



Alderman Pounder Infant and Nursery School

Domestic Violence Policy

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REVISION HISTORY

Version	Revision Date	Next review due	Summary of Changes (and author)
1.0	Autumn 2013	Spring 2015	Policy revised (Julie Hemsley)
1.1	Spring 2015	Spring 2017	Policy updated (Sue Ingram)
1.2	Spring 2017	Spring 2019	Contacts updated (J Shelton)

Every three days in England and Wales,
a woman is killed by her partner or former partner
British Crime Survey 2003

Statement of Intent

The Governing Body condemns domestic violence and recognises it is both a crime and unacceptable. It is committed to the welfare of its employees and seeks to support and assist any employee who is experiencing problems related to domestic violence and abuse. It also seeks to raise awareness of domestic violence and develop a workplace culture where domestic violence is recognised as unacceptable.

Definition

The term 'domestic violence' usually refers to violence and abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and/or financial) perpetrated within current or former relationships for the purpose of gaining power and control over someone. Compared with men, women are more likely to experience domestic violence at some point in their lives, more likely to experience repeated victimisation, more likely to be injured and to seek medical help, more likely to experience frightening threats and more likely to be frightened (Home Office Research Study No.192, 1998). However, the Governing Body recognises that violence and abuse is experienced within a range of different types of relationships for example men to men, women to men, women to women and children to parents. The advice given in these guidelines is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the relationship.

The Governing Body also recognises that domestic violence exists in all social classes, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural groups and that it can be experienced at any age and irrespective of factors such as sexuality, marital status and disability. However, we are aware that because of various types of discrimination, these are all factors that can affect a person's experience of seeking help and success in protecting themselves and their children from domestic violence.

Whilst it may seem that domestic violence is a personal matter and nothing to do with a person's employer, the Governing Body understand that for those experiencing it, domestic violence will affect their whole lives, including work and job performance.

Aims

- to demonstrate the Governing Body's commitment to, and support for employees experiencing domestic violence
- to raise awareness of domestic violence, what forms it can take and its likely effects on employees of the school
- to contribute to the health and wellbeing of all employees in order that they can enjoy fulfilling lives both at work and home
- to increase the awareness of Head Teachers, school managers and governors in recognising that an employee may be experiencing domestic violence and to provide advice about appropriate action to take
- to offer clear and consistent advice to employees experiencing domestic violence
- to establish and publicise support for employees who may be experiencing domestic violence

What can you expect from the school and/or Nottinghamshire County Council?

The Governing Body recognises that confidentiality is essential for an employee who is experiencing domestic violence. In most circumstances whatever you tell your Head Teacher or line manager will remain confidential and will not be revealed to anyone without your permission. However if you give information which leads your Head Teacher or line manager to believe that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering harm, they will have a responsibility to inform the Social Care department about this and will aim to seek your agreement to do so. The school has rigorous child protection procedures to follow which may involve external agencies such as the Police or Social Care. Your Head Teacher or line manager may pass on their concerns without your agreement if they remain concerned about a child's welfare. Your Head Teacher or line manager will discuss this with the Child Protection Officer and/or the Education Personnel Group before doing this.

The Social Care Department of the County Council is also a source of support you should be aware of. Staff in Social Care recognise that living with domestic violence is frightening for adults and children. Social Care will want to support you in protecting your children and will work with you to see if there is any help they can offer before things get worse. You may also therefore contact a Social Care Duty Social Worker for further advice. (see later section, sources of help and advice).

Support

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body are concerned about your health, safety and welfare and will therefore respond in an effective, confidential and sympathetic manner to any employee disclosing s/he is experiencing domestic violence.

Time Off

You may need time off from school to attend counselling sessions or court hearings or to make alternative living arrangements. Governing bodies have discretionary powers to grant up to 5 days leave of absence in any one year for urgent, personal reasons. Any employee suffering domestic violence will be eligible to request time off in accordance with these leave provisions. All requests will be treated confidentially and sympathetically. Initially requests for time off should be raised with your Head Teacher but, if you prefer, you may initially contact the Education Personnel Group or your trade union representative for advice.

Counselling

Confidential counselling is available to all staff on a free and confidential basis through the Nottinghamshire County Council Employee Counsellor who can be contacted through HR.

Adapting Working Arrangements

A change in working hours, work location, or other temporary measures for protecting your safety may be possible. Full consideration will be given to security arrangements for you, such as screening of telephone calls and not giving information about your work arrangements to callers. In certain circumstances it may be possible to consider redeployment from your existing job on a temporary basis, if this is practical. The Governing Body recognises that domestic violence may have a negative impact on your performance at work. You will not be discriminated against because of domestic violence; however, it is important that you discuss any problems and needs immediately with your Head Teacher, line manager, personnel contact point and/or your trade union representative, in order that support and guidance may be offered.

