



# Domestic Abuse Policy

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Linked to policies:

- Safeguarding including Child Protection policy
- Bullying and Harassment policy
- Data Protection policy

Signed:

*S. Day*

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## Contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
2.	Scope.....	4
3.	Policy principles.....	4
4.	Definition.....	4
5.	Recognising the signs of domestic abuse.....	4
6.	Responding to disclosures made regarding domestic abuse....	5
7.	Working arrangements.....	5
8.	Safeguarding.....	6
9.	Data Protection.....	6

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on the working lives of affected employees.

1.2 It is recognised that employees may be survivors of domestic abuse, individuals who are currently living with domestic abuse, individuals who have been impacted upon by domestic abuse or individuals who perpetrate domestic abuse.

1.3 This policy covers the approach the School will take where there are concerns that an employee may be suffering from domestic abuse.

## **2. Scope**

2.1 This policy and procedure forms part of the School's overall commitment to creating a workplace where employees feel safe and supported. It applies to all employees of the School whilst at work.

## **3. Policy principles**

- To show empathy and compassion when responding to an employee's disclosure regarding their experience of domestic abuse.
- To help employees to recognise whether they are experiencing domestic abuse.
- To offer help and support to any employee who is suffering from domestic abuse.

## **4. Definition**

4.1 Domestic abuse is defined as behaviour which consists of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse, carried out by a person aged 16 or over towards another person aged 16 or over to whom they are personally connected, as relatives or by marriage, civil partnership, intimate personal relationship or shared parental relationship, past or present.

\*N.B. When referring to individuals who have suffered from domestic abuse, some prefer the term survivor rather than victim, as survivor emphasises an active, resourceful and creative response to abuse.

## **5. Recognising the signs of domestic abuse**

5.1 To be able to offer support, managers will need to recognise possible signs that an employee may be experiencing domestic abuse. Line managers will be offered training on how to recognise the signs of domestic abuse.

5.2 All staff with line management responsibility will look out for signs of domestic abuse and, if they suspect that a colleague is being abused, they will consider asking open, sensitive, non-threatening questions in a one-to-one meeting in a private setting. Managers will avoid directly asking employees whether they are suffering abuse. Understanding the cycle of abuse will help managers find the best time to talk.

5.3 All employees will be provided with details of a nominated person or persons (to include both male and female) to whom those suffering domestic abuse can contact.

5.4 Employees will not be pressured to disclose information as to whether they are suffering domestic abuse.

## **6. Responding to disclosures made regarding domestic abuse**

6.1 Where employees choose to disclose information regarding domestic abuse, such disclosures will be believed and taken seriously, without the requirement of evidence.

6.2 Affected employees will be reassured that the School is understanding of their situation and be referred to any available workplace support and/or specialist domestic abuse organisations that can provide specialist support. The school councillor is available for staff members.

6.3 Employees will be asked what other support they need that the School may be able to provide.

## **7. Working arrangements**

7.1 Where an employee discloses that they have been suffering domestic abuse, consideration will be given to offering flexibility in working hours, where possible, to enable them to resolve financial, housing, legal and childcare issues. It is important to be aware that the flexibility required may differ in the short and longer term.

7.2 The employee will also be offered access to office space if they would normally be expected to work from home and ensure that this is provided if requested.

7.3 The manager will agree with the employee what to tell colleagues (if anything), which colleagues to tell (if any), and how they should respond if their ex/partner telephones or visits the workplace. There will be a presumption of strict confidentiality unless permission has been given to share any information.

7.4 The manager will ensure that the employee knows how to change their pay and contact details, if this is needed.

### *Circumstances where the abuser is attempting to harass the employee during working time*

7.5 Those suffering domestic abuse may be targeted at work and this may occur by the perpetrator's attendance at the workplace, through calls to their work or personal telephone or other communications such as email or texts.

7.6 Action may be necessary to limit the harassment that such employees may experience. This could include:

- Establishing a work safety plan – This could include measures such as changing an employee's phone extension or diverting their calls, arranging for the employee to be escorted to their vehicle if the car park is accessible to the public, ensuring that the employee is always able to work from School premises if they occasionally work from home, and keeping a record of any incidents that occur during working time.
- Ensuring that access to the School premises is restricted and monitored (as should be the case for child safeguarding in any case).
- Restricting access to an employee's personnel file and ensuring that their emergency contact details are up to date.

### *Circumstances where the abuser is also an employee*

7.5 In circumstances where the abuser is also an employee, it will be considered how the two employees can be kept apart in the workplace.

7.6 Advice will be taken on how best to manage such a situation.

7.7 Any inappropriate engagement by the abusing employee may constitute a breach of the *Bullying and Harassment policy* and may be considered a disciplinary matter. In some cases, such conduct may immediately constitute a disciplinary offence or even a potential criminal offence requiring police involvement.

## **8. Safeguarding**

8.1 In circumstances where a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk, the relevant protection services may need to be informed. Where the School believes that a crime has been committed and/or a child is at immediate risk, the police will be notified.

8.2 If a disclosure identifies a perpetrator who holds a position within a School involving direct or indirect work with children or vulnerable adults, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or the Adults Social Services safeguarding team manager will be consulted. They will help decide whether the allegation impacts the employee's suitability to carry out their role and advise accordingly.

## **9. Data Protection**

9.1 When an employee discloses information regarding domestic abuse that they are suffering, the School will process this as sensitive personal data in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected by the School as part of this policy will be held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of supporting the employee who is suffering the abuse.

9.2 Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and will be reported in accordance with the school's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure.