



Willoughton Primary School

The Cliff Federation Domestic Abuse Policy

<u>Policy Information</u>			
Status:	Statutory	Reviewed by:	Full Governing Board
Cycle of Review:	Every two years	Policy Ratified	January 2025
Signed as accepted:			

Policy Statement

"This policy should include clear statements regarding what it means to our school / educational setting 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 Domestic Abuse Act (2021) splits the definition of domestic abuse into two main parts. The first part deals with the relationship between the abuser and abused. The second part defines what constitutes abusive behaviour:

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Section 1: Definition of “domestic abuse”

(1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—

- (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other, and
- (b) the behaviour is abusive.

(3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;

and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

(4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to —

- (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- (b) obtain goods or services.

(5) For the purposes of this Act, A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

(6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.

(7) For the meaning of “personally connected”, see section 2.

Section 2: Definition of “personally connected”

(1) Two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies —

- (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
- (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
- (g) they are relatives.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if

—
(a) the person is a parent of the child, or;

(b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

(3) In this section —

“child” means a person under the age of 18 years;

“civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989;

“relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

Section 3: Children as victims of domestic abuse

(1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.

(2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who —

(a) sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse, and

(b) is related to A or B.

(3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if —

(a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or

(b) the child and the person are relatives.

(4) In this section —

“child” means person under the age of 18 years;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);

“relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

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 of the Domestic Abuse Resource Pack for Schools and Educational Settings in Lincolnshire [link at the end of this Policy].

Response following disclosure or concern

School is part of Operation Encompass.

When responding to domestic abuse employees are expected to adhere to the Referral Pathway in the Domestic Abuse Protocol for Schools and Educational Settings [Appendix 1] and page 27 onwards 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

Guidance in the Domestic Abuse Resource Pack 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 that 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.

For further information on how to manage the recording of information see page 26 of the Domestic Abuse Protocol for Schools and Educational Settings at the end of this policy.

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. This is mapped onto our federation safeguarding training 6 year pathway (for all staff which runs alongside the LCC 6 year pathway for DSLs).

Full details are available on page 30-32 of the Domestic Abuse Resource Pack 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.

Title of Staff	Training
<i>The Designated safeguarding lead [DSL]</i>	<i>E-learning and face to face domestic abuse training</i>
<i>All Teaching staff and support staff</i>	<i>E-Learning</i>
<i>Governors</i>	<i>E-learning</i>

The Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership also offers Healthy Relationship workshops for children in Year 2 through to Year 6.

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.

Key Contacts

Specialist Domestic Abuse Services:

These Lincolnshire services provide support for female and male victims aged over 16 years and their children affected by domestic abuse.

Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Specialist Service (LDASS)

www.ldass.org.uk 01522 510041

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.

www.lpft.nhs.uk

01371 812600

National Services:

24-hour national Domestic Abuse Helpline www.womensaid.org.uk , 0808 2000 247	Shelter www.shelter.org.uk , 0808 800 4444
Forced Marriage Unit www.foc.gov.uk/forcedmarriage 020 7008 0151 9am to 5pm Mon – Fri	Samaritans www.samaritans.org.uk , 08457 90 90 90
Men's Advice Line www.mensadvice.org.uk , 0808 801 0327	Victim Support www.victimsupport.org.uk , 0300 3031947
Mankind www.mankind.org.uk 01823 334244	Network for Surviving Stalking www.nss.org.uk
Galop Support helpline for LGBT victims of domestic abuse www.galop.org.uk 0300 999 5428	Information for children and young people: www.thehideout.org.uk www.nspcc.org.uk www.disrespectnobody.co.uk www.kooth.com
MWN Muslim Women's Network Helpline www.mwnhelpline.co.uk	

Key Resources

Education Domestic Abuse Resource Pack available via the Stay Safe Partnership website [Stay Safe Partnership Website](#) and the [Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Specialist Service](#)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

There are many resources available for schools to use regarding domestic abuse, covering all age ranges from Reception to Sixth Form.

National Workshop Packages:

'Expect Respect' –A free training programme offered to schools and universities to educate young people about unhealthy relationships (women's aid).

'Making sense of Relationships' – pre-planned workshops aimed at Key Stage 2, produced by NSPCC in partnership with PSHE Association.

All available from the [Stay Safe Partnership Website](#) and/or the Practitioner pages of the [Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Specialist Service](#)

It is hoped that with the use of these packages within schools and educational settings that pupils will learn what is a healthy relationship and unhealthy relationship at an earlier age, and thusly enable them to make educated choices at an earlier stage in their life.

The unit of Relationships education runs through our PSHE long term plans for all children from Year 1 to Year 6. To augment this learning, school organises opportunities for additional workshops, theme days and learning experiences.

Name of Package	Year Group delivered to	Timeframe
<i>NSPCC – “Stay Safe. Speak out.”</i>	<i>All pupils</i>	<i>Every two years</i>
<i>NSPCC Numbers Day</i>	<i>All pupils</i>	<i>Annually</i>
<i>Stay Safe Partnership Workshops</i>	<i>Dependent upon need and availability</i>	

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Referral pathway



