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Domestic Abuse Policy

Approved by:	Mrs C Ellis-Gage Head Teacher	**Date:** December 2025
Signed:		
Next review :	December 2026 John Habershon Deputy Head	

Domestic Abuse Policy

The Parkside School recognises that its employees will be amongst those affected by domestic abuse; for example as a survivor of domestic abuse, an individual who is currently living with domestic abuse, someone who has been impacted upon by domestic abuse or as an individual who perpetrates domestic abuse.
We are committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero tolerance for abuse and which recognises that the responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator. The Parkside School has a 'zero tolerance' position on domestic abuse and is committed to ensuring that any employee who is the victim of domestic abuse has the right to raise the issue with their employer in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and assistance.
This policy also covers the approach we will take where there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse.
By developing an effective domestic abuse policy and working to reduce the risks related to domestic abuse, we will create a safer workplace and we will also send out a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable.
The Parkside School recognises that domestic abuse is an equalities issue and undertakes to not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse in terms of current employment or future development.

This policy is part of The Parkside School commitment to family friendly working, and seeks to benefit the welfare of individual members of staff; retain valued employees; improve morale and performance; and enhance the reputation of The Parkside School as an employer of choice.
Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992), The Parkside School recognises its legal responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of all staff. Therefore this policy applies to staff across all sites as well as agency and contract staff (and elected members).

Definition of domestic abuse
Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."* *This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Identification of the problem
Whilst it is for the individual themselves to recognise they are a victim of domestic abuse, there are signs which may indicate an employee may be a victim. These may include;

- The member of staff may confide in their colleagues/manager.
- Staff may inform their manager that a colleague is suffering from domestic abuse.
- There may be obvious effects of physical abuse (it is important not to make assumptions).
- It may come to light as a result of enquiries into a drop in performance or a significant change in behaviour.
- It may reveal itself as the background to poor attendance.

It is essential to understand that any of the above may arise from a range of circumstances of which domestic abuse may be one. Managers/ Supervisors who support staff in such matters should address the issue positively and sympathetically ensuring that the employee is aware that support and assistance can be provided.

The Parkside School respects employees' right to privacy. Whilst The Parkside School strongly encourages victims of domestic abuse to disclose domestic abuse for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, it does not force them to share this information if they do not want to.

Confidentiality and right to privacy
Employees who disclose experiencing abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not ordinarily be shared with other members of staff without their permission.

There are, however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are safeguarding concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees.
In circumstances where The Parkside School has to breach confidentiality it will seek specialist advice before doing so. If it decides to proceed in breaching confidentiality after having taken advice, it will discuss with the employee why it is doing so and it will seek the employee's agreement where possible.
As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
All records concerning domestic abuse will be kept strictly confidential. No local records will be kept of absences related to domestic abuse and there will be no adverse impact on the employment records of victims of domestic abuse.
Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.
Where domestic abuse in a same sex relationship is disclosed, due regard will be paid to the double disclosure of confidential information particularly where the individual recipient of abuse may not be out at work.

Support for individuals
The Parkside School recognises that developing a life free from abuse is a process not an event and The Parkside School will provide ongoing support for employees who disclose abuse.
The Parkside School and Union/Professional organisation representatives will work together cooperatively to help staff experiencing domestic abuse.
The Parkside School will respond sympathetically, confidentially and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse.
Where domestic abuse has been reported line managers will treat unplanned absences and temporary poor timekeeping sympathetically.
Line managers may offer employees experiencing domestic abuse a broad range of support.
This may include, but is not limited to:

- Special paid leave for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments.
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns.
- Changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer facing role.

- Redeployment or relocation.
- Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls.
- Using other existing policies, including flexible working.
- Access to counselling/support services in paid time.
- Access to courses developed to support female survivors of domestic abuse, for example The Freedom Programme or assertiveness training.

Line managers will respect the right of staff to make their own decision on the course of action at every stage.
Other existing provisions (including occupational health, independent counselling service, others) will also be signposted to staff as a means of support.

Organisational planning
All employees will be made aware of this policy through a range of methods including induction, training, appraisal, leaflets and posters.
The Parkside School will remind staff of the importance of not divulging personal details of other employees, such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns.
This is paramount when dealing with Honour Based Abuse cases.

Disclosure of abuse
Staff experiencing domestic abuse may choose to disclose, report to or seek support from a union representative, a line manager, or colleague. Line managers and union representatives will not counsel victims, but offer information, workplace support, and signpost to other organisations.
The Parkside School will respond sympathetically, confidentially and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are suffering from domestic abuse. A member of human resources trained in domestic abuse issues, will be nominated as an additional confidential contact for staff. This person will also provide guidance for line managers and union representatives who are approached by staff who are being abused.

Training
The Parkside School is committed to ensuring all line managers are aware of domestic abuse and its implications in the workplace. Information, briefings or awareness raising sessions will ensure that all managers are able to:

- Identify if an employee is experiencing difficulties because of domestic abuse.

- Respond to disclosure in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner.
- Provide initial support – be clear about available workplace support.
- Discuss how the organisation can contribute to safety planning.
- Signpost to other organisations and sources of support. Understand that they are not counsellors.

Safety planning

The Parkside School will prioritise the safety of employees if they make it known that they are experiencing domestic abuse.

When an employee discloses domestic abuse, The Parkside School will encourage its employees to contact a specialist support agency (or suitably trained specialist member of staff) who can undertake a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment and make appropriate referrals where necessary.

