Barking & Dagenham

Schools Domestic Abuse Support Guidance

School Name	
Date of Adoption:	
Chair of Governors Signature:	
Head Teacher Signature:	

The Schools HR Advisory Service will automatically update this guidance to comply with any changes to legislation or ACAS guidance, to make corrections or increase the understanding and notify schools of the amendments.

This Guidance should not be amended by a School, except for entering details above or where required below.

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1. Introduction

Domestic abuse is a serious issue that can affect individuals regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

The School recognises that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and girls, whilst acknowledging that domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of sex, gender identity, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

Schools recognise that domestic abuse may have a significant impact on an employee's health, wellbeing, attendance, performance, safety and ability to carry out their duties. Domestic abuse can also have wider safeguarding implications for children and young people.

The School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive working environment for all employees. Employees who are experiencing domestic abuse will be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect, and will be supported to access appropriate assistance and workplace support.

This guidance outlines the School's approach to recognising, responding to and supporting employees who are affected by domestic abuse and should be read alongside relevant safeguarding, health and safety, attendance management and staff wellbeing policies and procedures.

The School recognises that individuals may have different preferences regarding the language used to describe their experiences. This guidance generally refers to an “employee affected by domestic abuse”. Where the terms “victim” or “survivor” are used, employees should be supported to use the terminology with which they feel most comfortable.

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- Raise awareness of domestic abuse and its potential impact on employees and the workplace.
- Provide a clear framework for supporting employees who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- Assist Headteachers, managers, governors and designated safeguarding leads to respond appropriately to concerns and disclosures.
- Promote a safe working environment and support employee wellbeing.
- Ensure compliance with relevant safeguarding, employment, health and safety and equality legislation.

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2.2 Scope

This guidance applies to all employees working within the School, irrespective of role, grade, contractual status or length of service, including:

- Teachers
- Support staff
- School leaders
- Casual and temporary employees
- Apprentices
- Agency workers and contractors where appropriate

This guidance should be applied alongside the School's safeguarding procedures and relevant Schools HR policies and guidance.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This guidance has been developed with regard to:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- ACAS guidance relating to employee wellbeing and workplace support

The School will comply with all relevant legal obligations when supporting employees affected by domestic abuse and managing any associated safeguarding concerns.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this guidance, domestic abuse is defined in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Domestic abuse may involve a single incident or a pattern of behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected.

Abusive behaviour may include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Threatening behaviour
- Sexual abuse

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Domestic abuse can occur regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

The School recognises that children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are victims in their own right and may require safeguarding support.

Domestic abuse may occur within current or former intimate relationships or between family members. It may begin, continue or escalate following separation and may occur in the home, in public places, online or in the workplace.

Domestic abuse may also be connected with forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called honour-based abuse. Where any such concern involves a child or raises an immediate safeguarding risk, the School's safeguarding procedures must be followed without delay.

5. Principles

The School is committed to the following principles:

- Domestic abuse is recognised as both a workplace wellbeing issue and, where relevant, a safeguarding concern.
- Employees experiencing domestic abuse will be treated sensitively, respectfully and without judgement.
- Employees will be encouraged to seek support without fear of discrimination or victimisation.
- Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary and appropriate.
- Support will be tailored to individual circumstances.
- Immediate concerns regarding safety and safeguarding will take priority.
- Victim-blaming, insensitive questioning and language that places responsibility on the employee affected by domestic abuse will not be accepted.
- The School will work collaboratively with HR, safeguarding professionals and external agencies where appropriate.

This guidance is intended to support employees whilst ensuring that the welfare of children and the safety of staff remain paramount considerations.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the School has effective arrangements in place to support employee wellbeing.
- Ensuring safeguarding responsibilities are met.
- Monitoring the implementation of this guidance.
- Supporting a culture which encourages employees to seek help when required.

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6.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Promoting awareness of this guidance.
- Ensuring managers understand their responsibilities.
- Ensuring appropriate support arrangements are available.
- Seeking HR and safeguarding advice where necessary.
- Managing significant workplace risks arising from domestic abuse cases.
- Ensuring that any workplace incident is reported and escalated in accordance with the School's health and safety and incident-reporting arrangements.

6.3 Line Managers

Line managers are responsible for:

- Creating an environment where employees feel able to seek support.
- Responding appropriately and sensitively to disclosures.
- Seeking advice from HR and safeguarding professionals when required.
- Considering reasonable workplace adjustments and support measures.
- Maintaining appropriate records.
- Escalating safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Completing the School's applicable accident, incident, violence or aggression reporting documentation where an incident occurs at work or affects the safety of the workplace.
- Seeking advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service before taking formal employment action connected with a disclosure or domestic abuse related concern.

6.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Providing safeguarding advice where domestic abuse may affect children or vulnerable individuals.
- Assessing safeguarding concerns in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Making referrals to appropriate agencies where required.
- Supporting information sharing decisions relating to safeguarding matters.

6.5 Employees

Employees are encouraged to:

- Seek support when required.
- Report any immediate safety concerns.
- Co-operate with agreed workplace safety measures.
- Raise concerns where they believe a child may be at risk of harm.

7. Recognising Indicators of Abuse

The School recognises that individuals experiencing domestic abuse may not disclose their circumstances immediately and, in some cases, may never make a direct disclosure. Domestic abuse can affect an employee's physical health, emotional wellbeing, confidence, attendance, conduct and work performance.

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Managers, school leaders, governors, HR professionals and safeguarding leads are not expected to investigate suspected domestic abuse. However, they should be aware of potential indicators and respond appropriately where concerns arise.

