the UOHC (as part of CHSCP and members of the public upon request.

## **Training**

The CHSCP already fund Interlink to deliver Level 1 and Level 3 Safeguarding Training to Orthodox Jewish staff and volunteers working with children and young people in Hackney. This is available to staff or volunteers working in Yeshivas.

Yeshiva staff and volunteers can also access the rolling programme of Level 1 and Level 3 Safeguarding training courses delivered by the CHSCP. In addition, the CHSCP offers a range of other safeguarding training that is free of charge and can be accessed via the CHSCP website.

For a particular focus on education settings, Hackney Education’s (HE) Safeguarding Education and Advice Team has a training offer that is compliant with local procedures and national statutory and non-statutory guidance.

The training is delivered to three main groups of people.

### **All staff Training**

- Staff responsibilities;
- Identifying harm and abuse; and
- Information sharing.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Training**

- As above plus;
- The DSL Role;
- Policies and procedures; and
- Obtaining support for children and their families.

### **Proprietors and Governors Training**

- As above plus;
- The recruitment of staff;
- The role of the governing body;
- Supporting safeguarding practice; and
- Assurance of safeguarding procedures.

### **Policy Support**

All schools and settings should have a clear safeguarding / child protection policy that sets out how they will keep children safe and how they will respond to child protection concerns. This is a basic requirement of our local safeguarding arrangements.

The CHSCP has [released new guidance](#) to help organisations write such a policy and how to structure it for best effect. Schools and settings should include the core elements of this guidance, alongside any specific requirements relevant to their respective sectors.

For more tailored advice, Hackney Education also provides support to schools and settings to develop comprehensive safeguarding policies. Model policies are available for settings to adapt to their specific requirements in consultation with the Safeguarding Team.