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Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy For School Based Employees - Governing Bodies and Headteachers Guidance



This policy has been formally adopted by the Governing Body of
The Federation of Abbey Infant & Junior on Tuesday 2nd July 2024.

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1.0 The impact of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse impacts all sectors of society in differing ways; however, some sectors are more prevalent than others. Domestic abuse is an underreported crime, and victims may never report their abuse, however, evidence suggests that 1 in 3 women are likely to be impacted by domestic abuse in their lifetime, whilst 1 in 6 men are also likely to be affected. Those most affected are those aged 16-24 years old. Two women a week are killed by a current or ex-partner. In 2019 1.6 million women experienced Domestic abuse (www.refuge.org.uk).

Domestic abuse can be experienced by both men and women and is an issue that can impact on the workplace. Domestic abuse can affect the morale, health, wellbeing, and self-confidence of an employee, which in turn can impact on their performance at work and their wider team.

The effects of domestic abuse do not remain at home when the victim goes to work and perpetrators can continue to harass victims while they are at work. Domestic abuse in the workplace includes all behaviour that affects an employee's capacity to safely perform their duties. As well as harassing emails, phone calls or the perpetrator attending the workplace/ route to work, a victim's ability to do their job can also be affected by sleep deprivation, anxiety, depression, fear, reduced confidence, injury, unplanned absences etc.

Avoid victim blaming: It is important that Governing Bodies/Headteachers are able to provide a non-judgemental and supportive environment. Respecting the employee's boundaries and privacy is essential.

Even if Governing Bodies/Headteachers disagree with the decisions being made regarding an employee's relationship, it is important to understand that abuse is never the fault of the victim and often victims will make a number of attempts to leave their partner before they are finally able to do so.

Governing Bodies/Headteachers also need to be aware that the victim is most at risk of life threatening or fatal abuse when they are attempting to leave or have recently left their violent partner.

2.0 Guidance for governing bodies/headteachers on domestic abuse.

The purpose of this guide is to support and help employers with employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse. **If there is an immediate danger the guidance is to dial 999.**

These guidelines are designed to assist governing bodies/headteachers and HR in responding to victims of domestic abuse and stalking.

If at any point an employee is absent due to domestic abuse, Governing Bodies/Headteachers are required to follow the guidance detailed within the Management of Absence procedure.

The impact of COVID – 19 is likely to continue to have serious effect on the lives of people who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Isolation is a key tactic of abusers; it will increase the risk to victims.

3.0 Recognising problems

- look out for sudden changes in behaviour or demeanor
- a usually engaged employee not being communicative.
- reduced quantity or quality of work
- regularly being unavailable to attend meetings with no explanation.
- consistently refusing to turn video on for virtual meetings.
- expressing a need to log off early or log on late.

4.0 Responding to disclosures

If an employee ever finds the courage to disclose that they are experiencing domestic abuse to you, please believe them, support them, and signpost them to available services and the necessary authorities.

One in three women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse in their lives. A significant number of women are targeted at work.

Do not ask for evidence or proof.

Reassure your employee that you are aware of the impact that domestic abuse may have on their performance and let them know what support is available.

- maintain communication with the employee by means that are safe for them.
- have open, supportive conversations with employees about what arrangements to make if they feel unsafe.
- devise a safe word to use in case of emergencies.
- check in regularly with your employee, set out company policy of employees contacting managers when they start and finish work.
- retain both a work contact and an emergency contact of a family member (not the abuser)
- ask employees to always keep a mobile phone with them, if possible. If not seek to obtain a work mobile phone for the employee
- keep up to date with specialist services and emergency numbers

- HR and Governing Bodies/Head Teachers to familiarise themselves with The Silent Solution system to pass on to employees (details overleaf).

5.0 Signposting to additional help

- make sure you share the list of support services offered in the area
- encourage the employee to contact organisations and or support services local to them, via the safest mode of communication.
- Black Country Women's Aid provide a range of services and support to men and women experiencing domestic abuse. You can call them 24 hours a day on 0121 552 6448.