The presence of one indicator does not necessarily mean domestic abuse is occurring. It is important to consider concerns holistically, respond sensitively and avoid making assumptions.

7.1 Physical Indicators

Potential physical indicators may include:

- Frequent or unexplained injuries.
- Repeated injuries with explanations that appear inconsistent.
- Visible signs of physical harm.
- Frequent medical appointments or hospital visits.
- Changes in appearance which may indicate attempts to conceal injuries.
- Signs of exhaustion, fatigue or sleep deprivation.

7.2 Behavioural and Emotional Indicators

Potential behavioural indicators may include:

- Increased anxiety, stress or nervousness.
- Reduced confidence or self-esteem.
- Becoming withdrawn or isolated from colleagues.
- Uncharacteristic changes in behaviour.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Appearing fearful about personal relationships or home circumstances.
- Reluctance to discuss personal matters.
- Increased emotional distress.
- Changes in mood or demeanour.
- Increased use of alcohol or other substances which may indicate an underlying wellbeing or safety concern.

7.3 Attendance and Work-Related Indicators

Potential workplace indicators may include:

- Frequent lateness.
- Increased short-term absences.
- Unexplained periods away from work.
- Reduced work performance.
- Missed deadlines or difficulty completing tasks.
- Changes in productivity or engagement.
- Requests to change working arrangements for reasons that may not be fully explained.
- Frequent personal interruptions during the working day.
- Difficulties attending meetings, training or school events.
- A marked change in the use of work telephones, email or other communication systems.
- Frequent or unexpected visits to the workplace by a partner, former partner or family member.
- Another person appearing to exercise unusual control over the employee's working hours, attendance or movements.
- The employee appearing particularly anxious about leaving work at a specific time.

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- A significant increase in personal calls, messages or other unwanted contact during working hours.

7.4 Indicators Relating to Control or Coercion

Domestic abuse does not always involve physical violence. Managers should be aware that coercive and controlling behaviour can be significant indicators of abuse.

Examples may include:

- An employee appearing unusually anxious about responding to calls, messages or emails.
- Excessive monitoring of the employee by another individual.
- A partner, family member or former partner making repeated contact with the School.
- Another individual attempting to control an employee's attendance, work arrangements or finances.
- Concerns regarding access to money, transport or communication devices.
- Statements suggesting fear of repercussions for everyday decisions.

Abuse may also involve the use of technology, including monitoring through mobile devices, location-tracking applications, social media surveillance, cyberstalking, unauthorised access to online accounts or the misuse of smart technology within the home.

7.5 Impact on Children and Safeguarding Considerations

Domestic abuse may have wider implications for children and young people.

Where concerns arise that a child may be experiencing, witnessing or otherwise being affected by domestic abuse, managers must seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay and follow the School's safeguarding procedures.

Managers must not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine whether further safeguarding action or referral is required.

7.6 Responding to Concerns

Where managers observe indicators that give rise to concern, they should:

- Consider whether there may be an underlying wellbeing, welfare or safeguarding issue.
- Arrange a private and appropriate opportunity to speak with the employee.
- Provide a supportive environment in which the employee can speak openly if they choose to do so.
- Avoid making assumptions or accusations.
- Avoid attempting to investigate or gather evidence.
- Seek advice from Schools HR and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with Section 9 of this guidance.

Managers should recognise that employees may choose not to disclose domestic abuse. Any support offered should therefore be based upon the employee's needs and circumstances and not solely upon a formal disclosure.

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7.7 Barriers to Seeking Support

Employees may face significant barriers to disclosing domestic abuse or seeking support. These may include fear of retaliation, threats involving children or other family members, financial control, insecure housing, isolation from support networks, cultural or community pressures, concerns about not being believed, or fear about the effect of disclosure on their employment.

Managers must not assume that leaving the situation is straightforward or question why an employee has not taken a particular course of action. Support should focus on the employee's expressed needs, immediate safety and access to specialist advice.

8. Responding to a Disclosure of Domestic Abuse

The School recognises that disclosing domestic abuse can be difficult and distressing. Employees may be concerned about confidentiality, the impact on their employment, or the consequences of sharing personal information.

Any employee who discloses domestic abuse should be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect. The primary aim of the School's response is to support the safety, wellbeing and welfare of the employee whilst ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are appropriately considered and managed.

Managers are not expected to investigate allegations of domestic abuse. Their role is to listen, provide support, seek appropriate advice and ensure that any risks are managed appropriately.

8.1 Receiving a Disclosure

Where an employee chooses to disclose domestic abuse, the manager should:

- Arrange to speak with the employee in a private and confidential setting.
- Listen carefully and allow the employee to explain their concerns in their own words.
- Remain calm, supportive and non-judgemental.
- Take the disclosure seriously.
- Reassure the employee that support is available.
- Be clear about the limits of confidentiality where safeguarding or safety concerns exist.
- Avoid asking intrusive or unnecessary questions.
- Avoid expressing personal opinions or making assumptions.
- Avoid attempting to investigate the circumstances or gather evidence.

Managers should recognise that the employee may be feeling vulnerable and may require time to consider the support they need.

The purpose of an initial conversation is to offer support rather than to pressure the employee into making a disclosure. Appropriate opening questions may include:

- "How are you at the moment?"
- "I have noticed that things appear difficult for you at the moment. Is there anything you would like to discuss?"

- “You do not have to tell me anything, but support is available if and when you would like it.”
- “What support would help you at work?”

Managers must not ask blaming or judgemental questions, including why the employee has remained in the situation, why the employee has not previously disclosed the matter or why the employee has taken or not taken a particular action.

