

Orchard Community Primary School

Domestic Abuse Policy



Version	Date	Author	Reason for Change
0.1	3/2021	FS based on LCC Guidance	New Policy
0.2	12/2023	FS	Reviewed
0.3	9/2026	FS	RE-written and updated to reflect LA practice

Review Frequency	Next Review Date
Every 3 years	12/2029

Approved by: Governing Body – Autumn 2026

1. Policy Statement

Orchard Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that **domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children's safety, wellbeing, development, and educational outcomes.**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

2. Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy is based on:

- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** (statutory definition of domestic abuse, including emotional, coercive, controlling and economic abuse)
- **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
- **Operation Encompass – Statutory Guidance (Home Office, 2025)**
(places a legal duty on police to notify schools of domestic abuse incidents)
- **Leicestershire County Council safeguarding procedures**

3. Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected, involving:

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

Children are **recognised as victims in their own right** if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse.

4. Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

Children experiencing domestic abuse may:

- Feel anxious, fearful, or unsafe
- Display challenging behaviour or withdrawal
- Experience difficulties with concentration and learning
- Be at increased risk of harm or injury

Even if not directly witnessing abuse, children can be significantly affected by living in a household where it occurs.

5. Operation Encompass (Leicestershire Protocol)

Orchard Primary School is part of **Operation Encompass**, a safeguarding partnership between:

- Leicestershire Police
- Leicestershire County Council
- Schools

Key Principles

- Police notify the school **before the next school day** following a domestic abuse incident
- Notifications apply to:
 - Children present at the incident
 - Children living in the household
 - Children connected to the family

School Response

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** receives the notification
- Information is:
 - **Confidential**
 - Shared on a **need-to-know basis only**
- The DSL ensures appropriate, **timely support** is provided

Purpose

Operation Encompass ensures early intervention so schools can support children **immediately following a traumatic event**.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- Receive and securely record Operation Encompass notifications
- Assess risk and determine appropriate support
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g. Early Help, Social Care)
- Ensure staff are informed on a need-to-know basis
- Maintain confidentiality at all times

All Staff

All staff must:

- Be aware of signs of domestic abuse
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL
- Provide a safe, supportive environment for pupils
- Avoid asking leading or investigative questions

7. Supporting Children

Support may include:

- Emotional check-ins with a trusted adult
- Flexible classroom expectations
- Safe spaces and pastoral support
- Referral to counselling or external services

Support will always be:

- Child-centred
- Discreet
- Based on individual needs and wishes

8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information is handled in line with:
 - UK GDPR
 - Data Protection Act 2018
- Information will only be shared:
 - To safeguard the child
 - On a **strict need-to-know basis**

Operation Encompass information **must not be shared with other parents or pupils.**

9. Record Keeping

- All domestic abuse concerns and notifications are:
 - Recorded on the school safeguarding system
 - Stored securely
- Records include:
 - Date and time
 - Nature of concern
 - Actions taken

10. Working with Parents and Carers

The school will:

- Work sensitively with families
- Prioritise the safety of the child and non-abusive parent
- Avoid sharing information that could increase risk

Parents will be informed about Operation Encompass through school communications.

11. Staff Training

All staff will receive:

- Safeguarding training (including domestic abuse awareness)

- Operation Encompass training where appropriate

Training supports staff to identify and respond effectively to children affected by domestic abuse.

12. Multi-Agency Working

The school will work with:

- Children's Social Care
- Early Help services
- Police
- Health professionals

Information sharing is essential where there are safeguarding concerns.

13. Safeguarding Concerns

If a child is at immediate risk:

- Staff must follow safeguarding procedures
- DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care

Domestic abuse is always treated as a **safeguarding concern**.

14. Equality and Inclusion

This policy applies to all children and families regardless of:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation

The school recognises that domestic abuse can affect **any family**.

15. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed by: Headteacher / Governing Body

Appendix 1: Key Contacts (Insert School Details)

- DSL: Fiona Shields
- Deputy DSLs: Rachel Daft & Hayley Caldwell
- Safeguarding Governors: Sue Shearman & Josh Wicks

External Support:

- Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 802 0028
 - NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
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Appendix 2: Key Principles Summary

- Domestic abuse = safeguarding issue
- Children are victims in their own right
- Operation Encompass ensures **early notification and support**
- Confidentiality is essential
- The child's welfare is always the priority

Appendix 3: Resources

- **Disrespect No-body** - Discussion guides and session plans to support the Government's campaign aimed at preventing abuse in teenage relationships, developed by the PSHE Association with the Home Office. <https://goo.gl/HxcSUU>
- **The Hideout** - a dedicated website for young people up to the age of 21 where they can find information about relationship abuse and where to get help. www.thehideout.org.uk
- **Expect Respect** - A free resource to download giving information about domestic abuse and its impact on children and young people. It also gives full lesson plans and resources on relationship matters from Year 1 to Year 13. (All DSLs already have this on their disk of resources given out when they trained.) <https://goo.gl/bliCOa>
- **Freedom Charity** - Empowering young people to feel they have the tools and confidence and support around the issues of family relationships which can lead to early and forced marriage and dishonour based violence. www.freedomcharity.org.uk Helpline 08456070133
- **Safe Lives** - Quick guide identifying and responding to young people affected by forced marriage. <https://goo.gl/Z3nrFV>
- **LRSB Domestic Abuse Pages** - Flow charts and guidance on responding to disclosures of domestic abuse from adults. <http://lrsb.org.uk/domestic-abuse>