The Parkside School will work with the employee and a specialist agency (with the employee's consent) to identify what actions can be taken to increase their personal safety at work and at home as well as address any risks there may be to colleagues.

If the victim and the perpetrator work in the same organisation

In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse work in the organisation, The Parkside School will take appropriate action.

In addition to considering disciplinary action against the employee who is perpetrating the abuse, action may need to be taken to ensure that the victim and perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace.

Action may also need to be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim. This may include a change of duties for one or both employees or withdrawing the perpetrators access to certain computer programmes or offices.

The Parkside School encourages all employees to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Employees should speak to their line manager about their concerns in confidence. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague, employers should ensure that the person with concerns is made aware of the existence of this policy.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. The Parkside School recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. Employees should report if they suspect a colleague is a perpetrator of abuse.

If an employee approaches The Parkside School about their abusive behaviour, The Parkside School will provide information about the services and support available to them.

Domestic Abuse Policy

The Parkside School will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change.

The Parkside School views the use of violence and abusive behaviour by an employee, wherever this occurs, as a breach of the *organisation's* Code of Conduct for disciplinary purposes.

The Parkside School's Code of Conduct is intended to inform all staff, irrespective of grade, of the standards of conduct expected of them. It identifies a set of principles governing behaviour by which staff members are expected to abide. Staff members are expected at all times to present high standards of personal integrity and conduct that will not reflect adversely on *the organisation* and its reputation.

In some circumstances it may be deemed inappropriate for the individual to continue in his/her current role(s), due to a caution or conviction. The Parkside School views the use of violence and abusive behaviour by an employee, wherever this occurs, as a breach of the organisation's Code of Conduct for disciplinary purposes.

These procedures can be applicable in cases where an employee has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or threatened his/her partner.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against his/her partner.
- Had an allegation of domestic abuse made against him/her.
- Presented concerns about their behaviour within an intimate relationship.
- The Parkside School is committed to ensuring that:
- Allegations will be dealt with fairly and in a way that provides support for the person who is the subject of the allegation or disclosure.
- All employees will receive guidance and support.
- Confidentiality will be maintained and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know.
- Investigations will be thorough and independent.
- All cases will be dealt with quickly avoiding unnecessary delays.
- All efforts will be made to resolve the matter within 4-6 weeks, although some cases will take longer because of their nature or complexity.

NOTE: This procedure is intended to be safety focussed and supportive rather than punitive.

The alleged perpetrator will be:

- Treated fairly and honestly
- Helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved
- Kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary process
- Advised to contact their union or professional organisation

There are five potential strands in the consideration of an allegation:

1. A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
2. Disciplinary action by the employer
3. Providing specialist, safety-focused counselling
4. Identifying risk
5. Referral to Local Authority regarding risk to general public/vulnerable people

Any employee who is responsible for giving advice, or who comes into contact with or supports those vulnerable people or children experiencing domestic abuse needs to be particularly aware of the potential consequences if they are found to be perpetrators.
If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones, email or fax machines then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.
If it becomes evident that an employee has made a malicious allegation that another employee is perpetrating abuse then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken.

Professional role and risk management
All organisations should have clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children.
An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has;

Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child:

Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child:
Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Each Local Authority should have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases. The LADO should provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.
The LADO should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police.

The Norfolk LADO team can be contacted on 01603 223473.

In relation to Vulnerable Adults all referrals must be directed to the Safeguarding Coordinator or MASH Team Manager.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with organisational procedures unless there are changes in legislation, best practice or other organisation policies impact on its effectiveness.

Further guidance

Anyone using this policy to respond to a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse should refer to further current information provided by:

http://www.leewaysupport.org

http://www.nscb.norfolk.gov.uk www.refuge.org.uk

www.respect.uk.net www.womensaid.org.uk

http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Appendix 1

Police Emergency Contact Number: 999 Police Non-Emergency Contact Number: 101
Website: www.norfolk.police.uk

Domestic Abuse Helplines	
Leeway Domestic Violence Helpline (local) http://www.leewaysupport.org	**0300 5610077**
National 24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk	**0808 2000247**
Childline http://www.childline.org.uk	**0800 1111**
Mens Advice Line (for male victims) www.mensadviceline.org.uk	**0808 8010327**
National Domestic Violence Helpline (Women's Aid) http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk	**0808 2000247**
National Victim Support http://www.victimsupport.org.uk	**0808 1689111**
National Centre for Domestic Violence http://www.ncdv.org.uk	**08009702070**
For Help TEXT "NCDV"	**60777**
Samaritans	**116 123**
Shelterline	**0344 515 1860**
Crime Stoppers	**0800 555111**
National Drugs Helpline	**0800 5404120**
National Help Line for LGBT	**0800 9995428**
Debtline	**0808 8084000**
NHS Direct	**111**
Paladin National Stalking Helpline	**020 38664107**

Honour Abuse Help lines	
Karma Nirvana	**0800 5999247**
Aanchal (Asian Languages spoken)	**08454 512 547**
Southall Black Sister	**0208 5710800**
Ashiana Network (Turkish and South Asian)	**0208 5390427**
Ikrow (Iranian, Kurdish women's rights organisation)	**0207 9206460**

Children's Services	
Norfolk County Council (Main Switch Board For any Safeguarding concerns)	**0344 8008020**

Hospitals	
Queen Elizabeth Kings Lynn	**01553 613613**
Norfolk and Norwich	**01603 286286**
James Paget, Gorleston	**01493 452452**
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk	**01284 713000**