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| Education & Learning |
| Suffolk Domestic Violence and Abuse Notification Protocol. |
| For schools and education settings |



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# Domestic Violence and Abuse: A role for schools

Schools are well placed to address issues of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) with children and young people for a number of reasons. School is a universal experience for children and young people and is therefore able to reach a whole generation of people. Schools can create an ethos which communicates to children, young people and families, a shared set of values about how people can treat each other with warmth and respect.

Preventative work with children and young people in schools and other settings, in relation to gender equality and from a young age, has been identified as important in changing damaging attitudes before they harden in the teenage years.

Schools have regular contact with children and young people, and are able to spot signs and indicators of a child who may be distressed. School may be one of the only safe places for children and young people experiencing violence at home. Schools may be a place of safety for adult victims to receive support. Schools also have a number of legal requirements relating to this work.

# What is Domestic Violence and Abuse?

A new government definition of domestic violence (DV) has been developed and came into use in March 2013. It changed the definition to one of *domestic violence and abuse* (DVA). The new definition now includes 16 and 17 year olds, recognising that they are the largest group to experience domestic abuse and violence. It is now defined as:

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| ***‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional’.***  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 their victim. |

# The impact of domestic violence and abuse.

“The impact on the abused person can be devastating and can include for example, physical injury, psychological injury, depression, living in constant fear and self-harming behaviour” (Source: Women’s Aid). There are wide ranging affects domestic violence and abuse can have on the lives of victims.

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| **The table below indicates the detail of the impact and risks for children and young people of domestic violence and abuse. It provides some of the signs and symptoms that school staff may recognise as a cause for concern and action. It also highlights some of the issues a young person is experiencing that require support.** | |
| **When Living with Domestic Violence and Abuse:** | **When Leaving Domestic Violence and Abuse:** |
| **Safety** | |
|  Injury/threats if attempts to intervene   Having to leave the house to get help or be safe   Running away   Being injured before birth, or as a baby   Self-harming in order to cope |  Continued threat from abuser   Continued contact with abusive parent through a ‘Contact order’   Greater risk to health and safety when in temporary accommodation   At greatest risk of being killed at this point or in the first few months |
| **Education** | |
|  Erratic school attendance   Late to school   Attending school when ill because they do not want to be at home   Faking illness to stay at home to protect abused   Disturbed sleep leading to a loss of concentration   Unable to complete homework   Concentrating extra hard to escape   Not being able to take part in extra-curricular activities |  Disturbed sleep leading to a loss of concentration   Not getting a new school place   Late to school because of new accommodation   Missing school for court appearances   Unable to complete homework   Reduced finances affecting ability to buy uniform or take part in extra-curricular activities   Risk of abduction because they can be found via school |
| **Emotional Health and Development** | |
|  Restricted access to health care   Restricted access to food and clothing   Unwilling or unable to bring friends home   Erratic school attendance   Disturbed sleep   Altered brain development   Living with conflict and tension   Distorted vision of relationships   Being forced to take part in abuse of parent   Upset at death/ injury to pet |  Not being able to see friends and family   Possible loss of a pet, possessions and all that is familiar   Stigma of being in temporary accommodation   Loss of access to activities e.g. sport or drama   Finances can improve or get worse   May be subject to an child protection investigation   Disturbed sleep   Stress related illness and/or behaviours |

Spotting signs and indicators early and providing ‘early help’ for the child or young person will reduce the risk of harm to them. The following procedure for notifying schools about a DVA incident involving a child or young person has been adopted by Suffolk County Council’s children’s services and you are asked to familiarise yourself with what to do if you receive a DVA notification. The main purpose of this notification is to ensure that schools are aware of the incident, so that they can provide sensitive support and play their part alongside other agencies in ensuring the child’s safety and well-being.

# Safeguarding in Education.

**Domestic abuse is always a child protection issue.** In a study of 139 serious case reviews in England 2009-2011, 63% of cases were found to have domestic abuse as a risk factor (Department For Education – Research Report 226 – New learning from Serious Case Reviews: a two year report for 2009-2011). It is essential to always inform Children’s Social Care via Customer First on **0808 800 4005** if you suspect a child at your school is living with domestic abuse andyou have an immediate safeguarding concern**.**

**Note: This document should not be used in place of Suffolk’ Safeguarding Procedures. All safeguarding concerns should be addressed by following safeguarding procedures. The policy and procedures are accessible at:** <http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/concerned/>

# Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) notifications to schools and education settings.