Money

It is possible for the school to consider ways in which it can help with financial issues, for example, changing the method by which you receive your salary or issuing an advance of pay. This is a matter for individual schools and governing bodies to consider on an individual basis. Any financial requests should be made initially through your Head Teacher so this can be discussed with the Education Personnel Group. Please note that your trade union may also be able to assist with emergency financial support and you should contact them directly or through the Education Personnel Group.

Further Sources of help and advice

Emergency Services (Fire, Police, Ambulance) If you need to call out the police to a domestic violence crime 999

Nottinghamshire Social Services Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0300 456 4546

24 Hour Freephone Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 800 0340 Offers support, access to emergency accommodation/refuge and other support services, information and advice on matters such as housing, solicitors, finance etc or just someone to talk to.

Subscribes to language line (instant interpretation service). Also available via text phone (for people who are deaf or hard of hearing) between 9am-5pm Mon-Fri 0808 800 0341

Women's Aid Advice Centre Drop-In (wheelchair accessible) Support, advice and information for women on domestic violence and related issues 30 Chaucer Street, Nottingham. Mon-Fri 10am-4pm 0808 800 0340

Nottingham Rape Crisis Centre (Helpline and counselling) 0115 941 0440

Shelter – 0115 9810503

Nottingham Lesbian and Gay Switchboard 0115 934 8485
(open Mon-Fri 7.00pm-10.00pm ansaphone all other times)

Childline - national freephone helpline 0800 1111

Nottingham Childline 0844 892 0255

NSPCC - national freephone helpline. Confidential service for 0800 800 500 for anyone concerned about children at risk including children themselves.

Nottingham NSPCC 0115 960 5481

Web Sites

There are also a number of web sites providing information on a range of domestic violence related issues and services. The addresses provided below are a useful starting point - all include links to other useful sites. However, please note that if an abuser knows how to read your computer's history or cache file they may be able to see information you have viewed recently on the internet.

The sites detailed below give instructions for clearing your computer's history or emptying your cache file. However, you will not be able to completely hide your tracks. Many browser types have features that display recently visited sites. The safest way to find information on the internet would be at a local library, friend's house or at work.

www.womensaid.org.uk

Women's Aid Federation England – for information about services available, your legal rights, campaigns etc

www.lgbt-dv.org

A web site developed for survivors of same sex abuse.

www.equation.org.uk

Domestic violence resources

www.familycare-Nottingham.org.uk

SPHERE charity providing therapeutic services for children affected by domestic violence

www.teachersupport.info

Provides information about how teachers may access support and advice. Website for Teacher Support Network and telephone support available 24 hours per day/365 days per year with free confidential support and counselling 08000 562 561.

Crisis Planning

There may be a time when you have to leave your home in a hurry. It is helpful if you have already thought about how you would do it and have a plan ready to help you feel more in control. The following checklist provides some ideas. Find somewhere you can quickly and easily use a telephone – at work, a neighbour, a relative? Carry with you a list of telephone numbers of friends, relatives and emergency numbers.

Try to save some money for bus or taxi fares if needed.

Keep an extra set of keys for your home or car with someone you trust in case you need to leave immediately. Keep the items you will need and some clothes in a bag packed ready. Keep it somewhere where you can quickly get hold of it.

Checklist:

- national insurance number
- NHS Number
- passport
- driving licence
- cheque book
- credit cards
- building society book
- income support book
- child benefit book
- birth certificates (you and children)
- insurance papers

- marriage certificate
- divorce papers
- address book
- diary
- keys
- medication
- rent book
- details of telephone, gas, electricity, accounts etc.
- car documents
- change of clothes
- toys
- jewellery
- photographs/sentimental items
- mobile phone
- more detailed information can be obtained from the 24 hour freephone domestic violence helpline 0808 800 0340

Guidance for Head Teachers, Governing Bodies and other School Line Managers

Warning Signs

- comes to work repeatedly with injuries
- unusual number of calls from home and strong reaction to the calls
- late for work and needing to leave early
- secretive about home life
- frequent absenteeism
- emotional reactions such as tearful, angry, depressed, nervous, confused
- partner exerts unusual amount of control over their life
- partner makes demands over their work schedule
- may be extremely passive or aggressive
- may seem chronically depressed or depressed in cycles
- may isolate themselves at work

These are just a few characteristics.

Different people will react in different ways. A more important sign is when an individual behaves in a way that is unusual for her or him.

The role of the Head Teacher or line manager

As a Head Teacher you have a responsibility for the health and safety of all staff employed at your school. Almost one third of all women will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives and some of these will be your employees. One in ten women are experiencing domestic violence today. As Head Teacher it is important that you respond positively to an employee disclosing a problem with domestic violence. Discussing this issue will have taken a great deal of courage and your response may be a crucial factor in determining whether an employee seeks help.