8.2 Assessing Immediate Safety

Following a disclosure, managers should consider whether there are any immediate risks to the employee, other staff, pupils or visitors.

This may include consideration of:

- Whether the employee feels safe attending work.
- Whether the alleged perpetrator knows the employee's place of work.
- Whether the alleged perpetrator has attended or attempted to contact the School.
- Whether there are any concerns regarding threats, harassment or stalking.
- Whether there is any immediate risk to children or vulnerable individuals.
- Whether emergency services or safeguarding agencies need to be contacted.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, the manager must take appropriate action without delay and seek advice from the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Schools HR Advisory Service and emergency services where required.

8.3 Safeguarding Considerations

Domestic abuse may have implications for children and young people.

Where information disclosed gives rise to concerns regarding the welfare or safety of a child, the matter must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and managed in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine whether further action, including referral to children's social care, the Local Authority or other safeguarding agencies, is required.

Managers must not delay safeguarding action whilst seeking further information or clarification from the employee.

8.4 Seeking Advice and Support

Managers should seek advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Advice may also be sought from:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Occupational Health.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Relevant domestic abuse support agencies.
- Legal Services where appropriate.

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Early consultation can assist the School in identifying appropriate support measures, workplace adjustments and risk management arrangements.

8.5 Workplace Support and Adjustments

Support should be tailored to the individual's circumstances and reviewed regularly.

Subject to operational requirements and individual circumstances, support may include:

- Temporary adjustments to working arrangements.
- Flexible working arrangements.
- Time off in accordance with the School's Leave of Absence Policy.
- Adjustments to working patterns or duties.
- Temporary changes to work locations where practicable.
- Additional wellbeing support.
- Referral to Occupational Health.
- Signposting to specialist domestic abuse services.
- Support through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

The School will work with the employee to identify reasonable and proportionate measures which support their safety and wellbeing.

8.6 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to domestic abuse disclosures will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where:

- There is an immediate risk of harm.
- A safeguarding concern has been identified.
- A criminal offence may have occurred.
- There is a legal obligation to disclose information.
- Disclosure is otherwise necessary to protect an individual from harm.

Where information needs to be shared, the employee will normally be informed unless doing so would increase risk or compromise safeguarding action.

Further information regarding information sharing and record keeping is set out in Section 9 of this guidance.

8.7 Recording the Disclosure

Managers should maintain a factual and proportionate record of any disclosure and actions taken.

Records should:

- Be accurate, objective and professional.
- Record relevant facts and actions.
- Avoid opinion, speculation or personal judgement.
- Be stored securely in accordance with the School's data protection procedures.

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- Be shared only with those who require access to fulfil their professional responsibilities.

Managers should not create unnecessary or excessive records relating to an employee's personal circumstances.

8.8 Ongoing Support and Review

Support arrangements should not be regarded as a single intervention.

Managers should maintain appropriate contact with the employee and review agreed support arrangements on a regular basis.

Review discussions should consider:

- Whether existing support remains appropriate.
- Whether risks have changed.
- Whether additional workplace adjustments are required.
- Any safeguarding concerns which may have emerged.
- Whether further specialist support should be offered.

The School will continue to provide support for as long as reasonably required and will seek to ensure that employees affected by domestic abuse are treated fairly, consistently and with compassion throughout the process.

8.9 Support for Managers

Managers receiving a disclosure may seek confidential advice and professional support from the Schools HR Advisory Service. Any discussion must protect the employee's confidentiality and should be limited to the information required to obtain appropriate advice.

Managers should also access appropriate wellbeing support where managing the matter has had a personal impact. The employee's personal information must not be disclosed through informal supervision or general discussions with colleagues.

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The School recognises that employees experiencing domestic abuse may be concerned about who will have access to information they disclose and how that information will be used.

All information relating to domestic abuse will be handled sensitively, lawfully and in accordance with data protection legislation, safeguarding requirements and the School's duty of care towards employees and pupils.

The School will seek to create an environment where employees feel able to seek support with confidence. However, employees should be aware that there may be circumstances where information must be shared to protect an individual from harm or to fulfil a legal or safeguarding obligation.

9.1 Confidentiality

The School will treat disclosures of domestic abuse as confidential wherever possible.

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Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to:

- Provide appropriate support to the employee.
- Protect the safety and wellbeing of individuals.
- Manage workplace risks.
- Fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.
- Comply with legal obligations.

Employees will normally be informed before information is shared unless there is an immediate safeguarding concern, risk of serious harm, or another lawful reason why prior discussion is not appropriate.

9.2 Information Sharing

Information relating to domestic abuse will only be shared where there is a clear and legitimate reason for doing so.

This may include circumstances where:

- There is a risk of harm to the employee.
- There is a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable person.
- A safeguarding referral is required.
- There is a significant risk to other staff, pupils or visitors.
- A criminal offence has been disclosed or is suspected.
- The School has a legal duty to share information.
- Specialist advice is required from HR, safeguarding professionals or statutory agencies.

Information sharing decisions should be proportionate, necessary and limited to the minimum information required for the specific purpose.

9.3 Safeguarding Considerations

Where information gives rise to concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a child, the matter must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

Whilst employee confidentiality will be respected wherever possible, the welfare of children and young people remains paramount.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine whether information needs to be shared with Children's Social Care, the Local Authority, the Police or other safeguarding agencies in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

9.4 Record Keeping

A factual record should be maintained where an employee discloses domestic abuse or where support measures are agreed.

Records should:

- Be accurate, objective and proportionate.
- Record relevant facts rather than opinion.
- Record actions taken and decisions reached.

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- Record any support arrangements agreed with the employee.
- Record safeguarding referrals or consultations where applicable.
- Be updated as circumstances change.

