

Domestic Abuse Policy

September 2024

CAPTAIN WEBB PRIMARY SCHOOL

Safeguarding

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Statement of intent

Captain Webb Primary School wants to ensure that all staff members are able to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and know how they can get support.

This policy outlines the school's stance on domestic abuse and how any staff member who discloses being a victim of domestic abuse will be supported by the school. The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of domestic abuse among staff members and how they can recognise indicators that a colleague may be a victim of domestic abuse.

The policy also outlines what measures will be put in place should a staff member be an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse.

Legal framework

Captain Webb Primary School understands its legal responsibility to promote the welfare of all staff members.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Abuse statutory guidance
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992
- Family Law Act 1996
- The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Staff Wellbeing Policy
- Staff Confidentiality Policy
- Staff Attendance and Absence Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher will:

- Review this policy on an annual basis.
- Oversee the school's management of staff wellbeing.
- Act as the point of call for staff members who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse.
- Encourage that all staff members report any concerns they have for their colleagues.
- Ensure that awareness is enhanced for all staff members through the organisation of training and events.
- Lead disciplinary measures where a staff member is found guilty of perpetrating domestic abuse.
- Support alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse while a case is being investigated.

The SLT will:

- Assist the headteacher in the school's management of staff wellbeing.
- Ensure all staff members are aware of this policy and communicate it through staff meetings, inductions and communications.
- Encourage all staff to read this policy and follow the measures to take when addressing domestic violence and abuse.
- Further educate themselves on the issue of domestic abuse in order to answer any questions staff members have.
- Support disciplinary measures where a staff member is found guilty of perpetrating domestic abuse.

All staff members will:

- Read this policy and ask any questions they have regarding its content.
- Report any concerns for their colleagues regarding domestic violence and abuse.
- Understand the impact that domestic abuse has on its victims.
- Participate in training and events held by the school.
- Support and uphold the school's stance on domestic abuse.

The DSL will:

- Work in collaboration with the headteacher if a case of domestic abuse among staff members becomes a safeguarding issue.
- Ensure pupils are protected in the event that a staff member is alleged to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

Definitions

'**Domestic abuse**' is defined by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as abusive behaviour where the perpetrator and the victim are both over the age of 16 and are personally connected to each other. Domestic abuse can be a single incident or a course of conduct.

For the purposes of this policy, **the 'perpetrator'** is the individual who has carried, or carries out, the act of abusive behaviour.

'**The victim**' is the person who has had, or is having, the act of abusive behaviour relayed upon them.

Individuals are classed as being '**personally connected**' if they are, or have been:

- Married to each other.
- Civil partners of each other.
- In agreement to become married to one another.
- In agreement to enter into a civil partnership.
- In an intimate personal relationship with each other.
- In a parental relationship in relation to the same child.
- Relatives under the definition given under section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

‘Abusive behaviour’ is classified as any action which consist of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse.
- Violent or threatening behaviour.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.
- Economic abuse.
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

‘Physical abuse, violent or threatening behaviour’ is when the perpetrator hurts, or threatens to hurt, the victim using physical force – this may include:

- Being, or threatened to be, kicked, punched, pinched, pushed, dragged, shoved, slapped, scratched, strangled, spat on and bitten.
- Use, or threats of use, of weapons including knives and irons.
- Being, or being threatened to be, burned, scalded, poisoned, or drowned.
- Objects being thrown at or in the direction of the victim.
- Violence, or threats of violence, against family members.
- Causing harm by damaging or denying access to medical aids or equipment.
- Harming someone whilst performing ‘caring’ duties, e.g. force feedings, over-medication, withdrawing medication, or denying access to medical care.

‘Sexual abuse’ is when the perpetrator makes the victim feel uncomfortable through sexual demands or advances – this can be verbal, physical, or both and may include:

- Rape and sexual assaults.
- Being pressured into sex, or sexual acts, including with other people.
- Being forced to take part in sexual acts because of threats to others.
- Unwanted sexual contact or demands.
- ‘Corrective’ rape, meaning the practice of raping someone with the aim of ‘curing’ them of being LGBTQ+.
- Intentional exposure to sexually transmitted infections.
- Being pressured or tricked into having unsafe sex.
- Forced involvement in making or watching pornography.
- Hurting a victim during sex including non-fatal strangulation.