There are a number of ways you can be helpful:

- try to develop an understanding and supportive climate within the school working environment
- make yourself approachable – give employees the opportunity to talk to you confidentially, both formally, through any regular one to one sessions you have, or informally
- make relevant literature generally available
- display any publicity information prominently
- look out for warning signs of domestic abuse and ensure information is available, do not however, pressure an employee to disclose information to you
- remember you are not an expert in this area, an understanding approach and offer of basic information is all that is required
- be aware that no advice is better than bad advice
- do not pressure a victim to leave the relationship, the nature of domestic abuse is that the victim will often stay within the relationship or return to it
- respect their decision

Confidentiality and Child Protection Concerns

Confidentiality is essential for an employee who is experiencing domestic violence. It is important that the employee knows that whatever they tell you will remain confidential and will not be revealed to anyone without their permission. In some cases where a violent or abusive partner has discovered their partner has confided in someone, this has resulted in more violence and even death. The only exception to this may be where it is necessary to invoke the school's child protection procedures where, for example, it is revealed that children are also being abused. In this case you have a duty to report this. The employee may then find the matter is taken out of their hands and it is therefore essential that you make the employee aware of your obligations in this area at a very early stage, so that they can decide exactly how much they wish to reveal. In all cases it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the employee is experiencing domestic violence and to ensure that the situation does not become centred solely around her/his child(ren).

Where this situation occurs you should immediately discuss your concerns with the Child Protection Officer and/or the Education Personnel Group.

Allowing time off work

An employee who is experiencing domestic violence will almost certainly need to take time off work to attend counselling sessions, court hearings or to make alternative living arrangements, etc. Conditions of service allow the governing body to approve absence with pay in cases of compassionate leave and urgent domestic business under the special leave provisions. Please remember that a refusal to allow time off may often add to the anxiety of the employee concerned. Head teachers should respond positively and sympathetically to requests for reasonable time off under these circumstances. Your Personnel Group contact point can give you further advice about allowing time off work.

Adapting working arrangements

Employers owe a duty of care to their employees. It may be that the most effective way a head teacher can help an employee is to consider a change in their working arrangements, probably temporarily, but possibly on a permanent basis. Perhaps s/he is being harassed by telephone calls

from the abuser, in which case a colleague or answering machine could screen calls. This may not always be straightforward in a school situation and will need some careful thought and planning. At particular times s/he may need to be more flexible about starting/finishing times and lunch breaks to avoid unwelcome visits; a temporary relocation of workplace may be considered. Whatever the needs, it is important for head teachers to consider all options carefully and be as flexible as possible in the circumstances. Further support and advice is available from your Personnel Group contact point. It should be recognised that domestic violence will probably have a negative impact on the performance of the employee concerned and it is important that the employee is supported and positive consideration is given to measures to temporarily alleviate work pressures. In certain exceptional circumstances the employee may be considered for redeployment and if this is the case you should contact the Education Personnel Group for advice. It is important to ensure that any action taken complies with the wishes of the employee concerned and that s/he does not feel blamed or punished in any way. To minimise the potential for conflict in the workplace, any changes to working arrangements should be communicated in an appropriate way to other colleagues whilst maintaining confidentiality. As indicated above, you can get further advice about the possibilities of changes to working arrangements from your Education Personnel Group contact point.

Finance

An employee experiencing domestic violence may request an advance of pay in an emergency situation or might also wish to request a change in the method of paying their salary. Both of these are possibilities and will be a matter for individual schools and governing bodies to consider on an individual basis. This should be discussed with and arranged through the Education Personnel Group. Individual requests made on this basis should be considered sympathetically. Please note that trade unions may also be able to assist individual members with emergency financial support.

Employees should be encouraged to contact their trade union for advice on this.

Dealing with perpetrators of domestic violence

In some cases the abuser may actually harass an employee at the workplace. In these circumstances both the victim and her/his colleagues may be at risk. If this person has no legitimate reason to be in school he/she is trespassing and may be escorted from the premises. Do not agree to pass on messages from a perpetrator of domestic violence or disclose the address or whereabouts of an employee who has fled violence. In extreme cases, the Legal Services Team can provide advice on dealing with these situations. Inevitably there will also be occasions where employees themselves are perpetrators of domestic violence. Creating an organisational culture in which domestic violence is unacceptable may help to influence perpetrators behaviour. Where the perpetration of domestic violence conflicts with the job role, head teachers should seek guidance from their Education Personnel Group contact point. In some cases this could put at risk the continued employment of the perpetrator.