



**The Westminster
School**

Safe, Happy and Learning Together

www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk

2022/2023

Domestic Abuse Policy

Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational, and independent members of our community.

Approved by Governing Body on:	12/01/2023
Signed by Chair of Governors:	<i>P. A. Evans</i>
Head Teacher:	O M Flowers
Lead Personnel:	J Turner
Date of Review:	12/01/2025

Summary

This policy has been written in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

We define domestic abuse as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- [Coercive control](#) (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse.
- Physical or sexual abuse.
- [Financial or economic abuse.](#)
- [Harassment and stalking.](#)
- [Online or digital abuse.](#)

Domestic abuse is a vastly under reported crime affecting one in three women and one in six men. Two women are still killed on average every week by their partner or ex-partner. It is rarely a one-off event and in most cases the abuse escalates over time. Around three quarters of the children or young people who have had a child protection plan have experienced domestic abuse. Domestic violence is experienced in all communities, in all socio economic groups, by LGBTQ+ people as well as in heterosexual relationships and by people of all ages.

The definition of emotional harm recognises that children and young people are affected not only by experiencing violence themselves but also by witnessing harm to others.

Threatening, controlling, belittling behaviours are domestic abuse as well as physical harm.

Children living in households where domestic violence is happening are now identified as "at risk" under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. From 31 January 2005, Section 120 of this act extended the legal definition of harming children to include harm suffered by seeing or hearing ill treatment of others. This would include witnessing domestic abuse **What does this mean for schools?**

Schools can provide a safe retreat from problems at home but some children and young people will avoid coming to school to stay home to protect their parent or siblings.

Working Together to Safeguard Children states... Professionals should ask direct questions about domestic violence and be alert to the signs that a child or mother may be experiencing domestic violence.

Professionals should ask young people direct questions about whether they are experiencing intimate partner violence.

Child to Parent Abuse

Abuse within the family includes child-to-parent abuse, also commonly referred to as Adolescent to Parent Violence/Abuse (APV/A) and Child and Adolescent to Parental Violence and Abuse (CAPVA). Child-to-parent abuse can involve children of all ages, including adult children, and abuse toward siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles as well as other family members such as those acting as kinship carers. If the child is 16 years of age or over, the abuse falls under the statutory definition of domestic abuse in the 2021 Act.

There is no specific legal definition of child-to-parent abuse but it is generally accepted to involve some of the patterns of behaviour that can be found in other relationship contexts. Behaviours can encompass, but are not limited to, humiliating and belittling language, violence and threats, jealous and controlling behaviours, damage to property, stealing and heightened sexualised behaviours. Child-to-parent abuse appears gendered, with the majority of cases being perpetrated by sons against their mothers, although men and boys are victims too.

Like other forms of abuse, child-to-parent abuse is characterised by shame and stigma which could mean parents are less likely to report the abuse to the police. Parents may fear being blamed, disbelieved, or conversely having their child taken away from them or criminalised leaving them reluctant to seek help. Recorded incidents likely represent only a small number of real cases as families facing crisis point make the difficult decision to disclose their abuse. Victims of this type of abuse should also receive appropriate domestic abuse response and support.

Disclosure

Where domestic abuse is disclosed, school staff must follow Safeguarding Procedure as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

- Don't question or interrogate the young person. This is the role of the police or social services.
- Offer reassurance and explain what will happen next.
- Write down what has been said, what you have seen and what you may already know and share this promptly with your school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- DSL to consider immediate risk of harm and, as appropriate, contact or refer to MASH and/or police if appropriate.

School will respond to any disclosure using the procedures set out in 'Working together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance.

Related issues

Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage.

The school DSL will have guidance on who to contact. Under no circumstances contact the victim's family or any person in their community as this could put the young person in danger.

Intimate Partner violence

Research suggests that girls are the most likely victims and there is evidence of a link between seeing abuse at home and becoming victimised. It may be difficult for young people to recognise a relationship as abusive. School staff must refer to the DSL. Specialist Domestic Abuse Support Services now work directly with primary victims over the age of 13.

What should schools do?