‘Controlling or coercive behaviour’ is manipulative, forceful or duplicitous behaviour which takes place in an attempt to influence the victim’s day-to-day behaviour or activities, and constitutes domestic abuse when it causes the victim to fear that violence will be used or places a substantial adverse effect on the victim’s usual day-to-day activities. This behaviour takes place repeatedly or continuously and may include:

- Controlling or monitoring the victim’s daily activities and behaviour.
- Controlling a victim’s access to finances, including monitoring their accounts or coercing them into sharing their passwords to bank accounts.
- Isolating the victim from family, friends and professionals who may be trying to support them.
- Refusing to interpret or hindering access to communication.
- Preventing the victim from taking medical support or medication.

- Using substances to control a victim through dependency or controlling their access to substances.
- Using children to control the victim, e.g. threatening to take the children away.
- Using animals to control or coerce a victim, e.g. harming or threatening to harm, or give away, pets or assistance dogs.
- Threats to expose sensitive information.
- Intimidation and threats of disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity to family, friends, work colleagues and wider community.
- Preventing the victim from learning a language or making friends outside of their ethnic or cultural background.
- Threatening precarious immigration status with the victim, e.g. using immigration law to threaten the victim with potential deportation.
- Using the victim's health status to induce fear and restrict their freedom of movement.
- Threats of institutionalisation.
- Physical violence, violent or threatening behaviour, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, economic abuse and verbal abuse.

'Harassment or stalking' may constitute physical abuse, threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, or emotional or psychological abuse. It is generally referred to as repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a victim, in a manner that could be expected to cause distress and fear – this may include:

- Following a person.
- Contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means.
- Publishing any statement or other material relating or purporting to relate to a person, or purporting to originate from a person.
- Monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication.
- Loitering in any place.
- Interfering with any property in the possession of a person.
- Watching or spying on a person.

'Economic abuse' is any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on the victim's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services – this may include:

- Controlling the family income.
- Not allowing the victim to earn or spend any money unless 'permitted'.
- Denying the victim food or only allowing them to eat a particular type of food.
- Running up bills and debts such as credit or store cards in a victim's name including without them knowing.
- Refusing to contribute to household income or costs.
- Deliberately forcing a victim to go to the family courts so they incur additional legal fees.

‘Emotional or psychological abuse’ is behaviour which aims to control the victim through tactics of manipulation – this may include:

- Manipulating a person’s anxieties or beliefs or abusing a position of trust.
- Hostile behaviours or silent treatment as part of a pattern of behaviour to make the victim feel fearful.
- Being insulted, including in front of others.
- Repeatedly being belittled.
- Keeping the victim awake or preventing them from sleeping.
- Using violence or threats of violence towards pets or assistance dogs to intimate the victim and cause distress, e.g. by harming the animal or controlling how the owner is able to care for the animal.
- Threatening to harm family, peers and loved ones.
- Using social media sites to intimidate the victim.
- Persuading the victim to doubt their own sanity or mind, including gaslighting.

‘Verbal abuse’ Verbal abuse may amount to emotional or psychological abuse, threatening behaviour or controlling or coercive behaviour – this may include:

- Repeated yelling and shouting.
- Abusive, insulting, threatening or degrading language.
- Verbal humiliation either in private or in company.
- Being laughed at and being made fun of.
- Discriminating against someone or mocking them about their disability, sex or gender identity, gender reassignment, religion or faith, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance or for any other reason.

‘Technology-facilitated abuse’ is where the perpetrator uses technology, including social media, to abuse victims. This can happen during and after the relationship and is commonly perpetrated by ex-partners. This can include:

- Placing false or malicious information about a victim on their or others’ social media.
- Setting up false social media accounts in the name of the victim.
- ‘Trolling’ with abusive, offensive or deliberately provocative messages via social media platforms or online forums.
- Image-based abuse, e.g. the creation of digitally altered images or the non-consensual distribution of, or threats to share, private sexual imagery – also known as ‘revenge porn’.
- ‘Upskirting’ – taking a picture under another person’s clothing without their knowledge.
- Hacking into, monitoring or controlling email accounts, social media profiles and phone calls.
- Blocking the victim from using their online accounts, responding in the victim’s place or creating false accounts.
- Use of spyware or GPS locators on items such as phones, computer, wearable technology, cars motorbikes and pets.