Managers should avoid retaining unnecessary personal information or detailed accounts that are not required for a legitimate business, safeguarding or legal purpose.

9.5 Storage and Access to Records
Records relating to domestic abuse should be stored securely and separately from general employment records where appropriate.

Access should be restricted to those with a legitimate professional need to know, such as:

- The Headteacher.
- Relevant senior leaders.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Schools HR professionals.
- Other authorised individuals involved in managing risk, support or safeguarding arrangements.

The School will ensure that records are managed in accordance with its Data Protection Policy, Records Retention Schedule and applicable legislation.

9.6 Communication and Safety Planning
Managers should agree with the employee how future communication will take place.

Consideration should be given to:

- Safe methods of communication.
- Safe contact telephone numbers and email addresses.
- The timing of communications.
- Who may legitimately contact the employee regarding the matter.
- Whether there are any restrictions on sharing information within the workplace.

Managers must take particular care not to disclose personal information, work locations, working arrangements, contact details or other sensitive information that could place an employee at further risk.

9.7 Requests from External Parties
Where enquiries are received from partners, family members, legal representatives, police officers or other third parties, managers must not disclose personal information without first seeking appropriate advice and ensuring that any disclosure is lawful.

Advice should be sought from the Schools HR Advisory Service, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Data Protection Officer or Legal Services as appropriate.

9.8 Breaches of Confidentiality
Any actual or suspected breach of confidentiality relating to a domestic abuse case must be treated seriously and reported immediately to the Headteacher.

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The School will take prompt action to investigate the circumstances, assess any risk arising from the breach and implement appropriate measures to protect affected individuals.

10. Support Available to Employees

The School is committed to supporting employees who are affected by domestic abuse and recognises that the impact of abuse will vary depending on individual circumstances.

Support will be considered on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, the School will work collaboratively with the employee, Schools HR Advisory Service, Occupational Health, safeguarding professionals and external support agencies to identify suitable measures.

Employees will be encouraged to access support at the earliest opportunity; however, support may be provided regardless of whether the employee chooses to make a formal report to the Police or engage with external agencies.

10.1 General Support

Employees affected by domestic abuse may access support through:

- Their Line Manager.
- The Headteacher.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The Schools HR Advisory Service.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Occupational Health.
- Trade Union representatives.
- Specialist domestic abuse support services.

The School will seek to ensure that employees are treated sensitively, respectfully and without judgement when seeking support.

10.2 Workplace Adjustments

Where appropriate, temporary workplace adjustments may be considered to support an employee's safety, wellbeing and ability to remain in work.

Depending upon individual circumstances, adjustments may include:

- Temporary changes to working hours.
- Flexible working arrangements.
- Adjustments to duties or responsibilities.
- Temporary changes to work location where practicable.
- Amendments to work contact arrangements.
- Additional support from managers and senior leaders.
- Arrangements to support attendance at appointments relating to health, legal proceedings, housing matters or specialist support services.
- Temporary changes to lone-working arrangements.
- Temporary removal from reception, telephone or other public-facing duties.

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- Diversion, screening or blocking of unwanted telephone calls, emails or messages.
- Changes to internal directories or published contact details.
- Safe arrangements for arrival at and departure from work.
- Review of emergency contact and next-of-kin information with the employee's consent.
- Protection of temporary addresses, telephone numbers, banking details and other sensitive personal information held by the School.
- Access to a private and safe space at work where practicable.
- Arrangements enabling the employee, or a child affected by the circumstances, to attend relevant health, legal, housing, counselling or specialist support appointments.

Any adjustments will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.

10.3 Leave Arrangements

Employees affected by domestic abuse, or those seeking specialist support to change abusive behaviour, may request leave in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Schools Leave of Absence Policy. The nature and duration of any leave, whether paid or unpaid, will be determined in accordance with that policy and following advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service.

Depending on the circumstances, support may include:

- Emergency leave.
- Compassionate leave.
- Annual leave.
- Flexible working arrangements.
- Planned unpaid leave.

The School will seek to balance operational requirements with the need to provide reasonable and compassionate support.

Schools should give positive consideration to requests for paid or unpaid leave, where appropriate, to enable employees affected by domestic abuse to attend court proceedings, police appointments, meetings with social care professionals, housing appointments, counselling services, medical appointments or specialist domestic abuse support services.

10.4 Wellbeing Support

Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on an individual's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing.

Employees may be signposted to appropriate wellbeing services, including:

- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Occupational Health services.
- Counselling and mental health support services.
- Domestic abuse support organisations.
- Local Authority support services.

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Managers should encourage employees to access appropriate support whilst recognising that any decision to do so remains a personal choice.

10.5 Safety Planning

Where appropriate, the School may work with the employee to develop a workplace safety plan. Measures may include:

- Agreeing safe methods of communication.
- Identifying appropriate workplace contacts.
- Reviewing building access arrangements.
- Managing concerns relating to unwanted contact at the workplace.
- Considering arrangements for arrival and departure from work.
- Reviewing emergency procedures where necessary.

Workplace safety planning should be proportionate, regularly reviewed and tailored to the individual circumstances of the employee.

10.6 Support Through External Agencies

Employees may benefit from specialist advice and support available through external organisations.

Support may include:

- Independent domestic violence advocacy services.
- Refuge and accommodation services.
- Legal advice services.
- Financial and welfare support services.
- Family support services.
- Police support services.

The School will, where appropriate, provide information about available services and support employees to access help; however, the decision to engage with external agencies remains with the employee unless safeguarding or legal obligations require alternative action.

10.7 Reviewing Support Arrangements

Support arrangements should be reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to meet the employee's needs.

