



Shropshire
Council



Domestic Abuse Policy

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	Date of Next Review by
Head teacher/SLT	October 2017
Governors	Finance and General Personnel

This Policy has been agreed by the following professional associations and Trade Unions representing Teachers, Headteachers and Support Staff:

- National Union of Teachers
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers
- National Association of Headteachers
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Unison
- GMB

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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	Page 3
2.	Scope	Page 3
3.	Aims and objectives	Page 3
4.	Definition	Page 3
5.	Confidentiality	Page 4
6.	Internal support	Page 4
7.	Occupational health	Page 4
8.	Special leave	Page 5
9.	Support officers	Page 5
10.	Family information service	Page 5
11.	Financial arrangements	Page 5
12.	Flexible working	Page 5
13.	Communication	Page 6
14.	External support	Page 6
15.	Anti-discrimination	Page 6
16.	Support and guidance	Page 6
17.	Review of policy	Page 6

Appendices

A.	Roles and responsibilities	Page 7
B.	Specialist support	Page 9
C.	List of trained support officers	Page 11
D.	Guidance (FAQ's)	Page 12
E.	Checklist for employees	Page 15

Domestic Abuse Policy

1. Introduction

Domestic abuse is a widespread problem that is unacceptable and should not be ignored. We will promote the understanding that everyone has the right to live and work free from violence and abuse in any form, and shall strive to create a working environment that promotes this view.

The school is committed to caring for staff by striving to ensure a safe, healthy and productive working environment. This includes taking action to assist staff during difficult times and providing advice to employees to help eliminate or assist with domestic abuse issues that may be affecting them.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all school based employees.

3. Aims and objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support employees experiencing domestic abuse.
- Enable employees experiencing domestic abuse to remain productive and at work.
- Assist headteachers/line managers to help staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
- Assist colleagues of those experiencing domestic abuse.
- Reinforce the schools social responsibility by demonstrating that they value and are prepared to support staff during difficult times.

A list of roles and responsibilities is shown at Appendix A.

4. Definition

The following definition is provided by the Women's aid Federation of England:

'Domestic violence is physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour'.

It is acknowledged that while it is mainly women who experience domestic abuse, this policy applies equally to men who need advice or support.

In support of this, any employee who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse can raise the issue, in the knowledge that the matter will be treated effectively, sympathetically and confidentially.

5. Confidentiality

Any employee experiencing domestic abuse who has confided in their headteacher/line manager has the right to confidentiality being maintained at all times. Involvement of other people will be kept to a minimum ('need to know' basis) to ensure confidentiality.

The number and nature of those people involved will be determined by the needs of the individual and the post/position held. In most circumstances an agreement will be reached with the employee over what information will be shared. However, the safety of the individual, other employees and the public is paramount and where this is deemed in the best interest of the school, information can be shared. In such cases the individual will be notified about the information that will be shared.

In the case of a child or adult protection issue referral should be made to the Initial Contact Team on 0345 678 9021.

6. Internal support

Security/safety arrangements

The security/safety of school staff will be prioritised at all times.

In situations when the headteacher/line manager is made aware of an employee experiencing domestic abuse, suitable security arrangements will be put into place to ensure that the employee is as safe as possible within the school.

Colleagues should be reminded that they should not answer enquiries from members of the public about colleagues working hours or arrangements.

The school may wish to take this opportunity to review the information publicised on their school website, such as employee photographs and contact details.

A priority car parking space could be arranged in close proximity to the school building for employees who fear an attack at work. In addition, an escort to and from the employees car could be arranged if required. This will be agreed on an individual basis and a risk assessment completed to determine the most appropriate person to carry out this voluntary duty.

In situations where the victim and the perpetrator both work for the school and there are reported instances of workplace bullying and harassment, the Bullying and Harassment Policy or the Disciplinary Procedure may be used.

Confidentiality

Arrangements should be considered for employees who may find it difficult to contact support services during normal working hours and thought given to those who do not have confidential access to facilities to make such telephone calls.

In addition, sensitivity and confidentiality should be respected in situations where a multiuse office is in operation.

7. Occupational health

Headteachers/line managers can refer an employee to Occupational Health with their consent when there is either a concern with the employee's health or when an employee's health is affecting their performance.

Employees may self-refer to Occupational Health for a confidential consultation with an Occupational Health Advisor, for advice and support.