- Respond sensitively and creatively following Operation Encompass notifications
- Provide opportunity for counselling, mentoring, contact with outside agencies for the child or young person.
- Offer understanding and support with homework, coursework, children being upset.
- Offer support to the non-abusing parent, including safety planning if it is possible the perpetrator may visit or contact school.
- Be aware of contact orders, injunctions, bail conditions, exclusion orders etc. especially when they include the school.

- Not disclose a refuge address keeping only the Post Office Box address on file (Head/DSL may know the actual refuge address)
- Consider transport arrangements if a child is in a temporary address to try to ensure he or she maintains their school place. Consider whether it is safe for the child to continue at their current school.
- Offer a RSHE curriculum which supports pupils to understand key issues. Understanding healthy relationships is at the centre of a child's compulsory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in school. The topic 'Being Safe' supports children to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe and covers the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, 'honour' based abuse and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships. There is no right to withdraw from RSHE, in which the topic of Being Safe is taught, at primary or secondary school. The content of this subject is essential in supporting pupils' wellbeing and attainment and helping young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.
- Offer support based on individual need, with a range of interventions so that each child is able to access the specialise help they require.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and Education safeguarding partnership that supports children and young people exposed to Domestic Abuse. It aims to ensure Schools are notified in a timely manner of any Domestic Abuse incident where a child was either present or registered at the address. This early notification should mean that, in most cases, schools are alerted in readiness for the children arriving at school the first working day following an incident.

Operation Encompass will also ensure that a member of the school staff, known as a Key Adult, is trained to allow them to liaise with the local authority and to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, while ensuring that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic abuse incident.

MARAC

A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a non-statutory process that brings together statutory and voluntary agencies to jointly support adult and child victims of domestic abuse who are at a high risk of serious harm or homicide, and to disrupt and divert the behaviour of the perpetrator(s). The MARAC's working assumption is that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety. The core MARAC agencies are: police, IDVA services, housing, children's services, the Probation Service, primary health, mental health, substance misuse service and adult social care.

Multi Agency working

Multi-agency working to safeguard children is underpinned by the system of multi agency safeguarding arrangements, provided for by the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. These arrangements place a statutory duty on police, health, and local authority leaders to work together on local safeguarding arrangements. They are jointly responsible for coordinating safeguarding services to keep children safe and are accountable for how well local agencies work together to protect children from abuse and neglect. The three safeguarding partners (the local authority, health and police) should agree on ways to coordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group

in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

Annex A - Support services

- 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline (England) – run by Refuge, freephone: 0808 2000 247. British Sign Language access from 10am - 6pm on weekdays. The website offers a live chat service between 3pm - 10pm on weekdays.
- Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse – an organisation that supports those who have lost a family member (or friend) through fatal domestic abuse.
- Age UK – an organisation that supports older people and victims of elder abuse.
- Ask for ANI – a codeword scheme for victims to access support from the safety of their local pharmacy.
- Black Country Women's Aid:
 - All services - 0121 553 0090
 - 24 hour helpline – 0121 552 6448
 - Text/Whatsapp – 07384 466181
- Broken Rites – a group offering mutual support and information to separated and divorced spouses and partners of clergy, ministers, and Church Army Officers.
- Childline – a free 24-hour service providing support for anyone under 19 in the UK. 0800 1111.
- Clinks – an organisation that supports the voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system and their families. Clinks have a directory of services, although it is not exhaustive, and are experienced in supporting women who have suffered domestic abuse.
- Dogs Trust Freedom Project – a specialist dog fostering service for victims fleeing domestic abuse.
- Galop – a specialist organisation and LGBT anti-violence charity offering support to LGBT victims.
- Hestia Respond to Abuse Advice Line – a specialist advice line supporting employers to help staff experiencing domestic abuse on 0203 879 3695 or via email Adviceline.EB@hestia.org. 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.
- HM Prison and Probation Service Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service – a service for victims to contact HMPPS to report unwanted letters, phone calls, texts or messages from a prisoner or to proactively seek to stop contact. You may access the service by completing the form on Gov.uk using the link gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact (24 hr access) or call 03000606699 or via email unwantedprisonercontact@justice.gov.uk Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm. The Unwanted Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance 148 Prisoner Contact service also offers victims the opportunity to contact HMPPS to raise concerns about a prisoner being released.
- Hourglass – a specialist organisation aiming to end the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people in the UK. Their helpline can be accessed by phone on 0808 808 8141, text on 07860 052906 or email helpline@wearehourglass.org.
- Jewish Women's Aid – a specialist organisation supporting Jewish women and children affected by domestic abuse. Their helpline is 0808 801 0500 and is open Mondays to Thursdays from 9.30 am - 9.30 pm (excluding Jewish holidays and bank holidays).
- Karma Nirvana 'Honour'-Based Abuse helpline – a specialist organisation supporting victims of 'honour'-based abuse and forced marriage. Their helpline is 0800 599 9247 and is open 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday.

