



*But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded ~ 2 Chronicles 15:7*

## Domestic Abuse Policy

### Schools and Educational Settings in Lincolnshire



**Weston St Mary  
CE Primary School**

Reviewed by:	Date:	Changes made:
LB	March 2021	New County Council Policy and front cover updated

Schools serving their communities through excellence,  
exploration and encouragement within the love of God

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me ~ Philippians 4:13*

## Policy Statement

*"This policy should include clear statements regarding what it means to our school and how we plan to respond to those statements."*

This Policy is also a point of reference for all employees who are involved in reports of domestic abuse in a work capacity. Employees can refer to this Policy for guidance purposes.

## Introduction

This policy is to support schools and educational settings work towards a safer community.

Schools and educational settings have a responsibility to respond to the safety and welfare of children they are working with and a duty to recognise that their employees may also be affected by domestic abuse.

## Aims of this policy

To send out a strong message that domestic abuse will not be tolerated and that schools and educational settings will promote healthy and respectful relationships.

- To develop an effective and supportive response for all those affected by domestic abuse.
- To optimise the opportunity for disclosure of domestic abuse in a safe environment.
- To offer practical suggestions of further support available.
- To offer the Head Teacher guidance on how to support employees affected by domestic abuse

## Definition of domestic abuse

The Home Office (2013) definition of domestic violence and 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 can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:*

*Psychological / emotional abuse – intimidation and threats (e.g. about children or family pets), social isolation, verbal abuse, humiliation, constant criticism, enforced trivial routines, marked over intrusiveness.*

*Physical violence – slapping, pushing, kicking, stabbing, damage to property or items of sentimental value, attempted murder or murder;*

*Physical restriction of freedom – controlling who the mother or child/ren see or where they go, what they wear or do, stalking, imprisonment, forced marriage;*

*Sexual violence – any non-consensual sexual activity, including rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, refusing safer sex or human trafficking; and*

*Financial abuse – stealing, depriving or taking control of money, running up debts, withholding benefits books or bank cards.*

*(This section of the Home Office definition has been adapted to give you examples of the types of abuse)*

*Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.*

*Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.*

*This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group."*

#### Raising of domestic abuse with Parent / member of staff

The member of staff who has the best working relationship with the parent/carer or member of staff should be the one who asks the questions about their concerns. This should occur in a safe and suitable environment, where the abuser or another inappropriate person is not expected to interrupt or overhear and respect given to that persons privacy and dignity.

These conversations should never happen in the presence of the abusive partner, any children involved OR any family member unless the individual states that it is safe to do so while the family member is not with them.

More helpful information on asking the question is available on page 23 of the Domestic Abuse Protocol for Schools and Educational Settings [link at the end of this Policy].

#### Response following disclosure or concern

When responding to domestic abuse employees are expected to adhere to the Referral Pathway in the Domestic Abuse Protocol for Schools and Educational Settings for appropriate processes of referral for all age ranges of those affected by domestic abuse.

In those circumstances where the victim is under 18 years and the perpetrator is 18 years or above, or if both victim and perpetrator are under 18 years this should also be treated as a child safeguarding concern. A referral/signposting can also be made to specialist domestic abuse services if aged 16/17 years. In the event that a child is known to be involved in a violent relationship, the member of staff should consider undertaking an Early Help Assessment. Should they subsequently decide they would like a consultation with an Early Help Advisor regarding their next steps this should be arranged. During the course of any such discussions the member of staff may find it helpful to consider with the Early Help Advisor whether the matter meets the threshold for social care intervention.

If the member of staff believes the child is at immediate risk then they should contact the police and initiate child protection procedures by contacting the Children's Services Customer Services Centre (CSC) on 01522 782111 and reporting a safeguarding concern; e.g. a child involved in a relationship with a violent girlfriend / boyfriend. Outside of normal working hours contact should be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 01522 782333.

### Professional Curiosity

The Domestic Abuse Protocol stresses the importance of professional curiosity. Employees must demonstrate a non-discriminatory approach and explore the issues and formulate judgements that translate into effective actions in their dealings with children, adults and families. This should be matched by an organisational culture which supports its employees in openness, constructive challenge and confidence to practice sensitive and challenging circumstances at the front line.

It is vital that employees understand the complexity of domestic abuse and are curious about what is happening in the child, adult and perpetrators life.

Professional curiosity is the capacity and communication skill to explore and understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value.

Employees should never avoid asking the difficult questions, sharing concerns with your Designated Safeguarding Lead [DSL] as a "fresh pair of eyes" looking at a case can really help to maintain good practice standards and develop a critical mind-set.