Prior to receiving DVA notifications all schools are required to sign an Information Sharing Agreement and have access to a secure email address and/or encryption software e.g. Egress and to supply details of the secure email to SCC. Please see appendix B (page 12) for instructions on how to do this. Any school not able to confirm details of secure email account and/or encryption software will not be able to receive the DVA notifications as per the information sharing protocol agreed between Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk County Council. This is in order to protect sensitive data from falling into the wrong hands.

When police are called out to a domestic violence and abuse incident in Suffolk where children or young people are present, schools will receive a “Domestic Violence and Abuse Notification” (see Appendix A Page 11), via a secure/encrypted email, informing them that this has happened to a child or young person in their school. The incident will also be recorded by the police. (See DVA flow chart, page 10).

The school may respond by telephoning the MASH Education unit on 01473 263200 on the email (Appendix A. Page 6) to request further information about the incident. However it should be noted that unless MASH staff have consent to share further information from those with PR, they will be unable to do so.

If the case is allocated, you will need to contact the child’s allocated Social Worker if you have a query: please do not contact the MASH. The allocated Social Worker will follow up the information from the police as appropriate.

The school would benefit from reviewing any records you may have of previous incidents or other welfare concerns to inform the discussion.

The schools may also wish to:

* Contact their local Domestic Abuse Services to refer the child for specialist support if deemed appropriate.
* Arrange a meeting with the parent (usually the victim) to discuss how to address the child’s needs and welfare which may be useful at this point. Parents may not be aware that the school have been informed and so the meeting will require a sensitive approach. The discussion should not include judgement of the parents’ relationship or behaviour. It needs to focus on the effects on the child, e.g. poor concentration due to worry or lack of sleep, anxiety, lack of attendance etc. This non-judgemental approach usually helps parents to focus on how their child can be supported and they are more likely to give consent for early help or specialist support. [Where there are concerns that it may not be safe to speak to the parents, follow your usual safeguarding procedures]
* Share information with relevant members of staff working directly with the child or young person to offer appropriate support and monitoring.

# What should I do now?

In order to start receiving DVA notifications all schools will be required to sign the Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) which has been sent out to all schools. This can also be found via the following link:

<http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/safeguarding-and-e-safety>

**Please email a scanned signed copy via** [**CYPMASH@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk**](mailto:CYPMASH@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk) **or**

**return a signed copy of the ISA to Addressee only, Head of Service, Suffolk MASH, Suffolk County Council, Landmark House, 4 Egerton Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 5DF**

**Please retain a copy for your records.**

If you have any further concerns for a child please follow your usual safeguarding procedures.

## Appendix A: Domestic Violence and Abuse Notification Email Template

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| **FAO: The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/Headteacher**  I am writing to notify you of a **DVA,** which the police attended.  Please note that the child(ren) named below may or may not be aware of the incident. If you require further immediate information regarding the incident, it is important that you contact the telephone number below.  .  **Child’s Name:                            DOB:                      Childs ID No:**  **Date of Incident:**  **Child present during the event: Yes/No/Unknown**  **Child resident in household: Yes/No**  **The risk level for the adult [victim]: RISK Level: HIGH/MEDIUM/STANDARD**  **MASH BRAG Rating: Blue(NFA) Red CP; Amber (Ass); Green (Monitoring/Signpost)**  This procedure has been developed in consultation with colleagues from Suffolk Constabulary, Social Care and Education & Learning. More information can be found on the Schools Extranet under Safeguarding. Schools will be expected to liaise with colleagues in other agencies involved with the child, as appropriate, e.g. school nurse, local Early Help Teams,  etc. It is hoped that this information will assist in understanding the particular needs of pupils and the schools role in providing Early Help where appropriate.  To assist us in continuing to improve our service, please take time to complete the survey using the link below:  <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CGWNW7J>  Regards,  MASH Co-ordinator  (include name)  This notification is intended solely for the addressee. ‘If you choose to share this information, please ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it and is shared securely’.  Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the contents of this e-mail may be disclosed. Suffolk County Council reserves the right to monitor both sent and received emails.  **The responsibility for informing schools lies with Business Support Services within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.** |

## Appendix B: Signing up for an Egress encryption services.