6.0 Silent Solution System

This is a system for victims of domestic abuse who might be afraid of further harm and danger if they are overheard when calling the emergency services. When they call 999, an operator will ask which service is required.

If the caller is unable to audibly signal to the operator, the call will be forwarded to an operating system. If 55 is pressed by the caller, the system will detect this. The operator will then transfer the call to the relevant police force as an emergency.

7.0 If the employee is deaf or can't verbally communicate

The employee can register with the emergency SMS service where users can send a text message to the UK 999 service which will be passed to the police, ambulance, fire rescue, or coastguard. To do this, they will need to text 'REGISTER' to 999. A response will then be sent with instructions on what to do next.

Recent statistics state that 50% of stalking victims have ceased or curtailed <u>work</u> due to being stalked
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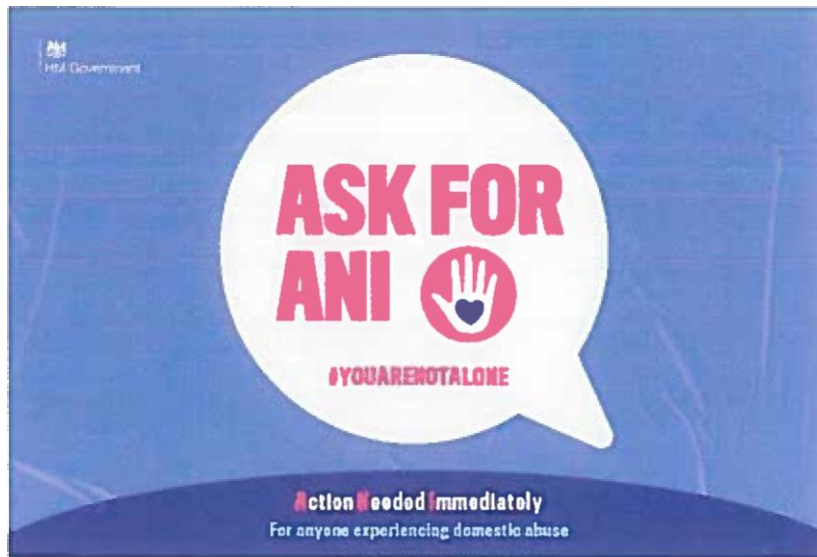
8.0 Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme or "Clare's Law"

Clare's Law designates several ways for police officers to disclose a person's history of abusive behaviour to those who be at risk from such behaviour. It is intended to reduce intimate partner abuse. There are two main elements: a 'right to ask', which allows members of the public, including a domestic partner, to request information from the police about a potential abuser; and a 'right to know', which, in certain circumstances, permits police to disclose such information to the public on their own initiative. information could arise from a criminal investigation, through statutory or third sector agency involvement, or from another source of police intelligence.

Where possible confidentiality will be maintained. Information will not be shared unnecessarily with colleagues without permission. There are, however, some circumstances in which the employer's duty of care is the overriding factor, and confidentiality cannot be assured.

How can employees make a Clare's Law request? — They will need to visit their local police website and complete an online form, or they can visit their local police station. If the 'person' lives outside of the employees local policing area, they will need to find the nearest police force to them using the National Police Website.

9.0 Assistance Needed Immediately or "Ask for Ani" Scheme



Allows those at risk or suffering from abuse to discreetly signal that they need help and access support. By asking for ANI (which stands for: Assistance Needed Immediately), a trained pharmacy worker will offer a private space where they can understand if the victim needs to speak to the police or would like help to access support services such as a national or local domestic abuse helplines. Specifically, trained staff in pharmacies can provide a safe space for victims to sound an alarm if they are isolated at home with their abuser and unable to get help in another way.

Reviewed on	Reviewed by	Completed
1 st issue July 2024	Unless new LA – not needed	