

# St Vincent's Catholic Primary School



## Domestic Abuse Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	Governing Body	<b>Date</b> 19.09.2019
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>		
<b>Next review due by:</b>	When government issues changes	

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## Introduction

This policy document explains the role of the staff in both identifying domestic abuse and supporting families who experiences it. The policy confirms the school's commitment to relevant guidance and identifies actions the school will undertake to support staff and families in identifying, preventing and supporting victims and their children.

Our Vision and Values **As a Catholic School we are guided, in everything we do, by the example and teachings of Jesus who told us to love one another. The quote below from Ephesians (4:31-32) gives us more detailed guidance.**

**'Never bear grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody. Never call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be friends with one another; be kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgives you.'**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation
- Attendance
- Equal Opportunities
- Anti-Bullying policies
- Relationships Education Policy

**This policy outlines the commitment of staff and governors to dealing effectively with domestic abuse.**

## Definitions

The following terms are used in this document:

A 2019 definition of domestic abuse states:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexual orientation. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, economic and emotional forms 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 a person."

## Definition of Domestic Abuse as seen in the Abuse Bill:

Behaviour by 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, and
- (b) the behaviour is abusive.

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;
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.
- (f) "honour" based, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

"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.

Domestic abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- **Sexual**

ANY non-consensual activity, including rape, sexual assault, coercive sexual activity or refusing safer sex.

- **Emotional/Psychological Abuse**

Intimidation, social isolation, verbal abuse, humiliation, constant criticism, enforced trivial routines.

- **Economic Abuse**

Stealing, depriving or taking control of money, running up debts, withholding benefits books and bank cards.

Perpetrators may use different forms of at different times. This policy and guidance applies equally to men who require advice or help whatever form it takes. Domestic is rarely a one-off incident. More usually it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour where the abuser exerts power over the victim. It occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography.

The aim of the policy

*The aim of the policy is the support children who have been exposed to any issue in relation to their safety both mental and physical. This includes all forms of abuse including domestic . The school will follow it's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures.*

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

All staff, including temporary and agency staff, are responsible for:

- Compliance with relevant *safeguarding procedures*.  
Mrs Di Tunno has attended domestic abuse training.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Our school is committed to protecting children. Where the abuse of a child or children under 18 is identified or suspected, this must be defined as child abuse in line with the school's Child Protection Policies and Procedures. If a decision is made not to make a referral to Children's Social Care, information should be shared with other local services. If there is some uncertainty regarding the level of risk, advice should be sought from the school leads for safeguarding.

The school leads for Safeguarding are Jane Roche, Paolina Di Tunno, Jenny Clark and Catherine Badawi.

The school Safeguarding leads are responsible for ensuring the school response to domestic and abuse.

They will:

- implement the domestic and abuse policy
- support reporting and complaints procedures
- advise staff members about any concerns that they have
- lead on analysis of relevant significant events
- determine training needs and ensuring they are met
- make recommendations for change or improvements in school procedural policy
- act as a focus for external contacts

In addition they will:

- Ensure that staff members and any staff who are victims receive adequate support when dealing with domestic and abuse.
- Respond appropriately if it becomes apparent a staff member is an alleged perpetrator.

All members of school staff:

- Have a responsibility to acknowledge any safeguarding issue as well domestic /abuse and take action to respond to their wishes and follow Domestic Abuse Flowchart .
- Should respect the wishes of parents who do not want to take further actions at the time of disclosure, must respect the need for parent's confidentiality but understand when it is necessary to disclose information.
- Have an awareness of and understand the indicators which may lead to domestic /abuse and that this issue features highly in cases of child protection.
- Know what process to follow if they are concerned a colleague is either a victim or perpetrator.
- Must inform DSP who will record disclosures of abuse.

## **Domestic and Abuse Process**

**St Vincent's is committed to:**

- Responding appropriately to domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, recognising that domestic abuse has a hugely negative impact in the families of those who experience it.
- Ensuring all staff has up to date and accessible local and national contact details.