8. Special leave

Special leave for appointments with support agencies or solicitors, to rearrange housing, to change childcare arrangements and for court appearances is available under the Special Leave Policy.

Agreement should be reached between the employee and the headteacher/line manager for when time off is needed. Should the individual not wish to personally share their situation with their headteacher/line manager, agreement for special leave could be reached between the employees support officer and headteacher/line manager.

An agreed communication plan should be put in place detailing the best ways to keep in touch whilst the employee is away from work.

9. Support officers

A list of trained support officers and their contact details can be found at Appendix C. In addition to the support of the headteacher/line manager these officers are available to help employees through difficult times and to assist in accessing any further support required.

10. Family Information Service

Shropshire Council's family Information Service offers a free, impartial, confidential service on all aspects of family life. Employees can speak confidentially to one of the information professionals via the telephone helpline, e-mail, text service or through a face-to-face appointment. A wide range of information is available to support families through any situation they may be facing, including domestic abuse. Contact details are shown at Appendix B.

11. Financial arrangements

Where necessary the headteacher/line manager or support officer can assist in liaising with Employment Services to make any changes to how payment is made i.e. to avoid being paid into a joint account.

12. Flexible working

Consideration should be given to requests to change hours of work and/or working patterns.

Headteachers/line managers should recognise the need to avoid requiring employees to work late without reasonable notice (a late return home is one of the common triggers for perpetrators of domestic violence to abuse their victim).

Any changes to working arrangements will be reviewed on a frequent basis and regular agreed review dates put in place.

13. Communication

If necessary, arrangements should be made to change an employee's work e-mail address or telephone number in order to prevent unwanted communication from a perpetrator.

14. External support

Counselling Service – Network of Staff Supporters (NOSS)

NOSS are an independent organisation who provides support to employees; the aim of NOSS is to help people stay healthy at work, particularly in stress related circumstances.

Specialist Support Organisations

See Appendix B.

15. Anti-discrimination

We will not discriminate against anyone who is being subjected to domestic abuse, in terms of their existing employment, training or career development.

16. Support and guidance

Management guidance in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQ's) is available at Appendix D.

17. Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed by Human Resources and Development, in consultation with trade unions.

Roles and responsibilities

Employee's responsibilities:

- To be aware of the Domestic Abuse Policy.
- To encourage colleagues to seek help if they have problems.
- To report any risks.
- To self-refer if experiencing problems and commit to where possible maintaining the required level of attendance and performance at work.
- To make use of the internal and external support services.

Headteacher/line manager responsibilities:

- To implement this policy.
- To raise awareness of this policy.
- To ensure that they, and their staff, understand the policy and their responsibilities.
- To monitor changes in behaviour, work performance and attendance and intervene early if there are signs of problems.
- To act fairly, consistently and sensitively, with understanding compassion and a non-judgmental approach.
- To support the employee to achieve the necessary levels of attendance and work performance.
- To refer employees for assistance where appropriate.
- To ensure that confidentiality is respected as far as possible.
- To understand that the employee may not wish to approach their headteacher/line manager and may wish to involve a third party i.e. a support officer or colleague.
- To recognise that the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try different options during the process.
- To be aware of what support is available and to explore these options with the employee.

Support Officer's role (see Appendix C):

- To decide if they are the appropriate person to provide support.
- To provide support to employees.
- To help employees identify options available to them under the policy.
- To undertake initial training and refresher training.
- To understand limits of own capabilities.
- To offer the opportunity for confidential and informal discussion.
- To positively promote the policy.

Human Resources & Development role:

- To ensure the policy applies to all employees, is fair and consistent, and includes processes to assist and support any employee.
- To support managers in implementing this policy.
- To liaise with trade unions as appropriate.
- To identify and provide training as necessary.
- To advise on the relationship with other policies and procedures e.g. caring about sickness.

Occupational Health's role:

- To provide advice and support to the headteacher/line manager.
- To give strictly confidential advice to employees who seek help, or are referred to them and will liaise with other agencies or their behalf.

(Occupational Health practitioners follow guidance from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the Nursing & Midwifery Council. There may be circumstances when in the interests of risk management, legal requirement or serious health risk, information may need to be shared e.g. child or adult protection.

Trade Union role:

- To be familiar with this policy.
- To encourage employees experiencing domestic abuse to seek help.
- To advise employees of their rights and responsibilities under this policy.
- To liaise with Human Resources & Development as appropriate.