- Hacking internet enabled devices to gain access to accounts or trace information such as a person's location.
- Use of hidden cameras.

'Abuse relating to faith' is when abuse occurs in relation to an individual's faith by using, manipulating, or exploiting it – this may include:

- Manipulation and exploitation through the influence of religion.
- Requirements for secrecy and silence.
- Marital rape and the use of religious scripture to justify it.
- Coercion to conform or control through the use of sacred or religious texts or teaching, e.g. theological justifications for sexual coercion or abuse.
- Causing harm, isolation or neglect to get rid of an 'evil force' or 'spirit' that is believed to have possessed the victim.
- Requirement of obedience to the perpetrator of domestic abuse, owing to religion or faith, or their 'divine' position.
- Being forced to act or behave in ways which contradict religious beliefs.
- Preventing the victim from performing acts of worship.
- Forcing sexual acts which contradict religious observance and or religious law.
- Forcing or limiting access to abortion, birth control or sterilisation when this contravenes religious observance.

'Honour-based abuse' is a crime or incident which is committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of the family or community, or in response to individuals trying to break away from constraining 'norms' of behaviour that their family or community is trying to impose. It can be physical, emotional or psychological and may include:

- Placing restrictions on the victim's freedom.
- Threats to kill.
- FGM.
- Forced marriage.

While the above lists offer some common examples of domestic abuse, these lists are by no means exhaustive and there are many other ways in which the perpetrator may practice abusive behaviours. All staff members will make themselves aware of the above definitions and contribute to the whole-school approach to dealing with domestic abuse.

Identifying victims of domestic abuse

All staff members will read the above definitions and make themselves aware of the signs of domestic abuse and the impact that it has on the victims.

When a staff member is worried that a colleague is being abused, they will let the potential victim know and seek to find a quiet time and place to talk; however, they should understand that they may not be ready to talk.

Many signs of domestic abuse are hard to see; however, some, e.g. physical indicators, are easier to recognise. All staff members will be aware of the following indicators that a colleague may be a victim of domestic abuse:

- Unexplained and frequent injuries such as burns and bruises
- Injuries to which the potential victim's explanation does not match
- Changes in behaviour
- Sudden development of mental health difficulties such as depression and anxiety
- Difficulties concentrating or listening – this could be in general conversation or whilst carrying out their job
- Noticeable increase in substance use
- Sudden drops in performance
- Frequent lateness or absence
- Spending more time at school than usual and/or necessary – for some victims, the school may be a place of refuge away from the perpetrator
- Wearing clothes which hide injuries or bruising
- Taking regular time off for appointments
- Taking an excessive number of phone calls from their partner during the school day
- Complaining about their partner frequently and confiding in their colleagues
- Becoming defensive or overly secretive when asked about aspects of their personal life

While staff are encouraged to look out for the above indicators, it is important to remember that this is by no means an exhaustive list. Those in management may be more likely to spot some of these indicators, e.g. performance and attendance-related changes.

When approaching a potential victim of domestic abuse, staff members are expected to use sensitive language and make attempts to ask questions which are not overly intrusive as they may be triggering for the victim.

Staff will participate in any training, guest speakers or awareness events that the school organises in order to enhance their understanding of domestic abuse.

When a staff member identifies a potential victim of domestic abuse, they must respect the victim's confidentiality and information will not be shared with other members of staff without their permission; however, the victim will be encouraged to share this information with the headteacher so that the school can support them to gain access to the help that is available.

Supporting victims of domestic abuse

The school has a duty of care for all of its employees and takes the wellbeing of its staff members extremely seriously.

When a staff member discloses that they are a victim of domestic abuse, the headteacher will offer information and support, and point them in the direction of where they can get further help. While the headteacher will not ordinarily deal with the abuse itself, they will make it clear that staff will be assisted to seek help, advice and support.

The school adopts methods to support victims of domestic abuse, including:

- Promoting awareness of the issue across the school.
- Incorporating confidential reporting channels.
- Using a code word or signal to alert others of domestic abuse or an immediate risk.
- Enabling victims to make use of special leave arrangements in order to support their wellbeing.
- Adopting a whole-school approach towards dealing with the complications of domestic abuse.

