

Viking Academy Trust



Managing Domestic Abuse in the Workplace Policy

The VIKING ACADEMY TRUST 'Managing Domestic Abuse in the Workplace' policy has been written using advice from CIPD and the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse.

Approved by the Trust: Term 2 2023

Reviewed annually: Term 2

Last review date: N/A

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Roby', is written over a faint rectangular box.

Chair of Trustees



VIKING ACADEMY TRUST

‘Empowering children through education: One Childhood One Chance’

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

All staff, governors and Trustees make the education of pupils at the Viking Academy Trust their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct.

All staff, governors and Trustees act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

- Chilton Primary School
- Ramsgate Arts Primary School
- Upton Junior School

This ‘Managing Domestic Abuse in the Workplace’ policy is for all the aforementioned schools.

MANAGING DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

PURPOSE

The aim of this policy is to set out the Viking Academy Trust’s stance on domestic abuse and explain the support the Trust can offer to employees experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse against any of our members of staff will not be tolerated. The Viking Academy Trust understands the risks and consequences of domestic abuse and will take all reasonable action to support any member of staff who is the subject of domestic abuse.

We acknowledge our duty of care towards our employees and understand that this includes a legal responsibility to provide a safe and effective work environment; we appreciate that tackling domestic abuse is an integral part of this.

We work hard to foster a supportive workplace culture where employees feel able to talk openly about their experiences if they wish to.

We recognise that any member of our workforce could be subject to domestic abuse, and in some cases, the victim may not realise that the behaviour displayed towards them is abuse. Research shows that those who are experiencing domestic abuse are targeted at work.



DEFINITION

Domestic abuse involves controlling, coercive threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse. The abuse is usually between adults who are, or have been, in an intimate relationship or family members. Domestic abuse is usually a pattern of behaviour although it can be a one-off event. Domestic abuse can involve a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It can take many forms, including:

- Psychological abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Economic / financial abuse.

Anyone can suffer from domestic abuse regardless of sex, race, sexuality, or religion. It can occur at any time in a person's life, though may be triggered by specific events or become more extreme or frequent because of those events.

THE FACTS TELL A CLEAR STORY...

Domestic abuse is all too common in the UK, and its harmful impacts on survivors can extend to many areas of their lives, including mental health, physical wellbeing and family safety.

Fact: The police receive a domestic abuse-related call every 30 seconds.

Yet it is estimated that less than 24% of domestic abuse crime is reported to the police.

Fact: 1 in 4 women / 1 in 6-7 men in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.

Domestic abuse feels incredibly isolating, but the numbers tell a different story.

Fact: 20% of children in the UK have lived with an adult perpetrating domestic abuse.

That's 1 in 5 children.

Fact: Each year more than 100,000 people in the UK are at high and imminent risk of being murdered or seriously injured because of domestic abuse.

Fact: 50% say that the abuse they experienced during their working life resulted in low self-esteem/confidence.

Fact: Domestic abuse gets worse during pregnancy.

About 20% of women in Refuge's services are pregnant or have recently given birth.

Fact: Domestic abuse costs the UK an estimated £23 billion a year.

It is not only weighing on our physical and emotional health, but also our economy.

It is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal conviction.



IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AT WORK

The Viking Academy Trust is aware that the challenges that domestic abuse victims face can manifest themselves in problems such as chronic absenteeism or lower productivity.

We recognise that domestic abuse does not occur only within the home and an employee can experience domestic abuse:

- Through threatening visits, phone calls and emails from the perpetrator while they are at work or
- When travelling to and from work.

Colleagues can experience threatening or intimidating behaviour from the perpetrator of the abuse.

SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MAY BE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Signs which may indicate that someone is experiencing domestic abuse may be:

- Frequent absence from work, lateness or needing to leave work early.
- Reduced quality and quantity of work or missing deadlines.
- Spending an increased number of hours at work for no reason.
- Changes in the way an employee communicates - many personal calls or texts or a strong reaction to personal calls.
- Physical signs and symptoms such as unexplained or frequent bruises or other injuries.
- Excessive clothing on a hot day.
- Changes in the amount of make-up worn.
- Changes in social behaviour, for example, not turning up to work social activities.
- Obsession with leaving work on time.

PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Viking Academy Trust will not tolerate domestic abuse by its employees, nor use of Viking Academy Trust equipment to carry out such abuse and this will be made clear to the perpetrator. The Viking Academy Trust will take seriously any allegations towards an employee of domestic abuse and investigations may lead to disciplinary action being taken in line with the Viking Academy Trust's disciplinary policy.

When speaking with an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse, a manager should, if considered necessary, take measures to ensure their own safety such as taking another member of staff to a discussion.

The Viking Academy Trust will seek to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse if it is evident that they are seeking help to address their behaviour.



If both the individual experiencing domestic abuse and the perpetrator work for the Viking Academy Trust, measures will be taken to reduce the impact, such as:

- Reassigning duties/roles and
- Restricting the perpetrator's access to information about the person they are targeting.

Managers will keep confidential records of any disclosure or action taken in relation to an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IF EMPLOYEE CONFIDES IN A MANAGER

If an employee discloses domestic abuse to their line manager, they will be referred to the HR Director for additional guidance and support.