Review discussions should consider:

- Whether agreed workplace adjustments remain appropriate.
- Whether any workplace risks have changed.
- Whether additional support is required.
- Whether safeguarding considerations have emerged.
- Whether the employee wishes to amend or discontinue any support arrangements.

The School recognises that circumstances can change over time and is committed to maintaining an appropriate level of support for as long as reasonably required.

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11. Managing Workplace Risk and Safety Planning

The School has a duty to take reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of employees whilst at work. Where domestic abuse is disclosed or concerns are identified, consideration should be given to any actual or potential risks to the employee, other staff, pupils, visitors and the wider school community.

Risk management arrangements should be proportionate to the circumstances of each case and developed in consultation with the employee wherever possible. The School recognises that every situation is unique and therefore workplace safety planning should be tailored to individual needs.

11.1 Risk Assessment

Following a disclosure, the Headteacher, Line Manager and Schools HR Advisory Service should consider whether a workplace risk assessment is required.

Factors that may need to be considered include:

- Whether the alleged perpetrator knows the employee's place of work.
- Any history of harassment, threatening behaviour, stalking or unwanted contact.
- Whether there have been incidents at or near the workplace.
- Whether the employee has expressed concerns regarding their safety.
- Any safeguarding concerns relating to children or vulnerable individuals.
- Risks to colleagues, pupils or visitors.
- Any involvement of the Police, courts, social care services or other agencies.

Any workplace risk assessment undertaken in connection with domestic abuse concerns should be documented, regularly reviewed and retained in accordance with the School's Health and Safety arrangements and records management requirements.

The School should seek advice from Schools HR, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant professionals where appropriate.

11.2 Developing a Workplace Safety Plan

Where risks have been identified, a workplace safety plan should be developed in partnership with the employee.

The purpose of the plan is to identify practical measures that may reduce risk and support the employee to remain safe whilst attending work.

The plan should be reviewed regularly and amended where circumstances change.

11.3 Workplace Safety Measures

Depending upon individual circumstances, safety measures may include:

- Identifying a named manager or senior leader as a key point of contact.
- Agreeing safe methods of communication.

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- Restricting disclosure of personal information.
- Reviewing access to the employee's work contact details.
- Making colleagues aware of agreed safety arrangements on a need-to-know basis.
- Providing alternative parking arrangements where available.
- Reviewing arrival and departure arrangements.
- Considering temporary changes to work location or duties where operationally feasible.
- Agreeing procedures for dealing with unexpected visits, telephone calls or contact from the alleged perpetrator.
- Reviewing lone working arrangements where applicable.
- Agreeing with the employee what, if anything, relevant colleagues need to know and how they should respond to telephone calls, messages or visits.
- Providing reception or other authorised staff, where necessary and proportionate, with sufficient information to implement agreed safety arrangements.
- Reviewing access permissions, staff directories, school systems and other sources through which the employee's location or contact information may be obtained.
- Temporarily moving the employee away from publicly visible or easily accessible work areas.
- Recording and responding to persistent calls, messages, emails, visits or other incidents affecting the workplace.

Any measures implemented should be reasonable, proportionate and subject to regular review.

11.4 Unauthorised Contact at School

The School should take appropriate action where an alleged perpetrator attempts to make contact with an employee at work or attends school premises without authorisation.

This may include:

- Informing reception and relevant staff of agreed arrangements.
- Implementing visitor management procedures.
- Contacting the Police where there is concern regarding safety or unlawful behaviour.
- Seeking advice from Schools HR and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Reviewing and updating the workplace safety plan.

Managers should ensure that information is only shared with relevant individuals where there is a legitimate need to know.

11.5 Court Orders and Legal Restrictions

Employees should be encouraged to inform the School where there are court orders, bail conditions, restraining orders, non-molestation orders or other legal restrictions that may impact workplace safety arrangements.

The School will seek to support the employee by acting upon relevant information where this is necessary to maintain safety and security.

Any documentation provided will be treated confidentially and managed in accordance with the School's information governance requirements.

Where necessary for the implementation of agreed workplace safety measures, the employee may provide the School with relevant information from a court order, bail condition or other legal restriction. Any document or image retained must be necessary, stored securely, accessed only by authorised persons and reviewed when the safety plan is updated.

11.6 Safeguarding and External Agency Involvement

Where domestic abuse gives rise to safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be involved in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.

The School may also need to liaise with external agencies, including:

- Children's Social Care.
- The Police.
- Domestic abuse support organisations.
- Occupational Health.
- Other statutory or support services as appropriate.

In high-risk cases, the School may also need to engage with agencies participating in a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), where appropriate and in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

Any information sharing will be undertaken in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities, legal requirements and Section 9 of this guidance.

11.7 Review of Risk and Safety Arrangements

Risk levels may change over time and therefore workplace safety plans should be reviewed regularly.

Reviews should consider:

- Any changes in the employee's circumstances.
- Whether safety measures remain effective.
- Any new incidents, concerns or disclosures.
- Any safeguarding developments.
- Whether additional support or workplace adjustments are required.

The frequency of reviews should be determined by the level of risk, the circumstances of the case and the employee's individual needs.

The School will aim to work collaboratively with the employee to maintain appropriate safeguarding, safety and wellbeing arrangements whilst balancing operational requirements and the needs of the wider school community.

12. Where an Employee Is Alleged to Be Causing Harm

Where information is received that an employee may be using abusive behaviour, the School must take the matter seriously and seek advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service before approaching the employee or commencing formal action.