The Westminster School

- Loving Me – a specialist organisation providing one-to-one online support and advocacy for high risk Transgender, Gender Queer and Non-Binary victims of domestic abuse.
- ManKind Initiative – a specialist organisation supporting male victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- Men's Advice Line – run by Respect. 0808 801 0327 open Monday to Friday 9am - 8pm or email info@mensadvice.org.uk
- Muslim Women's Network – a specialist organisation supporting Muslim women and girls.
- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse helpline – 0800 999 5428 Monday to Friday 10am - 5pm.
- National Stalking helpline – run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust. 0808 802 0300 9.30am - 4pm Monday to Friday.
- NSPCC – The UK's leading children's charity working to prevent abuse, rebuild children's lives and support families.
- NSPCC FGM helpline – 0800 028 3550.
- Operation Encompass Teachers' National Helpline – 0204 513 9990 open 8am - 1pm Monday to Friday. The helpline is for school staff to seek guidance and discuss queries they may have following an Operation Encompass notification and in preparation for supporting a child experiencing domestic abuse.
- Paladin – an organisation that provides support for victims of stalking. Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance 149
- Parental Education Growth Support (PEGS) – an organisation that supports victims of child to parent abuse.
- Rail to Refuge – a scheme providing free rail travel to refuge accommodation for women, men and children fleeing domestic abuse through a member organisation of Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, Imkaan or Respect (which runs the Men's Advice Line).
- Rape Crisis England and Wales – an organisation representing rape crisis centres across England and Wales which provide support for women and girls of all ages who have experienced any form of sexual violence. Their telephone number is 0808 802 9999. Their website also offers a Live Chat service.
- Refuge – an organisation operated by an all female staff that provides support for all victims of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. 0808 2000247
- Respect – an organisation that works with male victims of domestic abuse and domestic abuse perpetrators. Respect operates the Men's Advice line, a confidential helping for male victims of domestic abuse and the Respect Phoneline for domestic abuse perpetrators and those supporting them.
- Restored – a specialist organisation working to tackle domestic abuse by partnering with churches and Christian organisations.
- Revenge Porn helpline – open between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. 0345 600 0459 or help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk.
- Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) – centres providing medical, practical and emotional support to all victims of sexual assault.
- Sign Health Domestic Abuse Service – a specialist domestic abuse service to support the health and wellbeing of deaf people.
- Sikh Women's Aid – an organisation providing support for Sikh women and girls.
- Southall Black Sisters – an organisation providing support for ethnic minority victims and migrant women. Their helpline is 020 8571 9595 and is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

- Stay Safe East – a specialist organisation providing support for deaf and disabled victims of domestic abuse across London. Referrals should be made to enquiries@staysafe-east.org.uk.
- Surviving Economic Abuse – a specialist organisation dedicated to supporting victims of economic abuse, working in partnership with Money Advice Plus to provide money and debt advice to victims experiencing financial difficulties. Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance 150
- UK Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) – a Government policy unit leading on forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims and potential victims of forced marriage. 020 7008 0151.
- Victim Support – a specialist service helping anyone affected by any types of crime, not only those who experience it directly, but also their friends, family and any other people involved.
- Women's Aid Federation England (WAFE) – an organisation supporting women affected by domestic abuse. Their website offers a Live Chat service available Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm and Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6pm. Women's Aid also provide a directory, listing local support services across the UK, although it is not exhaustive it is updated regularly.