Specialist support

For a person who wants to get help from a specialist service for a domestic abuse problem it can feel difficult to take the next step, let alone choose the most suitable service and then find out how to get help.

Internal Support

Employees can self refer to Occupational Health or alternatively contact the Employees Counselling Service direct:

Occupational Health
01743 252833

NOSS (Employee Confidential Counselling Service)
01978 780479

The Family Information Service is a free, confidential and impartial service for all families, whatever their situation.

Direct helpline: 01743 254267

Text: FIS followed by a space followed by your message to 84433

E-mail: ShropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk

Website: www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare

External Support

Stonham Housing Association

Provides safe houses in North Shropshire and outreach/floating support workers.

01743 233299 (office hours)

07973 740666 (not 24 hour cover)

Refuge in Shropshire

Provides accommodation in North Shropshire and outreach/floating support workers.

01691 679491 (office hours)

07921 409768 (out of hours emergency line)

South Shropshire Refuge

Refuge provision in South Shropshire and there may be help with outreach work depending on circumstances.

01694 722440 (office hours)

01588 676200 (out of hours homelessness team)

Victim Support (Shropshire)

Victim Support has a number of trained domestic violence support workers across Shropshire (victims do not have to be going through the judicial process to be referred).

01743 362812 (office hours)

National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247

Domestic Violence Helpline for Shropshire (run by Women's Aid)
0800 783 1359 (24 hour support)

Women's Aid

Women's Aid in Shropshire provides support for domestic violence victims throughout the county.

01743 365032

Shropshire Police Domestic Abuse Officers

Police Officers are available who specialise in providing help and advice for domestic violence victims.

0300 333 3000 (ext 5856)

Broken Rainbow

Provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence.

0300 999 5428

Respect

Help is available for abusers. Anyone worried about their behaviour towards their partner can visit Respect at www.respect.uk.net or call their helpline on 0845 122 8609.

Unison

Provides emergency support, including financial aid and other assistance, for members through their charity 'Unison Welfare'.

Telephone: 0207 551 1620

E-mail: welfare@unison.co.uk

Website: www.unison.org.uk/welfare

Appendix C

Workplace Domestic Abuse Policy

List of Trained Support Officers

These Support Officers are available to be contacted in addition to, or instead of, your headteacher/line manager or the other internal supporters/advisers available to you.

All Support Officers have received appropriate skills training and are fully briefed on this policy.

They are available as an impartial, confidential supporter to you and can assist you in interpreting the Domestic Abuse Policy and its associated support options.

Name	Location	Contact Details
Jane Chambers	Shrewsbury	01743 210306
Sophie Meldon	Shrewsbury	01743 250018
Helen Woodbridge	Shrewsbury	01743 254556
Liz Davies	Ludlow	01588 536409
Lynne Hall	Shrewsbury	01743 250252
Julie Whiteley	Shrewsbury	01743 250160
Steve White	Oswestry	01691 677287
Carol Shields	Oswestry	01691 656513
Chris Roberts	Shrewsbury	01743 254843
Louise Evans	Shrewsbury	01743 252783
Debbie Sharp	Shrewsbury	01743 252192
Sandra Young	Shrewsbury	01743 252780
Nicky Parker	Shrewsbury	01743 359897
Carol Fox	Shrewsbury	01743 252814
Debbie Martin	Shrewsbury	01743 256118

Workplace Domestic Abuse Policy

Guidance for headteacher's and line managers

Frequently Asked Questions

Commonly asked questions surrounding Domestic Abuse and in the application of this policy:

1) What is Domestic Violence?

The following definition is provided by the Women's Aid Federation of England:

Domestic violence is defined as any violence, abuse or threatening behaviour between family members, current or former partners in an intimate relationship, whenever and wherever the violence occurs. It may include physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse.

2) How many people does Domestic Abuse affect?

One in four women are likely to experience domestic abuse at some point in their life and one in ten are likely to be experiencing it at any one time.

Abuse often starts and escalates when a victim is pregnant and 90% of incidents are witnessed by children who live in a household where abuse occurs.

3) Who are the victims?

Domestic abuse can occur regardless of ethnicity, age, religion, class, sexuality, disability or lifestyle. It can also occur in a range of relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships.