The safety of the employee affected by the alleged behaviour, any children involved and the wider school community must remain the primary consideration. The School must not disclose the affected employee's location, contact details, working arrangements or other personal information to the alleged perpetrator.

The School should consider:

- whether the alleged conduct affects the employee's role, professional suitability or the reputation of the School;
- whether School premises, telephones, email, information systems, mobile devices or social media have been used to threaten, monitor, harass or contact another person;
- whether the allegation raises a safeguarding concern or requires referral under the School's safeguarding procedures;
- whether interim measures are required to protect employees, pupils or visitors;
- whether action is required under the Schools Disciplinary Policy;
- whether any duties involving children, vulnerable individuals or access to confidential information require review; and
- whether the employee should be signposted to an accredited specialist service supporting behavioural change.

Any support offered to an employee seeking to change abusive behaviour must not reduce the protection or support provided to the person affected by the abuse.

Joint meetings, informal mediation or relationship-based resolution must not be used as a substitute for safeguarding, risk management, specialist support or appropriate employment action.

12.1 Where Both Individuals Work at the School

Where the employee affected by domestic abuse and the employee alleged to be causing harm both work for the School, separate management arrangements should normally be established.

Information should only be shared where necessary, and the Schools HR Advisory Service should be consulted before duties, reporting arrangements, work locations or access permissions are changed.

The School must avoid measures that unfairly disadvantage the employee affected by domestic abuse. Any separation or adjustment arrangements should prioritise safety, safeguarding and operational effectiveness.

13. Training and Awareness

The School is committed to promoting awareness of domestic abuse and ensuring that employees understand how concerns can be identified, raised and managed appropriately.

Training and awareness activities play an important role in creating a culture where employees feel safe to seek support and where managers are equipped to respond confidently, sensitively and consistently.

The School recognises that domestic abuse is both an employee wellbeing issue and, in some circumstances, a safeguarding concern. Training arrangements should therefore support both workplace wellbeing and safeguarding responsibilities.

Training and awareness information should be accessible to all employees, including those who do not routinely use School email, intranet systems or other digital communication channels.

13.1 Staff Awareness

The School will promote awareness of domestic abuse through appropriate communication, training and wellbeing initiatives.

Awareness activities may include:

- Information provided through staff inductions.
- Staff briefings and awareness campaigns.
- Access to support information and guidance.
- Signposting to internal and external support services.
- Distribution of wellbeing resources and employee support information.
- Promotion of safeguarding responsibilities where appropriate.

Awareness activities should help employees understand how to access support for themselves or raise concerns where they are worried about a colleague or the safety of a child.

13.2 Training for Managers

Headteachers, senior leaders and line managers should receive appropriate guidance and training to enable them to:

- Recognise potential indicators of domestic abuse.
- Respond appropriately to disclosures.
- Understand their responsibilities under this guidance.
- Support employees sensitively and consistently.
- Manage confidentiality appropriately.
- Identify when safeguarding advice is required.
- Access support from the Schools HR Advisory Service and other relevant professionals.

Managers are not expected to act as domestic abuse specialists. Their role is to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and facilitate access to support.

13.3 Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) should ensure that domestic abuse is considered as part of their safeguarding knowledge and ongoing safeguarding training.

This should include:

- Understanding the impact of domestic abuse on children and families.
- Information sharing and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Local safeguarding procedures and referral pathways.
- Multi-agency working arrangements.
- Current safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

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DSLs should maintain knowledge of local domestic abuse support services and safeguarding referral processes.

13.4 Whole School Culture

The School will seek to promote a positive workplace culture in which:

- Employees feel able to seek support without fear of stigma.
- Wellbeing and welfare concerns are taken seriously.
- Safeguarding responsibilities are understood.
- Employees are treated with dignity, compassion and respect.
- Concerns can be raised appropriately and confidentially.

The School recognises that fostering a supportive culture can assist in the early identification of concerns and improve outcomes for employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

13.5 Training Provision

Training should be proportionate to the responsibilities of the individual role and support the effective implementation of this guidance.

Training may include:

- General awareness training for all employees.
- Practical response training for Headteachers and Line Managers.
- Safeguarding-focused training for Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Strategic oversight training for governors and senior leaders, where appropriate.

Training and awareness information should be accessible to all employees, including those who do not routinely access School email, intranet systems or other digital communication channels.

13.6 Recording and Monitoring Training

The School should maintain appropriate records of domestic abuse awareness and safeguarding training undertaken by employees where this forms part of the School's training programme.

Training records should be reviewed periodically to ensure that:

- Relevant employees receive appropriate training.
- Managers understand their responsibilities.
- Safeguarding training remains current.
- Awareness initiatives continue to support employee wellbeing and safeguarding objectives.

Training needs may be reviewed following legislative changes, updates to safeguarding guidance, organisational learning or changes to local procedures.

13.7 Continuous Improvement

The School will seek to continuously improve its approach to supporting employees affected by domestic abuse through:

- Reviewing learning from cases and feedback.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of guidance and support arrangements.
- Updating training materials where required.
- Sharing good practice.
- Ensuring that policies, guidance and procedures remain aligned with current legal, safeguarding and HR requirements.

By promoting awareness and providing appropriate training, the School aims to create an environment where employees feel supported, safeguarding responsibilities are understood and appropriate support can be accessed at the earliest opportunity.

14. Related Policies and Guidance

This guidance should be read alongside other relevant policies, procedures and guidance adopted by the School.

Depending on the circumstances of the case, reference may need to be made to:

- Schools Leave of Absence Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Schools Disciplinary Policy
- Schools Grievance Resolution Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Lone Working Procedures (where applicable)

Where domestic abuse concerns give rise to safeguarding concerns, the School's safeguarding procedures must be followed in conjunction with this guidance.