In addition, the school adopts the Public Health England (now UK Health Security Agency and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) and Business in the Community's (BITC) 'four R's' approach:

- **Recognise:** recognise the problem to enable managers and employees to understand that domestic abuse is a workplace issue that everyone can play a part in tackling.
- **Refer:** provide access to internal confidential support and signpost appropriately to external organisations who can help staff members who disclose that they are a victim of domestic abuse.
- **Respond:** implement policies, and processes to enable a supportive school environment which responds appropriately to the disclosure of domestic abuse.
- **Record:** keep an accurate and secure record of what the victim has disclosed in order to provide the police with information should criminal proceedings take place.

In the event that a staff member discloses their experience of domestic abuse, the SLT will consider asking questions to protect the victim whilst they are on school site such as:

- Does the perpetrator know where the victim lives?
- Has the victim ever been followed by the perpetrator on their way to or from work?
- Is the victim concerned of anything specific that might take place at work or to and from work?
- Does the perpetrator have access to the victim's work contact details?
- What information is the victim comfortable sharing with the wider team or relevant staff to ensure that any changes can be implemented and an appropriate response can be delivered?

Where necessary, the school will consider taking action to support an employee who has disclosed that they are a victim of domestic abuse – the school look to take action in relation to the following:

- **Contact arrangements**
 - Keeping a record of both a work contact and an emergency contact at home
 - Making advance arrangements of when and who to contact if a staff member does not come in to work
 - Maintaining communication with the staff member during a period of absence, while keeping their location confidential from the perpetrator and other people named by the victim

- **Safety to and from work**
 - Enable the staff member to arrive at the school earlier and leave later if they wish
 - Support the staff member with a transfer to another school if they believe this would improve their safety
- **Safety while at work**
 - If necessary, change the locks and codes to enter the school
 - Consider an alternative entrance to, or exit from, the school
 - Consider what security arrangements can be put in place to identify the perpetrator to deny their access to the school
- **Communication safety**
 - Review the security of the staff member's records and personal information
 - Change the staff member's school contact details
 - Issue instructions to all staff they must not disclose the staff member's personal details or whereabouts to anyone
- **Managing responsibilities at work**
 - Consider whether the staff member's working arrangements can be amended
 - Adjust the staff member's workload by extending deadlines or redelegating responsibilities
 - Consider additional support for the staff member
 - Permit special leave or time off to attend appointments or court

In accordance with NHS guidance, where a victim confides in their colleague that they are suffering domestic abuse, the staff member being confided in will:

- Listen and ensure that they do not place blame on them.
- Acknowledge the strength it has taken for the victim to talk about their experience of domestic abuse.
- Give them time to talk without pushing them to divulge into additional details.
- Acknowledge the frightening and difficult situation that the victim is faced with.
- Inform them that no one deserves to be abused, and that the perpetrator has no right to make them think otherwise.
- Support them and encourage them to express their feelings whilst allowing them to make their own decisions.
- Not be overly expressive with opinions, e.g. do not tell the victim to leave the relationship – this is their decision.
- Ask whether they have suffered any physical harm and offer to go with them to seek medical attention if necessary; however, staff will not inquire further if this question makes the victim uncomfortable or agitated.
- Help them to report the abuse to the police if the victim chooses to do so.
- Be ready to provide information about organisations that offer help for people experiencing domestic abuse.

Getting help and support

The school will ensure that all staff members know that all forms of domestic abuse are not acceptable in any situation – if a staff member is experiencing domestic abuse, the school will reassure the victim that it is not their fault and advise them to seek help and support.

While the school will offer its staff members as much support as possible should they become a victim of domestic abuse, the victim will be made aware of the resources available to them to seek support from charities and professionals in the field of domestic abuse.

Below are some resources which all staff members will be aware of if they are a victim of domestic abuse, or supporting a victim of domestic abuse:

Women can contact the [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) on 0808 2000 247 for a free, confidential phone call 24 hours a day. There is also a live chat available from Monday to Friday between the hours of 3:00pm and 10:00pm.

[The Survivor's Handbook](#) from the charity Women's Aid also provides information for women on a wide range of issues for victims such as housing, money, helping children, and legal rights.

Men can use the [Men's Advice Line](#) by calling 0808 8010 327, emailing info@mensadviceline.org.uk or by making use of the webchat service which is available Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10:00am until 11:00am and 3:00pm until 4:00pm.