## **Dealing with disclosures**

Any disclosure must be reported to Safeguarding leads – who will follow school policy

- All staff should document what has been disclosed on a concern form and report the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow the procedures safeguarding procedures.
- The issue of domestic /abuse should be reviewed by the appropriate agency dealing with each case.

In dealing with any domestic disclosure, child protection issues must override normal confidentiality and data protection considerations. Where there are issues of child safety neither the consent of the child nor the parent (not even the non-abusing parent) is needed in order to disclose information. Where domestic is disclosed, professionals have a duty to share concerns and information even against the expressed wish of the child or parent.

### **Child/Young Person's Disclosure**

When a child/young person discloses DV it is highly likely that:

- A number of incidents have occurred
- The child/young person wants the DV to stop
- The child/young person trusts the person to whom the disclosure has been made

During the course of a disclosure by a child/young person, school staff will:

- Validate the experience of the child/young person by acknowledging the feelings and taking the account seriously
- Value the strengths the child/young person has shown by surviving and for making the decision to protect others in the family
- Listen to the child/young person
- Not interview or ask him/her to repeat the account
- Avoid leading questions as these could jeopardise current or future prosecutions
- Avoid interrupting when the child/young person is recalling events
- Carefully note what is said, verbatim, or as near as possible, including details such as timing, setting, who was present and what was said in the child/young person's words
- Not suggest any alternative explanations
- Check out how safe the child/young person feels now and in general and ask him or her about plans for the rest of the day

After the disclosure, Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Not promise the child/young person confidentiality, if he/she has witnessed DA it must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead
- Explain to the child/young person what is going to happen next i.e. that the Safeguarding Lead will be informed
- If it is decided, in the interests of safety, that other members of school staff need to know, the child/young person, where appropriate, will be informed.

When the Safeguarding Lead receives information regarding a disclosure by a child/young person he/she will:

- Contact Children's Social Care (CSC) to discuss the disclosure
- Agree on the next course of action, which can include whether or not a referral should be made
- Decide which agency should speak to the parent/carer and what information should be shared.

If it is agreed that a referral should be made, a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) should be completed and sent to CSC within 24 hours.

It is acknowledged that this type of disclosure and any referral made to CSC will put a strain on the school's relationship with the parent/carer(s). This is an acceptable risk taking into

account the damage that can be done to children and young people forced to witness DV.

### **Third Party Disclosure**

In some cases, a child may disclose that he/she has witnessed or is aware of DV in another child's family. In this situation the Safeguarding Lead will check with CSC as to whether the family is known to them. When reporting the disclosure to CSC, the Safeguarding Lead should inform them of any reservations regarding the disclosure e.g. a dispute exists between the families. If so, a report of the third-party disclosure must be made to the Duty Officer at CSC. If the family is not known to CSC, the Safeguarding Lead will ask the Duty Officer whether they think, given the situation:

- It is reasonable to talk to the child about the alleged domestic abuse, and/or
- A report should be made to the CSC.

If an adult reports DV in another family, explain that as he/she has all the relevant information, a firsthand report of the incident(s) from them would be better. Pass on the relevant CSC phone number and offer the adult the choice of making the call from a school phone. The adult may want you or another staff member (eg. the Safeguarding Lead) to be present when he/she makes the call. If the adult agrees to report, but doesn't make the call whilst on the school premises, or in another staff member's presence, the Safeguarding Lead is to check a few days later whether a report has been made to CSC.

If the adult declines, the Safeguarding Lead will check with CSC whether the family is known to them. If so a report of the third party disclosure will be made. If the family is not known to CSC, the Safeguarding Lead will ask the Duty Officer whether they think, given the situation:

It is reasonable to talk to the child about the alleged DA; and/or a report should be made to CSC.

Adults and children making third party disclosure may be distressed by what they have witnessed. If it is appropriate, they should be offered one of the Domestic Helpline leaflets (or be given the number if no leaflets are available).