Inform the individual who has disclosed to you or of whom you have concerns for of the local support services in your area, so they can contact them either with you or either directly at their convenience.

Support to staff who may be affected by domestic abuse could be offered additional leave for appointments with solicitors or doctors or support services for example, the school/educational setting should be as flexible as possible to be able to accommodate the employee's requests.

Extra security could be offered for example if the employee is being stalked or harassed, you could offer a different parking space and way of entering the work place, start or finish time to enable a change in work pattern. Maybe allow no mention of that employee's name or picture in publicity at the school/educational setting, all of which reduce the risk to that individual while at work.

### Recording of information

Information recorded on any individual either studying or working at the school or educational setting should be stored in a safe manner, so not to heighten the risk to that individual, i.e. the abusive partner/family member may see the note and increase the abuse.

### Staff Safety and Well Being

Employees are potentially at risk whenever they work with a family where one or more family members are violent. Employees should:

Be aware that domestic abuse is present but undisclosed or not known in many of the families they work with.

Schools should ensure that employees have the appropriate training and skills for working with people experiencing Domestic Abuse; and use supervision sessions both to allow employees to voice fears about abuse in a family being directed at them; and also to check that safe practice is being followed in all cases where Domestic Abuse is known or suspected.

Employees and managers should also be aware of the emotional impact of working with victims and/or perpetrators of domestic abuse and information and procedures for reducing risk of vicarious trauma.

### Training

All school / educational setting employees are advised to complete domestic abuse training at some level.

Full details are available on page 36 of the Domestic Abuse Protocol for Schools and Educational Settings, Training Section:

Basic Domestic Abuse Awareness E-learning.

More in-depth Domestic Abuse, Risk Assessment & MARAC E-learning.

Full days face to face Domestic Abuse, Risk assessment & MARAC Training.

These can be completed as part of the 5 year Safeguarding Training Pathway for all employees and there is also the expectation that employees will complete refresher training every 3 years.

### No Recourse to Public Funds and the impact this has on children

There may be occasions where victims, children of victims, or carers may have an uncertain immigration status, which could prevent them from accessing services. The victim may be hesitant to take action against the perpetrator for fear of losing the right to remain in the UK. In some cases, victims have received threats of deportation from their partner or extended family if they report domestic abuse and have had their passports taken from them. Similarly, children may have had their passports taken away from them and may fear that they and/or their parent could be deported if they disclose domestic abuse in the family. This introduces an additional level of complexity and vulnerability and employees should be aware of this and ask the specific question if they think it is a potential issue

This policy cannot prescribe specific actions in respect of this emerging and complex environment. However, employees should be aware that these issues create a complex challenge within safeguarding and can create an environment in which Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking might prosper.

We have a duty under numerous pieces of legislation to recognise threat, risk and harm and to take steps to safeguard. All employees should feel comfortable to intervene and make good professional decisions and escalate to the DSL for appropriate levels of decision making.

Local and National Domestic Abuse Support Agencies

EDAN Lincs provide support for female and male victims and for children affected by domestic abuse.

Website: [www.edanlincs.org.uk](http://www.edanlincs.org.uk),

Countywide helpdesk service that operates Mon-Fri 9am-5pm 01522 510041

Or email: [info@edanlincs.org.uk](mailto:info@edanlincs.org.uk)

SARC [Sexual Assault Referral Centre]:

Provides a safe environment where victims of Rape, Sexual Assault or Sexual Abuse can get support and advice. They also provide the possibility of making a report to the police and undertaking a forensic examination. They are open to all victims, regardless of whether they want to report a crime to the police or not.

[info@springlodge.org](mailto:info@springlodge.org), [www.springlodge.org](http://www.springlodge.org) 01522 524402 - Mon - Fri 9am till 5pm

01371 812686 - at any other time

**National services:**

24-hour national Domestic Abuse Helpline <a href="http://www.womensaid.org.uk">www.womensaid.org.uk</a> , 0808 2000 247	Shelter <a href="http://www.shelter.org.uk">www.shelter.org.uk</a> , 0808 800 4444
Forced Marriage Unit <a href="http://www.foc.gov.uk/forcedmarriage">www.foc.gov.uk/forcedmarriage</a> 020 7008 0151 9am to 5pm Mon - Fri	Samaritans <a href="http://www.samaritans.org.uk">www.samaritans.org.uk</a> , 08457 90 90 90
Men's Advice Line <a href="http://www.mensadvice.org.uk">www.mensadvice.org.uk</a> , 0808 801 0327	Victim Support <a href="http://www.victimsupport.org.uk">www.victimsupport.org.uk</a> , 0300 3031947

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