Staff members who identify as LGBTQ+ can access the resources on [Galop](#) and call their domestic abuse hotline on 0800 999 5428.

In an emergency, staff will call 999 immediately.

Further specialist sources of support for domestic abuse can be found [here](#). And on pages 147-151 of the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#).

Confidentiality and record keeping

Once a staff member has disclosed that they are a victim of domestic abuse to the school management, the headteacher will suggest that they and the victim find somewhere quiet and private to speak about the issues that the victim is comfortable to talk about. The complete confidentiality of the disclosure will be confirmed to the victim and any information disclosed will only be reported to anyone else if it is completely necessary in providing help and support, and with the prior agreement from the victim themselves.

Exceptions to the confidentiality of the disclosed information may be made if the person to whom the information has been communicated believes that there is an imminent threat to life, harm to children, harm to pupils at the school, or a threat against the people who have had the information disclosed to them. Where such a situation occurs, the police will be contacted, and their advice followed.

In the circumstances where complete confidentiality cannot be maintained, the victim will be informed of the reasons as to why this has happened. They will be reassured that only the necessary information has been shared and that care has been taken to ensure that sharing the information is not putting the victim at an increased risk.

A secure record of the information disclosed will be kept by the school for the purpose of relaying accurate information to the police should the abuse be brought to a court of law.

In accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, the victim will always have the right to access the personal data held by the school and the rights of other individuals to access this information will remain restricted.

The school will take careful measures to ensure that the release of the victim's personal information does not become accessible to the perpetrator, or anyone associated with the perpetrator through coercion to convince the victim to release the data.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse

Staff members who perpetrate domestic abuse will be in serious breach of their professional conduct and may face criminal proceedings. The school takes the issue of domestic abuse extremely seriously and will not tolerate abusive behaviour in any form by any of its staff members.

Where a staff member is alleged to have committed an act, or acts, of domestic abuse, the school will understand that this will likely be a stressful situation for them and will aim to reduce risk and support change by dealing with each allegation on a case-by-case basis.

The school will support a police investigation if a staff member is alleged to have perpetrated domestic abuse – the school will ensure that:

- All allegations are approached with fairness.
- The alleged perpetrator of the abuse receives support and guidance.
- Confidentiality is maintained during the investigation and information is only communicated to those who have a genuine need to know.
- Investigations are thorough and independent.
- All cases are dealt with in a way which avoids unnecessary delays; however, the school understands that cases take time and some may require additional time due to their complexity.
- The alleged perpetrator is treated fairly and receives help to understand the concerns and processes the allegation entails.
- The alleged perpetrator receives information about the progress of the investigation and the implications of any potential disciplinary proceedings that the school may have to take.

Where the alleged perpetrator is convicted of a domestic abuse offence, the school will consider whether this will have an impact on their ability to perform their role and whether or not the staff member should be removed from their role at the school.

False allegations of domestic abuse against staff members by other staff members will be taken extremely seriously and will result in disciplinary proceedings where the allegation is proven to be malicious and false.

If a staff member is found guilty of **assisting someone to perpetuate domestic abuse**, e.g. by providing the perpetrator with the victim's work contact details, they may be subject to investigation and disciplinary proceedings.

Where the victim and perpetrator are colleagues at the school, the headteacher will work closely with the SLT and the police, where necessary, to carefully look at each case and take the appropriate action. The school will take steps to ensure that the victim and alleged perpetrator do not come in to contact with one another at the school while the case is dealt with; this may be done via the imposition of a suspension for the alleged perpetrator if the school deems it necessary.

In collaboration with the school's LA and DSL, the headteacher will lead safeguarding protocols when dealing with an allegation or disclosure of domestic abuse, the school will be required to invoke serious misconduct procedures and consider whether the perpetrator needs to be suspended based on the evidence of the case.

Staff members will all make themselves aware of the behaviours which constitute domestic abuse to protect themselves, their colleagues and to recognise where the behaviours which they exhibit may classify as domestic abuse.

Where a staff member has approached the school with concerns that they may have practiced, or are practicing abusive behaviours, they will be directed to the services and support available to them and will be encouraged to seek help from an appropriate source.

If staff a member is worried that they may be showing abusive behaviours, the school will provide contact details for the [Respect helpline](#) on 0808 802 4040.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.