School staff may be concerned that a third party disclosure is malicious. It is impossible for any member of staff to be sure that there is malicious intent. The welfare of the child is paramount, consequently staff must report all disclosures regardless of suspicions.

### **Relationship with the Alleged Perpetrator – Post Disclosure**

Perpetrators of DV are often very adept at manipulation and presenting a different image to people in public to that faced by those in their home environment. Alleged perpetrators can use conversations with professionals to divert attention away from their behaviour and its consequences, and to inappropriately focus on the behaviour of others. However congenial or aggressive the alleged perpetrator is, **on no account** should the school staff mention the disclosure to him/her or challenge him/her about it.

### **Information Sharing**

Information sharing within the school and with outside agencies is on a need to know basis only. The child/young person and non-abusing carer must be informed and consent obtained if it is decided there is a need to share information with a third party. In a situation when the family does not wish for information to be shared this must be respected, except

when the safety of the child/young person can only be ensured by the sharing of information.

Confidentiality can only be broken if it is essential to the safety of the child/young person. The child/young person must be informed by the designated safeguarding lead when confidentiality is broken and the reasons for this explained.

Information may be shared in the public interest, without the parent's consent, and in exceptional cases where the parent has withheld consent, if the benefits to an individual or to society of the information sharing outweigh both the public and the parents' interest in keeping the information confidential. You must weigh the harms that are likely to arise from non-disclosure of information against the possible harm, both to the parent and to the overall trust between the school and the parent, arising from the release of that information.

### **Parental Responsibility (PR)**

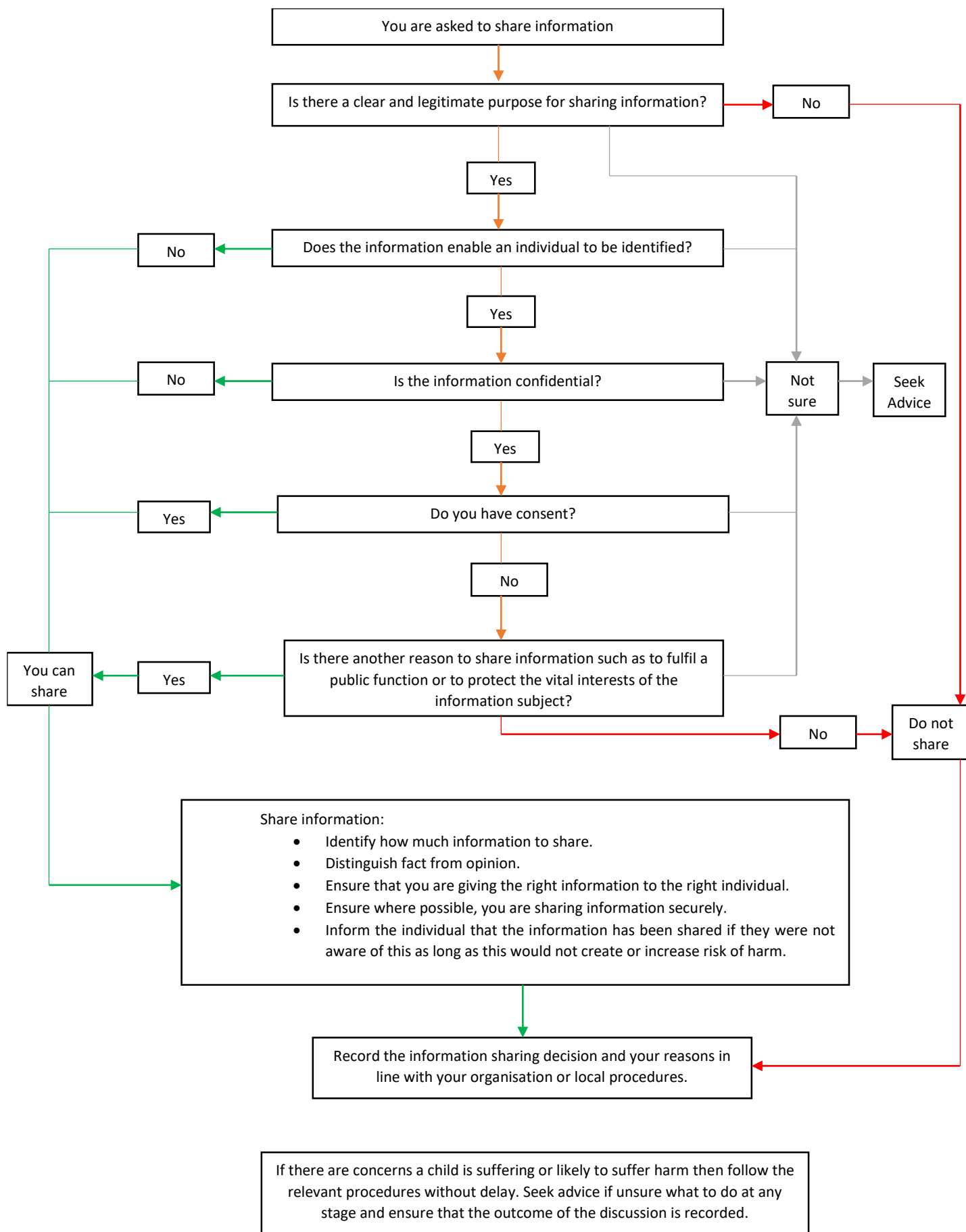
The guidelines that govern what schools are to do where an alleged perpetrator has parental responsibility are found below:

- The alleged perpetrator will not have access to the child protection file or any supporting documentation, even if he or she has PR, if disclosure would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of a crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of the perpetrator. (It may be advisable to inform any persons investigating the matter e.g. Police or Social Worker, that such a request has been made).
- If the alleged perpetrator demands access to the pupils educational record then this will usually be allowed. (It is important to ensure that the Pupil File holds no sensitive information).
- Where the alleged perpetrator has PR, he/she may seek information from the school or the Children and Young People's Service or the new school about the whereabouts of the young person/people whom he/she has responsibility. In this instance:
  - Check with the non-abusing parent/carer if she/he consents to disclosure of information to the alleged perpetrator that has PR;
  - Advise the non-abusing parent/carer that he or she should seek their own legal advice in order to prevent disclosure by obtaining a Court Order (Prohibited Steps Order).

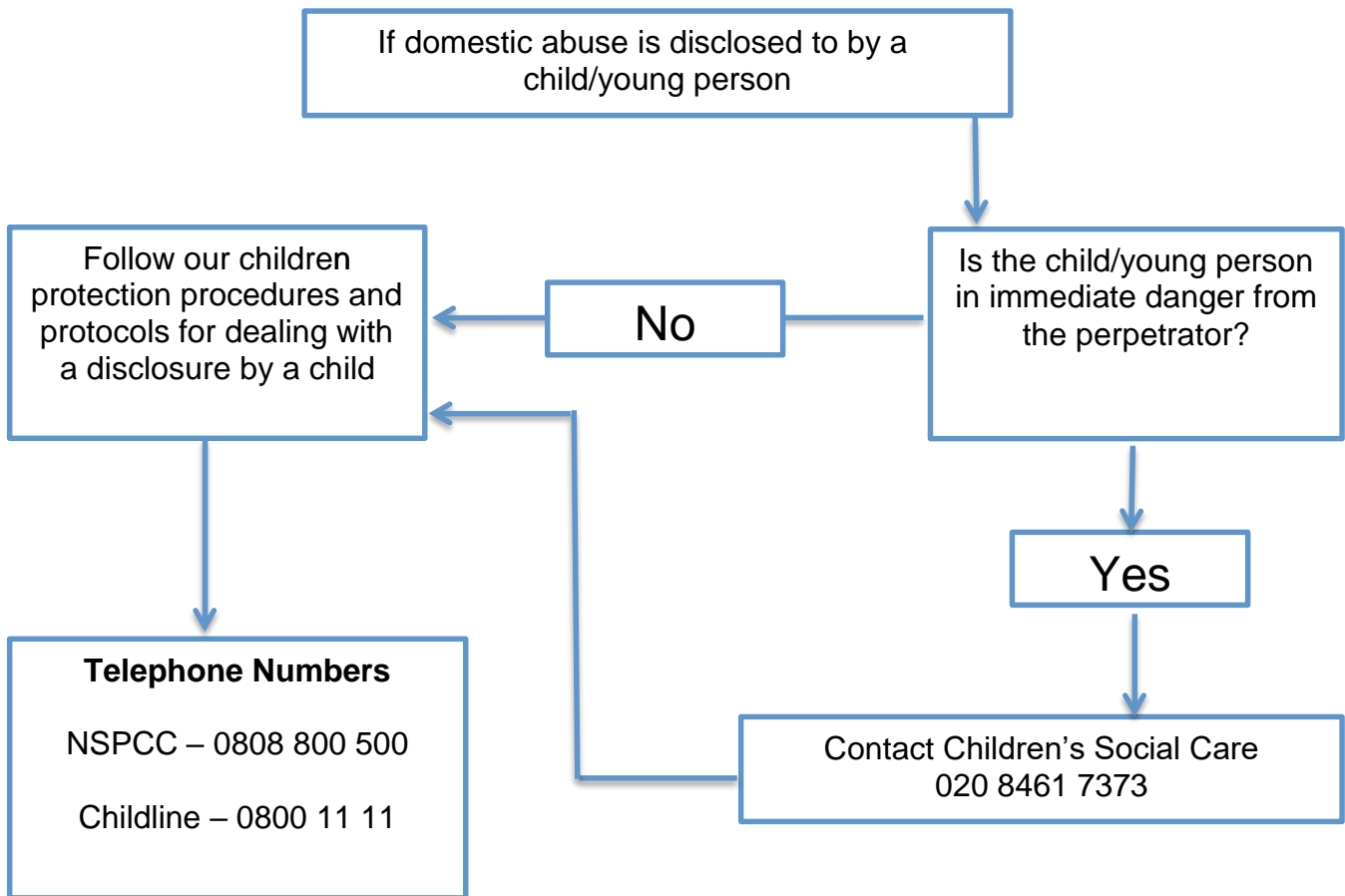
If the non-abusing parent/carer does not consent to the disclosure of information, the alleged perpetrator with PR should be informed that consent has not been given. The school will then seek further advice from all relevant agencies.



## Flowchart of when and how to share information



**Flowchart of how to deal with a disclosure by a child/young person**



Procedures should be in place in order to ensure that the child/young person's child protection file is accessible to certain staff within the school; the following staff members are required to have access:

- The Headteacher
- Safeguarding Leads
- Other staff members may have this information on a need-to-know basis with the permission of both the child/young person and parent/carer

We help protect children/young people by ensuring that:

- No documents or files relating to the child/young person are taken away by other staff members.
- The Head teacher and Safeguarding Leads both know the name and details of the alleged perpetrator.
- Guidelines relating to parental responsibility are followed.

### **General Guidance Regarding Information Sharing where the Child/Young Person is Living in a Refuge**

In addition to the above:

- The child/young person's school file must not disclose the refuge address, only the Post Office Box address will be written on the file. The Head teacher and safeguarding leads may hold the actual address of the refuge.

### **Training for School Staff**

The Family Worker has domestic abuse awareness training.

As part of this policy all staff should be familiar with the attached appendices:

- Appendix 1—Domestic abuse support services available;

- Appendix 2—Common behaviour when a child/young person is a witness of domestic abuse;
- Appendix 3—Directory of Services.

“The school governors and the Education Authority will not tolerate threatening and aggressive behaviour on its premises, nor verbal or physical abuse to parents, staff or pupils.”

We take very seriously incidents that cause stress and distress to school staff who do not deserve to be treated in this manner. We will ban parents from the school site who are vexatious, threatening and/or aggressive.