Schools should seek advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service where there is uncertainty regarding the application of this guidance, related policies or statutory requirements.

15. Sources of Support and Contacts

The School recognises that employees affected by domestic abuse may require support from a range of internal and external services. Employees are encouraged to seek support at the earliest opportunity and will be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect when doing so.

Support may be available whether an employee is directly affected by domestic abuse, is concerned about somebody close to them or requires guidance regarding a domestic abuse related matter.

15.1 Internal Sources of Support

Employees may seek support from:

- Their Line Manager.
- The Headteacher.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Schools HR Advisory Service.
- Their Trade Union Representative.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Occupational Health Services, where appropriate.

Employees are not required to disclose sensitive personal information to access support and may choose the most appropriate point of contact based on their individual circumstances.

15.2 Designated School Contacts

Each School should identify appropriate contacts who can provide support and guidance to employees.

Contact Role	Name	Contact Details
Headteacher		
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)		
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead		
School Business Manager		
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Contact		

Schools should ensure that contact information is reviewed regularly and communicated appropriately to employees.

15.3 Schools HR Advisory Service

The Schools HR Advisory Service can provide advice and guidance to Headteachers, governors and managers regarding the application of this guidance, employee support arrangements and related employment matters.

SchoolsHRAdvisoryTeam@lbbd.gov.uk

Schools should contact the Schools HR Advisory Service where advice is required regarding risk management, workplace adjustments, employee relations issues or the application of related policies and procedures.

15.4 External Sources of Support

Employees may wish to seek support from specialist organisations with expertise in domestic abuse.

Available support services include:

Organisation	Support Provided	Contact Details
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Confidential support and advice	0808 2000 247
Refuge	Support for individuals affected by domestic abuse	www.refuge.org.uk
Respect Helpline	Support for individuals concerned about their behaviour towards others	0808 802 4040
Men's Advice Line	Support for male victims of domestic abuse	0808 801 0327
Victim Support	Independent support and practical advice	0808 168 9111
Samaritans	Emotional support	116 123

Schools should periodically review contact details to ensure information remains accurate and up to date.

15.5 Emergency Support
Where there is an immediate risk to safety, employees should contact the emergency services without delay.

Emergency Services: 999

Where a child or young person may be at risk of harm, the School's safeguarding procedures must be followed immediately and concerns reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

15.6 Seeking Support for a Colleague
Employees may become concerned about a colleague who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

Where concerns arise, employees should:

- Encourage the individual to seek support where appropriate.
- Raise safeguarding concerns in accordance with School procedures where necessary.
- Avoid attempting to investigate the circumstances.
- Seek advice from an appropriate manager, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Schools HR Advisory Service as appropriate.

Support should be offered sensitively and without judgement, recognising that individuals may not be ready or willing to disclose their personal circumstances.

16. Monitoring, Review and Governance

The School is committed to ensuring that this guidance remains effective, legally compliant and aligned with recognised good practice. The implementation of this guidance should support employee wellbeing, safeguarding responsibilities and the promotion of a safe working environment for all staff.

16.1 Monitoring

The Headteacher, Governing Body and Schools HR Advisory Service will monitor the effectiveness of this guidance, as appropriate.

Monitoring activities may include:

- Reviewing trends and themes arising from domestic abuse related cases, where appropriate.
- Monitoring the availability and accessibility of support arrangements.
- Reviewing feedback from employees, managers and safeguarding leads.
- Monitoring training and awareness activities.
- Identifying any operational, safeguarding or wellbeing issues requiring further action.
- Reviewing anonymised learning from workplace incidents, risk assessments and support arrangements to identify whether changes to security, training, communication or management practice are required.

The School will ensure that monitoring arrangements respect confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Monitoring must not be used to identify, profile or disadvantage employees who have disclosed domestic abuse or accessed support.

16.2 Review

This guidance will be reviewed periodically by the Schools HR Advisory Service to ensure that it remains:

- Legally compliant.
- Consistent with current safeguarding requirements.
- Aligned with employment legislation and recognised good practice.
- Reflective of organisational learning and service improvements.

The guidance may be reviewed earlier where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements or Schools HR policies and procedures. Schools will be notified of any significant amendments or updates.

16.3 Governance Statement

This guidance is owned by the Schools HR Advisory Service and has been developed to provide schools with a consistent framework for supporting employees affected by domestic abuse.

Schools adopting this guidance should ensure that it is read in conjunction with local safeguarding arrangements, School policies and statutory requirements.

Responsibility for the day-to-day application of this guidance rests with School leaders, managers and Designated Safeguarding Leads, supported by the Schools HR Advisory Service where appropriate.

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16.4 Compliance Statement

This guidance has been developed with regard to:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Relevant ACAS guidance and recognised employment practice.

Schools must ensure that decisions taken under this guidance are lawful, reasonable, proportionate and consistent with their safeguarding, employment and health and safety responsibilities.

Any proposed exception to this guidance, or related Schools HR policies and procedures, must be supported by a clear documented business case and, where appropriate, HR, safeguarding, legal and governance advice.

16.5 Continuous Improvement

The Schools HR Advisory Service is committed to continuous improvement and will use feedback, legislative developments, case learning and stakeholder engagement to review and enhance guidance, resources, training and support available to schools.

Schools are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the practical application of this guidance to support future development and review.

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Appendix A: Manager Response Checklist

This checklist has been designed to support Headteachers, Line Managers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and other school leaders when responding to a disclosure of domestic abuse. It provides a practical reference tool to help ensure that disclosures are handled sensitively, consistently and in accordance with this guidance. The checklist should be used alongside professional judgement, safeguarding procedures and advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service where appropriate.

