Grove Vale Primary School

Domestic Abuse Policy and Guidance November 2026

Approved by:	**Date: November 2026**
Last reviewed on:	**November 2024**
Next review due by:	**November 2029**

Purpose

This guidance supports all staff in recognising, responding to and reporting concerns relating to domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is a safeguarding issue that can have a significant impact on children's safety, wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, emotional development and achievement.

All staff should be aware that children who live in households where domestic abuse occurs may be victims in their own right and may require safeguarding support.

What is Domestic Abuse?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as behaviour between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected.

Domestic abuse can include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Sexual abuse
- Financial or economic abuse
- Stalking and harassment
- Online or technology-facilitated abuse

Domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background.

Impact on Children

Children do not need to witness abuse directly to be harmed by it.

Children may be affected by:

- Seeing or hearing abuse
- Living in an atmosphere of fear and control
- Witnessing the aftermath of incidents
- Being used to monitor or control a parent
- Experiencing disrupted routines, housing instability or poor attendance

- Anxiety, depression or low self-esteem
- Difficulties with learning, concentration and relationships

Children experiencing domestic abuse may be at increased risk of other safeguarding concerns, including neglect, emotional abuse and mental health difficulties.

Possible Indicators

A child affected by domestic abuse may:

- Be anxious, withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Become aggressive, angry or disruptive
- Have unexplained changes in behaviour
- Frequently appear tired or distracted
- Have poor attendance or punctuality
- Demonstrate excessive worry about a parent or sibling
- Be reluctant to go home
- Show signs of emotional distress
- Regularly arrive at school without appropriate clothing, equipment or support

These indicators do not necessarily mean domestic abuse is occurring but should be considered alongside other information.

If a Child Makes a Disclosure

Staff should:

Do

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Take what the child says seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Explain that you must share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to help keep them safe.
- Record the disclosure accurately using the child's own words where possible.
- Report the concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Do Not

- Promise confidentiality.
- Ask leading questions.

- Investigate the matter yourself.
- Contact parents or carers without guidance from the DSL.
- Attempt mediation between family members.

Recording Concerns

All concerns relating to domestic abuse must be recorded promptly on CPOMS.

Records should include:

- What was seen, heard or disclosed.
- The date, time and location.
- The child's exact words wherever possible.
- Any actions taken.
- Who the concern was reported to.

Records must be factual, objective and professional.

Responsibilities of the DSL

The DSL will:

- Assess the level of risk.
- Consider the child's immediate safety and welfare.
- Consult with Children's Social Care, the MASH (or local safeguarding team) where appropriate.
- Liaise with other agencies when necessary.
- Ensure suitable support is put in place for the child.
- Maintain accurate safeguarding records.
- Consider ongoing monitoring and support.

Operation Encompass

The school participates in Operation Encompass.

When the police attend a domestic abuse incident where a child is present, school may receive a notification before the start of the next school day.

The DSL will:

- Review the information received.
- Determine appropriate support for the child.
- Share information with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.
- Monitor the child's wellbeing and presentation in school.

Supporting Children and Families

School may support children affected by domestic abuse through:

- Trusted adult support
- Emotional wellbeing interventions
- Pastoral support
- Attendance support
- Access to counselling or external services
- Reasonable adjustments to learning and behaviour support

Where appropriate, the school may also work with the non-abusive parent or carer to help promote the child's safety and wellbeing.

Related Safeguarding Concerns

Domestic abuse may be linked to:

- Child-on-child abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Mental health concerns
- Honour-based abuse

- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Child exploitation

Any related concerns should be reported through the school's safeguarding procedures

Key Message for Staff

If you are worried about a child, record the concern and speak to the DSL immediately. You do not need proof that domestic abuse is occurring; safeguarding concerns should always be reported and assessed by the DSL.

Useful Contacts

Emergency
999

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Refuge)
0808 2000 247
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline
0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnerships

0121 569 3100

Sandwell Domestic Abuse Directory

sandwell-domestic-abuse-services-directory