4) How can I tell if a colleague is experiencing Domestic Abuse?

There is no easy way to tell if someone is experiencing domestic violence, but things to look out for include:

- Repeated absence from work or social events.
- Fear of their partner.
- References to their partner's anger.
- Personality changes/becoming withdrawn.
- Repeated unexplained injuries.

5) What should I do if I think a member of my team is experiencing Domestic Abuse?

As the headteacher/line manager you may identify concerns, or be notified by a third party, of potential domestic abuse issues.

It is your responsibility to discuss with the employee, in a sensitive way, any concerns that you may have. Remember to bear in mind that the issue may not be related to domestic abuse.

Explore with the individual your reasons for concern. This may be due to poor work performance, attendance issues, personality changes or lack of concentration.

If this is not a domestic abuse issue you may wish to discuss with your HR Business Partner/Officer the options available. This could include accessing the Occupational Health Service, Employee Counselling Service or the Capability Procedure.

If this is a domestic abuse issue please see question 6 below.

If you are not a line manager and you identify concerns that a colleague may be experiencing domestic abuse, this should be reported to your line manager.

6) What should I do if a member of my team tells me that they are experiencing domestic violence?

As a headteacher/line manager it is your responsibility to have an informal discussion with the employee.

Discuss confidentially, but be clear that in some cases there may be the need to involve other people. This could be due to legal, child or adult protection issues and in these instances you must notify the individual of the referral.

During this discussion advise the employee of the internal and external support that is available to them (details can be found at Appendices B and C).

Explore with the individual if any special working arrangements are required. Consideration should be given to requests to change hours of work or work pattern (see Section 12 of the policy).

Recognise the need to avoid requiring the individual to work late (a late return home is one of the common triggers for perpetrators of domestic violence to abuse their victim).

Discuss with the individual if any special leave is needed (refer to the Special Leave Policy). This could include time off to rearrange childcare, to attend meetings with a solicitor or to arrange re-housing.

Consider if any changes are required in order to ensure the safety of the individual (refer to Section 6 of the policy). This could include changing telephone numbers/e-mail addresses or consulting with reception/security staff to arrange a priority car parking space close to the building. Colleagues should be reminded not to disclose details to members of the public regarding working hours or arrangements.

It is important to remain in regular contact with the individual and to agree a communication plan detailing the best way to keep in touch if the employee is not in work.

Some individuals may find it difficult to disclose issues of domestic abuse to their headteacher/line manager. Should they inform a third party they should be encouraged to talk to their headteacher/line manager to ensure that their circumstances are understood and appropriate help and support provided. This may prevent formal action taking place. If the individual cannot be encouraged to inform their line manager they should be advised of the other internal and external support that is available to them (details can be found at Appendices B and C).

7) What should I do if a member of my team reports they are a perpetrator of domestic violence?

You should have an informal discussion with the employee. During this discussion advise the individual of the internal and external support that is available to them (see Appendices B and C). Specific support for perpetrators of domestic abuse includes the organisation RESPECT who offers advice to help change behaviour patterns.

It is important to remain in contact with the individual on a frequent basis.

Contact your named HR Business Partner/Officer for further advice if the individual is convicted of a criminal offence.

8) I have agreed with the individual that the information they have shared with me will remain confidential. What should I do if I suspect that there is a child protection issue?

This must be referred to the Initial Contact Team on telephone number 0345 678 9021.

Workplace Domestic Abuse Policy

Checklist for employees who may be suffering domestic abuse

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Ensure you are familiar with the Domestic Abuse Policy and all of the support mechanisms available to you via the policy.	
Discuss with your line manager if any changes to working arrangements are required. This could include a priority car parking space close to the building or an escort to and from your car.	
Liaise with Employment Services if changes to your bank account details are required (to avoid being paid into a joint account).	
Talk to your line manager if you would benefit from someone else screening your calls.	
Talk to your line manager about altering your working pattern if needed.	
If obtaining a restraining order make sure that it includes your workplace.	
Save any threatening email or voicemail messages. You can use these to take legal action in the future, if you choose to. If you already have a restraining order the messages can serve as evidence in court that the order was violated.	
Provide a picture of the perpetrator to security/reception staff.	
Ensure that your emergency contact details are up to date with the HR & Development Team.	
Review the safety of your childcare arrangements. If you have a restraining order it can usually be extended to your child's school or nursery.	