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 states that visitors causing a disturbance in an educational establishment may be removed and prosecuted. If convicted of this offence the penalty is £500. Section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972 also allows the Local Authority to prosecute an abusive parent.

**Date approved by the governing body:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date to be reviewed by the governing body:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1

# Athena

Run by Refuge

Working in Lewisham  
to end gender-based violence

Do you feel threatened or at risk of violence?

We can support you.



One-to-one support session



Group discussion and peer support



Advocacy and support for young people

## What support is available

### from the Athena service?

The Athena service provides confidential, non-judgmental and independent support services for those who are experiencing gender-based violence in Lewisham.

We support women and girls aged 13 and over, and males aged 16 and over.

We will work with you to create a support plan that helps keep you safe.

### What is gender-based violence?

- Domestic violence (physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological abuse)
- Rape and sexual assault
- Stalking
- Prostitution
- Sexual exploitation
- Trafficking for sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- So-called 'honour'-based violence

### How can I access the service?

T 0800 112 4052

E [lewishamvawg@refuge.org.uk](mailto:lewishamvawg@refuge.org.uk)

W [www.refuge.org.uk/athena-lewisham](http://www.refuge.org.uk/athena-lewisham)

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<b>IMPACT OF DV ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>	
<b>Children/young people living in a household where there is DV</b>	<b>Children/young people living in a refuge or other temporary accommodation (fleeing DV)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> an inability to concentrate because the problems at home are overwhelming;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> loss of language skills (in younger children);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> running away;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> quiet and withdrawn behaviour;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> aggressive behaviour;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> disruptive behaviour;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> attempts to rescue potentially difficult situations by being overly compliant;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> difficulties with homework because of a volatile home environment;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> involvement in numerous extra curricular activities to avoid going home;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> excellent academic attainment;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> poverty because the abusive parent/carer is withholding money from the parent/carer with main childcare responsibilities;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fear, confusion and trauma;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> guilt for not being able to stop the violence;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> feelings that they have to protect the abused parent/carer;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> participating in the violence under coercion;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> physical injuries from DV crossfire; eg. cuts, bruises and even broken bones.</li> </ul>	<p>Children/young people living in a refuge or other temporary accommodation may experience some of the same issues as those living with DV. In addition they may experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the after effects of living in an abusive household;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> difficulties in becoming familiar with new surroundings and living with strangers;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the fear of being found;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> concern for the abused parent/carer and/or the perpetrator parent/carer poverty because:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• benefits may be the only source of funds;</li> <li>• the abused parent/carer may be unable to continue working if the perpetrator knows where he/she works;</li> <li>• a new benefit claim may take some time to sort out and leave the family in dire financial circumstances;</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> problems with homework because there are few resources and little quiet space (this will particularly affect GCSE pupils);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> loss of important schoolwork left at the family home;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> difficulties developing new friendships because their temporary home address cannot be disclosed;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> separation from older male siblings - boys over the age of 15 are not able to stay in women's refuges;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> loss of material and comfort items, eg. toys and clothes, left at the family home.</li> </ul>

## Directory of services

This is a directory of services in the UK that might be useful to you when supporting someone affected by domestic and sexual violence and substance use problems. For information about specialist services in your area, it is best to **contact your council's domestic violence/violence against women and girls coordinator**. If you don't know who to contact, call the Children & young People's Project Coordinator on 020 7549 0277 for more information.

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### HELPLINES

**Childline:** 0800 1111 or via their website [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) ChildLine is an advice and support service for children and young people.

**NSPCC helpline:** 0808 800 5000 (24 hours). The NSPCC Helpline provides advice and support to adults who are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child.

**National Domestic Violence Freephone:** 0808 2000 247 (24 hours). Operated by Women's Aid and Refuge. Support and information for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf (including professionals).

**Rape Crisis:** 0808 802 9999 (12-2.30pm, 7-9:30pm). National helpline for survivors of sexual violence including specific advice for under 18s. [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

**FRANK:** 0300 123 6600 (24 hours), Text 82111. Advice and information on drug and alcohol use and treatment, including information on local treatment services.