The HR Director will offer reassurance to the employee of the Viking Academy Trust's stance towards domestic abuse and outline the support that is to be offered. The HR Director will not ask the employee for evidence of abuse. If so, indicated by the employee, the HR Director will arrange for another manager of the same sex as the employee to be their confidante and offer support.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance for managers dealing with an employee who informs them that they are experiencing domestic abuse. However, there may be circumstances where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where the Viking Academy Trust needs to act to protect the safety of employees. In these circumstances the HR Director will discuss with the employee the reason for disclosing any information to a third party and will seek the employee's agreement where possible.

All records concerning domestic abuse will be kept strictly confidential and in line with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018. Improper disclosure of information i.e., breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously.

The HR Director will not directly involve themselves in the situation, by, for example, confronting someone accused of being abusive. Instead, the role of the HR Director in this situation is:

- To provide support to the employee in the workplace
- To help the employee find professional help.

In terms of practical assistance, the HR Director will:

- Regularly check in with the employee
- Permit use of Viking Academy Trust IT equipment to search for online assistance or to speak to an expert who can help.
- Ensure websites of organisations who can help are accessible from work equipment i.e., are not blocked under an internet usage policy.



- Allow the employee time off to visit one of the advice organisations, the police, or a doctor or to address concerns, such legal, financial, or housing.
- Adjust targets to reduce any undue pressure on the employee.
- Agree code words or hand signals to be used during a telephone or video call to signal that the employee is in a threatening situation, and what action needs to be taken when one is used.
- A salary advance to a bank account other than that which is normally used
- Arrange for the employee's telephone extension number to be changed or calls to be diverted if the employee is receiving harassing telephone calls.
- Agree with the employee how they should respond if the perpetrator attends the workplace.
- Ensure that the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area.
- Check that the employee has arrangements for safe travel between home and the workplace.
- Keep a record of incidents which occur in the workplace, e.g., harassing telephone calls or visits.
- Consider a temporary change to the employee's working patterns.

Employees have access to our confidential telephone counselling service offered by Cantium where they can talk to a trained counsellor about their circumstances. Employees can access this by accessing the online form: [Support Line counselling referral form](#) or calling the number provided 03000 411 411.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IF THE MANAGER SUSPECTS THAT AN EMPLOYEE IS BEING SUBJECTED TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

Suspicious that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse must be treated in a careful, balanced and sensitive manner, even where no evidence is available. Line managers must report any suspicions to the HR Director, which will be treated confidentially.

The HR Director has training in how to recognise the signs that an employee may be experiencing domestic abuse, including silent signals that can be used during a video conference with employees working remotely, and ways to support the employee.

If a manager suspects that an employee is being subjected to domestic abuse, but has no evidence, then great care must be taken which is why a referral to the HR Director is key. The HR Director will provide the employee an opportunity to confide but will not question the employee or put any undue pressure on the employee to discuss the situation.

Great care will be taken when the employee in question works at home because the perpetrator of the abuse may be monitoring communication or be in earshot of video or telephone calls.

On some occasions a colleague or friend of an employee might confide in a manager that an employee is being subjected to domestic abuse. It must be realised that this information might be incorrect, hence care should be taken. The manager should give the employee an opportunity to confide but should not question the employee or put any undue pressure on the employee to discuss the situation.



Managers should refer to the guidelines above for information on how to support the employee.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IF BOTH THE VICTIM AND THE PERPETRATOR ARE EMPLOYED BY THE ORGANISATION.

In cases where both the victim and perpetrator of domestic abuse work for the Viking Academy Trust, we will take appropriate action including:

- Considering utilising different work locations both within the building at which the employees work, or another of our work locations, working hours, shift patterns etc.
- Minimising the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim.
- Offering impartial support and where possible ensure both the victim and perpetrator have different supervisors who can provide appropriate information to each party.

PROFESSIONAL HELP

The line manager should encourage the employee to seek professional help but should not contact them personally. This may include reporting instances of violence to the police, or seeking help from specialist organisations such as:

GENERAL

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0808 2000 247 (Freephone and 24 hour) / www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Citizens Advice Bureau - www.adviceguide.org.uk
- National Centre for Domestic Violence – 0800 970 2070 / www.ncdv.org.uk
- Galop: 0800 999 5428 / www.galop.org.uk

FOR WOMEN

- Women's Aid - www.womensaid.org.uk
- Jewish Women's Aid - 0800 591203 / www.jwa.org.uk
- Shakti Women's Aid - 0131 475 2399 / shaktiedinburgh.co.uk
- Refuge - 0800 2000 247 / www.refuge.org.uk
- Southall Black Sisters - 020 8571 9595 / www.southallblacksisters.org.uk
- Muslim Women's Helpline - 020 8904 8193 or 020 8908 6715 / www.mwnhelpline.co.uk
- IKWRO: Women's rights organisation for Middle Eastern and Afghan women - 020 7920 6460 / ikwro.org.uk

FOR MEN

- ManKind Initiative: 01823 334 244 / www.mankind.org.uk



- Respect Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327 / www.respect.uk.net
- The Dyn Project (Wales): 0808 801 0321 / www.dynwales.org

FOR PERPETRATORS

- Respect: 0808 802 4040 / www.respect.uk.net