Manager Response Checklist

Immediate Response
□ Arrange to speak with the employee in a private and appropriate setting.
□ Listen carefully and without judgement.
□ Reassure the employee that support is available.
□ Explain the limits of confidentiality.
□ Avoid asking intrusive or unnecessary questions.
□ Avoid attempting to investigate the circumstances.

Risk and Safeguarding Considerations
□ Consider whether there is an immediate risk to the employee.
□ Consider whether there is a risk to other staff, pupils or visitors.
□ Consider whether there are any safeguarding concerns relating to children or vulnerable individuals.
□ Seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.
□ Contact emergency services where there is an immediate risk of harm.

Support Arrangements
□ Discuss available support and workplace adjustments.
□ Consider whether leave arrangements may be appropriate under the Schools Leave of Absence Policy.
□ Signpost the employee to available support services.
□ Agree any immediate support measures.

Advice and Record Keeping
□ Seek advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service.
□ Record relevant facts and actions taken.
□ Store records securely.
□ Arrange a review meeting.

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Appendix B: Domestic Abuse Disclosure Record

This template is intended to support Headteachers, Line Managers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and other appropriate School representatives in recording a disclosure of domestic abuse. The purpose of the record is to ensure that relevant information is documented accurately, immediate risks are identified, appropriate advice is sought and actions are recorded.

Records should be factual, objective and proportionate. Personal opinions, assumptions and unnecessary details should not be included. The record should be stored securely and managed in accordance with the School's data protection, confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.

Domestic Abuse Disclosure Record
Employee Details

Information	Details
Employee Name	
Job Title	
Department / Team	
Manager Receiving Disclosure	
Date of Disclosure	
Time of Disclosure	
Location of Disclosure	

Nature of Disclosure
Provide a factual summary of the information disclosed by the employee.

Immediate Risks Identified
Are there any immediate concerns relating to:

Risk Area	Details
Employee Safety	
Other Staff	

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Pupils	
Visitors	
School Premises	
Other Concerns	

Safeguarding Considerations

Question	Response
Are there any safeguarding concerns relating to a child or vulnerable individual?	Yes / No
Has the Designated Safeguarding Lead been consulted?	Yes / No
Has a referral been made?	Yes / No
Details of safeguarding action taken	

Support Offered
Please record any support discussed or offered.

Support Measure	Details
Immediate Support	
Schools Leave of Absence Policy Considered	Yes / No
Employee Assistance Programme Discussed	Yes / No
Occupational Health Discussed	Yes / No
External Support Services Discussed	Yes / No
Other Support Offered	

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Advice Sought

Service / Individual	Details
Schools HR Advisory Service	
Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Occupational Health	
Other Advice Obtained	

Actions Agreed

Action	Responsible Person	Target Date

Follow-Up Arrangements

Information	Details
Follow-Up Meeting Required	Yes / No
Follow-Up Date	
Support and Safety Plan Required	Yes / No
Date Record Completed	

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Appendix C: Domestic Abuse Support and Safety Plan

This template may be used where an employee has disclosed domestic abuse and additional workplace support or safety arrangements are required. The purpose of the template is to assist Schools in recording relevant information, identifying workplace risks, agreeing support measures and documenting actions taken.

The plan should be developed in partnership with the employee wherever possible and reviewed regularly to ensure that support arrangements remain appropriate. Information recorded should be factual, proportionate and relevant to supporting the employee, managing workplace risks and fulfilling safeguarding responsibilities.

Domestic Abuse Support and Safety Plan

Employee Details

Information	Details
Employee Name	
Job Title	
Manager	
Date of Initial Disclosure	
Date Plan Agreed	
Review Date	

Summary of Concern
Please provide a factual summary of the concern or disclosure made by the employee.

Immediate Risks Identified
Please record any immediate risks identified in relation to:
• The employee
• Other staff
• Pupils
• Visitors
• School premises
• Other relevant concerns

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Safeguarding Considerations

Question	Response
Is there a safeguarding concern relating to a child or vulnerable individual?	Yes / No
Has the Designated Safeguarding Lead been consulted?	Yes / No
Is further safeguarding action required?	Yes / No
Details of safeguarding actions taken	

Communication Arrangements

Information	Details
Preferred Method of Contact	
Safe Contact Telephone Number	
Safe Email Address	
Any Agreed Communication Restrictions	
Named School Contact	

Workplace Risks and Safety Measures

Risk Identified	Agreed Safety Measure

Examples may include:
• Visitor management arrangements.
• Safe arrival and departure arrangements.
• Parking arrangements.

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• Communication protocols.
• Security measures.
• Restrictions on disclosure of personal information.
• Contact procedures if concerns arise.

Workplace Support Measures

Support Measure	Agreed Action
Flexible Working Arrangements	
Leave Arrangements (including Schools Leave of Absence Policy provisions, where applicable)	
Temporary Adjustment to Duties	
Wellbeing Support	
Occupational Health Referral	
Employee Assistance Programme	
Other Support Measures	

Advice and Support Services Accessed

Service	Details
Schools HR Advisory Service	
Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Trade Union Representative	
Occupational Health	

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External Domestic Abuse Support Service	
Other Agency or Professional	

Agreed Actions

Action	Responsible Person	Target Date

Review Arrangements

Information	Details
Review Date	
Responsible Manager	
Review Outcome	
Further Actions Required	

Follow-Up Arrangements

Information	Details
Follow-Up Meeting Required	Yes / No
Follow-Up Date	
Support and Safety Plan Required	Yes / No
Date Record Completed	

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