



## Safeguarding Update - December

This month's staff safeguarding Newsletter focuses on safeguarding children affected by domestic abuse.

**As a school we have seen more and more children affected by Domestic Abuse in their home environments. A large percentage of our family support work and designated safeguarding cases are linked to Domestic abuse incidents. So it is important that all staff are aware of the definitions, signs to look out for and how we can help to prevent our children growing up with this mindset.**

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## Domestic Abuse



### **Domestic Abuse: definition**

Abusive, violent, controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour between intimate partners or family members aged 16 or over

Abuse can take place in different forms, listed below, but the underlying point is control. Abusers do it to control their partner.

- **Physical:** this means physically abusing someone, for example hitting, kicking, slapping, punching or burning them
- **Emotional:** also known as psychological abuse. This could involve putting the partner down, making them feel they are to blame for the abuse, and controlling the partner through threats and intimidation
- **Sexual:** this is any sexual activity that takes place without the other person's consent. It could be rape or sexual assault, or withholding access to contraception
- **Financial:** also known as economic abuse. This might include preventing the partner from working, taking their benefits, or spending or taking their money without their consent

Signs that we can look out for in children which might indicate domestic abuse is happening in the home:



Aggressive behaviour, like bullying and tantrums, along with anti-social behaviour like vandalism

Anxiety

Tiredness - As a result of bed wetting, nightmares or insomnia

Mental Health Problems - such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts or eating disorders.

Self-Harming

Problems in School or trouble learning

Attention-Seeking Behaviour

Constant or regular sickness like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers.

Withdrawal

Taking part in more activities outside the home like sports or clubs as a distraction.

## Operation Encompass



Sometimes, if Police are called to a domestic abuse incident and children are present, a report is sent through to school to inform us that there has been a police attendance. This is called Operation Encompass.

The information will state which child was present and where the domestic incident took place. It does not give us details of the incident.

The purpose for alerting schools is that we see the children for a large percentage of their time. It is not for us to question the child about the incident but instead to alert us to keep an eye on this child and understand if there are any changes in behaviour.

The information must be kept confidential and staff should keep an eye on the child and record any concerns or changes using CPOMS.

## Impact on Children



Children are suffering multiple physical and mental health consequences as a result of exposure to domestic abuse. Children see parents or carers suffer, often at the hands of someone else they love. They suffer physical, sexual and emotional abuse themselves. Sometimes they are forced into colluding with the violent partner; sometimes they feel deeply responsible for the non-abusing parent or carer, or for their brothers and sisters. Children can be further affected when adult victims of domestic abuse sometimes find it difficult to be the caring, supportive parents they would want to be, even after leaving the abusive relationship, because they have been hurt and traumatised by their experiences.

Amongst other impacts, over half (52%) had behavioural problems, over a third (39%) had difficulties adjusting at school, and nearly two thirds (60%) felt responsible for negative events. A quarter of both boys and girls exposed to domestic abuse exhibit abusive behaviours themselves... children were more likely to show abusive behaviours after exposure to the domestic abuse had ended.

In relationships where there is domestic violence, children witness about three-quarters of the abusive incidents. About half the children in such families have themselves been badly hit or beaten. Sexual abuse and emotional abuse are also more likely to happen in these families.

## What we can do - Prevention



- Ensure all staff understand the wider definition of domestic abuse.
- Work on relationships through PHSE including through a wider promotion of gender equality across the school, including equality in same sex relationships. This links closely with the work on [bullying](#).
- Create discussions and opportunities to reflect on developing relationships between young people.

- Raise awareness of domestic abuse among children and young people, people to talk to if they are worried and peer to peer work on ensuring safety in relationships supported by a culture that reaches beyond the school.

Reminder of DSL Team

## Safeguarding Concerns

Are you  
concerned  
about a child?

### Speak to a DSL



Ms Martin  
Headteacher



Mr Gadsby  
Deputy Headteacher



Mrs Bramley  
Assistant Headteacher



Mr Glanney  
KS1 Leader



Mrs Tarling  
Acting EYFS Lead  
Nursery Lead

Record your concern in writing on

**CPOMS**

<https://biertoncombined.cpoms.net/>