



## **MASH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/ABUSE (DVA) NOTIFICATIONS TO SCHOOLS**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

#### **Q: Why have we received 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. This will help to build the bigger picture of the child's circumstances and support professionals in acting for the child's safety and welfare.

The MASH will have identified the children at the home address and their registered school via the EMS system. Notifications are still submitted by Suffolk Constabulary when children were not present during an incident or if they were present in the home but did not witness the incident.

If you have received a DVA notification your school has signed an information sharing agreement with Suffolk MASH.

#### **Q: What is the expected response to the child on receipt of a DVA notification?**

This information may put into context the child's behaviour or presentation. Children will make disclosures about their safety and well-being in many different ways and may choose particular staff to talk to either intentionally or unintentionally. Staff need to be vigilant to recognise this. When a child approaches an adult to talk about any incident or worry that raises concern, it is important to respond sensitively at this point. They may be experiencing a range of complex emotions and have had to summon up a lot of courage to speak to an adult. How a professional responds at this point is crucial.

#### **Q: I have received DVA notification but the child is no longer a pupil at my school, what action should I take?**

Please inform the MASH by reply of email and delete the email received. If known please also provide the MASH with the details of the current school so the MASH can resend the notification.

The MASH will be using the EMS system so information may sometimes be out of date.

#### **Q: I have received a DVA notification but the pupil is open to Social Care and already has a Social Worker, what action should I take?**

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.

#### **Q: I have received a DVA notification but the pupil has an open TAC plan (Team Around the Child) what action should I take?**

The MASH will provide an alert direct to the Lead Professional once a decision is made in the MASH, allowing them to follow up the information from the police as appropriate and update the wider team of professionals. You may find it helpful to discuss the incident with the Lead Professional directly.

**Q: Who do I share the information received in the DVA notification with?**

The information sharing report is only intended for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) at the relevant school. The primary purpose for sharing this information is to alert the DSL to the fact that a pupil may be experiencing difficulties at home.

**Q: What does the High, Medium or Standard rating mean?**

This relates to the rating from a Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Harassment (DASH) risk checklist completed by the police officer attending. It assesses the level of risk to the adult victim.

**Standard** – Current information, intelligence or evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm. *Victim Support contact victims of Standard Risk Crimes.*

**Medium** – There are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The offender has the capability to cause serious harm but unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances, for example failure to take medication, loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown, and drug or alcohol misuse.

*Police Domestic Abuse Team contact victims of Medium Risk Crimes.*

**High** – There are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious.

Risk of Serious Harm (Home Office 2002 and OASys 2006): A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible. *Victims of High Risk Crimes are referred to and are offered the IDVA Service.* All High Risk Crimes are referred to *MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)*, a local, multi-agency victim-focussed meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse between different agencies.

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