**Broken Rainbow Helpline:** 0300 999 5428 (Monday & Thursday 10am-8pm, Tuesday & Wednesday 10am-5pm). Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people experiencing domestic violence.

**Honour Network Helpline:** 0800 5999 247 (9:30am-5pm). Advice and support for victims/survivors of forced marriage and so-called 'honour' based violence.

**National Stalking Helpline:** 0808 802 0300 (Monday-Friday, 9:30am-4pm, except Wednesday 1pm-4pm). Practical advice and information to anybody who is currently or has previously been affected by harassment or stalking.

**Samaritans:** 08457 90 90 90 (24 hours). Emotional support for anyone in crisis.

**Papyrus:** 0800 068 41 41 (Monday-Friday 10am to 10pm, Weekends 2-5pm) Support for young people and professionals to prevent young suicide [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

### SERVICES

**The London VAWG consortium** | <http://thelondonvawgconsortium.org.uk/>

Operates the Ascent Project which delivers a range of services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, funded by London Councils.

**Women's Aid** | [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

National charity working to end domestic violence, supporting over 500 services across the UK. Professionals can call the National Domestic Violence Helpline (0808 2000 247), run jointly with Refuge, for advice and information on supporting clients experiencing domestic violence.

**Refuge** | [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

National charity providing accommodation, advocacy and outreach service for survivors of domestic violence. Refuge also provides culturally specific refuges and outreach programmes for Eastern European, African, and Asian families.

**Independent Domestic Violence Advisors** | IDVAs are trained specialists, funded by the Home Office, who work one-on-one with survivors of domestic violence to keep them and their children safe. They work proactively with victims to assess the level of risk, discuss their options and develop safety plans, addressing their immediate safety as well as looking at longer-term solutions. IDVAs represent their clients at the multi agency risk assessment conference (MARAC). Contact your council's domestic violence coordinator to find out if there is an IDVA service in your area.

**Independent Sexual Violence Advisors** | ISVAs are victim-focused advocates, funded by the Home Office to work with victims of recent and historic serious sexual crimes to enable them to access the services they need in the aftermath of the abuse they have experienced. ISVAs are based in SARCs and voluntary sector violence against women services nationally. Contact your council's domestic violence coordinator to find out if there is an ISVA in your area.

**FRANK** | [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com), 0300 123 6600 (24hr Helpline), Text 82111

Website and phonenumber run by the Department of Health, providing advice and information on drug and alcohol use to users, their families and friends. FRANK can provide information on specific treatment services available in your area. Information is particularly aimed at young people, but can be used by people of all ages.

**Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)** | [www.thehavens.co.uk](http://www.thehavens.co.uk), 020 3299 1599

There are 24 hour Sexual Assault Referral Centres throughout England, Wales and Scotland, which are specialist centres for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. They provide support to recover from the emotional and physical effects of the assault, including medical care and forensic examination, counselling, psychotherapy, emergency contraception, treatment for STIs and advocacy. There are 3 SARCs in London, The Havens, their urgent advice/appointments line is 020 3299 6900. For SARCs nationally, see: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk/centres.php](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/centres.php) and [www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)

**National Union of Teachers** | [www.teachers.org.uk](http://www.teachers.org.uk)

The NUT has produced national guidelines on domestic abuse for teachers called 'Silence is not always golden'.

**Association of Teachers and Lecturers** – Safer Schools Campaign (covering all equalities strands including VAWG) <http://saferschools.org.uk>

**Black, minority ethnic and refugee people**

**Ashiana Project** | [www.ashiana.org.uk](http://www.ashiana.org.uk), 020 8539 0427

Offers advice, support and housing for black and ethnic minority women experiencing domestic violence, particularly those from South Asian, Turkish & Iranian communities.

**Chinese Information & Advice Centre** | [www.ciac.co.uk](http://www.ciac.co.uk), 08453 131 868 Ext 211

London-based national charity, with a women's support project for Chinese women and families in distress, including domestic violence.